

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND DISABLED PEOPLE
TASK AND FINISH PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2006
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.00 - 9.40 PM**

Members Present: Mrs S Perry (Chairman), Mrs J H Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Cooper, Mrs A Grigg (Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder), D Kelly, P Turpin and K Wright

Other members present:

Apologies for Absence: D Bateman, Ellis and P House

Officers Present J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), R Wilson (Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)), L Swan (Environmental Services) and S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer)

1. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 20 JULY 2006

Notes agreed as a correct record.

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

No substitutes advised.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations made.

4. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of reference agreed subject to:

- (i) Item (4) to refer to 'charges' not 'changes';
- (ii) Item (7) to refer to 'equality' not 'quality'; and
- (iii) Additional aim of reviewing the handyperson scheme (requested by Councillor Stellan);

Revision attached to these minutes for submission to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 October 2006.

5. FEEDBACK

Members made the following reports of recent visits:

Sheltered Housing Forum:

Services for Older People and Disabled People Task and Finish Panel Tuesday, 5 September 2006

Attendees: Councillors Cooper, Grigg and J H Whitehouse

Noted the wide representation at the meeting with the opportunity to ask questions and discuss matters of concern. The meeting had two main subjects Choice Based Lettings and Grounds Maintenance.

Parsonage Court Day Club

Attendees: Councillors Perry, House and Wright.

Attendance at the day had dropped from 20 to 10 because of the cost of Community Transport which was costing in the region of £150 p.c.m. The transport scheme was run by VAEF. Members noted the transport funding difficulties. Additionally it was thought that the minibus drivers test was difficult to pass.

Members requested a further report on the history of the day clubs to the next meeting.

A request had been made at the day club for a suitable venue for meetings of the University of the Third Age. Councillor Wright undertook to research this aspect and report back.

A report by Councillor Perry is also attached to these notes.

Older Peoples Advisory Group

Attendees: Councillors Grigg, Kelly and Wright

Meeting held at Frank Bretton House and although not well advertised it had been well attended by approximately 40 people. Officers from EFDC, ECC, Voluntary Sector and Social Services had attended. It had been a good meeting and had discussed pavements (uneven surfaces), Pedestrian crossings, access by phone to medical practices and appointment systems, transport and local shopping. Attendees had been responsive and it was a constructive meeting. It was important that the District members that had attended should follow up on some of the issues raised by those attending. Agreed that information on forthcoming meetings be published in the Forrester magazine to encourage attendance.

Noted that the next OPAG meeting was on 11 October 2006 (venue to be advised).

Robert Daniels Court

Attendee: Councillor Perry

Councillor Perry's report is attached to these notes. Noted that the average resident age was early to mid 70's.

Other Visits

Attendee: Councillor Cooper

Councillor Cooper reported that she had visited a number of the sheltered schemes. Residents had raised a number issues with her which would require reference to the appropriate council officer for response. Issues included: scooter facilities, window condensation problems, provision of incontinence pads, Yale key access, fencing of

sites (Parsonage Court), movement of bus stops, poor pavements in Epping (Leonard Davis House), issues with vandals (Hyde Mead House).

Councillor Cooper reported that residents had raised issues about feelings of isolation, lack of transport. Councillor Cooper also suggested that staff support and training/communication could also be looked at and cited an example of a recent Arts project "A sense of place" aimed at the elderly which wardens did not seem aware of.

Members of the Panel were requested to ensure that reports of future visits were made in writing to provide an evidential base to the achievement of the Panels Aims and Objectives.

6. REVIEW OF SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Members received reports on services provided the District Council as follows.

- (1) Environmental Services
- (2) Financial Services
- (3) Housing Services
- (4) Leisure Services
- (5) Supporting People (Briefing Note)

A revised sheet on some services provided by Environmental Services is attached to these notes for information.

Agreed that having received services details it was important at future meeting to identify any gaps in provision.

7. REVIEW OF SERVICES

Review of services provided by voluntary action Epping Forest and other previous suppliers via the council's grant aid scheme noted.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

J Scott undertook to provide Councillor Cooper with details of the Waltham Abbey Day Centre.

9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

Next meeting 2 November 2006 at 7.00 p.m. in Committee Room 2.

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Term of Reference:

- (1) To look at the services for older people provided by the district council.
- (2) To look at the services for older people provided through the voluntary sector and in particular voluntary action Epping Forest.
- (3) Look at the criteria for these services.
- (4) Look at any charges made for these services
- (5) Identify any gaps
- (6) Consider issues in relation to transport.
- (7) Consider the implications of the Disability Equality Duty for the district council and the council's proposed response.

