

Council Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL to be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING at 7.30 pm on Tuesday, 19 February 2008 for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.



PETER HAYWOOD
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services
Officer:**

Council Secretary: Ian Willett
Tel: 01992 564243 Email: iwillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

WEBCASTING NOTICE

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy and copies made available to those that request it.

Therefore by entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01992 564249.

BUSINESS

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

1. This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking.

2. The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the Internet and will be capable of repeated viewing and copies of the recording could be made available for those that request it.

If you are seated in the lower public seating area it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

This may infringe your human and data protection rights and if you wish to avoid this you should move to the upper public gallery”

2. MINUTES (Pages 7 - 24)

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2007 (attached).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Chief Executive) To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Apologies for Absence

(b) Announcements

To consider any announcements by:

- (i) the Chairman of the Council;
- (ii) the Leader of the Council; and
- (iii) any other Cabinet Member.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 9.3 of the Council Procedure Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Leader of the Council;
- (b) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; or
- (c) to any Portfolio Holder.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

6. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER, CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 25 - 34)

To receive reports from the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and members of the Cabinet on matters falling within their area of responsibility :

- (a) Report of the Leader;
- (b) Report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee - attached;
- (c) Report of Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder - attached;
- (d) Report of Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder - attached;
- (e) Report of Environmental Protection Portfolio Holder;
- (f) Report of Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder;
- (g) Report of Housing Portfolio Holder - attached;
- (h) Report of Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder - attached;
- (i) Report of Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

7. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE

Council Procedure Rule 10.6 provides for questions by any member of the Council to the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any Portfolio Holder, without notice on:

- (i) reports under item 5 above; or
- (ii) any other matter of a non operational character in relation to the powers and duties of the Council or which affects all or part of the District or some or all of its inhabitants.

Council Procedure Rule 10.7 provides that answers to questions without notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer from the Leader or, at the request of the Leader, from another member of the Cabinet;
- (b) direct oral answer from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or, at their request, from another member dealing with that issue as part of an Overview and Scrutiny review;
- (c) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication;
- (d) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner; or
- (e) where the question relates to an operational matter, the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a member of the Cabinet will request that a response be given direct to the questioner by the relevant Chief Officer.

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 10.8, a time limit of twenty minutes is set for questions. Any question not dealt with within the time available will receive a written reply. The Chairman may extend this period by up to a further 10 minutes to ensure that all political groups and independent members may have their questions answered.

8. MOTIONS

(a) To consider the following motion, notice of which has been given under Council Procedure Rule 11:

(i) Council & Cabinet Meetings – Public Questions

“That this Council –

- (a) notes the Council’s success in fostering public interest by allowing the public to speak on development control matters at planning meetings;
- (b) agrees that the introduction of public questions would assist in achieving more public interest in Cabinet proceedings;
- (c) resolves to ask the Cabinet to allocate up to 20 minutes at the beginning of each of their meetings to answer questions to portfolio holders by the public on Cabinet matters without prior notice;
- (d) notes that the public seldom asks questions at Council meetings and agrees that restrictions in the current scheme about prior notice may be a disincentive;
- (e) resolves to amend the present scheme for public questions at Council meetings by removing the requirement for the public to give prior notice both of their wish to ask questions and the content of those questions with effect from the next Council year; and
- (f) further resolves to amend the Constitution and give appropriate publicity to these changes.”

Mover: Councillor Mrs D Collins

Seconder: Councillor C Whitbread

(b) Motions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

9. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 10.3 of the Council Procedure Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Chairman of the Council;
- (b) to the Leader of the Council;
- (c) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or
- (d) to any Member of the Cabinet;.

Council Procedure rule 10.4 provides that answers to questions under notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

Answers to questions falling within (a) and (b) above will be made available to the member asking the question one hour before the meeting. Answers to questions falling within (c) above will be circulated to all councillors.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

10. REPORTS OF THE CABINET (Pages 35 - 118)

To consider the following reports of the Cabinet:

- (a) Acupuncture, Tattooing, Semi-Permanent Skin Colouring, Cosmetic Piercing and Electrolysis Byelaws
- (b) Budgets and Council Tax Declaration 2008/09
- (c) Calendar of Meetings 2008/09

11. REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (Pages 119 - 136)

- (a) Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 – Provisions relating to Elections

12. REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE (Pages 137 - 150)

13. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

To receive any reports, ask questions and receive answers on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations.

14. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Exclusion: To consider whether, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press should be excluded from the meeting for the items of business set out below on grounds that they will involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the following paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) or are confidential under Section 100(A)(2):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
Nil	Nil	Nil

The Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006, which came into effect on 1 March 2006, requires the Council to consider whether maintaining the exemption listed above outweighs the potential public interest in disclosing the information. Any member who considers that this test should be applied to any currently exempted matter on this agenda should contact the proper officer at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.

Confidential Items Commencement: Paragraph 9 of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require:

- (1) All business of the Council requiring to be transacted in the presence of the press and public to be completed by 10.00 p.m. at the latest.
- (2) At the time appointed under (1) above, the Chairman shall permit the completion of debate on any item still under consideration, and at his or her discretion, any other remaining business whereupon the Council shall proceed to exclude the public and press.
- (3) Any public business remaining to be dealt with shall be deferred until after the completion of the private part of the meeting, including items submitted for report rather than decision.

Background Papers: Paragraph 8 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Constitution define background papers as being documents relating to the subject matter of the report which in the Proper Officer's opinion:

- (a) disclose any facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the report is based; and
- (b) have been relied on to a material extent in preparing the report and does not include published works or those which disclose exempt or confidential information (as defined in Rule 10) and in respect of executive reports, the advice of any political advisor.

Inspection of background papers may be arranged by contacting the officer responsible for the item.

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES

- Committee:** Council **Date:** 18 December 2007
- Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.30 pm
- Members Present:** Councillors Mrs C Pond (Chairman), J Knapman (Vice-Chairman), R Bassett, D Bateman, Mrs P Brooks, K Chana, R Church, M Cohen, M Colling, Mrs D Collins, Mrs A Cooper, R D'Souza, R Frankel, T Frankland, Mrs R Gadsby, A Green, Mrs A Grigg, J Hart, P House, D Kelly, R Law, J Markham, R Morgan, S Murray, G Pritchard, Mrs P Richardson, T Richardson, B Rolfe, Mrs P K Rush, B Sandler, Mrs M Sartin, P Spencer, Mrs P Smith, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, P Turpin, H Ulkun, Mrs L Wagland, A Watts, C Whitbread, Mrs J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and J Wyatt
- Apologies:** Councillors K Angold-Stephens, Mrs S Clapp, J Demetriou, P Gode, Mrs A Haigh, Ms J Hedges, D Jacobs, Mrs J Lea, Mrs M McEwen, P McMillan, G Mohindra, Mrs E Webster and M Woollard
- Officers Present:** P Haywood (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), G Lunnun (Democratic Services Manager), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), J Boreham (Assistant Public Relations and Information Officer) and S Mitchell (PR Website Editor)
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78. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind all present that the meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

79. FORMER COUNCILLOR D SPINKS

It was with much sadness that the Chairman informed the Council of the death of former Councillor Don Spinks on 3 December 2007. The Chairman announced that Councillor Spinks had been a member of the District Council for a total of 13 years in two spells. He had been first elected to the District Council in 1987 to represent the Waltham Abbey East Ward and had been re-elected to represent that ward in 1991 for another 4 years. In 1991 he had been appointed Vice-Chairman of the District Council and he had been elected Chairman of the District Council in 1992. He had returned to the District Council in 2002 to represent the Waltham Abbey Honey Lane Ward and had been re-elected to represent that ward in 2003 for another 4 years. He had been the Council's Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder from 2004 until 2006. The Council noted that he had also been a member of the Waltham Abbey Town Council and had been elected Mayor of the Town Council in 1990.

All present stood for a minute's silence in tribute to the memory of Don Spinks.

Following the Chairman's announcement, Councillors Mrs D Collins, Ms S A Stavrou, J M Whitehouse, A Watts and Mrs P Brooks paid tribute to Don Spinks.

RESOLVED:

That the Council's condolences to the family of former Councillor Don Spinks be recorded.

80. MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2007 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to:

- (a) substitution of the word "public" for "private" after the words "which backs onto" in the fourth line of the question under Minute 69(g) (Graffiti);
- (b) substitution of the words "the Councillor" for "tenants" in the third line of the question in Minute 69(e) (Limes Farm Estate - Anti Social Behaviour); and
- (c) inclusion of the name of Councillor H Ulkun in the list of members present.

81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor J M Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Motion - Future Development of Epping Town Centre). The Councillor had determined that his interest was not prejudicial and that he would remain in the meeting for the consideration and voting on this matter.

82. ANNOUNCEMENTS**(a) Chairman's Announcements****(i) Christmas Service**

The Chairman thanked members who had attended the Christmas Service. She advised that the collection had raised approximately £420 which would go to the Samaritan's Purse Operation Christmas Child Shoe Box Appeal and the League of Friends of St Margaret's Hospital.

(ii) Quiz Evening

The Chairman invited members to form teams to enter a quiz being held in aid of her charity at Theydon Bois Village Hall on 8 February 2008.

(iii) Raffle Tickets

The Chairman advised that raffle tickets in aid of her charity would be available from Jane Boreham after this meeting.

(iv) World Scout Jamboree

The Chairman announced that she had received a letter and a piece of glassware from the Scout Association thanking the Council for the support it had provided for the World Scout Jamboree by making North Weald Airfield available as a logistic hub. She advised that she would display the glassware in the Chairman's Room.

(v) Flowers

The Chairman announced that the floral display from tonight's meeting would be sent to Councillor Mrs Liz Webster.

The Chairman also advised that she would be sending some flowers to Councillor Mrs Janet Hedges who had had an accident on the way to the Christmas Service.

(b) Leader's Announcements

There were no announcements made under this heading.

(c) Other Cabinet Members

There were no announcements made under this heading.

(d) Epping Forest District Youth Council

The Chairman invited the Assistant to the Chief Executive to advise the Council of the names of the young persons elected to the Epping Forest District Youth Council to act on behalf of all young people in the District and to represent the District on the Essex Youth Assembly.

The Assistant to the Chief Executive reported that it had been agreed that all the secondary schools in the District and the Epping Forest College would each be allocated two Youth Council places. In addition, five further Youth Council positions would be filled by young people who lived, but did not go to school within the District.

The Council noted that most of the appointments had been achieved without the need for an election. The one exception had been St John's School, Epping where there had been a considerable number of candidates and a recount.

Members noted that the following had been elected:

Amy Laurence - Roding Valley High School
Duncan Haslam - Roding Valley High School
Kaylee Orchard - St John's School
Rosie Sheriff - St John's School
Daniel Lake - Davenant Foundation School
Ami Robinson - Davenant Foundation School
Merrin Hagger - King Harold School
Samantha Foley - King Harold School
Gabrielle Compton - Braeside School
Alexandria Martin - Braeside School
Ryan Wallace - Debden Park School
Billy Moore - Debden Park School
Samuel Clark - West Hatch High School
Nathaniel Rogers - West Hatch High School

The Assistant to the Chief Executive advised that in respect of the five places allocated to young people going to school outside of the District there had been six nominations:

Sarah Burr, Holly Whitbread, Harriett Mason, Reece Williams, Claire Gilbert and Simone Webb.

Members noted that the six nominations would be assessed and five candidates selected by the Youth Council at its first meeting in January.

In relation to Epping Forest College it was understood that there would not be an election and that the names of the two nominees would be confirmed in the near future.

83. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

By Mr Roger Salmon to Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Bus Stopping Arrangements in The Broadway, Loughton

"What further steps will the District Council be taking in order to try to get the County Council to rectify and resolve the difficult and impossible situation regarding the enormous inconvenience inflicted on local residents, by siting the bus terminus at the far end of Vere Road, Loughton, as it is nearly a quarter of a mile from the main supermarket and over a quarter of a mile for those wishing to get a connection from the underground station?"

Response by Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

"The Council is aware of the difficulties being caused by the bus companies' decision to relocate their stopping places to the northern end of Vere Road.

It has to be recognised that the previous arrangements, whereby buses waiting in Burton Road parked illegally on yellow lines or on the pedestrian footpath, were far from satisfactory. The Council's officers have met with their County Highways and Public Transport colleagues at The Broadway in order to discuss options which might enable the re-provision of bus waiting but which do not perpetuate the previous illegal parking arrangements. Any arrangements must also not prejudice the outcome of the recently agreed scoping study for The Broadway, which includes references to public transport interchanges, nor affect in the longer term the land owned by the Council in Burton Road which is earmarked for the provision of affordable housing.

Epping Forest and County officers are therefore in the process of bringing forward shorter medium term options which will enable buses to wait again in Burton Road. These options will need to be considered by the respective District and County Portfolio Holders and funding identified".

Councillor Mrs Grigg added that the District Council's Housing Portfolio Holder had recently approved the short term usage of the garage forecourts in Burton Road as locations for bus waiting until such time as a more permanent solution could be provided.

Supplementary question asked by Mr Salmon.

"What is the timescale for the changes as residents are feeling unsafe waiting for buses in Vere Road and there are no welfare facilities available there for the drivers of the buses?"

Response by Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development.

"Although the Housing Portfolio Holder has signed a decision notice there is a need to await for the expiry of the call-in period. However, we are trying to move forward as quickly as possible as we are aware of the problems being caused".

84. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER, CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**(a) Leader's Report**

By leave of the Council, the Leader of the Council made an oral report on matters falling within her area of responsibility.

Staff Awards

Councillor Mrs Collins reported that together with Councillor Mrs Grigg she had judged the staff awards. Eighteen excellent nominations had been received and all those nominated, whether individuals or teams, had made an oral presentation prior to decisions being made. A small lunch party was to be held at the end of January at which all those nominated would receive certificates. In addition, those who had achieved highly commended status would receive a small trophy. The winners would receive certificates at the lunch but their awards would be presented at the Civic Dinner in March 2008.

Councillor Mrs Collins advised that awards had been made as follows:

Category A - Improving Services to the Community - winner Lindsay Swan, for her work in connection with Care and Repair and Public Sector Housing.

- highly commended - Josie Falco for her work in relation to Waste Management.

Category B - Innovation - winner - Community and Culture Team in Leisure Services, particularly for their work at Limes Farm, Chigwell.

- highly commended - Sally Devine, Environmental Services for her new initiatives in getting empty properties back into use.

Category C - Dealing with the Public - winner - Shirley Hawkins for her work in dealing with complaints.

- highly commended - Terry Wyatt, Assistant Repairs Manager for his work in relation to Housing Repairs and Voids.

Councillor Mrs Collins also advised that this year, a fourth category had been added in recognition of the work undertaken by staff at North Weald Airfield in relation to the use of the airfield as a logistical hub for the World Scout Jamboree. It had been

necessary for the staff to work both night and day in order to continually repair the main access road which had been used by coaches serving the Jamboree. Accordingly, a Special Events Award was to be made to staff at the Airfield.

Limes Farm, Chigwell

On behalf of the Council, Councillor Mrs Collins expressed very grateful thanks to the residents of Limes Farm who had acted so responsibly over the recent death of Jack Large.

Olympic Games Business Breakfast

Councillor Mrs Collins announced that the Council, in conjunction with Business Link Essex, had held an Olympic Business Breakfast for locally based small and medium sized businesses. Speakers had included Danny Crates, Champion Paralympic who had talked about the athlete's perspective. Councillor Mrs Collins advised that she hoped many local businesses would take the opportunity of involving themselves with the Olympics in 2012 especially in view of the events which would take place on the borders of the District.

Liaison with Harlow and Uttlesford Councils

Councillor Mrs Collins advised that together with the Council's Chief Executive she had met recently with the Leaders and Chief Executives of Harlow and Uttlesford Councils in order to explore the possibility of working together in the future. She advised that the three authorities would continue to have a dialogue bearing in mind groupings and proposed groupings of other authorities in the County.

Local Area Agreement 2

Councillor Mrs Collins reported that together with Councillor Mrs Grigg and the Chief Executive she had attended a meeting of the Essex Partnership concerning Local Area Agreement 2. She advised that a large amount of money would be distributed by the County Council to District and Borough Councils depending on the achievement of targets. The meeting had discussed priorities and the results of the discussions were awaited. Councillor Mrs Collins emphasised the need for the Council to participate in order to benefit from the money available.

Epping Forest College

Councillor Mrs Collins advised that together with Councillor P House, Loughton Town Councillor Mrs J Davis and local resident P Relph she had attended a seminar at Epping Forest College with the aim of talking to students about local government. She advised that a similar event had been held the previous year and this had been well attended by students. Unfortunately, at the event this year there had been poor attendance at the sessions by students and generally a lack of interest. She expressed the hope that in future the response to the seminar would be similar to that achieved last year.

Secondary Education

Councillor Mrs Collins reported that she had met with County Councillor T Chapman, Schools, Children and Families Portfolio Holder in order to discuss secondary education in the District. More recently together with the Chief Executive she had met County Councillor Chapman again together with a County Council officer and five of the local secondary school Head Teachers. There had been an interesting

discussion and all present had agreed the need to work together to improve secondary education in the District. It had been agreed to set up termly forums with the first being held at the end of February 2008 at which representatives of the County Council, the District Council and at the schools would address problems.

Senior Management Review

Finally, Councillor Mrs Collins reported that at the Cabinet meeting held on the previous evening members had agreed the next stage of the Senior Management Review by appointing the majority of Assistant Director posts. Directors would now complete their new structures and it was anticipated that these would be available at the beginning of January for a month's consultation with staff and the Unions. This timescale would enable matters to be concluded at the February Cabinet meeting. Councillor Mrs Collins advised that further savings would be achieved as part of this final part of the restructuring amounting to approximately £250,000/£300,000.

Reports of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Other Portfolio Holders

The Council received reports (circulated) from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder, the Environmental Protection Portfolio Holder, the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder, the Housing Portfolio Holder, the Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder and the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

By leave of the Council, Councillor Ms S-A Stavrou, Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder, updated members on developments at Limes Farm, Chigwell which had recently been reported in the local press. She advised that she could not comment on any matter relating to the ongoing Police criminal investigation or any aspects of policing up to and including the tragic incident on 30 November 2007. She asked members not to press her on these matters. Councillor Ms Stavrou advised that the inaugural meeting of the Limes Farm Special Action Group had been held on 6 December 2007. This multi-agency meeting had been well attended with representatives from the Police, Limes Farm Community Association, Safer Communities and Housing officers from the District Council, religious groups, the local Ward Councillor, Essex Fire and Rescue, residents and social landlords, Voluntary Action Epping Forest and Limes Farm Junior School. Three Sub-Groups had been formed to deal with social engagement, environmental and communication issues. The next Special Action Group was to be held on 31 January 2008. She reassured members that all services were continuing to be provided at Limes Farm and that in the New Year she hoped to introduce some new initiatives. She stressed that the Council and its partner organisations were taking the incident extremely seriously and would be applying any lessons learned.

85. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE

(a) Epping Forest College

By Councillor T Frankland to Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council

You referred to your recent visit to Epping Forest College. Why were the two democratically elected members representing that ward not invited to the visit?

Response by Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council

Councillor House and I were invited to the seminar by the College. The Council was not involved in issuing invitations.

(b) Pudding Lane and Gravel Lane, Chigwell - Traffic Conditions**By Councillor P Turpin to Councillor Ms S-A Stavrou, Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder**

Pudding Lane, Chigwell has been an accident black spot for many years. It is subject to the maximum speed limit, has no speed cameras and no traffic calming measures. Gravel Lane, Chigwell is fast becoming as bad as Pudding Lane. It also is subject to the maximum speed limit, has no speed cameras and no traffic calming measures. A short distance from these roads is Chigwell Lane which is a four-way carriageway with 30mph speed limit where the Police are often present with speed guns. Why is there such a difference in the approach taken to these roads and can something be done to make Pudding Lane and Gravel Lane safer?

The Chairman advised Councillor Turpin that his question should be directed to the Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder and requested that Councillor A Green respond to the question.

Response by Councillor A Green, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder

Essex County Council Highways are responsible for traffic calming and related matters and I will direct the question to the appropriate officers.

(c) Nottingham Declaration**By Councillor J M Whitehouse to Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council**

I was delighted that the Cabinet agreed to sign the Nottingham Declaration following my original motion. The Cabinet said it would incorporate reference to the Declaration in strategic documents and I see that this has been done in respect of the Capital Strategy. Beyond that it is important that the Council and the wider community take specific steps to deal with the issue of climate change. Can you explain what action is actually being taken and can you confirm that you have actually signed the Nottingham Declaration?

Response by Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council

I regret to say that I have not yet signed the Nottingham Declaration. As you will appreciate from my earlier report, recent weeks have been very busy but this is no excuse and I will sign the Declaration tomorrow morning. On every appropriate occasion, including development on our own land, we will be looking to cut the Council's carbon footprint. We have not yet taken any specific measures but we will be doing so as this is part of our strategic programme.

(d) Planning Application EPF/2458/07 - Erection of Telecommunications Mast in Oakwood Parade, Loughton

I would like to ask the Portfolio Holder if she is prepared to accept publicly a petition signed by over 200 residents in the Loughton Roding Ward objecting to planning

application EPF/2458/07 which seeks permission for the erection of a telecommunications mast.

Response by Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Yes, I will accept the petition and I will pass it to the appropriate officers for consideration as part of the processing of the planning application. (Councillor Murray handed the petition to Councillor Mrs Grigg).

86. MOTIONS

(a) Future Development in Epping Town Centre

Motion moved by Councillor Mrs J H Whitehouse and seconded by Councillor J M Whitehouse.

"This Council notes:

(a) that Essex County Council intends to vacate the current Epping Junior School site in St John's Road as part of its plan to amalgamate Epping Junior School and Epping Infants School on the Infants School Site in Coronation Hill, and that as a result the County Council is likely to sell the Junior School site for development;

(b) that consideration is being given to the future of the Epping Depot, which is adjacent to the Junior School;

(c) that the future of the former Youth and Adult Centre in St John's Road next to the Junior School is uncertain once the building is no longer required as a temporary home for Epping Infants School;

(d) that the draft Epping Conservation Area Appraisal identifies County Council land behind Epping Library as in need of regeneration;

(e) that other development proposals have been suggested in the area including land at Bakers Lane Car Park and next to St John's Church;

(f) that there is a concentration of community uses in the area including Epping Library, Epping Register Office, Epping Hall, St John's Church Hall, St John's Church, a Dental Surgery and Epping Methodist Church;

(g) that the Cabinet recently approved the preparation of a development brief for The Broadway, Loughton in order to make the most of the potential of that area;

and is of the opinion therefore:

(i) that the likely re-development of some or all of these sites will have a dramatic effect on the centre of Epping;

(ii) that if sites are brought forward for development in a piecemeal and unco-ordinated fashion, Epping could lose important community facilities and find unsustainable pressure being placed on local infrastructure;

(iii) that if the County and/or District Councils dispose of land in this area the impact on the community and the importance of providing community facilities for

Epping and the surrounding area should be fully considered and should not be of lesser priority than obtaining the largest capital receipt;

and calls upon the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development and the Cabinet:

- (a) to ensure that a development brief covering the area likely to be affected by re-development is prepared; and
- (b) to include in the scope of the development brief
 - the need to take account of the built heritage of the area,
 - the potential to improve and/or relocate community facilities,
 - all other relevant issues".

Amendment moved by Councillor C Whitbread and seconded by Councillor A Green

"That paragraphs (a)-(g) of the motion be deleted and the following words substituted:

"(a) That the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development and the Director of Planning and Economic Development are aware of all the sites in the St John's Road area of Epping which may be made available for development in the near future and the complex and wide ranging issues these raise; and

(b) That the Chief Executive and Senior Officers have recently met with Essex County Council officers and their advisers regarding the County Council's property interests in the area and have discussed the need for a joint approach including the engagement of consultants to prepare a planning and development brief and design strategy;

and that all the words from "and is of the opinion therefore" be also deleted and the following words substituted:

(c) Calls on the Portfolio Holder to submit an early report to Cabinet on all aspects relating to the preparation of a development brief and the wider implications for the Epping area".

Carried

Motion as amended **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

(1) This Council notes that the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development and the Director of Planning and Economic Development are aware of all the sites in the St John's Road area of Epping which may be made available for development in the near future and the complex and wide range issues these raise;

(2) This Council notes that the Chief Executive and Senior Officers have recently met with Essex County Council officers and their advisers regarding the County Council's property interests in the area and have discussed the

need for a joint approach including the engagement of consultants to prepare a planning and development brief and design strategy; and

(3) This Council calls on the Portfolio Holder to submit an early report to Cabinet on all aspects relating to the preparation of a development brief and the wider implications for the Epping area.

87. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE

There were no questions asked by members under this item.

88. REPORTS OF THE CABINET

(a) Loughton Hall and Library Site adjoining Epping Forest College, Loughton - Right of Pre-emption

Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet, invited the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder to present this report of the Cabinet.

(Mover: Councillor C Whitbread - Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder)

The Portfolio Holder submitted a report proposing that the right of pre-emption be not exercised as the Council had no current operational requirement for office type accommodation in the Loughton area.

Amendment moved by Councillor S Murray and seconded by Councillor P House

"That the recommendation submitted be numbered (1) and that the following recommendation be added:

"(2) That in the light of the sale of the adjoining Sports Hall by Epping Forest College for the purpose of Care Home provision the Council urges the College not to replicate such a facility at Loughton Hall".

Lost

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the Council's right of pre-emption to purchase Loughton Hall and/or the Library Site adjoining Epping Forest College be not exercised.

(b) Capital Strategy 2007-2012

Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet, invited the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder to present this report of the Cabinet.

(Mover: Councillor C Whitbread - Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder)

The Portfolio Holder submitted a report proposing approval of the draft Capital Strategy 2007-2012 including revised key capital priorities.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the ranking of the Council's key capital priorities be revised as follows:
 - (a) improving the Council's Housing Stock;
 - (b) meeting housing need;
 - (c) improving quality of life;
 - (d) protecting the environment;
 - (e) promoting economic development;
 - (f) re-generating areas in need;
 - (g) delivering quality public services through e-government; and
 - (h) improving private sector housing stock;
- (2) That no further Town Centre Enhancements or large-scale Parking Reviews be undertaken before 2012; and
- (3) That the draft Capital Strategy 2007-2012 be approved.

(c) Supplementary Estimates

Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet, invited the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder to present this report of the Cabinet.

