

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**NOTES OF A MEETING OF SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE AND DISABLED PEOPLE**  
**TASK AND FINISH PANEL**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY, 2 NOVEMBER 2006**  
**IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING**  
**AT 7.00 - 9.10 PM**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Mrs S Perry (Chairman), Mrs J H Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A Cooper, D Bateman, Ellis, Mrs A Grigg (Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder), P House, D Kelly, T Richardson and K Wright
<b>Other members present:</b>	Ms S Stavrou
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	P Turpin
<b>Officers Present</b>	J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), B Moldon, R Palmer (Head of Finance), L Swan (Environmental Services) and R Wilson (Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations))
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	-

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**1. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING - 5 SEPTEMBER 2006**

Notes agreed as a correct record.

**2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor T Richardson substituted for Councillor P Turpin.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations made.

**4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No further items of business had been brought forward for discussion.

**5. SOCIAL CLUBS FOR OLDER PEOPLE**

Report of R Wilson noted.

Panel noted the low usage of some of the clubs. There was evidence of the clubs being in decline, problems with the cost of transport, difficulty finding drivers and volunteers. Interviews with attendees had revealed that they had concerns about pavements, lack of local shops, access to NHS dentists and transport. Discussions at OPAG indicated that there was a low level of interest in the clubs and that older people wanted other activities. There seemed a wish to socialise amongst themselves in other ways and help to contribute and participate in the community.

Other evidence indicated that in some cases that the outing to the days clubs was their sole journey out. This may indicate the need to look at the overall care package provided to them individually. This may be something that the Panel would wish to raise with ECC Social Care.

Councillor Cooper had also received good feedback on a Leisure Arts programme 'A Sense of Place' that had been well received in some of the Council's sheltered accommodation. Good feedback had also been forthcoming about the seated exercise programme for the elderly and disabled. Panel expressed their wish for the portfolio holder to give consideration to how these two programmes could be repeated in 2007/08.

**Agreed:**

That an early report be made to Overview and Scrutiny Committee requesting that the Portfolio Holder for Leisure Services be asked to consider how the Seated Exercise for Elderly and Disabled and a repeat of the Arts Project 'A Sense of Place' can be funded on a district wide basis

**6. REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S HANDY PERSON SCHEME**

The Panel noted on 20 July 2006, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Councillor Stallan, had asked the Panel to carry out a review of the handy Persons Scheme.

The request originated from a question to the Housing Portfolio Holder (Councillor Heavens) at Council on 21 February 2006 by Councillor Mrs Whitehouse.

The Handyperson Scheme was an offshoot of CARE (Caring and Repairing in Epping Forest) which was that part of Environmental Services, which provided the Council's Home Improvement Service. The purpose of the scheme was to provide retired homeowners and private tenants in the Epping Forest District with reputable contractors to carry out minor works.

Typical handyperson jobs were small repairs (leaking taps and gutters for instance) and work to prevent falls in the home, (like fitting grab rails and hand rails).

The Service was free to people over 60, retired and on a means tested benefit for work costing up to a maximum of £150. Minor repairs costing more than this could be carried out but the homeowner had to pay the difference. Works could also be arranged for the same client group but who were not in receipt of a means-tested benefit but only if they agreed to meet the costs in full.

It seems that the concerns behind the original question were finance related in that the budget for the Handyperson Scheme had not been increased since the Scheme was first set up in 1999. To some extent this concern had been addressed by the allocation of an additional £3000 via the DDF in the financial year 2006/07, making a total sum available of £13,250.

In 2005/06, the Scheme undertook 93 jobs at a total cost of £9,827 from a budget of £10,000. So far this year a total of 52 jobs had been arranged at a total cost of £5,868. Since demand rises in the winter months, it seemed likely the total budget of £13,250 would be spent.

The additional sum of £3000 made available via the DDF in 2006/07 was a one-year only commitment.

The Panel were of the view that this scheme provided an excellent service of which the Council should be proud. The panel therefore recommended that this District Development funding should be repeated for 2007/08. It was agreed that this recommendation should be made to the Committee and Cabinet before the formal report was issued because of the budget timescales.

**Agreed:**

That an early report be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requesting that the Cabinet be asked to agree to the submission of a bid for District Development Fund funding in 2007/08 in the sum of £3,000 to continue the provision of assistance to residents under the Council's Handy Person Scheme subject to consideration of the budget later in the municipal year

**7. COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO DISABILITY EQUALITY DUTY**

The Panel received a report from J Scott. It was noted that a consultant had been appointed in November 2006 to carry out work on the Council plan. This would not be completed by the deadline in December. It was agreed the the final report would be published in the members bulletin.

**8. CONCESSIONARY TRAVEL**

Bob Palmer and Brian Moldon presented a report on the current concessionary fares schemes. Officers circulated details of both the TFL and Essex Schemes.

The TFL scheme currently had around 400 users. The Essex scheme had approximately 9,000 users. The Countywide scheme now offered free travel and the increase in applications had meant a massive administrative exercise was required to issue them by post.

From 2008 the scheme would mean that free travel would extended to local bus services across the country rather than just within administrative boundaries. This meant that people would have access to London bus services but not the underground.

**9. CONCLUSIONS AND REPORT**

The Panel agreed the following issues for inclusion in their formal report:

**Day clubs:**

- Issues of affordability of transport –
- Lack of volunteers and what barriers are
- Failing attendances – reasons more fit elderly – better promotion paragraph 8 of report - are older people doing this amongst themselves? – Not high on their agenda

**Work of the JMC:**

- One stop shop idea of JMT should be supported
- endorse the idea of an updated services directory for the elderly

- encourage further summit
- Support JMT proposals to seek the floatation of OPAG

**Issues from visits:**

- Good work of OPAG needs support and publicity to encourage input
- Some feelings expressed about isolation of less mobile older people.
- Concerns about uneven surfaces, other environmental conditions and local shopping facilities
- Should OSC seek further discussions with social care about elderly care?

**Review of Services:**

- Those Provided by EFDC and VAEF noted
- Concessionary fares issues
- Handy Person Scheme – Portfolio Holder needs to consider the continuation of provision of top up of £3,000 in 2007/08 and publicise in the Forrester
- DDA – Disability Equality Duty – noted restrictions on resources and flag up when scheme completed via Bulletin
- Need to ensure that good practice (like the arts projects) are shared across the council
- Ask leisure portfolio holder to consider a repeat of the ‘sense of place’ project across the community and vulnerable people and council support for the seated exercise project
- What gaps in provision found?

**Agreed:**

That a subgroup comprising Councillors Perry, Whitehouse, Cooper and Kelly and Mrs K Ellis be convened to formulate the final report with a view to reporting back to the Panel with a draft final report.