Aims and Objectives of Review:

1. To find out what services are provided by the district council, Voluntary Action Epping Forest and if there are any difficulties in accessing these services; if there are any gaps; and are they adequately funded and advertised.
2. To confirm if the council complies with the December 2006 section of the Disabled Discrimination Act that states that public bodies must anticipate problems and encourage the involvement of disabled people in public life.
3. To make any recommendations that identified the need for extra spending by 18 September 2006 in order to meet the deadline for the budget fixing round for next year
4. To find out about the specialist transport on offer, and about the Taxi Card System offered by other councils.
5. To investigate the use of bus passes and the relevance to the availability busses.
6. To Review the Council's Handyperson scheme
7. To co-opt Kay Ellis, Chairman of the Joint Management Team for Older Peoples Services, onto the panel

Key Issues:

TIMESCALE	ESTIMATED	ACTUAL
Commencement		22 June 2006
Finish	December 2006	
Report	January 2007	

Appendix to Notes of the Older People and Disabled People Task and Finish Panel Notes of 5 September 2006.

Reports received on visits by Councillor Perry.

Visit to Robert Daniels Court, Theydon Bois

Friday 11th August

Scheme Manager - Maureen Jones (Warden Assisted)

They have:

35 flats 33 are occupied - 1 disabled?
 2 empty
 1 guest room (charge a fee)
 1 for emergency (flood, fire etc.)

They are involved in the CARE scheme. They run various functions, fish and chip supper, trips to The Dogs, days out etc. There are a number of older people in the village who also participate.

The flats consist of a lounge, Kitchen, Hall, bedroom, and a wet room. They are about £97 per week?

The scooter shed is rather difficult to access though as there are 4 steps leading down to it.

Visit to Parsonage Court/C.A.R.E. Line, Loughton, on Wednesday 9th August 2006.

Present: Cllr. Mrs. S. Perry
 Cllr. Peter House
 Cllr. Keith Wright

We met Denise Pegler(?) Manager. We then met the CARELINE staff who operate the centre and saw how it worked.

We then went through to the community lounge and met the volunteers and spoke to both them and the a mixture of day visitors and some residents.

It was all very interesting and what seemed to emerge was the problem with getting volunteers to both help at the centre and also with transport.

The main problem seems to be the lack of funding for transport. A figure of £150 per month was mooted.

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Via Grant Aid Scheme

Name of scheme or type of service	Short descriptions	Target age group	Eligibility requirements (if any)	No. Of users	Annual Cost of budget (if known)	Comments – issues of concern – future developments
C.A.R.E.	Caring and Repairing in Epping Forest. General support for older and disabled people.	Any.	Open to anyone who is over 60 and/or disabled.	250 a year.	£38,000 (net cost).	Introduction of new Housing Assistance Policy will include younger 'vulnerable' clients.
Handyperson Service.	Small repairs and falls prevention work.	Mainly over 60 but can include younger people with disabilities.	Work costing under £150 free of charge to people on means tested benefits. People over 60 not on means tested benefits have to pay for the Service.	350 a year.	£10,000 (budget for work).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voluntary Contributions Scheme being considered. The question is often raised as to why the scheme cannot be extended to Council Tenants.
Disabled Facilities Grants.	Grants to home owners and private tenants to provide essential facilities or access to essential facilities.	Any.	Applicant must be registered or eligible to be registered as disabled. Maximum grant £25,000. Means tested. Referral required from O.T.	About 60 a year.	£500,000.	Increasing demand impacting on resources.
Renovation Grants.	Grants to home owners and private tenants for properties that are "unfit for human habitation".	Priority given to people who are over 60.	Property has to be "unfit". Maximum grant £20,000. Means tested.	5-10 normally.	£100,000.	Planned to be replaced in Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2006.
Disabled parking bays.	Bays for reserved parking.	Now effectively with ECC – although we can "sponsor".				Traffic Regulation Order takes several months to process. High workload for little return.

Name of scheme or type of service	Short descriptions	Target age group	Eligibility requirements (if any)	No. Of users	Annual Cost of budget (if known)	Comments – issues of concern – future developments
Provision of footway crossovers.	Where disabled meet criteria a crossover may be provided.	As for disabled bays.				Demand usually exceeded.
Home Repairs Assistance.	Small grants to home owners and private tenants for essential repairs.	Priority given to people who are over 60.	Maximum grant £2,000 or £5,000 in special circumstances. Applicant must be on a means tested benefit.	About 70 a year.	£100,000 a year.	See Renovation Grants above.
Pest Control.	Elimination of specified pests.	Any age. Concessions for older people.	Control of rats and cockroaches free. Other specified pests £13.50 for over 60s. None.		Total PC budget £28,000. £56,000 tender sum. £500.	Increase in costs for next year – may need to consider other provision of service.
Home and Work Safety.	Electric blanket testing, kitchen safety etc.	Any, but targeted at older people.	None.	?		None.