(Mover: Councillor C Whitbread - Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder)

The Portfolio Holder submitted requests for supplementary estimates.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a revenue District Development Fund Supplementary Estimate in the sum of £5,000 be approved for 2007-08 in order to facilitate the initial induction and training period for members of the Epping Forest District Youth Council and part-time Administrative Support of 18 hours per week; and
- (2) That a revenue District Development Fund Supplementary Estimate in the sum of £20,000 for 2007-08 be approved for planning consultancy, site

surveys and other necessary reports for a planning application for Industrial Development at Langston Road Depot, Loughton.

(d) Waste Management Partnership Board

Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet invited the Environmental Protection Portfolio Holder to present this report of the Cabinet.

(Mover: Councillor Mrs M Sartin - Environmental Protection Portfolio Holder)

The Portfolio Holder submitted a report proposing the establishment of a Waste Management Partnership Board.

Amendment moved by Councillor M Cohen and seconded by Councillor D Stallan.

"That a fifth recommendation be added as follows:

"That Councillor R Morgan be appointed on a temporary basis to attend any meetings of the Board convened prior to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee nominating a member to the Board and that nomination being approved by the Council".

Carried

Report as amended **ADOPTED**.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That, in accordance with the terms of the new Waste Management Contract, the establishment of the Waste Management Partnership Board be approved, with a membership of eight split equally between the Council and the Waste Management Contractor, SITA;
- (2) That the Council's membership of the Waste Management Partnership Board be as follows:
 - (a) the Environmental Protection Portfolio Holder (to be Chairman);
 - (b) the member nominated by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
 - (c) the Director of Environment and Street Scene; and
 - (d) the Council's representative under the contract;
- (3) That the meetings of the Board be held on a quarterly basis with one meeting designated as the Annual General meeting;
- (4) That the following key functions of the Board be approved:
 - (a) to monitor service performance;
 - (b) to encourage innovation and to monitor the Innovation Forums;
 - (c) to manage the contract pro-actively;

- (d) to encourage partnership working;
 - (e) to resolve differences;
 - (f) to review the partnership; and
 - (g) to report to the Cabinet on an annual basis; and
- (5) That Councillor R Morgan be appointed on a temporary basis to attend any meetings of the Board convened prior to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee nominating a member to the Board and that nomination being approved by the Council.

89. REPORTS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(a) Review of Protocol on Outside Organisations

(Mover: Councillor R Morgan, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Councillor Morgan submitted a report proposing changes to the Protocol on Outside Bodies in the light of experience gained over the last two years.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the revisions to the Protocol and Partnerships and other External Organisations as set out in the Appendix to the report be approved.

(b) Decision-making in Emergencies

(Mover: Councillor R Morgan, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee)

Councillor Morgan presented a report proposing provision in the Council's Constitution for emergencies where there could be many members and officers unavailable through illness etc.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the draft Appendix to the Executive Procedure Rules (as set out in the Appendix to the report) be approved and published as part of the Council's Constitution.

(c) Area Plans Sub-Committees - Three Week Cycle

Councillor Morgan reported that this matter had been discussed at the last meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee but no report was being submitted to this meeting of the Council as it had been decided to defer consideration of the matter to enable Town and Parish Councils to have more time to comment. Members noted that it was now proposed that a further report would be submitted to the Overview

and Scrutiny Committee in January and that the Committee would submit a report to full Council in February 2008.

90. REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS' SERVICES STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL

(a) Constitution Changes - (1) District Councillors' Planning Applications and (2) Cabinet Committees

(Mover: Councillor R Church, Chairman of the Constitution and Members' Services Standing Scrutiny Panel)

Councillor Church presented a report of the Scrutiny Panel which had been authorised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to report direct to Council on these matters.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

Planning Applications - Decisions on Applications by Councillors

(1) That the terms of reference of Area Plans Sub-Committees be amended to exclude consideration of any planning application submitted by or on behalf of a councillor of the Authority (and/or a spouse/partner);

(2) That the terms of reference of the District Development Control Committee be amended to include consideration of any planning application submitted by or on behalf of a councillor of the Authority (and/or a spouse/partner);

(3) That the officers be authorised to make consequential changes to the Constitution; and

Cabinet Committees

(4) That the terms of reference of Cabinet Committees be amended to make it clear that nominations to Cabinet Committees can only be made by Groups having seats on the Cabinet; and

(5) That the officers be authorised to make consequential changes to the Constitution.

91. REPORT OF EPPING FOREST DISTRICT STANDARDS COMMITTEE

(a) Review of the Planning Protocol

In the absence of Mary Marshall, Chairman of the Epping Forest District Standards Committee, who had sent apologies for absence due to illness, the Chairman invited the Assistant to the Chief Executive to introduce this report.

I Willett submitted a report proposing changes to the Protocol to bring it into line with the Council's Code of Conduct, changes in Council procedures and new advice from the Standards Board for England. Members noted that Parish and Town Councils,

District Councillors (via Members' Bulletin), Planning Officers and Planning Agents had been consulted on how the Code was operating and those views had been taken into account in the review process.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the amended Planning Protocol attached as an Appendix to the report be adopted;
- (2) That, following this meeting of the Council, the Monitoring Officer sent copies to all District Councillors and to the Clerks of Parish and Town Councils and also seek their views on the need for further training in relation to the revisions to the Protocol; and
- (3) That the Monitoring Officer produce a Guidance Note for Clerks of Parish and Town Councils in relation to the requirements for dual-hatted Councillors, in particular regarding their involvement in considering planning applications at Parish/Town Council meetings.

92. AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEES

Members noted that the calendar of meetings for 2007/08 adopted by the Council on 24 April 2007 had not provided for any Area Plans Sub-Committee meetings after 16 April 2007. The first meeting of a Sub-Committee in the municipal year 2008/09 would be on 21 May 2008 after the Annual Council meeting. Members were advised that this gap in meetings would impact on the Council's targets for determining applications and it was proposed that it be closed by scheduling additional meetings.

RESOLVED:

That the following additional meetings be held during the municipal year 2007/08:

Area Plans South - 23 April 2008
Area Plans East - 7 May 2008
Area Plans West - 14 May 2008

93. EX-COUNCILLOR A LEE

The Chairman reported that Mr A Lee, member for the Loughton St Mary's Ward had submitted a letter of resignation dated 3 November 2007 and received by the Proper Officer on 5 November 2007. As the vacancy arose within six months of the date that the Councillor's term of office would have expired, the election to fill the vacancy would take place at the next ordinary election (1 May 2008).

RESOLVED:

That the resignation of ex-Councillor A Lee on 5 November 2007 be noted.

94. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Councillor Mrs A Grigg reported as one of the Council's appointed representatives on the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and on the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership.

She advised that the LSP had produced the Epping Forest District Community Strategy 2004-2021 which addressed some of the important key challenges facing the District. In October 2007 at a seminar, action plans and priorities had been updated. The LSP Board met quarterly and minutes of meetings were published in the Members' Bulletin. There were eight Action Groups:

- (a) Green and Unique;
- (b) Homes and Neighbourhoods;
- (c) Economic Prosperity;
- (d) Getting About;
- (e) A Safe Community;
- (f) Fit for Life;
- (g) Life Long Learning; and
- (h) Children and Young People.

There was also a Steering Group which co-ordinated the work of the Action Groups.

Members noted that one of the main issues being considered by the LSP was Local Area Agreement 2. Councillor Mrs Grigg reported that together with the Leader of the Council she had attended a meeting recently hosted by the County Council to explore the setting up of an Essex Partnership Forum and a smaller Management Board.

Councillor Mrs Grigg encouraged members to view the LSP website for further information.

Councillor Mrs Grigg also reported as one of the Council's representatives on the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnership, a Sub-Group of the LSP. She advised that the Partnership had a Management Board which met quarterly and co-ordinated the work of seven Action Groups which met approximately every eight weeks. The Management Board was also responsible for financial decisions. Members noted that Councillor Mrs A Haigh, the District Council's other appointed representative on the Partnership had recently been appointed as Vice-Chairman and in the absence of the Chairman this year was Acting Chairman. Councillor Mrs Grigg reported that the Action Groups were:

- (a) 0-5s;
- (b) Local Development Groups - Epping Forest South and Epping Forest Rural;
- (c) Young Peoples Action Group;
- (d) Play Strategy;

- (e) Common Assessment Framework;
- (f) Child and Adolescent Mental Health;
- (g) Community Strategy.

Councillor Mrs Grigg reported on a stakeholder meeting held in November at which excellent presentations had been made by officers supporting the Action Groups. It had presented an available opportunity for members to network and be brought up to date with work undertaken by other Groups.

Councillor Mrs Grigg reported that she had arranged for the minutes of future meetings to be placed in the Members' Room.

Councillor Murray asked Councillor Mrs Grigg if she considered that the LSP had achieved better co-ordination between the various organisations. He also asked if any of the other statutory members of the LSP made a financial contribution towards the running of the body. Councillor Mrs Grigg stated that the LSP was making a worthwhile contribution and that in view of the approach being taken to future Local Area Agreements it was clear that the LSP was to be at the forefront in progressing these arrangements. She advised that Essex County Council also made a financial contribution towards the costs of the LSP.

CHAIRMAN

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 19 February 2008

Subject: Progress Report – February 2008

Chairman: Councillor R Morgan



Recommendation:

That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from December 2007 to the present be noted.

Report.

The main Overview and Scrutiny Committee

December 2007 Meeting:

1. At its meeting, held on 13 December 2007, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a presentation from the Chairman of the Princess Alexandra Hospital on their bid for Foundation Trust Status. Also there was Aidan Thomas, the Chief Executive of the West Essex PCT and John Carr the Vice Chairman of the West Essex PPI Forum, who gave their views on the bid. The Committee upon hearing the argument put forward, expressed their support for the PAH's bid for Foundation Trust Status.

2. The meeting also considered a report on the proposal to instigate a three-week cycle for the Area Planning Sub-committees. The Committee deferred consideration of the report to the January meeting pending a more detailed report and to receive further views of the Town and Parish Councils on this proposal. The Committee also considered a report from the Constitution and Members Services Standing Panel about improving communication and access to information within EFDC for Members, where a number of proposals to enable this were agreed.

January 2008 Meeting:

3. At their meeting on 31 January 2008 the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered and agreed the draft Portfolio Holders Budget proposals for the coming municipal year which had previously been considered by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel. They also considered the revised report on the proposed three week cycle for the Area Plans Sub-committees, after a close debate the committee recommended to council that provision be made in the Council calendar of meetings for a meeting of each Area Plans Sub-committee every three weeks.

4. The Committee also considered and endorsed the Constitution and Member's Services Standing Panel report on Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 – provisions relating to elections, in which they decided not to pursue the four year option for council district elections. They appointed Councillor Morgan to be the Overview and Scrutiny representative on the Waste Management Board and received a report on Cleaner Neighbourhoods and the Rogers Review that was considered by the Environment and Planning Scrutiny Panel in December. They endorsed the report's recommendations to the

Cabinet.

5. The Council may also wish to know that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will have the Police at our March meeting and London Underground at our April meeting.

Standing Panels

6. The 4 Standing Panels each have a rolling programme that consider ongoing cyclical issues and are comprised of the Housing Standing Panel under the Chairmanship of Councillor S Murray; the Constitution and Members Services Standing Panel chaired by Councillor R Church; the Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel chaired by Councillor Jon Whitehouse; and the Environment and Planning Standing Panel chaired by Councillor Mrs Smith.

7. The Housing Standing Panel met on 22nd January 2008. At this meeting they received the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan for 2007/08 and an update of the Choice Based Letting Scheme.

8. The Constitution and Members Services Standing Panel met on 11 December 2007. They considered the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, and the Electoral Cycle. At their meeting on 15 January 2008 the Panel again considered other parts of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act.

9. The Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel met on 14th January 2008 when they considered the draft detailed Portfolio Holders Budgets in detail.

10. The Environment and Planning Standing Panel met on 6th December 2007, when they discussed the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act and the Rogers Review.

Task and Finish Panels

11. The Provision of Value for Money within Planning Services Task and Finish Panel met on 3 December 2007 where they were updated on the Best Value Review of Planning Services and received a copy of the BMG Customer Satisfaction Survey.

12. No other Task and Finish Panels have met in this period.

Report to the Council

Subject: Civil Engineering & Maintenance

Date: 19 February 2008

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Andrew Green

Item: 6(c)

Recommending:

That the report of the Civil Engineering & Maintenance Portfolio Holder be noted.

Parking matters

The six month review of the new parking restrictions in Epping is due to commence shortly. Officers from the County Council have been collating all the responses received since implementation and consideration will then be given as to how best to take the process forward. This will be a difficult decision since it will be important to balance the need to deal with the issues raised over the past six months without undertaking what could easily become full scale parking consultation / review with all the attendant difficulties and of course the costs. Getting this right will be important since how the Epping review is approached will clearly become the model for Buckhurst Hill review which is scheduled to commence in May.

The parking review for the areas surrounding The Broadway is progressing, with the scoping plans having been provided to all local ward members and the town and parish councils. Once the scope of the review is agreed the County Council will engage consultants to undertake the review process.

Roundabout sponsorship

After a considerable delay in agreeing the legal documentation between the County Council, their appointed contractors and this Council, it is pleasing to report that the sponsorship agreement has been signed. It is hoped that this will result in the sponsorship of a number of key locations throughout the district, with the income generated being available to the council to enhance the visual appearance of these key locations and to support other expenditure streams.

Annual watercourse maintenance contract

The new 5 year contract for the maintenance of the Council's watercourses has now commenced. This is important work ensuring that the watercourses for which the Council is the riparian owner are properly maintained and kept free flowing. This is a major contribution to the prevention of flooding in the district, an issue of considerable importance given the continuation of unpredictable weather patterns and extreme weather events.

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Report to the Council

Subject: Community Wellbeing

Date: 19 February 2008

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ms S-A Stavrou

Item: 6(d)

Recommending:

That the report of the Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder be noted.

Winter Weather

The recent spate of winter weather has been the cause of some concern in relation to possible flooding issues and officers in emergency planning and land drainage sections have been monitoring the regular reports from the Meteorological Office and the Environment Agency to ensure that the Council was alerted as quickly as possible to potential problems in the District.

Between 11 January and 21 January, three flood watches (the lowest level of warning) were received in respect of the River Roding and the River Lee and its tributaries including Nazeing Brook. During this period the Council received six requests for sandbags. Of these requests for sandbags, two were considered to be valid immediate flooding concerns, requiring an emergency response.

The first was to Theydon Bois Primary School on 11 January, when one of their relocatable classrooms was at risk from surface water flooding following a period of heavy rain. The works Unit delivered approximately 20 sandbags from the Council's emergency planning stock within an hour of the request being received.

The second request was from a property in Matching Green that had flooded internally from an ordinary watercourse on 11 January. The duty Land Drainage Officer was initially alerted via the 24hour security control officers at 6 pm. After confirming the nature of the incident with the resident the Council's land drainage contractor was mobilised immediately to deliver 10 sandbags to mitigate against continued flooding.

All other requests for sandbags during the period were not deemed to require an emergency response. In these cases the enquirer was given the contact details of sandbag suppliers so they could prepare for the defence of their property against potential flooding.

Emergency Transport

I am pleased to announce that an agreement has been concluded with Voluntary Action Epping Forest for the Council to be able to utilise the community transport fleet of mini-buses at times of urgent need as part of its response to an incident that requires emergency transport.

The ability to call upon the fleet, on a 24 hour basis 365 days a year, will be a valuable addition to the resources available to the Council and is an important

demonstration of how partnership working with the voluntary sector can benefit the residents of the District

Limes Farm

The situation remains calm and the community is working with the Community Association and the Limes Farm Neighbourhood Action Panel (NAP). A Youth NAP has been started on the estate and this is a first for the Division. The Youth NAP has identified the opening of the Community Police Office on Friday and Saturday nights as the main priority. Funding is being sought from the District's CRDP to fund a third officer on a Friday night for nine weeks.

Buckhurst Hill Underpass

Following two serious crimes involving personal attacks and theft at the underpass, steps have been taken to ensure that all lighting is in service. Discussions have been opened with London Underground with regard to:

- (a) basic maintenance;
- (b) additional security measures; and
- (c) structural integrity.

CDRP Strategic Assessment

The Council is required to act as Lead Authority in the development of the annual assessment. This document considers a wide range of community safety issues and sets out an action plan for the CDRP for the next 12 months. The public perception questionnaire has been produced and has been circulated to all CDRP partners and to district, town & parish members for comment. The closing date for the return of the questionnaire was 15 February 2008. The Assessment document has to be published by April 2008.

Dispersal Orders

An application has been received from Essex Police for the renewal of the dispersal orders in Debden and Loughton.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener

A report was submitted to the February cabinet meeting setting out the initiative. This report needs to be read alongside the Cabinet reports on Directorate restructures. The Cabinet report also suggests that Overview and Scrutiny should monitor this initiative.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 19 February 2008

Subject: Housing

Portfolio Holder: Councillor D Stallan

Item: 6(g)

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing Portfolio Holder be noted

Wickfields, Chigwell

An event to commemorate the re-opening of Wickfields Sheltered Housing Scheme, Limes Farm, Chigwell was held on 31 January 2008, to which all Members of Council and residents were invited.

The Council transferred Wickfields to Home Housing in 2006, through a small-scale stock transfer. The reason for the transfer was to enable a major improvement / conversion scheme to take place, primarily to convert all the difficult-to-let bedsits into self contained one-bedroom flats.

The scheme was officially re-opened by the Chairman of Council, who unveiled a bird table and bird bath, as a gift to the residents. The Leader of Council gave a short speech on behalf of the Council and guests were able to visit some of the converted flats.

Annual Housing Awards

Judging for the second Annual Housing Awards has taken place. There are now three awards:

- Neighbour of the Year Award
- Services to Housing Award
- Gardener of the Year (New this year)

The Judging Panel comprised Cllr John Wyatt (Asst Housing Portfolio Holder), Molly Carter (Chair, Tenants and Leaseholders Federation) and Alan Hall (Director of Housing). Nominations were received for all three categories, with a particularly high number of nominations for the new award of "Gardener of the Year". The Judging Panel had the benefit of seeing both photographs and videos of the nominated gardens, taken in the Summer when they were all in full bloom.

The winners will be announced at the Civic Awards Ceremony in March, to which the winners have been invited.

"Home Truths" – Report on the Cost of Housing in the East of England (NHF)

Each year, the National Housing Federation (NHF – effectively, the national "trade body" for housing associations) produces a report on housing costs in the East of England (which comprises 48 local authority districts) and gives comparative data for each of the Districts in the Region. This year's report has just been published.

The report provides the following information, relating to 2006, in respect of the Epping Forest District:

- Epping Forest had the highest average property price in Essex and the 4th highest in the East of England
- The ratio of average incomes to property prices was 12.9 (meaning that the average property price is 12.9 times the average annual income)
- Epping Forest had the highest ratio of incomes to property prices in Essex, and the (equal) 2nd highest ratio in the East of England
- Epping Forest DC had the 2nd highest number of households on its Housing Register in Essex and the 10th highest in the East of England

Small Council Development Sites

It is pleasing to report that five of seven small development sites in the ownership of the Council were transferred to Estuary Housing Association at the beginning of January 2008. Construction is due to commence on the first site in early March 2008. The five sites will provide 20 affordable homes, with a mix of social rented and shared ownership (S/O) properties. The locations, tenure and mix are as follows:

(a) Homefield, Waltham Abbey	3 houses (rented)
(b) Hillyfields, Loughton	3 bungalows (rented)
(c) Oakfields, Loughton	3 flats (rented)
	3 flats (S/O)
(d) Hornbeam Rd, Buckhurst Hill	4 flats (S/O)
(e) Oakley Court, Loughton	4 flats (S/O)

In addition, a site to the northern end of the shops at Pyrles Lane, Loughton is due to be transferred in the near future, to provide a further 9 flats. The transfer has been delayed due to the need for two leaseholders to obtain the consent of their mortgagees to a deed of variation to their leases, enabling the development to proceed.

The 29 affordable homes are being subsidised through the provision of free land and a £1m social housing grant from the Council.

A revised planning application for a development of a further 18 properties - to the rear of 2-56 (even) Acres Avenue, Shelley, Ongar - was submitted by Estuary in December 2007, which will be determined shortly. Estuary has submitted a bid to the Housing Corporation for funding, to enable all of the homes to be provided as affordable housing. If this bid is not successful, either some of the homes will need to be sold on the open market or the Council will need to provide the required grant funding.

A further package of small Council-owned potential development sites is being discussed with Home Housing, one of the Council's Preferred RSL Partners. A report on this package will be considered by the Housing Portfolio Holder in the near future, once discussions with planning officers have been completed.

Review of Works Unit and the Future Delivery of the Housing Repairs Service

As part of the Report on the Top Management Restructuring, it was agreed that a review of the Council's Works Unit and the future delivery of the housing repairs service should be undertaken. The review is being led by the Assistant Head of Housing Services (Property & Resources), assisted by the Chief Works Officer and others.

Good progress is being made with the Review and a report on its outcome will be considered by the Cabinet in the near future.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 19 February 2008

Subject: Leisure and Young People

Portfolio Holder: Councillor M Cohen

Item: 6(h)

Recommending:

That the report of the Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder be noted

District Play Award

We are delighted that the Big Lottery Fund has approved Epping Forest District's Children's Play bid of £243,871.

Earlier this year the Epping Forest Play Partnership, lead by the District Council Leisure Services, undertook extensive consultation with local residents, along with an audit of the District's play facilities, in order to develop a Play Strategy and Big Lottery submission. Three key geographic localities were identified as priorities for improved play provision and these include: Limes Farm Estate in Chigwell and the village locations of Nazeing and Lambourne. The success of our bid means that we will be able to enhance play facilities for children in these areas whilst also providing a range of exciting and innovative pieces of equipment for teenagers in their own "youth space" environment.

Fit as a Fiddle

Leisure Services Sports Development Section has also successfully secured £150k from Big Lottery Well Being Fund. This will see the first cross - district health improvement initiative, working with staff from Harlow and Uttlesford Council's, to deliver physical activity programmes to people in their mid fifties and above. The programme aims to address physical health needs, in view of the ageing population agenda.

Leisure staff will be responsible for training staff from the other authorities and supporting them in the development of physical activity programmes. They will also train local deliverers to expand provision in the Epping Forest District.

Touring Exhibition Programmes

Through the success of the 'Tales of the Boarder' and Slavery Exhibitions, the Museum has successfully secured a further £30k from Renaissance in the Regions in 2008/09, to design and develop exhibitions that will tour Essex and the East Region.

The last of this year's tour is currently on show at the Museum until March 4th and focuses on 'Scouting', with a range of exhibits that have never been seen outside of

Gilwell Park. These include Baden Powell's Hussars dress uniform and his vast array of scouting memorabilia.

Epping Forest Youth Council

A very successful Youth Council launch event took place on 29th January, where Members and Officers had the opportunity to meet the 20 Youth Councillors, who represent young people from across the district.

Two team building and induction days are being held at half term, which will include outdoor activities and bowling; work with a Theatre Company around behaviour and interpersonal relationships, and presentations from Leisure and Democratic Services staff on the functions and protocol of the Council.

It is hoped that all members will be supportive of the Youth Councillors in their role.

World Scout Jamboree – North Weald Airfield

As previously reported to Council, in the summer of 2007, North Weald Airfield performed an important logistical role in support of the main Jamboree site at Hylands Park, Chelmsford.

Unfortunately, due to the considerable level of use by the several hundred heavy vehicle and bus movements per day, a stretch of internal roadway was damaged. The Council incurred emergency expenditure to reinstate the roadway. I am now able to confirm that the full cost of some £50,000 has been received from the Scout Association to reimburse the Council.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 19 February 2008

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mrs M Sartin

Item: 10(a)

1. BYELAWS FOR ACUPUNCTURE, TATTOOING, SEMI-PERMANENT SKIN COLOURING, COSMETIC PIERCING AND ELECTROLYSIS

Recommending:

(1) That the Acupuncture, Tattooing, Semi-Permanent Skin Colouring, Cosmetic Piercing and Electrolysis byelaws attached as an Appendix to this report be adopted; and

(2) That the Council's common seal be affixed to the byelaws and that following advertisement, the byelaws be submitted to the Secretary of State for Health for approval.

- ...
- 1.1 In accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, Sections 14 and 15, the Council previously adopted the provisions requiring those carrying on the business of tattooing, acupuncture, ear piercing or electrolysis to be registered.
 - 1.2 At that time those carrying on the practice of cosmetic (body) piercing, other than of the ears, or semi-permanent skin colouring, such as micro-pigmentation, semi-permanent make up or temporary tattooing, could not be included within the provisions and have therefore been outside of the Council's regulatory control.
 - 1.3 These treatments have become more popular but pose the same, or in some cases, greater risks than those already subject to regulation. Following extensive lobbying by environmental health professionals, the Government introduced provisions in the Local Government Act 2003, amending the provisions contained within the 1982 Act, to include the activities of cosmetic piercing and semi-permanent skin colouring.
 - 1.4 The new provisions are adoptive and require businesses to:
 - (a) register the operators and their premises; and
 - (b) observe byelaws relating to the cleanliness and hygiene of premises, practitioners and equipment.
 - 1.5 The measures are intended to increase health protection and reduce the risk of transmission of blood-borne virus infections such as Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and other infections.
 - 1.6 We consider it essential that the protection offered to those receiving a tattoo, acupuncture or electrolysis treatment be extended to those undergoing a cosmetic piercing or semi-permanent skin colouring. The requirement to register the business and the subsequent application of the byelaws will offer greater protection to those undergoing these treatments by ensuring that businesses operate hygienically and in

a manner which will minimise the risk of infection to their customers.

- 1.7 The Council may levy a fee for registration and it is proposed that the current fee for special treatments operations (premises registration £98, personal registration £50) be applied.
- 1.8 The adoption of byelaws is a function reserved to the full Council. Following adoption it is necessary for the byelaws to be advertised in the local press for two consecutive weeks. Following a period of one month from the start of the period of advertisement it is then necessary to submit the byelaws to the Secretary of State for Health for approval.
- 1.9 We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

MODEL BYELAWS

Acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis

Byelaws for the purposes of securing the cleanliness of premises registered under sections 14(2) or 15(2) or both of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 and fittings in such premises and of persons registered under sections 14(1) or 15(1) or both of the Act and persons assisting them and of securing the cleansing and, so far as appropriate, sterilization of instruments, materials and equipment used in connection with the practice of acupuncture or the business of tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing or electrolysis, or any two or more of such practice and businesses made by Epping Forest District Council in pursuance of sections 14(7) or 15(7) or both of the Act.

Interpretation

1.—(1) In these byelaws, unless the context otherwise requires—

“The Act” means the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982;

“client” means any person undergoing treatment;

“hygienic piercing instrument” means an instrument such that any part of the instrument that touches a client is made for use in respect of a single client, is sterile, disposable and is fitted with piercing jewellery supplied in packaging that indicates the part of the body for which it is intended, and that is designed to pierce either—

(a) the lobe or upper flat cartilage of the ear, or

(b) either side of the nose in the mid-crease area above the nostril;

“operator” means any person giving treatment, including a proprietor;

“premises” means any premises registered under sections 14(2) or 15(2) of the Act;

“proprietor” means any person registered under sections 14(1) or 15(1) of the Act;

“treatment” means any operation in effecting acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing or electrolysis;

“the treatment area” means any part of premises where treatment is given to clients.

(2) The Interpretation Act 1978 shall apply for the interpretation of these byelaws as it applies for the interpretation of an Act of Parliament.

2.—(1) For the purpose of securing the cleanliness of premises and fittings in such premises a proprietor shall ensure that—

(a) any internal wall, door, window, partition, floor, floor covering or ceiling is kept clean and in such good repair as to enable it to be cleaned effectively;

(b) any waste material, or other litter arising from treatment is handled and disposed of in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance as advised by the local authority;

(c) any needle used in treatment is single-use and disposable, as far as is practicable, or otherwise is sterilized for each treatment, is suitably stored after

treatment and is disposed of in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance as advised by the local authority;

- (d) any furniture or fitting in premises is kept clean and in such good repair as to enable it to be cleaned effectively;
- (e) any table, couch or seat used by a client in the treatment area which may become contaminated with blood or other body fluids, and any surface on which a needle, instrument or equipment is placed immediately prior to treatment has a smooth impervious surface which is disinfected—
 - (i) immediately after use; and
 - (ii) at the end of each working day.
- (f) any table, couch, or other item of furniture used in treatment is covered by a disposable paper sheet which is changed for each client;
- (g) no eating, drinking, or smoking is permitted in the treatment area and a notice or notices reading “No Smoking”, and “No Eating or Drinking” is prominently displayed there.

(2)(a) Subject to sub-paragraph (b), where premises are registered under section 14(2) (acupuncture) or 15(2) (tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis) of the 1982 Act, a proprietor shall ensure that treatment is given in a treatment area used solely for giving treatment;

(b) Sub-paragraph (a) shall not apply if the only treatment to be given in such premises is ear-piercing or nose-piercing using a hygienic piercing instrument.

(3)(a) Subject to sub-paragraph (b), where premises are registered under section 15(2) (tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring and cosmetic piercing) of the 1982 Act, a proprietor shall ensure that the floor of the treatment area is provided with a smooth impervious surface;

(b) Sub-paragraph (a) shall not apply if the only treatment to be given in such premises is ear-piercing or nose-piercing using a hygienic piercing instrument.

3.—(1) For the purpose of securing the cleansing and so far as is appropriate, the sterilization of needles, instruments, jewellery, materials and equipment used in connection with treatment—

- (a) an operator shall ensure that—
 - (i) any gown, wrap or other protective clothing, paper or other covering, towel, cloth or other such article used in treatment—
 - (aa) is clean and in good repair and, so far as is appropriate, is sterile;
 - (bb) has not previously been used in connection with another client unless it consists of a material which can be and has been adequately cleansed and, so far as is appropriate, sterilized.
 - (ii) any needle, metal instrument, or other instrument or equipment used in treatment or for handling such needle, instrument or equipment and any part of a hygienic piercing instrument that touches a client is sterile;
 - (iii) any jewellery used for cosmetic piercing by means of a hygienic piercing instrument is sterile;
 - (iv) any dye used for tattooing or semi-permanent skin-colouring is sterile and inert;
 - (v) any container used to hold dye for tattooing or semi-permanent skin-colouring is either disposed of at the end of each treatment or is cleaned and sterilized before re-use.
- (b) a proprietor shall provide—
 - (i) adequate facilities and equipment for—

- (aa) cleansing; and
- (bb) sterilization, unless only pre-sterilized items are used.
- (ii) sufficient and safe gas points and electrical socket outlets;
- (iii) an adequate and constant supply of clean hot and cold water on the premises;
- (iv) clean and suitable storage which enables contamination of the articles, needles, instruments and equipment mentioned in paragraphs 3(1)(a)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v) to be avoided as far as possible.

4.—(1) For the purpose of securing the cleanliness of operators, a proprietor—

- (a) shall ensure that an operator—
 - (i) keeps his hands and nails clean and his nails short;
 - (ii) keeps any open lesion on an exposed part of the body effectively covered by an impermeable dressing;
 - (iii) wears disposable examination gloves that have not previously been used with another client, unless giving acupuncture otherwise than in the circumstances described in paragraph 4(3);
 - (iv) wears a gown, wrap or protective clothing that is clean and washable, or alternatively a disposable covering that has not previously been used in connection with another client;
 - (v) does not smoke or consume food or drink in the treatment area; and
- (b) shall provide—
 - (i) suitable and sufficient washing facilities appropriately located for the sole use of operators, including an adequate and constant supply of clean hot and cold water, soap or detergent; and
 - (ii) suitable and sufficient sanitary accommodation for operators.

(2) Where an operator carries out treatment using only a hygienic piercing instrument and a proprietor provides either a hand hygienic gel or liquid cleaner, the washing facilities the proprietor provides need not be for the sole use of the operator.

(3) Where an operator gives acupuncture a proprietor shall ensure that the operator wears disposable examination gloves that have not previously been used with another client if—

- (a) the client is bleeding or has an open lesion on an exposed part of his body; or
- (b) the client is known to be infected with a blood-borne virus; or
- (c) the operator has an open lesion on his hand; or
- (d) the operator is handling items that may be contaminated with blood or other body fluids.

5. A person registered in accordance with sections 14 (acupuncture) or 15 (tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis) of the Act who visits people at their request to give them treatment should observe the requirements relating to an operator in paragraphs 3(1)(a) and 4(1)(a).

6. The byelaws relating to Tattooing, Acupuncture, Ear Piercing and Electrolysis, that were made by Epping Forest District Council on the 16th April 1987 and were confirmed by the Secretary of State for Social Services on 1st July 1987 are revoked.

COUNCIL'S SIGNATURE

COUNCIL'S SEAL

The foregoing byelaws are hereby confirmed by the Secretary of State for Health
on _____ and shall come into operation on _____

[Printed name]

Member of the Senior Civil Service

Department of Health

NOTE – THE FOLLOWING DOES NOT FORM PART OF THE BYELAWS

Proprietors shall take all reasonable steps to ensure compliance with these byelaws by persons working on premises. Section 16(9) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 provides that a registered person shall cause to be prominently displayed on the premises a copy of these byelaws and a copy of any certificate of registration issued to him under Part VIII of the Act. A person who contravenes section 16(9) shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 2 on the standard scale (see section 16(10)).

Section 16 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 also provides that any person who contravenes these byelaws shall be guilty of an offence and liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 on the standard scale. If a person registered under Part VIII of the Act is found guilty of contravening these byelaws the Court may, instead of or in addition to imposing a fine, order the suspension or cancellation of the person's registration. A court which orders the suspension of or cancellation of a person's registration may also order the suspension or cancellation of the registration of the premises in which the offence was committed if such premises are occupied by the person found guilty of the offence. It shall be a defence for the person charged under the relevant sub-sections of section 16 to prove that he took all reasonable precautions and exercised all due diligence to avoid commission of the offence.

Nothing in these byelaws extends to the practice of acupuncture, or the business of tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing or electrolysis by or under the supervision of a person who is registered as a medical practitioner, or to premises in which the practice of acupuncture, or business of tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing or electrolysis is carried out by or under the supervision of such a person.

Nothing in these byelaws extends to the practice of acupuncture by or under the supervision of a person who is registered as a dentist, or to premises in which the practice of acupuncture is carried out by or under the supervision of such a person.

The legislative provisions relevant to acupuncture are those in section 14. The provisions relevant to treatment other than acupuncture are in section 15.

The key differences in the application of requirements in respect of the various treatments are as follows:

*The references in the introductory text to provisions of section 14 (acupuncture) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 **only apply to acupuncture.***

*The references in the introductory text to provisions of section 15 (tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 **do not apply to acupuncture.***

*The references in paragraph 1(1) in the definition of "premises" to provisions of section 14 (acupuncture) **only apply to acupuncture.***

*The references in paragraph 1(1) in the definition of "premises" to provisions of section 15 (tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis) **do not apply to acupuncture.***

*The requirement in paragraph 2(2) that treatment is given in a treatment area used solely for giving treatment **applies to acupuncture, tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring, cosmetic piercing and electrolysis but not to ear-piercing or nose-piercing using a hygienic piercing instrument.***

*The requirement in paragraph 2(3) that the floor of the treatment area be provided with a smooth impervious surface **applies to tattooing, semi-permanent skin-colouring and cosmetic piercing but not to acupuncture or electrolysis or ear-piercing or nose-piercing using a hygienic piercing instrument.***

*The requirements relating to dye or a container used to hold dye used for treatment in paragraphs 3(1) (a) (iv) and (v) **apply to tattooing and semi-permanent skin-colouring.***

*The requirement in paragraph 4(1)(a)(iii) that an operator wears disposable examination gloves that have not previously been used with another client **does not apply to acupuncture otherwise than in the circumstances described in paragraph 4(3).***

*The provisions of paragraph 4(2) in relation to washing facilities **apply to cosmetic piercing using only a hygienic piercing instrument.***

*The exception whereby the byelaws do not apply to treatment carried out by or under the supervision of a **dentist applies only to acupuncture (see section 14(8) of the Act).***

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 19 February 2008

Portfolio Holder: Councillor C Whitbread

Item: 10 (b)

1. BUDGETS AND COUNCIL TAX DECLARATION 2008/09

Recommending:

Budget

- (1) That the list of CSB growth for the 2008/09 budget (set out in Annex 1) be approved;
- (2) That the list of District Development Fund items for the 2008/09 budget (set out in Annex 2) be approved;
- (3) That the revenue estimates for 2008/09 and the draft Capital Programme for 2008/09 be approved as set out in Annexes 3, 4 (a-j) and 5 including all contributions to and from reserves as set out in the attached Annexes;
- (4) That the medium term financial forecast be approved as set out in Annexes 8a and 8b;
- (5) That the 2008/09 HRA budget be approved and that the application of rent increases and decreases in accordance with the Government's rent reforms and the Council's approved rent strategy, resulting in an average increase of 6.7% from £68.09 to £72.67, be approved.

Declaration of Council Tax

(6) That it be noted that on 12 November 2007, the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee calculated the following amounts for the year 2008/09 in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) and 34(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

(a) 54,017.3 being the amount calculated by the Council in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 as the Council Tax Base for the year;

(b) Part of the Council's Area	Tax Base
Essex County Council (General Expenses)	54,017.3
Essex Police Authority	54,017.3
Essex Fire Authority	54,017.3
Epping Forest District Council (General Expenses)	54,017.3
Abbess, Beauchamp & Berners Roding	202.7
Buckhurst Hill	5,230.1
Chigwell	5,942.0
Epping Town	5,026.9

Epping Upland	404.5
Fyfield	412.2
High Ongar	557.8
Lambourne	942.1
Loughton Town	12,812.1
Matching	318.9
Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers	660.1
Nazeing	2,099.7
North Weald Bassett	2,552.2
Ongar	2,757.3
Roydon	1,307.5
Sheering	1,370.1
Stanford Rivers	358.3
Stapleford Abbotts	494.5
Stapleford Tawney	56.5
Theydon Bois	1,978.3
Theydon Garnon	66.3
Theydon Mount	109.4
Waltham Abbey Town	8,112.2
Willingale	245.6

being the amounts calculated by the Council in accordance with Regulation 6 of the Regulations as the amounts of the Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which one or more special items relate;

(7) That the following amounts be now calculated for the year 2008/09 in accordance with sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- (a) £104,621,024 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) - (e) of the Act;
- (b) £84,744,169 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3) (a) - (c) of the Act;
- (c) £19,876,855 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act as its budget requirement for the year;
- (d) £9,321,680 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non Domestic Rates and Revenue Support Grant and increased by the amount the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund to the General Fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 and the amount which the Council estimates will be transferred from the Collection Fund to the General Fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) (England) Directions 1994 made under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988;
- (e) £195.40 being the amount at (c) above, less the amount at (d) above, all divided by the amount at (6)(a) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
- (f) £2,830,204 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act;
- (g) £143.01 being the amount at (e) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at (f) above by the amount of (6)(a) above, calculated by the

Council in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates;

(h) Part of the Council's Area	Amount £
Abbess, Beauchamp & Berners Roding	167.68
Buckhurst Hill	208.97
Chigwell	177.36
Epping Town	214.62
Epping Upland	170.60
Fyfield	168.24
High Ongar	164.99
Lambourne	173.79
Loughton Town	190.86
Matching	168.72
Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers	159.67
Nazeing	181.08
North Weald Bassett	188.99
Ongar	200.00
Roydon	163.99
Sheering	162.24
Stanford Rivers	171.48
Stapleford Abbotts	154.70
Stapleford Tawney	166.02
Theydon Bois	174.32
Theydon Garnon	157.53
Theydon Mount	156.79
Waltham Abbey Town	232.66
Willingale	158.89

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (7)(g) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at (6)(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate;

(i) the amounts shown in Annex 6 to this report, being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (7)(h) above by the number which is the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band, divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

(8) That it be noted that for the year 2008/09 the major precepting authorities have stated that the amounts shown in Annex 7 Part A (tabled) are the precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings shown;

(9) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (7)(i) and (8) above, the Council in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the amounts in Annex 7 Part B (tabled) as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2008/09 for each of the categories of dwellings shown;

(10) That the Council's policy of retaining revenue balances at no lower than £3.7M or 25% of the net budget requirement whichever is the higher for the four year period to 2010/11 be amended to no lower than £4.0M or 25% of the net budget requirement whichever is the higher during the four year period up to and including 2011/12;

(11) That the recommendations included in the report on the Prudential Indicators and the Treasury Management Strategy for 2008/09 (set out in Annex 9) be approved; and

(12) That the report of the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the estimates for the purposes of the Council's 2008/09 budgets and the adequacy of the reserves (see Annex 10) be noted.

General Fund Budget Guidelines

1. The annual budget process commenced with the Financial Issues Paper being presented to the 24 September 2007 meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. The paper was prepared against a background of considerable uncertainty with major issues such as the corporate restructuring, funding for concessionary fares, the outcome of the latest pension fund valuation and the Council's grant settlement for the next three years still to be determined. There is now greater clarity on most of these issues and they will be revisited in subsequent paragraphs.
2. In setting the budget for the current year Members had anticipated using £321,000 of general fund reserves. This was not viewed as a matter of concern as recent years have seen substantial increases in the general fund balance (2003/04 £323k, 2004/05 £1.026m and 2005/06 £968k) such that at the time of setting the budget it was £6.456 million. This level of reserves represented 39% of the Net Budget Requirement for 2007/08 and was comfortably in excess of the Council's adopted guideline of 25%.
3. The revised four year forecast presented with the Financial Issues Paper took into account all the additional costs known at that point but did not anticipate the savings from the corporate restructuring or any increase in investment income. This projection showed a need to achieve savings of £100,000 on the revised estimates and £200,000 per annum in future years to keep revenue balances above the target level at the end of 2010/11.
4. Members adopted this measured approach to reduce expenditure in a progressive and controlled manner. It was felt that a reduction was needed in the revised budget figures for 2007/08 as the first step in this process, followed by further savings in 2008/09.
5. The budget guidelines for 2008/09 were therefore established as:
 - i. The ceiling for CSB net expenditure be no more than £17.3m including net growth/savings.
 - ii. The ceiling for DDF net expenditure be no more than £186,000.
 - iii. The District Council Tax be increased by no more than the rate of increase in the Retail Prices Index.
6. In view of the progress made in identifying savings and the slippage in the DDF programme, these guidelines were revised by the 10 December meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. The target for the Council Tax increase was unchanged but the other guidelines were amended to:

- i. The ceiling for CSB net expenditure be no more than £16.8m including net growth/savings.
- ii. The ceiling for DDF net expenditure be no more than £1m.

The Current Position

7. A review of the key budget areas is given below.

(a) The ceiling for CSB net expenditure be no more than £16.8m including net growth;

Annex 1 lists all the CSB changes for next year. Some of the growth items listed are for sums agreed as part of previous year's budgets but most are new for next year. The largest item for next year is £331,000 for the end of subsidy on reinstatement grants. Under section 541 of the 1985 Housing Act the Council has been receiving subsidy for reinstatement grants made between 1987 and 1991. The subsidy was for loan charges on those grants and lasts for 20 years from the inception of each grant. This subsidy is largely coming to an end next year and so the loss of income must be reflected as CSB growth.

The other significant item of CSB growth is £250,000 for the safer, cleaner and greener initiative. This initiative was considered and approved by Cabinet on 4 February.

Growth of £92,000 has been necessary for additional ongoing pension fund contributions. The 19 November 2007 meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee considered the different options for phasing in the additional contributions and decided on the option to increase ongoing contributions by 1% per annum in each of the next three years instead of implementing the full 3% increase in 2008/09. This does cause an increase in deficit contributions but total contributions over the next three years are lower with the phased growth option.

CSB savings come mostly from cost reductions and procurement efficiencies. The largest single saving is from the new waste management contract, where the tendering exercise proved far more competitive than had been anticipated and a saving of £604,000 resulted. Corporate restructuring has provided significant savings at both the top management level, £206,000, and below the assistant director level, £300,000.

The CSB total is £28,000 above the revised CSB target of £16.8m. However, Cabinet decided on 4 February that this was not significantly above the target and that a CSB total at £16.828m was acceptable.

(b) The ceiling for DDF net expenditure be no more than £1m;

The DDF net movement for 2008/09 is £1.078m, Annex 2 lists all the DDF items in detail. The largest cost item is £288,000 for work on the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is a substantial and unavoidable project and over the next four years DDF funding of £1.273m is currently allocated to it. The Director of Planning and Economic Development has been asked to provide regular updates to Cabinet to monitor this project and the expenditure incurred on it.

Other significant items of expenditure include £130,000 for the non-HRA building maintenance programme and £100,000 to complete the comfort cooling programme. Expenditure of £235,000 is included for the new national concessionary fares scheme but this is matched by a specific government grant.

At £1.078m the DDF programme exceeds the target by £78,000. However, similarly to the position with CSB, this excess was not felt by Cabinet to be significant. All of the DDF items currently programmed to the end of 2011/12 can be funded from within existing DDF resources. Recent experience has shown that there is usually substantial slippage on the DDF and so even if £1.078m were programmed, the outturn would be unlikely to exceed £1m.

(c) The District Council Tax be increased by no more than the RPI% increase;

For some time members have had a policy of restricting increases in Council Tax to less than the increase in the RPI. At the meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee on 10 December 2007, Members decided that in view of the latest RPI figure being 4.2% the Council Tax increase should be 2.5%. Since then RPI has reduced to 4.0%, but it is not proposed to alter the 2.5% increase previously agreed.

(d) That longer term guidelines covering the period to March 2012 provide for:

(i) The level of General Fund revenue balances to be maintained within a range of approximately £4.0m to £4.5m but at no lower level than 25% of net budget requirement whichever is the higher;

Current projections show this rule will not be breached by 2011/12, by which time reserves will have reduced to £6.1m and 25% of net budget requirement will be £4.4m.

(ii) Future levels of CSB net expenditure being financed predominately from External Funding from Government and Council Tax and that support from revenue balances be gradually phased out.

The outturn for 2006/07 added £305,000 to reserves, and the revised estimates for 2007/08 anticipate a further increase of £114,000. This would leave the opening revenue reserve for 2008/09 at £6.875m and the estimates for 2008/09 show an additional increase of £218,000, which would take reserves above £7m. The Medium Term Financial Strategy at Annex 8 shows deficit budgets for the three years 2009/10 to 2011/12. The level of deficit peaks at £387,000 in 2010/11 and reduces to £371,000 in 2011/12, although this is achieved through CSB savings of £200,000 in each of those three years.

The Local Government Finance Settlement

8. After one two-year settlement under the new four block system, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) announced a consultation to “update and fine tune” the model to produce a three-year settlement. Unfortunately the fine-tuning has resulted in some substantial movements in the Council’s relative position. The table below sets out the Council’s amounts in each of the four blocks for the five years of data now available. The Relative Needs Amount (what the Government believes the Council needs to spend) has fallen nearly £300,000 for 2008/09 whilst the Relative Resource Amount (a negative amount to reflect the ability to raise income from Council Tax) has increased by over £500,000. This worsening of £800,000 is offset by an increase in the Central Allocation of £460,000 and a change in the net Floor Damping position of £490,000.

	2006/07 £m	2007/08 £m	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m
Relative Needs Amount	5.728	5.742	5.455	5.457	5.464
Relative Resource Amount	-4.465	-4.724	-5.228	-5.096	-4.956
Central Allocation	7.854	8.332	8.793	8.834	8.871
Floor Damping	-0.490	-0.189	0.302	0.173	0.036
Formula Grant	8.627	9.161	9.322	9.368	9.415

9. The draft figures shown above represent a poor settlement for the Council and give grant increases of only 1% (against the adjusted 07/08 figure) for 2008/09 and only 0.5% for 2009/10 and 2010/11. This seems odd given the sizeable grant increase seen under this system for 2006/07 and 2007/08.

	2006/07 £m	2007/08 £m	2008/09 £m	2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m
Formula Grant (adjusted)	8.627	9.161 (9.229)	9.322	9.368	9.415
Increase £	0.711	0.534	0.093	0.046	0.047
Increase %	9.0%	6.2%	1.0%	0.5%	0.5%

10. The introduction of the four block system saw the Council change from receiving floor support of £412,000 to losing £490,000 to support the floor for others. It had been hoped that the move away from the floor would last longer than two years. However, the benefit of the previous large increase has not been lost, as this has provided the base that the floor increase of 1% has been added to.

The 2008/09 General Fund Budget

11. Whilst the position on many issues is clearer now than it was when the Financial Issues Paper was written there are still significant risks and uncertainties for 2008/09. The effects of the new national concessionary fares scheme will not become clear until at least half way through 2008/09. A prudent view has been taken on the costs of the scheme as the level of costs predicted by MCL (the consultants to the current countywide scheme) has been matched to the CSB budget. The additional funding provided by specific grant has been treated as a DDF item and provides some comfort against the costs exceeding the MCL estimate.
12. The recent substantial increases in utility prices and the potential for higher than budgeted wage settlements are also areas of concern. In view of these concerns and the general fear of a worsening economic position a contingency of £175,000 has been included in the estimates which will be available to members to allocate as and when necessary to cover unforeseen expenditure.
13. Another major area of uncertainty pending clarification was whether the DCLG would provide a capitalisation direction to cover the pension deficit payments for 2007/08, and subsequent years. A full capitalisation direction was obtained for 2005/06 but a direction covering only 57% of the costs was given for 2006/07. It is necessary to apply for each year separately, and now as well as considering whether individual applications meet the criteria (Gate 1) the national economic impact of all applications (Gate 2) is also considered. A notice of full Gate 2 Approval was issued on 31 January 2008, this was in line with the assumptions used in compiling the budget.
14. The starting point for the budget is the attached Medium Term Financial Strategy, Annex 8. Annexes 8a and 8b are based on the current draft budget, a Council Tax increase of 2.5% (£143.01 Band D) for 2008/09 and subsequent increases of 2.5% per annum for each of the following three years in accordance with the strategy of keeping Council Tax increases in line with the RPI.

15. Members are reminded that this strategy is based on a number of important assumptions, including the following:
- Future Government funding beyond the current CSR (for which the grant increases are known) will increase at a rate of 1% per annum.
 - CSB growth has been restricted but slightly exceeds the CSB target for 2008/09 of £16.8 million. Known growth beyond 2008/09 has been included but will be subject to a further review to help identify savings.
 - All known DDF items are budgeted for, and because of the size of the LDF programme the closing balance at the end of 2011/12 is anticipated to be only £69,000.
 - Maintaining revenue balances of at least 25% of NBR. The forecast shows that the deficit budgets in the final three years of the period will reduce the closing balances at the end of 2011/12 to £6.1m or 34% of NBR for 2011/12, although this can only be done with further savings of £200,000 per annum from 2009/10 to 2011/12.

The Capital Programme

16. The Capital Programme at Annex 5 shows the expenditure previously agreed by Cabinet and approved as part of the Capital Strategy by Council on 18 December 2007. Late additional capital items include £25,000 for works to the main lift at the Civic Offices and £23,000 as part of the Safer, Cleaner, Greener initiative. As stated earlier, Cabinet considered and approved a report on this initiative on 4 February.
17. No significant new items have been included in the capital programme for some time. Members have stated that in future priority will be given to capital schemes that will generate revenue in subsequent periods. This position was stated in the previous Capital Strategy and has been reinforced by the increasing awareness that capital spending reduces investment balances and thus impacts on the general fund revenue balance through lower interest earnings.
18. Annex 8b sets out the estimated position on capital receipts for the next four years. Members will note that even with a substantial capital programme, which exceeds £50m over five years, it is anticipated that the Authority will still have £17.3m of usable capital receipt balances at the end of the period. It is anticipated that further disposals of surplus land will take place during 2008/09. Although in line with normal practice no account will be taken of any disposal proceeds until the deals are completed.

The Housing Revenue Account

19. The balance on the HRA at 31 March 2009 is expected to be £6.2m, after a surplus of £568,000 in 2007/08 and a deficit of £18,000 in 2008/09. A significant factor in the change from surplus to deficit has been the increase in subsidy payable to the Government, which has gone up £2m to £10.8m for 2008/09.
20. The rent increase is set with reference to an individual property's formula rent but subject to various constraints. This process is referred to as Rent Restructuring and was introduced to bring Council rents and Housing Association rents more in line with each other. Rent Restructuring is not mandatory however it is recommended as best practice and forms part of the Council's existing Rents Strategy. The actual average rent increase for 2008/09 is expected to be 6.7%.
21. An update to the current five-year forecast is being prepared and will be presented to a subsequent Cabinet. The HRA has had substantial balances for some time and this position is not expected to change in the short term.

22. The estimated balances for the Housing Repairs Fund and the Major Repairs Reserve at the end of 2008/09 are £3.33m and £3.31m respectively. Members are recommended to agree the budgets for 2008/09 and 2007/08 revised and to note that although a deficit budget is proposed for 2008/09 the HRA has substantial ongoing balances.

Risk Assessment and the Level of Balances

23. The Local Government Act 2003 section 25 introduced a specific personal duty on the "Chief Financial Officer" (CFO) to report to the Authority on the robustness of the estimates for the purposes of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. The Act requires Members to have regard to the report when determining the Council's budget requirement for 2008/09. If this advice is not accepted, the reasons must be formally recorded within the minutes of the Council meeting. The report of the Chief Financial Officer is set out at Annex 10, Members will note the following conclusions:
- a. the estimates as presented are sufficiently robust for the purposes of the Council's overall budget for 2008/09; and
 - b. the reserves of the Council are adequate to cope with the financial risks the Council faces in 2008/09 but that spending needs to be kept under review and savings made in the medium term.

The Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management Strategy 2008/09

24. Since 2004/05 it has been necessary to set affordable borrowing limits, limits for the prudential indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy. These elements of the budget requirements are set out in a separate report at Annex 9.
25. Members approved a Treasury Management Strategy on 19 February 2004, which has been updated and amended on annual basis to give additional flexibility in dealing with increased investment balances, resulting from land sales. Investment balances have increased substantially and, as part of the 2007/08 budget, the limit on funds invested for over 364 days was raised from £15m to £30m and the maximum amount to be invested with higher rated counter parties was increased from £8m to £12m.
26. No further increases to the limits set out in the Treasury Management Strategy are currently proposed. Indeed given the current instability in money markets a more prudent approach is being taken to counter parties and some foreign banks are no longer being dealt with even though they satisfy the credit rating requirements. This may lead to some reduction in interest earnings but the first priority is to safeguard the Council's investment funds.

Council Tax

27. The revenue and capital budgets of the various spending portfolios are set out in Annexes 4(a)-(j). Annex 3 summarises the overall budget for the Council for the General Fund and the HRA and is grossed up for the effects of local parish and town council precepts. Annex 5 summarises the Council's Capital Programme. The budget as submitted produces a District Council Tax (Band D) of £143.01 for 2008/09 (£139.50 for 2007/08), which represents a 2.5% increase. The average (Band D) Council Tax including local Parish/Town Council precepts will be £195.40 (£191.35 in 2007/08), which represents an approximate 2.1% increase.

Council Tax Declaration

28. Under Recommendations (1) – (4) which include Annexes 1, 2, 3, 4(a)-(j) the Council will agree its budget for the next year. The Authority must then proceed to declare a Council Tax. The appropriate technical recommendations are set out in Recommendations (6) onwards. These follow the standard form of declaration recommended by the Local Government Association in consultation with the Secretary of State. They are designed to avoid the possibility of legal challenge to the declaration of the Council Tax.
29. The Council Tax bases for each band in each area of the District were approved by the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. These are reproduced in Recommendation (6)(b) and form part of the ensuing calculations. The amounts to be levied within the District in respect of Essex County Council, Essex Police Authority, Essex Fire Authority and Parish and Town Councils are notified to this Authority and are matters on which the District Council has no discretion.
30. However, the precepts of Parish and Town Councils are levied on the District Council and then taken into account in the General Fund. Details relating to the District Council precept together with the precepts in respect of Parish and Town Councils are set out in the recommendations and analysis in Annex 6.

Guide to the Council Tax Calculation

31. The figures in Recommendation (7) draw on calculations contained within the report as follows:
 - 7(a)** is the total of the revenue expenditure items shown in Annex 3 summary of revenue including the total of the Parish/Town Council precepts;
 - 7(b)** is the total of the revenue income items shown in Annex 3;
 - 7(c)** is the difference between the revenue expenditure and income as shown in Annex 3 (in simple terms it represents the net budget requirement of the District Council plus Parish and Town Council precepts);
 - 7(d)** is the figure in Annex 3 for Exchequer support from the Government to the General Fund together with a transfer of surpluses from the Collection Fund;
 - 7(e)** is obtained by dividing 7(d) by the Council Tax Base; this represents the average Band 'D' Council Tax for the District and Parish/Town Councils only;
 - 7(f)** as shown in Annex 3 is the total of Parish/Town Council precepts; and
 - 7(g)** represents the equivalent of dividing 7(f) by the Council Tax Base, the resulting figure being deducted from the figure shown in 7(e); this provides the average Band 'D' Council Tax for the District Council only.
32. This process culminates in the figures shown in Annex 6, which are the Council Tax amounts for the District Council and the Parish/Town Councils for each valuation band for 2008/09. To these amounts are added Council Tax figures supplied by the major precepting authorities and which are further summarised as the total Council Tax due for each valuation band in Part B of Annex 7.
33. Annex 7 relating to the precepts of various parts of the District will be tabled at the meeting.

Council : 19 February 2008

List of Annexes:

- Annex 1 CSB Growth/Savings List**
- Annex 2 DDF List**
- Annex 3 Revenue Expenditure, Income and Financing Summary**
- Annex 4 Portfolio Budgets (a – j)**
- Annex 5 Capital Budgets and Financing**
- Annex 6 District & Parish Council Tax Rates**
- Annex 7 Major Precepting Authorities Analysis (Late)**
- Annex 8 Medium Term Financial Strategy (a & b)**
- Annex 9 Prudential Indicators Report**
- Annex 10 Chief Finance Officers Report on the Robustness of the Estimates within the 2008/09 Budget**

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CONTINUING SERVICES BUDGET - GROWTH / (SAVINGS) LIST

Portfolio	Service	Original 2007/08 £000's	Revised 2007/08 £000's	Estimate 2008/09 £000's	Estimate 2009/10 £000's	Estimate 2010/11 £000's	Estimate 2011/12 £000's
Leaders Portfolio	Corporate Policy Making		(78)	(128)			
	Corporate Policy Making			10			
	Subscriptions		(6)	(6)			
	Civic and Member	(12)	(12)	25			
	Civic and Member			30			
	Civic Ceremonial	2	2				
	Civic Ceremonial	5	5				
	Elections	3	3				
	Total Leader's Portfolio	(2)	(86)	(69)	0	0	0
Community Wellbeing	Concessionary Fares		(12)				
	Concessionary Fares			(133)			
	Safer Communities		15				
	Safer Communities		(15)				
	Safer Communities			28			
	Safer Communities			47			
	Safer Communities			5			
	Safer Communities			35			
	Total Community Wellbeing	0	(12)	(18)	0	0	0
Finance, Performance Management, and Corporate Support Services	Local Taxation	(2)	13				
	Local Taxation	(21)					
	Finance Miscellaneous	4	4				
	Finance Miscellaneous			92			93
	Finance Miscellaneous			20			20
	Finance Miscellaneous			(300)			
	Finance Miscellaneous			175			
	Housing Benefits/Local Taxation	16	16	16	4		
	Housing Benefits			22			
	Housing Benefits		(85)				
	Office Accommodation	7	7				
	Industrial Estates		2	24			
	Industrial Estates		7				
	Industrial Estates		(17)				
	Industrial Estates						
	Industrial Estates		(6)				
	David Lloyd Centre		(8)				
	All Services	(38)	(38)				
	All Services	(35)	(30)	(5)			
	All Services	(4)	(4)				
	Energy Sites	44	26				
	Total Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services	(29)	(113)	44	136	113	0
Housing	Private Sector Housing	19	16				
	Private Sector Housing	41	11	30			
	Private Sector Housing	5	5				
	Reinstatement Grants	113	113	331	1		
	Total Housing	178	145	361	1	1	0

CONTINUING SERVICES BUDGET - GROWTH / (SAVINGS) LIST

Portfolio	Service	Original 2007/08 £000's	Revised 2007/08 £000's	Estimate 2008/09 £000's	Estimate 2009/10 £000's	Estimate 2010/11 £000's	Estimate 2011/12 £000's
Leisure	Leisure Management	(50)	(14)	(36)			
	Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre	(10)	(10)				
	Leisure Services	10	6				
	Leisure Centre Income Share						
	Revision of Joint Use Agreement						
	Increased Energy Costs						
	Total Leisure	(50)	(18)	(36)	0	0	0
Environmental Protection	Pollution Control	11	11		7		
	Licensing & Registration		(26)				
	Hackney Carriage Licensing		(25)				
	Waste Management			(6)			
	Waste Management			(604)			
	Waste Management			(148)			
	Waste Management			76			
	Neighbourhoods / Rapid Response			59			
	Animal Welfare			8			
	Bobbingworth Tip Maintenance						
	Increased income						
	New Contract						
	Weed Spraying & Tipping Away						
	Safer, Cleaner and Greener						
	Stray Dogs						
	Total Environmental Protection	11	(40)	(615)	7	0	0
Planning & Economic Development	Tourism	5	5				
	Building Control		25				
	Building Control		(25)				
	Building Control	(9)	(70)				
	Building Control	9	70				
	Building Control		(10)				
	Building Control		10				
	Development Control		20	20			
	Development Control		(20)	(20)			
	Forward Planning			(7)			
	End of Sec 106 contribution to W Abbey TIC						
	Additional Consultancy Fees						
	Building Control Ring Fence						
	Additional Income						
	Building Control Ring Fence						
	Training Expenses						
	Building Control Ring Fence						
	Contaminated Land Consultants Fees						
	Income from Pre-application Discussions						
	Strategic Environmental Assessment						
	Total Planning & Economic Development	5	5	(7)	0	0	0
Civil Engineering & Maintenance	Off Street Car Parking	75	88				
	Off Street Car Parking	(45)	(45)				
	Increased Income						
	Additional staffing costs		7	6			
	Additional staffing costs		6	6			
	Additional staffing costs		(6)	(6)			
	Additional staffing costs		9	10			
	Additional costs of new contract		10	10			
	Additional costs of new contract		(10)	(10)			
	Additional costs of new contract		13	(10)			
	Reduced Penalty Notice Income						
	Reduced Maintenance						
	Increased Energy Costs		4	(14)			
	Grounds Maintenance/Car Parking	5					
	Total Civil Engineering & Maintenance	35	76	2	0	0	0
Other Items	Increased Investment Interest		(102)				
	Car Leasing		(18)	(6)			
	Amendments to Scheme						
	Total CSB	138	(163)	(344)	144	113	0

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FUND		Original 2007/08 £000's	BF from 2006/07 2007/08 £000's	Revised 2007/08 £000's	2008/09 Estimate £000's	2009/10 Estimate £000's	2010/11 Estimate £000's	2011/12 Estimate £000's
Portfolio	Service							
Leaders	Corporate Policy Making	10		10				
	Corporate Policy Making		30					
	Corporate Policy Making			163				
	Corporate Policy Making			(33)				
	Elections			4				
	Civic and Member	2		1				
	Civic and Member				4			
	Public Relations	31			31			
	Total Leaders	43	30	145	35	0	0	0
Community Wellbeing								
	Concessionary Fares		21	21				
	Concessionary Fares			53				
	Concessionary Fares			(53)				
	Concessionary Fares				(235)	(241)	(247)	
	Concessionary Fares				235	241	247	
	Safer Communities				2			
	Safer Communities				5			
	Safer Communities				2			
	Total Community Wellbeing	0	21	21	9	0	0	0
Finance and Performance Management and Corporate Support Services								
	Accountancy			3				
	Finance Miscellaneous			20				
	Finance Miscellaneous	20	14	20	14			
	Housing Benefits	40		40				
	Housing Benefits	(167)		(167)				
	Housing Benefits		6	6				
	Housing Benefits		15	8	7			
	Housing Benefits			(108)				
	Housing Benefits			108				
	Housing Benefits			(14)				
	Housing Benefits			14				
	Housing Benefits/Local Taxation	80	26	106	40			
	Industrial Estates		34	39				
	Insurance/Risk Management	9	(3)	3				
	Legal Services	9			11			
	Legal Services	17			17			
	Legal Services	41	1		42			
	Legal Services		3		3			
	Local Land Charges		9					
	Land Charges			57				
	Land Charges			(20)				
	Office Accommodation	66	47	71	77	31	20	
	Office Accommodation		9					
	Office Accommodation		4	13	100			
	Office Accommodation		10	10	100			
	Office Accommodation		4					
	Unappropriated Land			5				
	Unappropriated Land			26				
	Non HRA Building Maintenance			20	130			
	Total Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services	115	181	260	541	31	20	0

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FUND		Original 2007/08 £000's	Bf from 2006/07 £000's	Revised 2007/08 £000's	Estimate 2008/09 £000's	Estimate 2009/10 £000's	Estimate 2010/11 £000's	Estimate 2011/12 £000's
Portfolio	Service							
Housing	Homelessness	9	9	18				
	Private Sector Housing	4	4		8			
	Private Sector Housing	10		5	15			
	Private Sector Housing	3		2	1			
	Homelessness Prevention Officers							
	Housing strategy and empty homes surveys							
	Consultancy Private Sector Assistance Policy							
	Handyperson Scheme							
	Total Housing	26	13	25	24	0	0	0
Leisure	Alternative Management	151		168				
	Loughton Leisure Centre			15				
	Community Development	7	4	4				
	Open Spaces			7				
	North Weald Airfield							
	North Weald Airfield	(50)	5	(73)	5			
	North Weald Airfield			11				
	Museum			10				
	Community Development	20		20				
	Community Development	(20)		(20)				
	Community Development			5				
	Sports Development	30		39				
	Sports Development	(30)		(39)				
	Total Leisure	108	30	147	5	0	0	0
Environmental Protection	Recycling Measures	56		56				
	Maintaining waste service whilst procurement undertaken			717				
	Subscription to procurement hub		186	15	7			
	Government Grant	(56)		(56)				
	Contract termination and new contract set up		228	66				
	Trade Waste Account		(25)					
	Safer, Cleaner and Greener				5			
	Safer, Cleaner and Greener				18			
	Air Quality Management Area				4			
	Bobbingworth Tip					4	1	
	Total Environmental Protection	0	389	798	34	4	1	0

DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FUND		Original 2007/08 £000's	Bf from 2006/07 £000's	Revised 2007/08 £000's	Estimate 2008/09 £000's	Estimate 2009/10 £000's	Estimate 2010/11 £000's	Estimate 2011/12 £000's
Portfolio	Service							
Planning & Economic Development	Building Control		23					
	Building Control		(23)					
	Countrycare			40				
	Countrycare			(40)				
	Development Control		48					
	Development Control			0				
	Development Control			46				
	Development Control			40				
	Economic Development				5			
	Economic Development			4				
	Economic Development				35			
	Enforcement		122		85			
	Forward Planning		18		17			
	Forward Planning			(1)				
	Forward Planning		160	51	40	288	4	153
	Planning Services		15	2	17		217	615
	Planning Services		24	23	20	27		
	Planning Services		10	12	22	14		
	Planning Services			49	49	38	2	
	Planning Services				48	(40)		
	Planning Services		15		48	160		
	Planning Services		(15)		(48)	(160)		
	Planning Services			25	35			
Tourism					30			
Tourism				2				
Town Centre Enhancements				25				
Town Centre Enhancements					12	12		
		349	209	402	427	235	627	153
Total Planning & Economic Development								
Civil Engineering & Maintenance	Land Drainage	199		199	90			
	Land Drainage	50		100				
	Land Drainage	(50)		(100)				
	Highways	36		34				
			235	0	233	90	0	0
Total Civil Engineering & Maintenance								
Total Portfolio District Development Fund		876	873	2,031	1,165	270	648	153
Other Items	Reimbursement of Highways Residual Costs	(117)		(117)				
	Increased Investment Interest			(312)				
	Second Homes Discount Allowance			(73)				(87)
	Backdated Housing Grant			(325)				
	Local Authority Business Growth Incentives Scheme	(200)		(241)				
Total District Development Fund		559	873	963	1,078	270	648	153

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REVENUE EXPENDITURE, INCOME AND FINANCING

2007/08 ORIGINAL ALL REVENUE ITEMS £	2007/08 REVISED ALL REVENUE ITEMS £		GENERAL FUND ACCOUNT £	2008/09 ORIGINAL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT £	ALL REVENUE ITEMS £
Gross Expenditure					
2,963,380	2,890,100	Leaders	4(a) 2,904,080	0	2,904,080
1,741,670	1,777,160	Community Wellbeing	4(b) 1,964,950	0	1,964,950
36,239,500	37,610,380	Finance Performance Mgt & Corporate Support Services	4(c) 38,921,400	0	38,921,400
35,145,460	36,168,110	Housing	4(d) 2,929,000	34,517,000	37,446,000
5,161,480	5,316,790	Leisure & Young People	4(e) 5,244,080	0	5,244,080
2,710,050	2,817,890	Civil Engineering & Maintenance	4(f) 2,716,330	0	2,716,330
3,957,080	4,122,690	Planning & Economic Development	4(g) 4,398,860	0	4,398,860
7,927,930	9,102,450	Environmental Protection	4(h) 7,910,920	0	7,910,920
168,110	230,610	Internal Trading Organisations	4(i) 237,200	0	237,200
96,014,660	100,036,180	Total Expenditure on Services	67,226,820	34,517,000	101,743,820
39,000	61,000	Interest Payable (Inc HRA)	2,050,000	(2,003,000)	47,000
2,787,075	2,787,075	Precepts Paid to Parish Councils	2,830,204	0	2,830,204
98,840,735	102,884,255	Total Gross Expenditure	72,107,024	32,514,000	104,621,024
Gross Income					
34,299,600	34,749,650	Government Subsidies	36,092,500	0	36,092,500
23,467,000	23,390,000	Rents from Dwellings	0	24,430,000	24,430,000
5,293,600	5,205,790	Miscellaneous Rents, Trading Operations etc.	2,555,620	2,501,000	5,056,620
7,057,960	7,643,520	Fees and Charges	6,552,160	1,512,000	8,064,160
2,698,000	3,582,000	Interest on Mortgages and Investments	3,099,000	17,000	3,116,000
526,590	1,303,940	Grants and Reimbursements by other Bodies	471,860	0	471,860
73,342,750	75,874,900	Total Operational Income	48,771,140	28,460,000	77,231,140
(45,132)	(682,082)	Contribution from/(to) Revenue Reserves	(217,561)	18,000	(199,561)
(64,000)	93,000	FRS 17 Adjustment	(2,000)	0	(2,000)
559,000	963,000	Contribution from/(to) District Development Fund	1,078,000	0	1,078,000
0	0	Contribution from/(to) Other Reserves	0	0	0
5,601,950	7,189,270	Contribution from/(to) Capital Reserves	2,600,590	4,036,000	6,636,590
79,394,568	83,438,088	Total Gross Income	52,230,169	32,514,000	84,744,169
19,446,167	19,446,167	To be met from Government Grants and Local Taxation	19,876,855	0	19,876,855
Financed by:					
1,316,489	1,316,489	Revenue Support Grant			1,139,084
7,844,617	7,844,617	Distribution from Non-Domestic Rate Pool			8,182,596
0	0	Collection Fund Adjustment			0
9,161,106	9,161,106	Exchequer Support and Collection Fund Surpluses	7d		9,321,680
7,497,986	7,497,986	District Precept			7,724,971
2,787,075	2,787,075	Parish Council Precepts	7f		2,830,204
19,446,167	19,446,167	Total Financing			19,876,855

Leaders Portfolio

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Portfolio Holder - Councillor Diana Collins

	2007/08 Original £	2007/08 Revised £	Revenue Expenditure	2008/09 Original £
	342,450	342,960	Elections	347,930
	1,967,300	2,001,460	Corporate Activities	1,888,110
	1,121,730	1,079,250	Member Activities	1,184,450
	34,210	40,660	Local Council Liaison	46,050
	635,400	477,960	Public Relations & Customer Services	535,240
	461,980	351,580	Democratic Services	359,490
	4,563,070	4,293,870	Total Expenditure	4,361,270
	1,599,690	1,403,770	Income from Internal Charges	1,457,190
	2,963,380	2,890,100	Net Expenditure (see Annex 3)	2,904,080
			Service Generated Income	
	-	-	Government Subsidies	
	-	-	Rents from Dwellings	
	-	-	Miscellaneous Rents, Trading Operations etc	
	2,280	1,740	Fees and Charges	1,200
	22,500	33,980	Interest on Mortgages and Investments	
			Grants and Reimbursements by other Bodies	20,500
	24,780	35,720	Total Income	21,700
	2,938,600	2,854,380	To be met from Government Grant and Local Taxation	2,882,380
	-	15,000	Capital Expenditure (see Annex 5)	-

Community Wellbeing

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Portfolio Holder - Councillor Syd Stavrou

2007/08 Original £	2007/08 Revised £	Revenue Expenditure	2008/09 Original £
149,900	157,310	Emergency Planning	175,020
404,490	403,170	Voluntary Services	413,300
337,140	322,590	Safer Communities	453,170
850,140	909,090	Travel Schemes	938,460
1,741,670	1,792,160	Total Expenditure	1,979,950
-	15,000	Income from Internal Charges	15,000
1,741,670	1,777,160	Net Expenditure (see Annex 3)	1,964,950
		Service Generated Income	
-		Government Subsidies	
-		Rents from Dwellings	
10,120	10,100	Miscellaneous Rents, Trading Operations etc	10,100
13,590	60,230	Fees and Charges	237,520
-	-	Interest on Mortgages and Investments	
-	-	Grants and Reimbursements by other Bodies	
23,710	70,330	Total Income	247,620
1,717,960	1,706,830	To be met from Government Grant and Local Taxation	1,717,330
-	-	Capital Expenditure (see Annex 5)	-

Finance, Performance Management & Corporate Support Services

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Portfolio Holder - Councillor Chris Whitbread

2007/08 Original £	2007/08 Revised £	Revenue Expenditure	2008/09 Original £
33,919,420	34,799,500	Housing Benefits	36,243,100
1,642,920	1,693,250	Local Taxation	1,686,630
280,960	346,850	Land & Property	324,190
2,730,750	3,206,560	Other Activities	3,144,820
2,315,780	2,343,180	Financial Services	2,448,510
2,605,710	2,761,910	Information Technology	2,970,100
1,660,120	1,519,650	Legal & Administration Services	1,694,740
2,043,450	1,961,750	Accommodation Services	2,277,250
2,250,430	2,246,650	Other Support Services	2,355,100
49,449,540	50,879,300	Total Expenditure	53,144,440
13,210,040	13,268,920	Income from Internal Charges	14,223,040
36,239,500	37,610,380	Net Expenditure (see Annex 3)	38,921,400
		Service Generated Income	
33,332,050	33,982,100	Government Subsidies	35,483,040
1,086,390	1,105,900	Rents from Dwellings	1,080,190
986,770	1,127,030	Miscellaneous Rents, Trading Operations etc Fees and Charges	1,149,840
-	-	Interest on Mortgages and Investments	
-	-	Grants and Reimbursements by other Bodies	
35,405,210	36,215,030	Total Income	37,713,070
834,290	1,395,350	To be met from Government Grant and Local Taxation	1,208,330
1,060,000	1,148,000	Capital Expenditure (see Annex 5)	1,298,000

Leisure & Young People

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Portfolio Holder - Councillor Mitchell Cohen

2007/08 Original £	2007/08 Revised £	Revenue Expenditure	2008/09 Original £
2,035,430	2,119,380	Leisure Facilities	1,978,630
792,500	808,410	Arts, Museum and Library	856,740
697,590	717,010	Parks and Grounds	761,140
850,040	860,560	North Weald Centre	849,200
780,150	804,230	Sports Development and Miscellaneous	791,160
605,930	682,040	Leisure Administration	544,250
5,761,640	5,991,630	Total Expenditure	5,781,120
600,160	674,840	Income from Internal Charges	537,040
5,161,480	5,316,790	Net Expenditure (see Annex 3)	5,244,080
		Service Generated Income	
-		Government Subsidies	
-		Rents from Dwellings	
1,308,120	1,371,430	Miscellaneous Rents, Trading Operations etc	1,289,180
265,480	225,640	Fees and Charges	247,530
29,750	148,600	Interest on Mortgages and Investments	
		Grants and Reimbursements by other Bodies	138,460
1,603,350	1,745,670	Total Income	1,675,170
3,558,130	3,571,120	To be met from Government Grant and Local Taxation	3,568,910
50,000	135,000	Capital Expenditure (see Annex 5)	230,000

Civil Engineering & Maintenance

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Portfolio Holder - Councillor Andrew Green

	2007/08 Original £	2007/08 Revised £	Revenue Expenditure	2008/09 Original £
	573,870	581,060	Highways	577,040
	1,061,940	1,222,000	Car & Lorry Parking	1,218,150
	905,680	889,000	Land Drainage & Sewerage	792,140
	1,082,500	1,146,840	Grounds Maintenance	1,219,420
	650,120	597,510	Civil Engineering & Building Services	612,310
	4,274,110	4,436,410	Total Expenditure	4,419,060
	1,564,060	1,618,520	Income from Internal Charges	1,702,730
	2,710,050	2,817,890	Net Expenditure (see Annex 3)	2,716,330
			Service Generated Income	
	-		Government Subsidies	
	-		Rents from Dwellings	
	22,000	18,360	Miscellaneous Rents, Trading Operations etc	21,150
	1,791,570	1,780,100	Fees and Charges	1,803,890
			Interest on Mortgages and Investments	
	50,000	110,270	Grants and Reimbursements by other Bodies	10,350
	1,863,570	1,908,730	Total Income	1,835,390
	846,480	909,160	To be met from Government Grant and Local Taxation	880,940
	312,000	377,000	Capital Expenditure (see Annex 5)	700,000

Environmental Protection

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Portfolio Holder - Councillor Mary Sartin

	2007/08 Original £	2007/08 Revised £	Revenue Expenditure	2008/09 Original £
	1,432,380	1,399,350	Environmental Health	1,523,150
	6,143,670	7,392,800	Waste Collection & Street Cleansing	6,051,860
	98,580	91,480	Environmental Initiatives	91,230
	253,250	218,750	Licensing	244,610
	558,000	526,660	Environmental Admin	568,090
	8,485,880	9,629,040	Total Expenditure	8,478,940
	557,950	526,590	Income from Internal Charges	568,020
	7,927,930	9,102,450	Net Expenditure (see Annex 3)	7,910,920
			Service Generated Income	
	-		Government Subsidies	
	-		Rents from Dwellings	
	-		Miscellaneous Rents, Trading Operations etc	
	930,120	1,315,490	Fees and Charges	1,348,250
	56,290	56,290	Interest on Mortgages and Investments	-
			Grants and Reimbursements by other Bodies	
	986,410	1,371,780	Total Income	1,348,250
	7,499,470	7,730,670	To be met from Government Grant and Local Taxation	6,562,670
	1,300,000	1,820,000	Capital Expenditure (see Annex 5)	704,000

Planning & Economic Development

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Portfolio Holder - Councillor Anne Grigg

	2007/08 Original £	2007/08 Revised £	Revenue Expenditure	2008/09 Original £
	85,010	116,630	Economic Development	135,420
	15,860	18,640	Tourism	46,690
	20,210	21,630	Bus Shelters	22,570
	219,620	266,230	Countryside	248,520
	223,970	180,340	Conservation Policy	209,270
	629,680	510,050	Forward Planning	761,060
	113,470	147,670	Town Centre Enhancements	135,050
	2,648,220	2,874,410	Regulatory Services	2,768,200
	523,310	539,700	Planning Administration	631,920
	4,479,350	4,675,300	Total Expenditure	4,958,700
	522,270	552,610	Income from Internal Charges	559,840
	3,957,080	4,122,690	Net Expenditure (see Annex 3)	4,398,860
			Service Generated Income	
	-		Government Subsidies	
	-		Rents from Dwellings	
	-		Miscellaneous Rents, Trading Operations etc	
	1,205,380	1,214,710	Fees and Charges	1,327,450
	26,940	174,690	Interest on Mortgages and Investments	
			Grants and Reimbursements by other Bodies	191,440
	1,232,320	1,389,400	Total Income	1,518,890
	3,247,030	2,733,290	To be met from Government Grant and Local Taxation	2,879,970
	1,970,000	293,000	Capital Expenditure (see Annex 5)	2,000,000

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Internal Trading Organisations

	2007/08 Original £	2007/08 Revised £	Revenue Expenditure	2008/09 Original £
	3,001,090	2,885,560	Housing Maintenance	2,973,130
	371,910	450,530	Fleet Operations	460,720
	3,373,000	3,336,090	Total Expenditure	3,433,850
	3,204,890	3,105,480	Income from Internal Charges	3,196,650
	168,110	230,610	Net Expenditure (see Annex 3)	237,200
			Service Generated Income	
	168,110	230,610	Fees and Charges	237,200
	168,110	230,610	Total Income	237,200
	-	-	To be met from Government Grant and Local Taxation	-
	50,000	51,000	Capital Expenditure (see Annex 5)	50,000

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Non Service Budgets

2007/08 Original		2007/08 Revised		2008/09 Original		Total
£	Total	£	Total	£	Housing Revenue	£
(2,680,000)	(3,564,000)	(3,564,000)	Interest & Investment Income	(3,099,000)		(3,099,000)
(117,000)	(117,000)	(117,000)	Highways Residual Cost Reimbursement	-		-
(200,000)	(241,000)	(241,000)	Local Authority Business Growth Scheme	-		-
-	(398,000)	(398,000)	Other Items	(87,000)		(87,000)
39,000	61,000	61,000	Interest Payable (Inc HRA)	2,050,000	(2,003,000)	47,000
3,684,050	2,793,730	2,793,730	Depreciation Reversals & Other Adj's.	(2,600,590)	8,785,000	6,184,410
726,050	(1,465,270)			(3,736,590)	6,782,000	3,045,410
3,062,000	3,924,000	3,924,000	Transferred to Housing Summary	-	4,036,000	4,036,000
3,788,050	2,458,730			(3,736,590)	10,818,000	7,081,410
(321,868)	114,082	114,082	Contribution (from)/to Revenue Reserves			217,561
64,000	(93,000)	(93,000)	FRS 17 Adjustment			2,000
-	-	-	Contribution (from)/to Other Reserves			-
(559,000)	(963,000)	(963,000)	Contribution from District Development Fund			(1,078,000)
2,971,182	1,516,812	1,516,812	Reduction in Amount to be met from Government Grant and Local Taxation			6,222,971

Portfolio Programme 2008/09

Capital Programme

2007/08 Original		2007/08 Revised		2008/09 Original		Total	
General Fund	Housing Revenue	General Fund	Housing Revenue	General Fund	Housing Revenue	General Fund	Housing Revenue
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
-	-	15,000	-	-	-	-	-
1,060,000	-	-	15,000	1,298,000	-	1,298,000	-
1,855,000	6,204,000	1,148,000	1,148,000	2,027,000	8,815,000	2,027,000	10,842,000
50,000	50,000	135,000	6,088,000	230,000	8,815,000	230,000	230,000
312,000	312,000	377,000	377,000	700,000	700,000	700,000	700,000
1,970,000	1,970,000	293,000	293,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
1,300,000	1,300,000	1,820,000	1,820,000	704,000	50,000	704,000	704,000
50,000	50,000	51,000	51,000	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
6,547,000	6,254,000	6,185,000	6,139,000	6,959,000	8,865,000	6,959,000	15,824,000
	6,224,000	-	6,059,000	-	8,785,000	-	8,785,000
6,547,000	30,000	6,577,000	80,000	6,959,000	80,000	6,959,000	7,039,000
5,421,000		5,421,000		6,232,000		6,232,000	
841,000		841,000		517,000		517,000	
285,000	30,000	315,000	80,000	210,000	80,000	210,000	290,000
6,547,000	30,000	6,577,000	80,000	6,959,000	80,000	6,959,000	7,039,000

COUNCIL TAX RATES FOR DISTRICT & PARISH/TOWN COUNCILS 2008/09

Authorities	Tax Base No.'s	Precept 2008/09	Council Tax Band D	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
				£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
District Expenses	54017.3	7,724,971	143.01	95.34	111.23	127.12	143.01	174.79	206.57	238.35	286.02
Abbess, Berners and Beauchamp Roding	202.7	5,000	24.67	111.79	130.42	149.05	167.68	204.94	242.20	279.47	335.36
Buckhurst Hill	5230.1	345,000	65.96	139.31	162.53	185.75	208.97	255.41	301.85	348.28	417.94
Chigwell	5942.0	204,130	34.35	118.24	137.95	157.65	177.36	216.77	256.19	295.60	354.72
Epping Town	5026.9	360,000	71.61	143.08	166.93	190.77	214.62	262.31	310.01	357.70	429.24
Epping Upland	404.5	11,160	27.59	113.73	132.69	151.64	170.60	208.51	246.42	284.33	341.20
Fyfield	412.2	10,400	25.23	112.16	130.85	149.55	168.24	205.63	243.01	280.40	336.48
High Ongar	557.8	12,261	21.98	109.99	128.33	146.66	164.99	201.65	238.32	274.98	329.98
Lambourne	942.1	29,000	30.78	115.86	135.17	154.48	173.79	212.41	251.03	289.65	347.58
Loughton Town	12812.1	613,000	47.85	127.24	148.45	169.65	190.86	233.27	275.69	318.10	381.72
Matching	318.9	8,200	25.71	112.48	131.23	149.97	168.72	206.21	243.71	281.20	337.44
Mdreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers	660.1	11,000	16.66	106.45	124.19	141.93	159.67	195.15	230.63	266.12	319.34
Nazeing	2099.7	79,936	38.07	120.72	140.84	160.96	181.08	221.32	261.56	301.80	362.16
North Weald Bassett	2552.2	117,343	45.98	125.99	146.99	167.99	188.99	230.99	272.99	314.98	377.98
Ongar Town	2757.3	157,150	56.99	133.33	155.56	177.78	200.00	244.44	288.89	333.33	400.00
Roydon	1307.5	27,430	20.98	109.33	127.55	145.77	163.99	200.43	236.87	273.32	327.98
Sheering	1370.1	26,350	19.23	108.16	126.19	144.21	162.24	198.29	234.35	270.40	324.48
Stanford Rivers	358.3	10,200	28.47	114.32	133.37	152.43	171.48	209.59	247.69	285.80	342.96
Stapleford Abbotts	494.5	5,783	11.69	103.13	120.32	137.51	154.70	189.08	223.46	257.83	309.40
Stapleford Tawney	56.5	1,300	23.01	110.68	129.13	147.57	166.02	202.91	239.81	276.70	332.04
Theydon Bois	1978.3	61,936	31.31	116.21	135.58	154.95	174.32	213.06	251.80	290.53	348.64
Theydon Garnon	66.3	963	14.52	105.02	122.52	140.03	157.53	192.54	227.54	262.55	315.06
Theydon Mount	109.4	1,507	13.78	104.53	121.95	139.37	156.79	191.63	226.47	261.32	313.58
Waltham Abbey Town	8112.2	727,255	89.65	155.11	180.96	206.81	232.66	284.36	336.06	387.77	465.32
Willingale	245.6	3,900	15.88	105.93	123.58	141.24	158.89	194.20	229.51	264.82	317.78
Town and Parish Total	54017.3	2,830,204	52.39	34.93	40.75	46.57	52.39	64.03	75.67	87.32	104.78
District, Town and Parish Total	54017.3	10,555,175	195.40	130.27	151.98	173.69	195.40	238.82	282.24	325.67	390.80

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Medium Term Financial Strategy

Introduction

1. For a number of years as part of the Council's sound financial planning arrangements a four-year financial strategy has been prepared. This document allows a considered view to be taken of spending and resources. Without a medium term financial strategy finances would be managed on an annual basis leading to sudden expansions and contractions in services. Clearly such volatility would lead to waste and be confusing for stakeholders.
2. Managing this Council's finances has been made easier by isolating one off fluctuations (District Development Fund or DDF) from the ongoing core services (Continuing Service Budgets or CSB). This distinction highlights the differing effects in the medium term of approving different types of initiative.
3. A key part of the strategy is future rises in Council Tax and the Council has a stated ambition to not only remain a low tax authority but to ultimately have the lowest Band D charge in Essex. The Council currently has the third lowest charge and last year set one of the lowest increases in Essex.
4. At its 24 September 2007 meeting the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee decided that communication of the revised medium term financial strategy to staff, partners and other stakeholders be undertaken by way of publishing key bullet points in appropriate publications.

Previous Medium Term Financial Strategy

5. That meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee considered the annual Financial Issues Paper and an updated medium term financial strategy. At that time Members attention was drawn to a number of areas of significant uncertainty. The restructuring of top management was still ongoing and the re-organisation below assistant heads of service had not commenced. Information was still awaited from the Government on the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the mechanism for funding the new national concessionary fares scheme. The outcome of the latest triennial valuation of the pension fund was also unknown.
6. Given the level of risk and uncertainty a prudent forecast was constructed that capped CSB expenditure for 2008/09 at £17.3m and introduced a requirement for annual CSB savings of £200,000 until the end of the forecast period. At this time deficit budgets were anticipated for each year of the forecast, although all of the deficits were kept below £400,000.
7. At that time the predicted General Fund balance at 1 April 2011 of £5.6m represented just over 31% of the anticipated Net Budget Requirement (NBR) for 2010/11 and was therefore somewhat higher than the guideline of 25%. It was also predicted at that time that there would be some £1.3m left in the DDF at 1 April 2011. However, the target savings in the forecast confirmed the need for the review of services and expenditure that is being undertaken.

Updated Medium Term Financial Strategy

8. As it became clear what the level of savings was likely to be from the corporate restructuring and the new waste management contract it was necessary to re-evaluate the CSB target for 2008/09. The meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee on 10 December considered a draft General Fund summary together with growth lists of both CSB and DDF items. This meeting decided that it was possible to revise the CSB target downwards by £0.5m to £16.8m. To reflect these budget reductions a revised medium term financial strategy has been prepared and is attached as Annexes 8 a and b. In constructing the forecast it has been necessary to make certain assumptions, these are set out below:
- a) CSB Growth – net savings for 2008/09 have been included at a total of £344,000. For 2009/10 growth items of £144,000 have currently been identified. In common with the earlier version of the strategy, target CSB savings of £200,000 per annum are included for the period 2009/10 to 2011/12. Having successfully exceeded the savings targets for 2007/08 and 2008/09, the search for the further savings needed in subsequent periods will continue throughout 2008/09.
 - b) DDF – all of the known items for the four-year period have been included and at the end of the period a balance of only £69,000 is still available. This is after revising the estimates for the inclusion of the Local Development Framework (LDF), which uses up £1.3m of DDF resource over the forecast period. It is hoped that the replacement for Planning Delivery Grant will provide funds that can be used for the LDF but these will only be included in the estimates when the amounts to be received are certain.
 - c) Grant Funding – the provisional settlement figures have been included for the CSR period of 2008/09 to 2010/11. Once provisional figures have been announced it is unusual for them to change significantly. For 2011/12 it has been assumed that there will be a 1% increase in the base grant but that there will be no floor support, this gives a net increase of 0.6%.
 - d) Council Tax Increase – Members have confirmed they wish to keep rises below the rate of increase in the Retail Prices Index and so an increase of 2.5% has been included for 2008/09. It is anticipated that growth in the retail prices index will reduce from the current level of 4.0% to 2.5% in subsequent years and so 2.5% has been used for future increases.
9. This revised medium term financial strategy still has deficits in the final three years of the period, although these are clearly affordable. The predicted revenue balance at the end of the period is £6.1m, which represents 34% of the NBR and thus comfortably exceeds the target of 25%. Members are asked to approve the medium term financial strategy. The strategy will be monitored during the year and updated for the September 2008 meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee.

GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2007/08 - 2011/12

ORIGINAL 2007/08	REVISED				
	FORECAST 2007/08	FORECAST 2008/09	FORECAST 2009/10	FORECAST 2010/11	FORECAST 2011/12
£'000 NET REVENUE EXPENDITURE	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
16,842 Continuing Services Budget	16,708	17,173	17,571	18,008	18,367
138 CSB - Growth Items	-163	-344	144	113	0
0 Target saving	0	0	-200	-200	-200
<hr/>					
16,980 Total C.S.B	16,545	16,829	17,515	17,921	18,167
876 One - off Expenditure	2,031	1,165	270	648	153
<hr/>					
17,856 Total Net Operating Expenditure	18,576	17,994	17,785	18,569	18,320
-876 Contribution to/from (-) DDF Balances	-2,031	-1,165	-270	-648	-153
-321 Contribution to/from (-) Balances	114	218	-228	-387	-371
<hr/>					
16,659 Net Budget Requirement	16,659	17,047	17,287	17,534	17,796
<hr/> <hr/>					
FINANCING					
9,350 Government Support (NNDR+RSG)	9,350	9,020	9,195	9,379	9,473
-189 RSG Floor Gains/(-Losses)	-189	302	173	36	0
<hr/>					
9,161 Total External Funding	9,161	9,322	9,368	9,415	9,473
7,498 District Precept	7,498	7,725	7,919	8,119	8,323
0 Collection Fund Adjustment	0	0	0	0	0
<hr/>					
To be met from Government 16,659 Grants and Local Tax Payers	16,659	17,047	17,287	17,534	17,796
<hr/> <hr/>					
Band D Council Tax	139.50	143.01	146.61	150.30	154.08
Percentage Increase %		2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5

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GENERAL FUND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2007/08 - 2011/12

	REVISED FORECAST 2007/08	FORECAST 2008/09	FORECAST 2009/10	FORECAST 2010/11	FORECAST 2011/12
REVENUE BALANCES	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Balance B/forward	6,761	6,875	7,093	6,865	6,478
Surplus/Deficit(-) for year	114	218	-228	-387	-371
Balance C/Forward	6,875	7,093	6,865	6,478	6,107
DISTRICT DEVELOPMENT FUND					
Balance B/forward	3,181	2,218	1,140	870	222
Income	1,068	87	0	0	0
Transfer Out	-2,031	-1,165	-270	-648	-153
Balance C/Forward	2,218	1,140	870	222	69
CAPITAL FUND (inc Cap Receipts)					
Balance B/forward	26,425	25,877	20,476	18,241	17,767
New Usable Receipts	7,032	831	819	817	725
CR Used to Fund Capital Expenditure					
- Transitional Relief Receipts	-1,000	0	0	0	0
- Other Capital Receipts	-6,580	-6,232	-3,054	-1,291	-1,172
Balance C/Forward	25,877	20,476	18,241	17,767	17,320
TOTAL BALANCES	34,970	28,709	25,976	24,467	23,496

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Report on the Council's Prudential Indicators for 2008/09 to 2010/11 and the Treasury Management Strategy for 2008/09

Recommendations;

1. The Council is recommended to adopt the prudential indicators and limits for 2008/09 to 2010/11 contained within the report. The main indicators are summarised in the table below:

	2006/07 Actual	2007/08 Revised	2008/09 Estimate	2009/10 Estimate	2010/11 Estimate
Capital Expenditure	£10.500 m	£12.324m	£15.824 m	£8.780 m	£6.624 m
Capital financing requirement	-£0.784 m	-£0.784 m	-£0.784 m	-£0.784 m	-£0.784 m
Authorised limit for external debt	£5.0 m	£5.0 m	£5.0 m	£5.0 m	£5.0 m
Operational boundary for external debt	£0.5 m	£0.5 m	£0.5 m	£0.5 m	£0.5 m
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – General Fund	-7.14 %	-10.45 %	-8.86 %	-7.11 %	-6.31 %
Ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream – HRA	-7.38 %	-10.80 %	-9.15 %	-7.35 %	-6.52 %
Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on the Band D Council Tax	N/a	-£0.05	£1.63	£4.10	£5.23
Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on weekly housing rents levels	N/a	-£0.01	£0.92	£1.16	£1.05

2. Members are recommended to approve the treasury management strategy for 2008/09. The treasury prudential indicators as set out in the tables below;

Exposure to fixed/variable interest rates	2008/09 Upper	2009/10 Upper	2010/11 Upper
Limits on fixed interest rates	100%	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rates	30%	30%	30%

Maturity Structure of fixed interest rate borrowing						
	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11	
	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	100%	0%	100%	0%	100%
12 months to 2 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2 years to 5 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5 years to 10 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10 years and above	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Maximum principal sums invested for 1 year or more	£30 m		£30 m		£30 m	
Investment returns to exceed the 7 day LIBID rate by;	0.10 %		0.10%		0.10%	

3. Members are recommended to approve the Council's Statement on the Minimum Revenue Provision.
4. Members are recommended to approve the investment strategy for 2008/09 contained in the treasury management strategy, and the detailed criteria included within it, specifically approving:
 - The criteria for specified investments
 - The criteria for non-specified investments

The Prudential Indicators 2008/09 – 2009/10

1. The Local Government Act 2003 required the Council to adopt the CIPFA Prudential Code and to produce prudential indicators. This report revises the indicators for 2007/08, 2008/09 and 2009/10, and introduces new indicators for 2010/11. Each indicator either summarises the expected activity or introduces limits upon the activity, and reflects the outcome of the Council's underlying capital appraisal systems.
2. Within this overall prudential framework there is a clear impact on the Council's treasury management activity, either through borrowing or investment activity. As a consequence, the treasury management strategy for 2008/09 and the treasury indicators form part of this report.

Capital Expenditure Plans

3. The first prudential indicators govern the Council's capital expenditure plans, its net borrowing position and its Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). The Council's capital expenditure plans are summarised below. Capital expenditure can be financed immediately (by resources such as contributions from revenue, capital receipts and capital grants), so that with no unfinanced expenditure there is no need to borrow.
4. A certain level of capital expenditure will be grant supported by the Government; anything above this level will be unsupported and will need to be paid for from the Council's own resources. The Government has the power to restrict the level of external debt undertaken by either all councils as a whole or of a specific council, although these powers have not yet been exercised.
5. The key risks to the plans are that the level of Government support has been estimated and is therefore subject to change. Similarly some of the estimates for other sources of funding, such as capital receipts, may also be subject to change over this timescale.
6. **The Council is recommended to approve the capital expenditure estimates presented in Table 1 as Prudential Indicators 2 and 3.**

Portfolio	2006/07 Actual £'000	2007/08 Revised Estimate £'000	2008/09 Original Estimate £'000	2009/10 Original Estimate £'000	2010/11 Original Estimate £'000
Finance, Performance Management & Corporate Support Services	619	1,148	1,298	2,125	304
Leader of the Council	15	15	0	0	0
Leisure	564	135	230	61	62
Environmental Protection	1,001	1,820	704	0	0
Planning & Economic Development	1,714	293	2,000	0	0
Civil Engineering & Maintenance	331	377	700	262	262
Housing General Fund	520	2,397	2,027	1,005	875
Total General Fund	4,764	6,185	6,959	3,453	1,503
HRA	5,687	6,088	8,815	5,277	5,071
Housing DLO	49	51	50	50	50
Total Housing Revenue Account	5,736	6,139	8,865	5,327	5,121
TOTAL	10,500	12,324	15,824	8,780	6,624

The Council's Capital Financing Requirement

7. The Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is the total capital expenditure which has not yet been financed from either revenue contributions or capital income. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need; any unfinanced capital expenditure will increase the Council's CFR. Table 2 demonstrates that all projected capital expenditure over the current and the next three financial years is expected to be financed, and that the Council's CFR is expected to remain unchanged.
8. **Members are asked to agree that the Council has complied with the requirement of Prudential Indicator 1 by keeping net borrowing below the appropriate CFR in 2006/07, and that no difficulties are envisaged for the financial years 2007/08 to 2010/11.**
9. **Members are further asked to approve Prudential Indicators 4 and 5, the Capital Financing Requirement from 2006/07 to 2010/11, contained within Table 2**

Table 2: Capital Expenditure Financing and its effect on the CFR					
	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
	Actual	Revised	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund					
Capital Expenditure	4,764	6,185	6,959	3,453	1,503
Financed by:					
Capital receipts	3,749	5,080	6,232	3,054	1,291
Capital grants	1,015	1,105	727	399	212
Revenue Contributions	0	0	0	0	0
Total Financed Expenditure	4,764	6,185	6,959	3,453	1,503
Net financing need for the year	0	0	0	0	0
Opening CFR	23,844	23,844	23,844	23,844	23,844
CFR arising during the year	0	0	0	0	0
Closing CFR	23,844	23,844	23,844	23,844	23,844
HRA					
Capital Expenditure	5,736	6,139	8,865	5,327	5,121
Financed by:					
Capital receipts	986	0	0	0	0
Capital grants	178	80	80	80	80
Revenue Contributions	4,572	6,059	8,785	5,247	5,041
Total Financed Expenditure	5,736	6,139	8,865	5,327	5,121
Net financing need for the year	0	0	0	0	0
Opening CFR	- 24,628	- 24,628	- 24,628	- 24,628	- 24,628
CFR arising during the year	0	0	0	0	0
Closing CFR	- 24,628	- 24,628	- 24,628	- 24,628	- 24,628
General Fund CFR	23.844	23.844	23.844	23.844	23.844
HRA CFR	- 24,628	- 24,628	- 24,628	- 24,628	- 24,628
Total CFR	- 0.784	- 0.784	- 0.784	- 0.784	- 0.784

10. Local authorities are required to repay an element of the accumulated General Fund capital spend – represented by the CFR - through an annual revenue charge (the Minimum Revenue Provision, or MRP).
11. Draft DCLG Regulations are currently issued for comment which, if implemented, will require full Council to approve an MRP Statement. This will need to be approved in advance of each financial year. As the timetable for consultation is very tight, members are asked to approve the following MRP statement:

As the Council is currently debt-free and intends to remain so for the foreseeable future, there is no requirement to make a provision for external debt repayment. If the Council identifies a need to borrow externally, the Council will draw up a minimum revenue policy in accordance with proper accounting practice, and will present this to members for approval.
12. **Members are asked to approve the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, set out in paragraph 11 above.**

Limits to Borrowing Activity

13. Prudential Indicators 6, 7 and 8 are intended to ensure that the Council operates its external borrowing activities within well defined limits. The first two of these are:
 - The Authorised Limit for External Debt. This represents a limit beyond which external debt is prohibited, and needs to be approved by full Council. It reflects the level of external debt which could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.
 - The Operational Boundary for External Debt. This indicator is based on the expected maximum external debt during the course of the year; it is not a limit.
14. The Council became debt-free on 29th March 2004, and intends to remain debt-free for the foreseeable future, meaning that the Authorised Limit is unlikely to be breached. The Director of Finance & ICT confirms that the Council has remained within these two limits during the current year, and does not foresee any difficulty in continuing to do so.
15. **The Council is recommended to approve the Authorised Limit and Operational Boundary set out in Table 3 as Prudential Indicators 6 and 7.**

Table 3: The Authorised and Operational Limits of External Debt				
	2007/08 Revised £ m	2008/09 Estimate £ m	2009/10 Estimate £ m	2010/11 Estimate £ m
Authorised limit	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.0
Operational boundary	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5

16. In order to comply with Prudential Indicator 8 the Council must ensure that its total borrowing net of any investments, does not, except in the short term, exceed the total of the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2008/09 and next two financial years. This allows flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years.
17. The Director of Finance & ICT confirms that the Council has complied with this prudential indicator throughout the current year and does not envisage difficulties for the foreseeable future. This view takes into account current commitments, existing plans, and proposals contained within this budget report. The Council's net debt position as at 31 March 2007 and its estimated position as at 31 March 2008 is shown for information in Table 4.

Table 4: Net external debt on the final day of the financial year

	31 March 2007 Actual £'000	Rate %	31 March 2008 Estimate £'000	Rate %
External debt	0		0	
Less transferred debt	- 585	5.10	- 559	5.10
Total Debt	- 585		- 559	
Fixed Investments	-53,000	5.35	-55,000	5.88
Variable Investments	-1,548	5.37	-3,000	5.50
Total Investments	-54,548		-58,000	
Net Investments	-55,133		-58,559	

Affordability Prudential Indicators

18. The previous sections cover prudential indicators designed to examine capital expenditure and control of borrowing: prudential indicators in this section are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the Council's financial affairs, and identify the trend in the cost of capital (borrowing and other long term obligation costs net of investment income) against the net revenue stream.
19. The estimates of financing costs include current commitments and the proposals in this budget report.
20. Prudential Indicators 9 and 10 are the actual and estimated ratios of financing costs to net revenue stream for the General Fund and Housing Revenue Accounts, and are shown in Table 5. As the Council is debt-free, these are based on investment income and are therefore negative.

Table 5: Actual and estimated ratios of financing Costs to net revenue stream

	2006/07 Actual %	2007/08 Revised Estimate %	2008/09 Estimated Forecast %	2009/10 Estimated Forecast %	2010/11 Estimated Forecast %
General Fund	- 7.14	- 10.45	- 8.86	- 7.11	- 6.31
HRA	- 7.38	- 10.80	- 9.15	- 7.35	- 6.52

21. Prudential Indicator 11 concerns an estimate of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions on the Band D Council Tax over the next three financial years, and is shown in Table 6. This indicator identifies the revenue costs associated with new schemes introduced to the capital programme considered as Appendix 14 to this report, compared to the capital programme examined for the 2007/08 Prudential Indicators. The assumptions are based on the budget, but will invariably include some estimates, such as the level of government support in future years.
22. Prudential Indicator 12 examines estimates of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions on housing rent levels over the next three financial years. Similar to the Council Tax calculation, this indicator identifies the trend in the cost of proposed changes in the part of the capital programme relating to the Housing Revenue Account. It compares the most recent programme to that examined for the 2007/08 Prudential Indicators, and is expressed as a discrete impact on weekly rent levels.

Table 6: Incremental impact of capital investment decisions on Council tax and rents				
	2007/08 Revised	2008/09 Estimate	2009/10 Estimate	2010/11 Estimate
	£	£	£	£
Band D Council Tax	-0.05	1.63	4.10	5.23
Housing rents levels	-0.01	0.92	1.16	1.05

23. It should be emphasised that these are theoretical, and do not imply an actual requirement to raise either Council Tax or housing rent levels. Any move to raise housing rent levels will be constrained by the rent restructuring controls.

Treasury Management Strategy 2008/09 – 2010/11

24. The treasury management service is an important part of the overall financial management of the Council's affairs. The prudential indicators considered so far relate to the affordability and impact of capital expenditure decisions and govern the Council's overall capital framework. The treasury service considers the effective funding of these decisions. Together they form part of the process which ensures that the Council meets the "balanced budget" requirement under the Local Government Finance Act 1992. There are specific treasury prudential indicators included within this strategy which require approval.
25. The Council's treasury activities are strictly regulated by statutory requirements and a professional code of practice (the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management). This Council adopted the Code of Practice on Treasury Management on 22 April 2002, and as a result formulated a Treasury Management Policy Statement (approved by Cabinet on 18 October 2004). This adoption meets the requirements of the first of the treasury prudential indicators (Prudential Indicator 13).
26. The Council's Treasury Management policy requires an annual strategy to be reported to Council in advance of the first financial year to which it relates, outlining the expected treasury activity for the following three financial years. A key requirement of this report is to explain both the risks and the management of the risks associated with the treasury service. A further treasury report is produced within six months of the year-end to report on actual activity for the year.
27. This strategy covers:
- The Council's debt and investment projections;
 - The expected movement in interest rates;
 - The Council's borrowing and investment strategies;
 - Treasury performance indicators;
 - Specific limits on treasury activities;

Debt and Investment Projections 2008/09 – 2010/11

28. The borrowing requirement comprises the expected movement in the CFR and any maturing debt which will need to be re-financed. Table 7 shows this effect on the treasury position over the next three years. It also highlights the expected change in investment balances, although as a matter of prudence it does not include an estimate for capital receipts from proposed land sales.

29. Although the Council is debt-free and expects to remain so for the foreseeable future, there is a reducing element of debt taken out on behalf of other local authorities. Epping Council has repaid the underlying external debt in full from its own resources; the authorities concerned are paying the Council their share of the debt plus interest in instalments. This is shown as negative debt, as it represents income to the Council.

	2008 Revised £'000	2009 Estimate £'000	2010 Estimate £'000	2011 Estimate £'000
External Debt				
External debt	0	0	0	0
Less transferred debt	- 559	- 534	- 508	- 481
Total debt	- 559	- 534	- 508	- 481
Investments				
Investment portfolio	55,000	50,000	45,000	40,000
Funds held in short notice accounts	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Total investments	58,000	53,000	48,000	43,000
Change from previous year	+3,452	- 5,000	-5,000	-5,000
Annual net interest income	3,540	3,069	2,650	2,440

Economic Forecast

As at end of:	Base Rate %	Market investment rates		
		3 month %	6 month %	12 month %
December 2007	5.50	6.0	5.9	5.6
March 2008	5.25	5.5	5.4	5.3
June 2008	5.00	5.2	4.9	4.7
September 2008	4.75	4.8	4.7	4.6
December 2008	4.75	4.8	4.7	4.6
March 2009	4.75	4.8	4.7	4.7

30. The summer's dip in inflation drew to a close in October and the latest Bank of England Inflation Report suggests this key aggregate will rise further in the months ahead before returning to the 2% mid-target level by early 2009.
31. The end to aggressive discounting on retail sales, the rise in oil and petrol prices, and the upward trend in food costs have contributed to the rebound in inflation. While domestically-generated inflation will remain heavily influenced by the strength of economic activity and the growth in consumer spending, external factors are likely to be under upward pressure for the foreseeable future.
32. The main restraining influence in the UK will be the prospective decline in economic activity. Recent developments in the financial markets threaten to make the slow-down more pronounced than forecast earlier. The deceleration in economic activity in the US is expected to spread to the Euro-zone and this will undermine the chances of continued export-driven growth. On the domestic front, the effect of interest rate increases upon consumer activity and confidence is set to emerge more strongly in the New Year.

33. Higher rates, concern about the stability of asset prices (notably housing, where prices are faltering) and news of weakening activity are all likely to undermine consumer confidence. This would weaken further if the problems of the financial markets were to worsen.
34. Lower activity is set to emerge in the months ahead. This, together with signs of a pronounced slow-down in personal spending will be seen as providing scope for the MPC to relax its current, tight monetary stance. But uncertainty about the path of activity and prices over the medium term suggests the authorities will tread a cautious path and will confine interest rate cuts to a relatively small number.
35. Long-term interest rates have been driven lower by the strong demand for safe haven instruments at a time of crisis in the banking industry. Yields were driven down to levels that were hard to justify purely on economic grounds. While they have subsequently rebounded, they are still below levels that can be called attractive on fundamental grounds.
36. The crisis in the financial markets is set to continue for a while longer. More banks are likely to announce large losses in business linked with asset-backed securities. This will promote persistent nervousness and ensure demand for safe haven instruments, notably government securities (gilts), remains strong. Yields are set to remain volatile in this environment and there may be times when they are driven down to levels not justified by fundamental economic analysis.
37. The longer term outlook is not as favourable. The US Federal Reserve's aggressive cuts in interest rates since mid-September were driven by reaction to a combination of factors, including the weakening of economic activity, some improvement in inflation performance and the crisis in the US property market. But the move was seen as heavy handed and a threat to the long-term outlook for inflation. The US economy continues to post a mixed performance and inflation is only just below the ceiling the central bank considers acceptable.

Borrowing Strategy 2008/09 – 2010/11

38. The uncertainty over the UK economy and the level of confidence in individual banks increases the risks associated with treasury activity. As a result the Council will take an even more cautious approach to its treasury strategy than in previous years. This may mean a reduction in investment returns, and the performance benchmark has therefore been reduced to 0.1% over the 7 day LIBID rate for 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11.
39. Long term fixed interest rates are expected to fall modestly. The last rise in the Bank of England Base Rate - on which all major UK financial institutions traditionally base their own rates - was in July 2007, to 5.75%, followed by a fall to 5.50% in December and widespread predictions of further cuts. However, the volatility in the markets during the second half of 2007 has effectively removed the link between market rates and Base Rate, and has made the future course of investment rates more difficult to predict.
40. The Director of Finance & ICT, under delegated powers, will continue to consider interest rate forecasts and counterparty assessments available from professional advisors, and will take the most appropriate form of investment at the time.

Investment Counterparty and Liquidity Framework

41. The primary principle governing the Council's investment criteria is the security of its investments, although the yield or return on the investment is also a key consideration. After this main principle the Council will ensure:
 - It has sufficient liquidity in its investments. For this purpose it will set out procedures for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed. These procedures also apply to the Council's prudential indicators covering the maximum principal sums invested.

- It maintains a policy covering both the categories of investment types it will invest in, criteria for choosing investment counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security. This is set out in the Specified and Non-Specified investment sections below.
42. The Director of Finance & ICT will maintain a counterparty list in compliance with the following criteria and will revise the criteria and submit them to Council for approval as necessary. This criteria is separate to that which chooses Specified and Non-Specified investments as it selects which counterparties the Council will invest with rather than defining what form its investments will take.
- **Banks and Building Societies** – the Council will invest in banks and building societies which have the following Fitch or equivalent ratings as a minimum:
 - **Short Term** – F1 (minimum of F1+ for total investments between £5m to £12m)
 - **Long Term** – A (minimum of AA- for total investments between £5m and £12m)
 - **Individual / Financial Strength** – C (Fitch / Moody's only)
 - **Support** – 3 (Fitch only)
 - **Building Societies without credit ratings** – the Council will invest in building societies based in either the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland, provided that these have either a credit rating as specified above or a minimum of £1,000m (€1,500 m) in capital assets.
- Societies with no credit rating are subject to investment limits, according to their capital asset base as listed in the most recent issue of the Butler's Building Society Guide;
- i. Maximum investment of £3m and maximum term of nine months (capital assets of at least £1,000m)
 - ii. Maximum investment of £2m and maximum term of six months (capital assets between £500m and £1,000m, or €750m and €1,500m)
- **Money Market Funds** – AAA
 - **UK Government** (including gilts and the DMO)
 - **Local Authorities, Parish Councils etc**
43. The time limits for institutions on the Council's counterparty list are five years, unless shorter time limits are specified above (these will cover both specified and non-specified Investments). Investments for terms of one year or more are subject to prior approval by the Director of Finance & ICT. The proposed criteria for specified and non-specified investments are shown in paragraphs 54 to 60 for approval.
44. The use of longer term instruments (one year or greater from inception to repayment) will fall into the category of non-specified investments. These instruments will be used only where the Council's liquidity requirements are safeguarded. This usage is limited by Prudential Indicator 17 at paragraph 46 below.

Investment Strategy 2008/09 – 2010/11

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators and Limits on Activity

45. There are four more treasury prudential indicators. The purpose of these prudential indicators is to contain the activity of the treasury function within certain limits, thereby managing risk and reducing the impact of an adverse movement in interest rates. However if these are set to be too restrictive they will impair the opportunities to reduce costs. The indicators are:
- Upper limits on fixed interest rate exposure (Prudential Indicator 14). This indicator identifies a maximum limit for fixed interest rates based upon the debt position net of investments

- Upper limits on variable interest rate exposure (Prudential Indicator 15). Similar to the previous indicator, this covers a maximum limit on variable interest rates.
- Maturity structures of borrowing (Prudential Indicator 16). These gross limits are set to reduce the Council's exposure to large fixed rate sums falling due for refinancing; upper and lower limits of each category are required.
- Total principal funds invested for one year or more (Prudential Indicator 17). These limits are set to reduce the need for early sale of an investment, and are based on the availability of funds after each year-end.

46. **Members are recommended to approve the contents of Tables 9 and 10 as Prudential Indicators 14, 15, 16 and 17.**

	2008/09 Upper	2009/10 Upper	2010/11 Upper
Limits on fixed interest rates	100%	100%	100%
Limits on variable interest rates	30%	30%	30%

	2008/09		2009/10		2010/11	
	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper	Lower	Upper
Under 12 months	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	0%
12 months to 2 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
2 years to 5 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
5 years to 10 years	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
10 years and above	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Maximum principal sums invested > 364 days	£30 m		£30 m		£30 m	

Performance Indicators

47. The Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires the Council to set performance indicators to assess the adequacy of the treasury function over the year. These are distinct historic indicators, as opposed to the prudential indicators, which are predominantly forward looking. As a debt free council with no externally managed funds, the only effective performance indicator that can be set is an achievement margin in excess of the 7 day LIBID rate, the London Interbank Bid rate, which is the generally accepted benchmark for local authority treasury operations. The results of these indicators will be reported in the Treasury Annual Report for 2007/08.
48. **Members are recommended to approve the local performance indicators set out in Table 11.**

	2008/09 %	2009/10 %	2010/11 %
Returns to exceed the 7 Day LIBID rate by:	0.10	0.10	0.10

Treasury Management Practice (TMP) 1 (5) – Credit and Counterparty Risk Management

49. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (now the DCLG) issued Investment Guidance on 12th March 2004, and this forms the structure of the Council's policy below.
50. The key intention of the Guidance was to maintain the current requirement for Councils to invest prudently, giving priority to security before liquidity, before yield. In order to facilitate this objective, the guidance requires this Council to have regard to the CIPFA publication "Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross-Sectoral Guidance Notes". This Council adopted the Code on 18 April 2002 and will continue to apply its principles to all investment activity. In accordance with the Code, the Director of Finance & ICT has produced treasury management practices. This part, TMP 1(5), covering investment counterparty policy requires approval each year.
51. The key requirements of both the Code and the investment guidance are to set an annual investment strategy as part of its annual treasury strategy for the following year, to be approved by full Council and covering the identification and approval of:
 - The strategy guidelines for decision making on investments, particularly non-specified investments.
 - The principles to be used to determine the maximum periods for which funds can be committed.
 - Specified investments the Council will use. These are high security (i.e. high credit rating, although this is defined by the Council, and no guidelines are given), and high liquidity investments in sterling and with a maturity of no more than a year.
 - Non-specified investments, clarifying the greater risk implications, identifying the general types of investment that may be used and a limit to the overall amount of various categories that can be held at any time.
52. The investment policy proposed for the Council for the forthcoming financial year is based on Butler's forecast of economic conditions. Shorter-term interest rates, on which the majority of the Council's investment decisions are based, were artificially inflated by the recent turbulence in the money markets. These are expected to fall steadily for the next year, until they regain their traditional level in regard to the Base Rate.
53. The Council's investment decisions are based on comparisons between the rises priced into market rates against the Council's and advisers own forecasts. It is likely that investment decisions will be made for shorter periods, to take advantage of the current higher market rates and for reasons of caution; however, investments of longer terms with fixed investments rates to lock in good value and security of return will be made if opportunities arise. The Director of Finance & ICT, under delegated powers, will undertake the most appropriate form of investments depending on liquidity requirements and the prevailing interest rates at the time, taking into account the risks shown in the forecast above.

Specified and Non-Specified Investments

54. Specified investments are sterling investments with original investment terms of not more than one year, or those which are agreed for a longer period where the Council has the right to be repaid within 12 months if it wishes. These are low risk assets where the possibility of loss of principal or investment income is small. These include investments with:
- I The UK Government (such as the Debt Management Office, UK Treasury Bills or a Gilt with less than one year to maturity).
 - II A local authority, parish council or community council.
 - III Pooled investment vehicles (such as money market funds) that have been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency.
 - IV A financial body such as a bank or building society that has been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency.
55. The Council proposes to invest in specified investments, with further restrictions related to credit ratings.
56. **Members are requested to confirm their approval of the following specified investments for this council:**
- **All Category I investments;**
 - **All Category II investments;**
 - **For Category III - money market funds rated AAA by Standard and Poor's, Moody's or Fitch rating agencies.**
 - **For Category IV - bodies with a minimum rating of A-1, P-1 and F1 as rated by Standard and Poor's, Moody's or Fitch rating agencies respectively.**
57. Non-specified investments are any other type of investment (i.e. not defined as specified above). These would include sterling investments with:
- I. Securities which are guaranteed by the UK Government (such as supranational bonds). These are fixed income bonds although the value of the bond may rise or fall before maturity and losses may accrue if the bond is sold before maturity.
 - II. Gilt edged securities with a maturity of greater than one year.
 - III. Institutions not meeting the basic security requirements under the specified investments.
 - IV. A body that has been awarded a high credit rating by a credit rating agency (such as a bank or building society), for deposits with a maturity of greater than one year.
58. Proposals approved at Cabinet in December 2004 added the thirty largest building societies by capital asset base to the counterparty listing, A review of the counterparty criteria in August 2007 concluded that a more logical way of dealing with building societies would be to adopt the following criteria:
- Building societies with a credit rating would be treated on the basis of that rating
 - Building societies based in either the United Kingdom or the Republic of Ireland will be included:
 - Irish societies base their accounts on the Euro (€); however, all deals will be made in pounds sterling and will not be converted out of sterling at any stage;
 - Unrated societies with assets in excess of £1bn (€1.5 bn) are subject to cumulative investment limits of £3m and maximum terms of 9 months;

- Unrated building societies with asset bases in excess of £500m (€ 750m) are subject to cumulative investment limits of £2m and maximum terms of 6 months; and
- Unrated building societies with asset bases of less than £500m (€ 750m) are excluded from the counterparty listing.

59 Proposals approved at Cabinet in December 2004 also allow a limited proportion of funds to be invested for terms of between one and five years. On the advice of Butlers, any investment of a term of one year or more would be made only with a counterparty possessing a minimum short term credit rating of A- (Fitch), A3 (Moody's) and A (Standard & Poors).

60 **Members are requested to confirm that, for the time being, it is intended that non-specified investments will not form part of the Council's investment portfolio, with the exception of;**

- **Building societies with no credit rating, subject to the restrictions laid down in Paragraph 58 and**
- **A maximum of £30,000,000 invested for terms of one year or more, subject to the credit rating criteria in Paragraph 59 and a maximum term of five years.**

61 The credit rating of counterparties will be monitored regularly. The Council receives credit rating emails from its Treasury advisers as and when ratings change, and counterparties are checked promptly on receipt of these emails. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria will be removed from the list immediately by the Director of Finance & ICT and new counterparties which meet the criteria will be added to the list.

62 The Council is aware that a counterparty may hold investments from the Council at the time that it is removed from the approved list due to a downgraded rating. The criteria used are high enough that a minor downgrading should not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest at maturity. Existing investments with the downgraded counterparty will therefore be allowed to run to maturity, unless there is reason to believe that an attempt should be made to retrieve the funds beforehand.

63 It should be noted that credit ratings are subject to change without prior warning, and that a high credit rating is an indication, not a guarantee, of a financial body's stability and creditworthiness.

64 The Council is aware that external fund managers are potentially able to achieve higher returns on an investment portfolio than in-house staff with limited time and no specialist financial expertise. However, these potential high returns are offset by the managers' fees. The Council has considered the net returns available through the use of external managers, and has decided to retain its policy of retaining the entire portfolio in-house. This policy will be kept under review each year.

Table 12: Returns achieved by the in-house Treasury team compared to the industry average net returns for external fund management teams			
	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
	%	%	%
In-house team	4.67%	4.73%	4.92%
External management (net of charges)	4.69%	4.60%	4.29%
Difference	(0.02)%	0.13%	0.63%

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The Chief Financial Officer's report to the Council on the robustness of the estimates for the purposes of the Council's 2008/09 budgets and the adequacy of the reserves.

Introduction

1. The Local Government Act 2003 section 25 introduced a specific personal duty on the "Chief Financial Officer" (CFO) to report to the Authority on the robustness of the estimates for the purposes of the budget and the adequacy of reserves. The Act requires Members to have regard to the report when determining the Council's budget requirement for 2008/09. Where this advice is not accepted, this should be formally recorded within the minutes of the Council meeting. The Council will consider the recommendations of the Cabinet on the budget for 2008/09 and will determine the planned level of the Council's balances.
2. Sections 32 and 43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 also require billing and precepting authorities to have regard to the level of reserves needed for meeting estimated future expenditure when calculating the net budget requirement.
3. There is also a range of safeguards, which are in place to ensure local authorities do not over-commit themselves financially. These include:
 - The CFO's s.114 powers, which require a report to the Cabinet and to all members of the local authority if there is or is likely to be unlawful expenditure or an unbalanced budget
 - The Prudential Code, which applied to capital financing from 2004/05.

The Robustness of the Recommended Budget

4. A number of reports to the Cabinet in recent years have highlighted the difficulties inherent in setting budgets, not least because of significant changes in the level and complexity of Government funding and continuing pressure to protect and develop services. At the same time major changes have been introduced to the way the Council is structured and managed with Member and officer roles and responsibilities changing fundamentally. These changes are still on going, and do represent a significant risk to the Council's ability to assess properly all the financial pressures it faces.
5. However the Council's budget process, developed over a number of years, has many features that promote an assurance in its reliability:
 - The rolling four year forecast provides a yardstick against which annual budgets can be measured
 - The early commencement of the budget process and the clear annual timetable for both Members and officers including full integration with the BVPP process promotes considered and reasoned decision making
 - The establishment of budget parameters in the summer is designed to create a clear focus before the budget process commences

- The analysis of the budget between the continuing services and one off District Development Fund items smoothes out peaks and troughs and enables CSB trends to be monitored
 - The adoption of a prudent view on the recognition of revenue income and capital receipts
 - The annual bid process whereby new or increased budgets require reports to Cabinet before inclusion in the draft budget
 - Clear and reasoned assumptions made about unknowns, uncertainties or anticipated or forecast changes
6. Changes to the process have also created the facility for far greater consultation, particularly with the creation of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel to deal with finance and performance management issues. An onus is now placed on Portfolio Holders to deliver acceptable and accurate budgets, this is a role that has been taken seriously and with considerable understanding.
7. The budget is therefore based on strong and well-developed procedures and an integrated and systematic approach to the preparation of soundly based capital and revenue plans and accurate income and expenditure estimates. The risks or uncertainties inherent in the budget have been identified and managed, as far as is practicable, and assumptions about their impact have been made.
- 8. The conclusion is that the estimates as presented to the Council are sufficiently robust for the purposes of the Council's overall budget for 2008/09.**

Factors to be taken into account when undertaking a Risk Assessment into the overall Level of Reserves and Balances

9. Guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) states that the following factors should be taken into account when the CFO considers the overall level of reserves and balances:
- Assumptions regarding inflation;
 - Estimates of the level and timing of capital receipts;
 - Treatment of demand led pressures;
 - Treatment of savings;
 - Risks inherent in any new partnerships etc;
 - Financial standing of the authority i.e. level of borrowing, debt outstanding etc;
 - The authority's track record in budget management;
 - The authority's capacity to manage in-year budget pressures;
 - The authority's virements and year-end procedures in relation to under and overspends;
 - The adequacy of insurance arrangements.
10. These issues have formed the basis for budget reports in the past and they remain relevant for the current budget.

Factor Assessment

a. Inflationary pressures

11. Every year base budget estimates are produced and then different inflation factors are applied to the resultant figures to take budgets to out-turn prices. It is inevitable that there will be either over or under provision for the full cost of inflation, as prices will inevitably vary against the estimates made. Efforts have been made to predict the level of inflation in the coming year, but it should be noted that there is one specific item where there could be additional costs:
12. The Council procures energy through consortiums and is currently intending to move to the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) framework agreement, in accordance with advice from the Essex Procurement Hub, at the next renewal. Recent announcements of double digit price increases for the domestic energy market are unlikely to be fully reflected in the wholesale market. However, there is a risk that the allowance for inflation in the budgets will not fully cover increases in energy costs.
13. Future pay awards are in doubt, as agreement has not been reached on an increase for 2008/09 and subsequent years. The Government have stated their desire for three-year deals for the public sector with 2% per annum increases. Although with RPI at 4% that may not be achievable and the 2.475% included in the estimates is felt to be more realistic. Recruitment and retention is less of a concern, but some difficulty is still being experienced in certain areas. In the budgets the centrally held vacancy allowance has been reduced from 3% to 2%. This is to reflect the deletion of some vacant posts as part of the corporate restructuring. It is unlikely that the Authority will have a full establishment throughout 2008/09 and so this allowance is reasonable.

b. Estimates on the level and timing of capital receipts

14. The Council has always adopted a prudent view on the level and timing of capital receipts, a position justified by past experience. Capital receipts are not recognised for budgetary purposes unless they have been received or their receipt is contractually confirmed prior to the budget being ratified.
15. The exception to this relates to receipts from council house sales. In this instance because sales occur throughout the year and the receipts are significant in providing either revenue income to the General Fund or financing the capital programme, assumptions have to be made about their generation. Sales completed in 2007/08 are likely to be less than the 46 in 2006/07, and in line with the current estimate of 30. It is anticipated that sales will now stabilise at 30 for the following three years.
16. Clearly if the forecasts contained in this report are not realised in full, there could be a financial impact on the General Fund because investment income to that account has been based on that level of sales. However, this is relatively unlikely given the low numbers involved.
17. Other capital receipts are likely to be generated during 2008/09. The Council is conducting a review of depot accommodation and is likely to dispose of any surplus land identified. However, as stated above, no receipts are recognised prior to contractual confirmation.

18. Even with the Authority's substantial capital programme, which exceeds £50m over five years, it is anticipated that the balance of usable capital receipts at 31 March 2012 will be £17.3m. The Capital Strategy has made it clear that priority will be given to capital schemes that will create future revenue income. This follows from the increased awareness amongst Members that the using up of balances reduces investment income.

c. Treatment of demand led pressures and savings

19. The largest demand led pressure facing the Council is the new national concessionary fares scheme. Under the new scheme travel is no longer restricted to within the district or county issuing the pass but is allowed anywhere in England. District councils will be required to pay for all concessionary travel within their areas regardless of where the traveller actually lives. This is likely to cause particular difficulties for coastal districts and those with other tourist attractions.
20. The projections from the current consultant to the Essex Countywide scheme are that Epping Forest is unlikely to be significantly worse off under the new scheme. However, where a change of this size occurs it is difficult to forecast the outcome with any degree of certainty. To provide a degree of comfort the CSB budget has been matched to the consultant's projections and the specific grant of £235,000 has been taken to the DDF to meet any additional costs.
21. It is clear that in order to avoid breaching the guideline on reserves it will be necessary to seek savings throughout the period covered by the medium term financial strategy. However, the current strength of reserves means that it will be possible to do this in a structured and progressive way.

d. Risks inherent in partnership arrangements etc

22. There are several partnership arrangements, some of which carry risks of varying degrees in monetary terms. The risks have not been specifically identified in the budget but are underwritten through the Authority's balances.

e. Financial standing of the authority (i.e. level of borrowing, debt outstanding etc)

23. The Authority is currently debt free and intends to remain so in the medium term. Revenue reserves for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account are in a healthy state.

f. The authority's track record in budget management, including its ability to manage in-year budget pressures

24. The Authority has a proven track record in financial management as borne out by the Use of Resources assessments from the Authority's external auditors. A comparison of actual net expenditure with estimates over a number of years shows that the Council rarely experiences under or over spends of any significance.

25. However, the discipline of Financial Regulations - not incurring spending without a clear budget - must be rigidly observed, and the monitoring of the riskier budgets, particularly income budgets, needs to be maintained. The quarterly budget monitoring reports on key budgets to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel will continue throughout 2008/09. The production of these reports during the year is essential in identifying emerging problems at the earliest opportunity. This allows maximum benefit to be accrued from any corrective action taken.

g. The authority's virement and year-end procedures in relation to under and overspends

26. The Authority has recognised and embedded virement procedures that allow funds to be moved to areas of pressure. Although underspends and overspends are not automatically carried forward, the Authority does have an approved carry forward scheme for capital and DDF which is actioned through the formal provisional outturn report to Cabinet in the summer of each year.

h. The adequacy of insurance arrangements

27. The Council is now in the third year of a five-year agreement, which was subject to a competitive tendering process. As part of this exercise different levels of excess and policy cover were considered. The Council made a decision to undertake a greater degree of self-insurance and accept higher excess levels to reduce insurance premiums. Savings on premiums resulting from this exercise are likely to be in the order of £1m over the life of the agreement, and some of this saving is being paid into the Council's insurance fund. Any claims resulting from the acceptance of higher excesses will have to be paid from the fund. However, in 2006/07 a net surplus arose on the account, which has led to an increase in the fund from £831,000 to £981,000.

i. Pension liabilities

28. Following receipt of the latest triennial valuation of the Pension Fund a report setting out the different payment options was made to the 19 November meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee. The current ongoing employers contribution is 10.1%, which has to increase to 13.1% over the three-year life of the valuation. Members decided to introduce the increases by 1% per annum and consequently make higher deficit payments, although total payments over the three years are lower with this option.
29. Despite taking the higher deficit payment option, the deficit payments to the fund will reduce from £1.822m in 2007/08 to £1.796m in 2008/09. Council agreed in December, as part of approving the Capital Strategy, that the policy of capitalising deficit payments would continue and a further £2.5m of capital receipts will be moved to the Pension Deficit Reserve to fund this.
30. An annual application is made to Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for a capitalisation direction. Authority was given to capitalise the full additional deficit payment in 2005/06 although for 2006/07 the capitalisation was limited to 57.19% of the value of the application. This followed concerns at the Treasury about excessive capitalisations creating pressure on the Chancellor's "Golden Rule".

31. The regulations for issuing capitalisation directions were changed for 2006/07, with a “Two Gate” system being introduced. Applications must satisfy the previous criteria to clear Gate 1 but applications will not pass Gate 2 until the national economic impact has been considered in total. Confirmation has now been received that the applications to capitalise the additional pension deficit payments for 2007/08 have cleared both Gate 1 and Gate 2. If capitalisation directions had not been obtained then the additional charges to revenue for 2007/08 would have been £680,000 General Fund and £319,000 HRA. As the deficit payments have not changed significantly the amounts at risk in future years are broadly similar.

Statement on the adequacy of the reserves and balances

32. The Use of Resources assessment now conducted by the external auditors has moved on from the formulaic approach of CPA to achieve the ‘good’ ranking for reserves. The old formula had suggested that the Council should maintain a General Fund balance of at least £0.89m but no more than £17.86m. The Council’s current best estimate of the General Fund balance at 31 March 2009 is £7.1m as shown in the Annex 12. This is clearly within the range specified but as a benchmark is not particularly useful. Therefore a risk assessment related to the Authority’s individual circumstances is provided as a more meaningful benchmark against which the adequacy of the balances can be determined.
33. The following table lists those developments and cost pressures within the four-year forecast that offer the greatest risk to financial stability.

Item of risk	Estimated level of financial risk £000	Level of risk %	Adjusted level of risk £000
Basic 5% of Net Operating Expenditure			910
Pay award being settled 1% in excess of 2.475% est. for 08/09 and future years	600	20	120
Inflationary pressures between 1-4% higher than budget	600+	20	120+
Loss of North Weald Market Income	4,000+	20	800+
General Income between 1-4% less than budget	600+	10	60+
Interest Rates 1% less than budget	500+	10	50+
Emergency Contingency	800+	20	160+
Capitalisation applications refused for 08/09 and 09/10	1,300	40	520
Renegotiating External contracts and partnership arrangements	Say 1,000+	10	100+
Total	9,400+		2,840+

34. The presentation in this table is not a scientific approach, but a crude attempt to put a broad order of scale on the main financial risks potentially facing the Council. It is meant to be thought provoking rather than definitive. It is certainly not a complete list of all the financial risks the Council faces but it shows the potential scale of some of the risks and uncertainties and the impact they may have on the Council’s balances if they were to come to fruition.

35. Based on the CPA formula there is an expectation that an authority should carry a level of balance that equates to at least 5% of the net operating expenditure (NOE) of the Authority. During the period of the four-year plan NOE is expected to average out at £18.13m, which suggests a figure of £910,000.
36. The income generated from the market at North Weald airfield is significant to the ongoing financial well being of the Authority. Uncertainties surrounding the future of the airfield create a risk to the Authority that needs to be recognised and quantified hence its inclusion in the list above. A number of contracts have been granted to outside bodies for the provision of Council services. The failure of any of these contracts would inevitably lead to the Council incurring costs, which may not be reimbursed. Other than certain bond arrangements there is no specific provision made in the estimates for this type of expenditure, which therefore would have to be covered by revenue balances. Although the awarding of a new long-term contract for waste management to SITA has reduced this risk for 2008/09.
37. It is common practice amongst other councils to include contingency sums in their budgets for major risk items such as pay awards, general inflation, income and emergencies. Previously this Authority has chosen to cover such risks through its revenue balances. However, by way of additional comfort for 2008/09 a contingency of £175,000 has been included in the budget for the first time. The contingency will be allocated by Council as and when necessary and should help reduce the need for supplementary estimates during the year.
38. The Council has always been conscious of its balances position as can be demonstrated by budget reports over many years. Fortunately for the Authority the question had not been whether it had a sufficient level of balance but rather that it had too much. Balances have been increasing since 2003/04 and are predicted to peak at £7.1m as at 31 March 2009.
39. A number of policies have been determined previously to bring about reductions and the current policy reflects that deficit budgets are now necessary for the balances to fall. That is to say that the current policy allows for balances to fall to no lower than 25% of Net Budget Requirement (NBR). This is slightly different from the NOE stated above, the average NBR figure for the next four years is expected to be £17.42m therefore 25% of that figure equates to £4.35m. The current four-year forecast shows balances still at £6.11m at the end of 2011/12.
40. The risk assessment undertaken above suggests that 20-25% of NBR is about the range that this authority should be maintaining its balances within. By 31 March 2012 balances will represent 34.3% of NBR, which is perfectly adequate. However, Members are aware that this situation can only be achieved with CSB savings and have stated a clear target of reducing expenditure throughout the period of the medium term financial strategy.
41. It has already been stated that the capital fund is expected to remain in a surplus position beyond 2011/12 and the capital programme can be fully funded.
42. The Council has a few earmarked reserves (e.g. DDF), which are intended to be used for specific purposes over a period of time of more than a single financial year. These earmarked reserves have been excluded from the assessment for this reason.

43. HRA revenue balances are expected to decrease slightly from £6.2m as at 31 March 2008 to £6.18m as at 31 March 2009. The balance on the Housing Repairs Fund is expected to increase slightly over the next year, from £3.29m to £3.30m. However, the Housing Major Repairs Reserve is predicted to reduce from £6.34m to £3.31m. Overall the financial standing of the HRA and its reserves going into 2008/09 remain healthy.
44. **The conclusion is that the reserves of the Council are adequate to cope with the financial risks the Council faces in 2008/09 but that spending needs to be kept under review and savings made in the medium term.**

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 19 February 2008

Portfolio Holder: Councillor C Whitbread

Item: 10(c)

1. CALENDAR OF MEETINGS – 2008/09

Recommending:

...

(1) That, subject to consideration of the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, set out in (2) below, the calendar of meetings for the period May 2008 - May 2009 attached as Appendix 1 be adopted.

Recommendation set out in the attached report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

(2) That with effect from 2008/09, provision be made in the council calendar of meetings for a meeting of each Area Plans Sub-Committee every three weeks.

(NOTE: In considering this report of the Cabinet, the Council will need to have regard to the attached report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for Area Plans Sub-Committees to be held on a three weekly cycle.

If the Council adopts the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee it is recommended that the revised calendar of meetings for the period May 2008 – May 2009 attached as Appendix 2 be adopted. To achieve a three week cycle for Area Plans Sub-Committees it has been necessary to adjust the dates of the Local Councils Liaison Committee)

Background

1.1 The programme of meetings of the Council is considered by the Cabinet each year for onward approval by the Council. The calendar has developed over time to meet the changing needs of the Authority.

Council

1.2 As in previous years, Council meetings have been programmed for Tuesdays except those scheduled for May and June, which are on Thursdays as the Annual Meeting takes place two weeks after the election in May and the Council is required to agree the statutory Statement of Accounts by 30 June each year. A provisional Council meeting has been scheduled for 30 September 2008, in the event that the revised Statutory Statement of Accounts requires agreement. Two Council budget-setting

meetings are provisionally set for February 2009. The meeting will take place on the first date unless the required information from the County Council to set precepts is not received in time.

Cabinet

- 1.3 Nine meetings of the Cabinet are programmed throughout the year.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- 1.4 As last year, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee will meet at the start of the municipal year to plan their programme in conjunction with the Cabinet. Meetings will then be held each cycle on the Thursday before Cabinet, ie after the Cabinet agenda is published. This is to allow both normal scrutiny business and “oversight” of the Cabinet agenda to improve pre-decision scrutiny.

Overview and Scrutiny Standing Panels

- 1.5 The Constitution provides for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to determine the number and terms of reference of Standing Scrutiny Panels each year. Meetings of the four Standing Panels have been scheduled throughout the year.

Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Panels

- 1.6 No scheduled meetings have been programmed for the Task and Finish Panels. These panels are established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and tend to meet as and when they are needed to complete their own self-set timetabled reviews.

Licensing Committee and Sub-Committees

- 1.7 Regular monthly meetings of the Sub-Committee are planned in order to meet the on-going requirements including the new powers under the Gambling Act.

Area Plans Sub-Committees

- 1.8 The Area Plans Sub-Committees have been scheduled to meet on a four weekly cycle. There is a review currently being undertaken by Overview and Scrutiny as to whether these Sub-Committees should meet on a three-weekly cycle, and the outcome of this is the subject of a separate report to this meeting.

Variations to the Programme

- 1.9 Individual frequencies of meetings can be varied. In practice additional meetings are called as and when issues dictate, including call-ins.

Recommendation

- 1.10 We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

<u>Epping Forest District Council Calendar of Meetings 2008-09</u>													
	2008					2009					APPENDIX 1		
Meeting	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
<u>Executive</u>													
Council	15th	26th	29th		(30th)	28th		16th		17th(19th)		28th	21st
Cabinet		9th	14th		1st	6th	10th	15th		2nd	9th	20th	
FPM Cabinet Comm		16th			22nd		17th	8th	26th		16th		
<u>Scrutiny</u>													
OS Committee		5th	10th	28th		2nd	6th	11th	29th		5th	16th	
Finance & Perf Mgmt		17th		19th			11th		13th	10th	31st		
Housing			3rd			9th			8th		26th		
Environment & Planning		24th			2nd	21st		9th		24th		21st	
Constitution & Mbr Serv's		30th			8th		3rd		12th			6th	
<u>Planning</u>													
District Development		3rd		5th		7th		2nd		3rd		7th	
Plans South	28th	25th	23rd	20th	17th	15th	12th	10th	21st	18th	18th	15th	13th
Plans East	7th	4th	2nd-30th	27th	24th	22nd	19th	17th	28th	25th	25th	22nd	20th
Plans West	14th	11th	9th	6th	3rd	1st-29th	26th		7th	4th	4th	1st-29th	27th
<u>Licensing</u>													
Licensing Committee						15th						15th	
Licensing Sub-Comm		5th	3rd	7th	4th	2nd	6th	4th	8th	5th	5th	2nd	
<u>Miscellaneous</u>													
Audit & Governance		23rd			15th		24th			9th	30th		
Housing Appeals Panel		19th	24th	21st	18th	23rd	20th	18th	22nd	12th	19th	23rd	
Joint Consultative Comm			17th			16th			15th			9th	
Local Councils Liaison		18th					5th				11th		
Standards Committee			15th		13th				27th			14th	
<u>Easter 2009</u>													
Fri 10-Apr to Mon 13-Apr Inc.													
		<u>Election 2009</u>											
		Thu 7-May											

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Report to the Council

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 19 February 2008

Chairman: Councillor R Morgan

Item: 10 (c)

1. AREA PLANS SUB-COMMITTEES – 3-WEEK CYCLE

Recommending:

That with effect from 2008/9, provision be made in the Council calendar of meetings for a meeting of each Area Plans Sub Committee every three weeks.

**Note that consultation replies from Town and Parish Councils are attached as an Appendix to this report.*

Background

1. Over the past five years the Government has required local authorities to improve their performance in the speed of determining planning applications. They did this by setting targets, 'naming and shaming' those authorities that were 'failing' and by providing incentives in the form of additional grant to those authorities that were 'succeeding'.

2. The Government began separating the planning application performance into three categories and set a target for each:

Major applications (large commercial schemes and residential schemes over 10 units)60% in 13 weeks
Minor applications (smaller commercial and residential schemes)..... 65% in 8 weeks
Other applications (mostly householder applications for extensions, etc, changes of use, adverts and other minor applications) 80% in 8 weeks.

Five years ago (2002/03) this Council's performance was:

Major26%

Minor55%

Other78% all three below the Government's targets.

Last year (2006/07), the performance had improved to:

Major67%

Minor73%

Other90% all three exceeding the Government's targets.

3. However, bearing in mind the investment the Council has made in Planning in recent years and a desire to provide a first-class service to its residents, the Council's objective is to achieve top quartile performance for these three key indicators, and has thus adopted the following targets in the BVPP for 2007/08:

Major74.75%
Minor80.39%
Other91.61%

Current Performance

4. For the first nine months of the current year (April-December 2007) the performance has been:

Major73.33%
Minor80.53%
Other89.21%

5. Of the 1,649 planning decisions taken during this period, 1,440 were within the target periods and 209 outside of their targets. These comprised 8 out of 30 Major applications, 59 out of 303 Minor applications and 142 out of 1316 Other applications.

6. Of the 209 outside target, 150 were applications determined by committee and 59 under delegated powers.

Customer Satisfaction

7. The latest Customer Satisfaction Survey was carried out deriving from decisions made between April and September 2006 asking applicants and agents a series of questions in accordance with a centrally designed form (so that comparisons could be made nationally). The results were that 82% of customers were very or fairly satisfied with the service they received from Epping Forest Development Control service, which was the highest in Essex and exceeded the national, top-quartile performance (80%).

Performance Improvement Plan

8. In September 2007 a revised performance improvement plan was adopted setting out a number of initiatives to be explored in order to further improve performance. The plan included:

- i) complete implementation of various e-government initiatives including introduction of 1APP the national planning application form – *in fact the Government has set back this initiative until April 2008. Other ICT initiatives are progressing and are leading to some efficiencies relating to professional officers time rather than statistical improvements;*
- ii) enhanced monitoring of application progress by senior staff;
- iii) fill a long-vacant establishment post that had been covered on a part-time, working-from-home basis – *position filled from 02/01/2008;*
- iv) secure application plans on the web site for public access – *this would enable some efficiency savings. This is now to be a priority within ICT;*
- v) eliminate the break in committee cycle over the election period each year; - *this has been secured from May 2008;*

- vi) seek 'tweaks' to officer delegation – *it is recognised that there is little appetite amongst members for enhancing officer delegation but there are one or two tweaks that may avoid a few simple matters taking up committee time;*
- vii) seek change from 4-week to 3-week cycle of Area Plans subcommittees; and
- viii) increase staff resources.

9. It is appropriate to add that none of these measures on their own are likely to lead to a significant change in performance, but each measure will assist in the push to improve performance.

10. Clearly, since September only points (i) and (ii) have had any impact upon performance and it is relevant to note that during the last quarter only 11.5% of decisions were made outside target, whereas for the first two quarters of the year the figure was 13.2% and yet, because the figures are so volatile, the last quarter has seen the Major performance figure dip just under the target whereas the Minor figure now exceeds the target.

11. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Panel looking into Value for Money in Planning is looking at both financial and staff resourcing in Planning and this report is seeking only consideration of the change from a 4-week cycle to a 3-week cycle.

Three or Four-Week Cycle

12. It can be appreciated that losing one week in the committee cycle, at its very simplest, would save one week in the time taken to determine applications decided at committee. An analysis of decisions during April to December 2007 reveals that 18 committee decisions slipped over target by less than one week such that all those would have been within their target times if the committees operated on a 3-week cycle. This would have resulted in current performance of:

Major76.66%
 Minor82.17%
 Other90.12%

13. If this occurred together with the avoidance of the break in committees over the election period, performance would have been:

Major76.66%
 Minor83.16%
 Other90.34%

14. It can be added that a small, but unknown, number of other applications might have met their target if the case officer was confident that a more regular meeting of the appropriate committee would have enabled the target to be met.

15. Generally speaking there would be no follow on effect on the calendar of meetings, in losing the current, fourth fallow week. The Civic Offices will still have the Council Chamber available every third week as Area Plans South would be held at Roding Valley School. This would mean that other meetings that use the Council Chamber on Wednesdays, such as the Local Councils Liaison meetings, would still have a venue.

16. The suggestion has been made that the revised timetable over the election period be trialled before altering the committee cycle and the Council may feel this is a sufficient step. However, it must be appreciated that it is considered that not one of the improvement

measures on their own will lead to a significant change in performance but rather together they will aid achievement of targets.

Local Councils

17. Local Councils need not be concerned that this change would affect their ability to make considered comments on applications. Local Councils are consulted on applications within seven days of their receipt and are required to make comment within three weeks. The change in committee cycle is aimed at catching those applications that presently take nine or 10 weeks to determine and deciding them within eight weeks. This has no impact upon the first three weeks of consideration, the time during which local councils make their comments.

18. The practice of, exceptionally, completing a report on an application before the consultation period has finished will not change as a result of this proposal. Any comments received after printing an agenda are read out in full at the committee, which gives them a higher profile than simply typing them in a report and is accepted practice satisfying, for example, the Ombudsman.

Costs

19. In terms of additional costs, these fall into three categories:

- (1) Rents - applies to Plans South
- (2) Staffing costs
- (3) Printing costs

(1) Rents

Plans South would increase from 12 to 17 meetings - each additional meeting would cost £104 in rent to the school - this is a variable cost not budgeted for.

(2) Staffing

It can be assumed for the purposes of each meeting that there would be three staff there as a minimum - one planner, one committee officer and one webcasting operator. Assuming that meetings generally finish before 10pm then an additional cost of £56.50 x 3 would be incurred. These costs come from planning services (for the planner) and RDS for the Committee Officer and the webcast operator – the RDS budget for this has been overspent to date this year but contained within salary budgets as a whole for RDS. Revised estimates have been made for this budget and these should carry through to next years budget.

(3) Printing costs

Each planning agenda cost between £100 and £150 - the printing budget was not increased for inflation this year (when we also reduced the number of planning meetings) and we are currently showing an underspend on this budget (partly because we are not having these meetings). Even taking into account the additional meetings it is not anticipated that members would be asked for even an inflationary increase in the budget again next year. The printing budget has decreased significantly over the last three-four years since the introduction of the Committee Management System from a peak of about £80k to under £50k currently.

20. Other factors have not been costed for, such as travel for members, lighting, heat etc for each of these meetings.

Constitution and Members Services Scrutiny Standing Panel

21. The Constitution and Members Service Scrutiny Panel considered this on 20 November 2007, when they recommended that the Council agree a three-week cycle for Area Plans Sub-Committees, with a start date of May 2008. But that prior to this the proposals should be put to all members and Local Councils to seek their views. This was subsequently done via the Local Councils Liaison Meeting and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, both of whom requested extra time for consideration.

Local Councils Liaison Meeting

22. There was some disquiet amongst Local Councils at their meeting on 28 November that the proposed timescale did not give them time enough to respond.

Summary

23. Changing the committee cycle from 4 weeks to 3 weeks cannot be regarded as a panacea solving all ills and providing a step-change in performance. However, it is one of a series of measures that together with others will assist in securing an improvement in performance.

24. Planning Delivery Grant was dependant upon achieving the government targets. The basis upon which PDG is now to be calculated no longer includes development control performance (other than a penalty if government targets are not met). There is, then, no additional funding from government for hitting top-quartile targets but the Council desires to provide its residents with the best service possible and speed of decision-making is one simple measure by which comparison with others can be readily be made to indicate the quality of service delivery.

Area Plans Sub-Committee – Three Week Cycle Responses from Town and Parish Councils

1. Response from North Weald Bassett Parish Council:

The above matter was discussed at the Parish Council Planning Meeting yesterday evening where the following comments were made:

North Weald Bassett Parish Council would have no objection to the changes to the committee system for plans to be on a 3 week cycle, providing that all Parish and Town Councils are able to have their views read by Councillors who are Members of the relevant Planning Committee. We would prefer all Parish Council views and comments be placed within an Agenda, however we are aware that these views may have to be circulated on a Yellow Supplementary Agenda. Providing that this could be circulated in time for it to be read by the Members of the relevant Planning Committees we would have no objection. However we feel that the District Council should be 'lenient' when there are additional gaps between Parish Council meetings such as the summer recess and Christmas/New Year Period, and allow an extension of time for comments to be submitted. Subject to these matters being adhered to we would have no objection.

2. Response from Loughton Town Council:

As the district council are already within the government targets for the turn around of applications, there would seem no real need for this proposal to be adopted. If it were adopted it could restrict the ability of town councils to properly consider planning applications. It could also mean that local councillors would not have as much opportunity to attend subcommittee meetings, as there would inevitably be more clashes.

3. Councillor Caroline Pond: this is a personal view as a planning councillor:

Our officers are to be congratulated on the way that performance last year way exceeded the Government targets, and is similar at this stage.

It almost reached the council's own targets so it is premature to change the cycle. With the extra meeting in May/ June it may improve.

The spare week is useful for parishes to hold their own meetings (often held on Wednesdays), thereby avoiding some clashes for dual-hatted councillors, and for parishes wishing to speak at Area Plans.

It can also be useful for extra non-planning District meetings.

More information is required on the costs of holding an extra meeting. More information is also needed on how this will effect consultation by the public, and the parish councils. It is not acceptable for views to be given on the night, and not included in the agenda.

Cllr. Caroline Pond

4. Response from Roydon Parish Council:

Roydon Parish Council considered the suggestion of a 3 week cycle to committee meetings recently and has concerns that this will not give Parish Councils like Roydon sufficient time to comment on applications particularly major ones.

Roydon PC considers the majority of planning applications at its regular monthly meetings. Very occasionally we hold a planning meeting in-between times but generally this has not been necessary as the current arrangement, with some flexibility asked for and usually agreed with individual planning officers, has sufficed.

Our concerns are that holding a second regular monthly meeting (to ensure that our comments are included for a 3 week cycle sub-committee meeting) will mean more of a time commitment from members and the Clerk as well as hall costs - historically it has always been more difficult to ensure quorum attendance at ad-hoc planning meetings.

We trust that our comments will assist in the decision making process.

5. Response from Stapleford Abbots Parish Council:

Their members believe that a three-week cycle would incur extra costs to Parish and Town Councils because additional planning meetings would be required. At the present time the Sub-Committee meetings are on a specific day each month and are easy to diarize; three-weekly meetings would lead to confusion.

It is understood that the proposal would assist the Planning Department to meet Government guidelines but the Council would suggest that other avenues be explored to meet these guidelines rather than put Parish and Town Councils under pressure.

6. Response from Nazeing Parish Council:

Members of the Nazeing Parish Council would object to Plans Sub Committee meetings being held on a three-weekly cycle.

Members consider that it is not necessary because Planning Services already meet government targets and that an extra week in the monthly cycle could be put to better use within the Parish Council, Town Council and District Council.

The present meetings are not always well attended by sub committee members and therefore there would be doubt if this would improve attendance id asked to attend more meetings.

The cost has also got to be considered, and Members ask that the costing issue be dealt with and circulated before any decisions are made.

The Council has already changed the dates for Planning Committee meetings to accommodate turn around times and would ask that this matter be seriously reconsidered.

7. Response from Ongar Town Council:

Councillors would wish there to be a demonstrable reason for this change as they are concerned that this may result in extra meetings (and therefore an increase in costs) for Parish and Town Councils and a difficulty in meeting the required deadlines.

Members would also like to see a return to the practice of holding these meetings at various locations throughout the District and not only in the Civic Offices, Epping. Members believe this would result in a greater public attendance at these meetings.

8. Response from Epping Town Council:

The following is an extract from the Council's minutes, indicating their view on this matter:

Council considered a letter and report on the District Council's proposals to move the Planning Sub-committee cycle from four weeks to three weeks. The Clerk advised the Council that the Council's decision will be little affected by the change but exceptionally, single applications are received outside the normal weekly list arrangements and these may be troublesome under the current delegations.

Council RESOLVED to direct the Clerk to write to EFDC Planning Section advising them of Council's general approval of the three-week cycle for Planning Sub-committees; provided the 'weekly list' arrangements are strictly adhered to. Council also resolved to delegate authority to the Clerk acting in consultation with the Chairman of Planning and General Purposes Committee to: either respond to any applications which, due to time of receipt, cannot be placed before an ordinary meeting of Committee (advising the next available Committee of any decisions); or to call an extraordinary meeting of Committee.

9. Response from Moreton, Bobbingworth and the Lavers Parish Council:

Generally they cannot see any problems with the concept providing that:-

- The revised time scale does not reduce the amount of time allocated to PC's for their consultation;
- That there is no reduction in quality to planning decision caused by the increased frequency of Sub-committee meetings.

10. Response from Lambourne Parish Council:

We have discussed these proposals and have no objections in principle to the meetings taking place every 3 weeks. However, we would hope this would mean that the Parish Council would still have the usual time to meet and discuss the plans in order to submit our decisions. We meet monthly and quite often have to contact the planning officer to request a 1 week / 2 week extension for our decisions to be submitted. Ordinarily this is possible, as the plans are not going to a planning committee immediately and therefore this would fit in with the schedule. However, if plans go to committee sooner, it would mean that this would no longer be possible and we would have to hold interim meetings. This would have financial implications as we have to pay for hall hire for committee meetings and would also impose on Councillor's time to attend more committee meetings.

Therefore, if the 3 weekly cycle would shorten the consultation time we would not support this proposal.

11. Response from Buckhurst Hill Parish Council

The Parish Planning Committee considered the papers and made the following observations:

1. This Government driven change will no doubt increase the rate at which proposals are processed but will further increase the pressure on officers and do nothing to improve the quality of the decisions made.
2. An increase in the rate of granting permission further benefits the developer.
3. We need to be assured that the change does not further diminish the short time available for a response from the Parish.
4. We are very concerned that applications submitted during holiday periods will disenfranchise legitimate objectors.
5. The effects of planning decisions will be with us for at least a generation.
6. Concentration on targets of this sort produce changes in culture, which may be detrimental to the democratic process.
7. How does this proposed change improve the democratic process?

12. Response from Willingale Parish Council:

Willingale Parish Council has no problem with the three-week cycle as we do not hold separate meetings to discuss plans - they are circulated to Members.

They are concerned, however, that in view of the objections we have learned about from town councils and larger parishes, that the three-week turn-around could be reduced. That would make it difficult to circulate plans in a rural and widespread parish like Willingale.

They would very much like EFDC to push ahead with applications to be available on line, including plans and drawings.

13. Response from Chigwell Parish Council:

The Parish Council wanted to draw attention to the fact that Chigwell Parish Council has five dual-hatted Councillors and the recently introduced “fallow week” means that they can attend more meetings and are therefore more effective. The loss to the Parish Council is considered to be far greater than the small gain by Planning Services in achieving targets.

Since there is no funding gain to the District Council for achieving top quartile status there seems little point in imposing more difficulties on the Parish Council.

The Councillors have now agreed to consider investigating taking over as the Planning Sub-Committee for Chigwell given it's Quality Council Status.

<u>Epping Forest District Council Calendar of Meetings 2008-09</u>													
	2008					2009					APPENDIX 2		
Meeting	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
<u>Executive</u>													
Council	15th	26th	29th		(30th)	28th		16th		17th(19th)		28th	21st
Cabinet		9th	14th		1st	6th	10th	15th		2nd	9th	20th	
FPM Cabinet Comm		16th			22nd		17th	8th	26th		16th		
<u>Scrutiny</u>													
OS Committee		5th	10th	28th		2nd	6th	11th	29th		5th	16th	
Finance & Perf Mgmt		17th		19th			11th		13th	10th	31st		
Housing			3rd			9th			8th		26th		
Environment & Planning		24th			2nd	21st		9th		24th		21st	
Constitution & Mbr Serv's		30th			8th		3rd		12th			6th	
<u>Planning</u>													
District Development		3rd		5th		7th		2nd		3rd		7th	
Plans South	21th	11th	2nd-23rd	13th	3rd-24th	15th	5th-26th	17th	21st	11th	4th-25th	15th	13th
Plans East	7th-28th	18th	9th-30th	20th	10th	1st-22nd	12th	3rd	7th-28th	18th	11th	1st-22nd	20th
Plans West	14th	4th-25th	16th	6th-27th	17th	8th-29th	19th	10th	14th	4th-25th	18th	8th-29th	27th
<u>Licensing</u>													
Licensing Committee						15th						15th	
Licensing Sub-Comm		5th	3rd	7th	4th	2nd	6th	4th	8th	5th	5th	2nd	
<u>Miscellaneous</u>													
Audit & Governance		23rd			15th		24th			9th	30th		
Housing Appeals Panel		19th	24th	21st	18th	23rd	20th	18th	22nd	12th	19th	23rd	
Joint Consultative Comm			17th			16th			15th			9th	
Local Councils Liaison		11th					5th				4th		
Standards Committee			15th			13th			27th			14th	
<u>Easter 2009</u>													
Fri 10-Apr to Mon 13-Apr Inc.													
		<u>Election 2009</u>											
		Thu 7-May											

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Report to the Council

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny

Date: 19 February 2008

Chairman: Councillor R Morgan

Item: 11(b)

1. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 - PROVISIONS RELATING TO ELECTIONS

Recommending:

(1) That the option of changing to whole Council district elections every four years be not pursued; and

(2) That the other provisions in Act relating to elections as set out in the report be noted.

Introduction

1.1 We asked the Standing Scrutiny Panel on Constitution and Members Services, as part of their work programme for the current year, to review the contents of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This is an important piece of legislation, which affects the Council's Constitution, its governance arrangements, and the role of Councillors including electoral matters, local authority executives, Overview and Scrutiny and other changes to constitutional arrangements.

1.2 We have considered the Panel's report on the electoral provisions in the Act.

Changing the Electoral Cycle

1.3 Part 2 of the Act deals with new powers for district councils to change their electoral schemes. Ministerial approval is no longer required.

1.4 This Council currently operates a system of election by thirds so that District Councillors are re-elected in three years out of every four. This system has been in operation since 1976 and was reaffirmed in 2002 as part of the district electoral review at that time.

1.5 The procedure for changing to whole Council elections requires:

(a) reasonable steps to be taken to consult such persons as the Authority thinks appropriate;

(b) approval by means of a Council resolution to be passed at a meeting specially convened for the purpose with a majority of at least two thirds of the members voting;

(c) the resolution being passed within the period prescribed in the Act (either the period ending on 31 December 2010 or the period starting with the Council's annual meeting in 2014 and ending on 31 December of that year or in any fourth year subsequently).

1.6 This resolution would mean that the Council would be subject to a new electoral scheme providing for election of all Councillors in 2011 and every four years thereafter. Under this arrangement all sitting Councillors would retire four days after election day on 2011 and those elected (or re-elected) would come into office for a four year term.

1.7 The Council is required by the Act to publicise this resolution and produce an explanatory document explaining the effect of the resolution and to give notice of the resolution to the Electoral Commission.

1.8 The Act also allows Councils to change back to election by thirds if they have previously operated that system in the period since 1974. Similar conditions regarding the passing of that resolution to that effect, consultation, and public notice apply. However changing back requires that a notice of the adoption of that resolution must be served on the Electoral Commission who then have to decide whether to ask the Boundary Committee for England to conduct an electoral review and to consider making an order for election by thirds whether the Boundary Committee for England has conducted a review.

Investigation of Arguments For and Against Changing to Whole Council Elections

1.9 Now that the Council has more freedom to make this change, we have considered the arguments for and against adopting a whole Council election cycle. These arguments can be grouped together under the following headings:

- (a) Local Democracy;
- (b) Political Management of the Council; and
- (c) Resources and Costs.

1.10 Our first step was to obtain details of other local authorities that had made the change to whole Council elections so that we could examine their reports arguing the advantages and disadvantages of that policy. Three local authorities: Broadlands District Council (Norfolk), Eastbourne Borough Council (East Sussex), and Castle Point District Council (Essex).

1.11 Castle Point District Council was of interest to us because it was an authority which had changed in the reverse direction (i.e., from whole Council elections to election by thirds).

1.12 The two Councils (Eastbourne and Broadlands) who changed to whole Council elections were clearly strongly influenced by research documents produced by the Electoral Commission and the Government in 2004/5 on this subject. Extracts from these two reports are set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to this report.

...

Electoral Commission Findings

1.13 We think it is worth quoting a section of the Electoral Commission report from 2004 in relation to electoral cycles:

"The Commission recommends that each local authority in England should hold whole Council elections with all Councillors elected simultaneously every four years.

The Commission recommends that all local government electors in England should elect members of their District, Metropolitan Borough, London Borough or Unitary Council simultaneously once every four years. Two years later, in the mid point of the electoral cycle, electors in areas with county councils, citywide authorities or any future sub national government should elect representatives to those bodies."

1.14 Other points which arise from the Electoral Commission study are as follows:

- (a) Understanding among the Electorate - the Commission points out that a mixed pattern of electoral cycles is "unclear and inconsistent" and may explain the number of electors who appear in the Commission's Public Consultation Exercise to be unaware of when the elections will be held in their area;

(b) Equity between Electors - the Commission concludes that it is unfair that, in systems of election by thirds, some electors "may have fewer opportunities to vote and influence the political composition of the same local authority than their neighbours in a different ward". Greater equity, it is concluded, would be achieved by all electors voting every four years;

(c) Leadership Stability - the Commission explores the arguments for elections by thirds or whole Council elections to establish which can provide a more stable political environment. The Commission points out that election by thirds may mean "less potential for abrupt changes of political control and switches in policy" but could imply that "important but controversial decisions may be postponed for political reasons until after an election". Other views are expressed about the ability of the electorate to change political control under the two systems. The Commission concludes that "whole Council elections do provide a degree of inherent stability providing an administration with a clear, four year mandate to implement its policies". It does acknowledge however that the election by thirds system does provide an annual opportunity by which political management of the Authority could be changed.

(d) Voter Participation and Turnout - the Commission's view was that on the basis of its research, more frequent elections dilute public interest and reduce turnout. London Borough elections are put forward as an example of how the four year cycle results in higher turnout.

"Vibrant Local Leadership" - ODPM Policy Paper (February 2005)

1.15 This Government document picks up many of the points raised in the Electoral Commission report indicated above. In summary, the Government saw a higher level of public understanding about the system of elections through whole Council cycles. It supports the argument that equity between electors is better achieved through whole Council elections and endorses the arguments of the Electoral Commission regarding stability of political management. On participation and turnout the Government accepted that "less frequent elections do reduce the number of separate opportunities for people to stand as local representatives or become involved in the local political process". However, the Government also commented that frequent elections may dilute public interest in the Council especially in the case of election by thirds which are "often unlikely to offer a clear opportunity for a locality-wide judgement on the overall performance of a Council and the prospect of a clear shift in control where local people felt that this was merited".

Experience within the three other Councils

1.16 We feel it may be useful to outline in brief terms the information we have obtained about the experience of the other three authorities mentioned above.

Broadlands District Council

1.17 The report of Broadlands Council refers to cost savings as a result of economies of scale which arise from all seats being elected at the same time. The Council had clearly consulted the public on making this change but the matter had stalled pending the Government's response to the Electoral Commission report. What can be seen now is that the 2007 Act is the Government's response to the Electoral Commission's proposal. Other than tying the change in electoral cycle to the previous Electoral Commission and Government Policy Papers, there is not a great deal of argument about the pros and cons of making the change.

1.18 It would be fair to say that cost arguments seemed to be a high priority for Broadlands District Council at the time. For the information of the Committee, Broadlands District Council has 47 members and has had a majority party for many years.

Eastbourne Borough Council

1.19 The reports we have seen from Eastbourne Borough Council are also clearly tied to the Electoral Commission report to which we have referred. Statistics were produced

showing the electoral cycles operated by Borough and District Councils in England at the time. 82 held elections by thirds and 149 by whole Council cycles. Seven other councils held elections by halves. The Council had convened a Members' Seminar which had resulted in the following summary of arguments for and against this change:

"Advantages of Whole Council Elections

- (a) long term stability and enhanced stability to plan long-term;
- (b) reduction in the occasions when normal Council activities have to be curtailed because of an election period;
- (c) likely to improve electoral turnout;
- (d) reduction in confusion in the minds of voters and greater clarity in the election process;
- (e) cost savings;

Disadvantages of whole Council Elections

- (f) Council could be perceived as being less accountable when not subject to annual elections;
- (g) potential for reduction in local political activity in non election years and loss of contact between Councillors and residents;
- (h) voter confusion in the face of a ballot paper offering up to three votes instead of the more familiar one;
- (i) potential for loss of cross-party co-operation when elections are seen as being "all or nothing".

1.20 Eastbourne Borough Council is a relatively compact authority and has 28 Councillors. The political make-up of the Council involves only two parties with a small majority.

Castle Point District Council

1.21 This Authority changed from whole Council elections to election by thirds. Relevant reports and discussions with electoral staff did not reveal any clear arguments being put forward for this change of policy. The impression is that the controlling political group of the time were convinced of the need for this change and went ahead with that proposal.

Review of Evidence

1.22 We decided to obtain further information on cost comparisons between whole Council and election by thirds and also recent turnout figures for Epping Forest District in order to test the arguments put forward by the Electoral Commission and the Government about whole Council elections improving turnouts.

1.23 The main elements of the cost of elections are as follows:

- (a) staffing costs;
- (b) printing costs;
- (c) cost of hiring polling stations and count centre; and
- (d) travel and other miscellaneous costs.

Cost Comparison

1.24 The Returning Officer has prepared the financial appraisal set out at Appendix 3 to this report. We would like to draw attention to two specific items:

1.25 Training for members which in the first year of the new electoral cycle (2011/12) is set at £10,000. This is to reflect the fact that a larger than normal intake of new members might be experienced at that time. The Council should note that for the remaining three years of the electoral cycle the figure reverts to the current level.

Public Consultation

1.26 It was clear from Eastbourne Borough Council, that public consultation had been undertaken on this change. The Returning Officer has included in the financial appraisal a sum of £10,000 for consultation with the public on electoral cycles. However, it now seems that the Council has some discretion about the extent of the consultation to be carried out. The Returning Officer has told us that the figure of £10,000 should be regarded as an upper limit, sufficient to carry out a sophisticated public consultation exercise if that was the Council's preference. Any more limited consultation would reduce that cost but it should be borne in mind that some funding might still be required as there is no other available budget at the present time. Thus, the less sophisticated the public consultation, the greater is the cost advantage of pursuing whole Council elections.

Electoral Turnout

1.27 In 1999 a review of the electoral cycle was undertaken by the Council. This was as part of the periodic electoral review which came into operation in 2002 with a whole Council election on new electoral boundary. As part of that review, the Council could have opted for whole Council elections but in a report by the Executive Committee in December 2007 the conclusion was: "That the existing arrangements served the District well and should therefore be continued".

1.28 We asked the Returning Officer to produce for this report some information on turnout figures for District Council elections since 2002. These are summarised below:

Year	Type of Election	Percentage turnout
2002	Whole District Council Election	32.7%
2003	One Third District Council	29.3%
2004	District/Parish/European Parliament Election	37.6%
2005	County Council	N/A
2006	District and Parish Council	42%
2007	District and Parish Council	34%

1.29 We would ask the Council to review those turnout figures in relation to the comments by the Electoral Commission and the ODPM in relation to higher turnouts for whole Council elections.

The Electoral Cycle

... 1.30 Appendix 4 to this report sets out an electoral cycle over the period 2007-2014. The Council will note that the change to whole Council election would take place in 2011 with

Parish, European and County Council elections continuing on the same timetable. The only uncertainty is the date for Parliamentary elections.

5. Summary of Arguments

1.31 We have considered the following summary of the arguments for and against change to whole Council elections prepared by the Panel.

(a) Political Management

1.32 It is clear to us that a majority party with a four year mandate may find it easier to plan and deliver its policy programme than if the majority is "at risk" as a result of annual elections. However, by the same token, whole Council elections could perpetuate a "balanced" Council for a period of four years. If the majority party maintains its position throughout the four year period on elections by thirds, it could be argued that it would still be in a position to deliver its policy programme.

(b) Voter Engagement - Electoral "Overload"

1.33 We have carefully considered the argument that whole Council elections would reduce electoral overload for the voters and result in higher turnout. Although we can see merit of this in some situations (e.g. inner cities), it seems to us that in a County area with Parish and Town Councils the number of different elections is still considerable and, in our view, undermines the case for change. In the case cited by the Electoral Commission's report (London Boroughs) the only elections held are whole Council London Boroughs. There are now Mayoral and London Assembly elections which have a high public profile.

(c) Voter Engagement - Turnout Figures

1.34 Our assessment of turnout figures since 2002 seems to indicate that in this area at least election by thirds has not adversely affected voter turnout. It is possible that turnouts are not as high as might be wished but if a comparison is made between 2002 and 2006, the argument may not be as strong as implied by the Electoral Commission and by the Government in 2004/5.

(d) Electoral Costs

1.35 We have reviewed the cost comparison prepared by the Returning Officer. It is clear that there would be a saving on the whole Council option which would be approximately £10,000 per annum and could be increased if the estimate of consultation is reduced. There would be economies of scale in mounting elections on a whole Council basis. For instance, polling stations would only need to be hired on one occasion and similarly staff will be required in that Ward only once in the four-year period.

1.36 On the other hand, we noted that it will be necessary to take account of four years' inflation with whole Council elections. Similarly if the predictions about the number of bye-elections is correct, some of the "whole Council" economies of scale may be lost over the four-year period.

(e) Staffing

1.37 The Returning Officer has commented that staffing a whole Council election is a major undertaking. It will be necessary for him to engage approximately 70 Presiding Officers, compared with approximately the 40 necessary for each election by thirds. The four-year cycle, in his view, will place greater emphasis on succession planning and the maintenance of the skills and knowledge of Presiding Officers. The process of maintaining a pool of experienced staff will become more difficult and greater training will be necessary to avoid "rustiness".

1.38 This needs to be balanced against the cost arguments for whole Council elections. The Returning Officer has said to us that it will be easier to refresh the skills of Presiding Officers

and secure replacements if the system of election by thirds continues.

(f) Political Implications

1.39 We have also discussed the implications for political parties arising from whole Council elections. Some political groups will find it easier to secure candidates if they are contesting a restricted number of wards. However, it may be more difficult for parties committed to field candidates in all or a large number of wards to find a number of candidates required every four years. Our discussions indicated that it can sometimes be difficult to find candidates for District Council seats and we took this as being an important negative factor in this argument.

(g) The Demand for Change

1.40 In our discussions, we asked ourselves the question whether there was a strong desire within the Council to make the change to whole Council elections. There has been consultation with Members through the Council Bulletin and this attracted very little support for the idea. We accept that there has been no consultation with the public on this idea and it may be that the community at large will be more persuaded to change to whole Council elections having heard some of the arguments which are in this report.

1.41 We had considered convening a Members' Seminar, possibly involving an external facilitator and representatives of the local authorities we have mentioned, in order to explore these matters more informally. However, we are anxious to avoid unnecessary expenditure if there is no deep conviction about making the change.

Other Electoral Matters

1.42 The other provisions in the 2007 Act relating to elections are as follows:

(a) Changing the Parish/Town Council Electoral Cycle

1.43 There is now an opportunity for the Council to make an Order to change the electoral cycle for Parish and Town Councils. This can only be done where it achieves a situation where Parish and Town Council elections are held in the years which coincide with the year of ordinary elections in a Ward situated in any part of the Parish. This provision is designed to ensure that Parish and Town Council elections are synchronised with the District election. However, it will be necessary to consult with all the Parish and Town Councils about whether they wish to change from the current regime to a regime where all were re-elected in the same year.

1.44 As part of this process the District Council would have to make transitional provisions regarding the retirement date for existing Parish Councillors. We have not explored this option in detail although in discussion the point has been made to us that this change might achieve greater economies of scale and reduce costs for mounting elections.

(b) Single Member Wards

1.45 Councillors may ask the Electoral Commission to direct the Boundary Commission to review the District and for the Boundary Committee for England to make recommendations on single member wards for each electoral area. This procedure only applies where:

- (i) not all wards have a single Councillor;
- (ii) the Council is subject to a scheme of whole Council elections.

1.46 Furthermore, the Electoral Commission is not obliged to grant such a request and it would be for the Boundary Committee to make proposals for how those single member wards were to be established.

(c) Names of Electoral Areas

1.47 Under the Act, Councils are now able to change the name of electoral areas by passing a resolution at a meeting convened for the purpose with notice of the subject matter. This no longer requires prior consent from the Secretary of State.

(d) Community Governance Reviews

1.48 This Council may initiate a Community Governance Review of its District or any part thereof. By petition, local communities can also request that such a review be carried out. Such reviews can result in the creation of new Parish Councils, the disbandment of Parish Councils, the grouping of Parish Councils and the creation of individual Parish Councils currently grouped together. There is reference in the Act to further guidance on this process which has not as yet been received.

1.49 We have not have discussed these matters in detail. We refer to these as part of this report for information purposes.

1.50 We recommend as set out at the commencement of this report.

Vibrant Local Leadership – ODPM Policy Paper February 2005

Extract:

The Cycle of Local Elections

49. The current cycle of local elections in England means that councils are elected through a number of different cycles. More than half of all councils hold whole council elections every four years, but others hold elections in two or three years out of four for proportions of the council's seats. This situation is felt by many to be confusing for the public and the Electoral Commission has responded to the Government's invitation to look at this issue by recommending that whole elections are held every four years for all councils, together with a recommendation on how this might be implemented.

50. The Government has carefully considered the Electoral Commission's recommendations and is minded to agree with the principal recommendation to move to whole elections for all English councils, although not necessarily on the same day. Whilst the Government acknowledges the arguments for local.

51. There are several, detailed arguments about how such a system of whole council elections could be introduced. There are, for example, arguments about whether these should be spread over one, two or more separate election days during a four yearly period and whether these would be differentiated by types of authority, or more randomly. The Government plans to hold further discussions with the Electoral Commission and representatives of local government about the desirability and feasibility of any such changes.

The potential benefits of whole elections

The Government sees a number of benefits accruing from such a move:

- A higher level of public understanding about the system that would, in itself, be an aid to supporting the clarity and visibility of local leadership;
- Equity between electors. Some electors within the same authority area can, at present, have fewer opportunities to vote and influence the overall composition of their council than do their neighbours in a different ward. In areas with partial elections, but no uniform pattern of members per ward, electors may become disaffected when control of the council changes in elections where they have no opportunity to participate;
- Stability. As discussed previously when dealing with the mayoral model, whole elections every four years provide an inherent stability that allows policies to be developed and implemented over a reasonable period that the local electorate can form a judgement on;

- Participation and turnout. The Government accepts that less frequent elections do reduce the number of separate opportunities for people to stand as local representatives or become involved in the local political process. Equally, more frequent elections may tend to dilute public interest in the council. This is particularly the case as election by thirds is often unlikely to offer a clear opportunity for a locality wide judgement on the overall performance of a council and the prospect of a clear shift in control where local people felt that was merited.

Electoral Commission findings and factors affecting electoral cycles

The electorate's understanding of local government elections

A1. The Electoral Commission concluded that the current pattern of local electoral cycles in England is unclear and inconsistent, both within and between local authorities and it is unnecessarily complicated and confusing in that many electors do not know when or why local elections are held in their area. More worryingly, it allows electors to be unclear about which body they are voting for on a given day. The Commission is concerned that whilst the current complexity of English local government elections is not an issue in itself, the complexity might not encourage understanding of the democratic opportunities across England, which is a significant matter.

A2. The Commission also noted the variation in the proportion of the local government electorate that has been eligible to vote over the years. For example, in 1999 and 2003 80 per cent of the total local government electorate in England were eligible but in 1996 and 2000 less than half were eligible to vote. This pattern of elections, mitigates against continuing interest and encouraging higher participation in elections.

A3. A study by MORI on behalf of the Commission in 2003 showed that one-in-six people in areas where elections were due to be held were unaware of it. The year before, MORI had found this to be a quarter of the electorate. Younger people and respondents from black and minority ethnic groups were three times more likely to be uninformed. Disturbingly, one-in-five respondents did not know which authority they would be voting for in 2003. To outline this, MORI found that in unitary authority areas 21 per cent of respondents thought they would be voting in a county council election.

A4. The Commission has concerns that the varied pattern of electoral cycles across England may have a particular effect on the levels of awareness and understanding of the electorate. 30 per cent of respondents conceded that they did not know how often elections were held in their area and only 16 per cent were actually able to correctly identify the actual cycle of local elections. A higher proportion of respondents where elections were held once every four years were most likely to correctly identify the cycle of local elections in their area, around one-third of correct responses. Only 5 per cent of respondents facing elections in three or two out of four years could correctly identify the cycle. These respondents were much more likely to think that local elections took place every year, which is not the case.

A5. Respondents to the Commission's consultation paper on electoral cycles were divided on the merits and desirability for change to a more uniform pattern of elections. Many accepted the benefits of increased voter awareness; others resented interference from the centre in what they saw as a matter for local choice.

(Interestingly, whilst respondents felt that electors did understand the cycle of local elections the Commission's research suggests otherwise.)

A6. The majority of respondents accepted that a more uniform pattern of local elections would be beneficial: a clearer more predictable pattern would help electors to understand when elections take place. Some noted the importance of consistency both within and across local authorities, ensuring all electors have the same rights and opportunities. Others noted that consistency across England may develop a 'national voting habit' which could promote local democratic renewal and civic responsibility.

A7. There is some opposition among local government stakeholders on the idea of imposition of change. Some consider that what works well for some authorities will not work for others. They argue that local choice is important and that local elected representatives are best placed to determine which pattern is most suitable for their area, responding to local need and circumstances but only shire district/borough and unitary authorities have local choice under our current arrangements.

A8. On balance, the Commission felt that locally determined arrangements would merely suit those with established interests. Well-informed electors are better placed to hold their local representatives to account. Removing confusion on the cycle of elections was an important step forward and outweighs the potential costs of change.

Equity between electors

A9. The Electoral Commission is clear that opportunities for access to the local democratic process should be equitable. In its view it is unfair and unacceptable that within an individual local authority some local electors may have fewer opportunities to vote and influence the political composition of the *same local authority* than their neighbours in a different ward. (Many authorities that elect by thirds, outside metropolitan borough areas, do not have a uniform pattern of three-member wards. In these areas, some electors may have three opportunities to vote for their local authority in a four-year period while others can only vote once in the same period.) In areas with partial elections but no uniform pattern of members per wards, electors may become disaffected if control of the council changed as the result of an election in which they were not able to participate.

A10. A strong theme that came from respondents to the Commission's consultation paper was the importance of ensuring the equity and fairness in electoral arrangements, in line with the Widdicombe Committee's thinking. Respondents felt that all electors within each individual local authority should have the same opportunities to influence the outcome of local elections and the policies of the authority. This is clearly not the case at present.

A11. An alternative way of achieving equity for electors in each individual local authority would be to require a uniform number of members per ward within the authority. However, the Boundary Committee for England has noted that the requirement to recommend a uniform pattern of three-member wards in all 36 metropolitan borough areas caused specific difficulties when attempting to reflect community identities in some authorities. They note that the flexibility to recommend single, two or three-member wards enables the Committee to more easily reflect

local communities' identity while continuing to provide good levels of electoral equality.

A12. A pattern of whole council elections would not require authorities to be restricted to any particular size of ward, yet there would be equity for electors in that the whole electorate would be eligible to vote together once every four years. It is worth reiterating at this point, over half of all principal authorities in England already operate on this basis.

Leadership stability within councils

A13. Local government stakeholders value the role of stability and leadership in enabling the effective management of authorities. However, there is no clear evidence directly linking the electoral cycle of an authority with its CPA score.

A14. Stability means different things to different people:

- For some supporting elections by thirds, stability means less potential for abrupt changes of political control and switches of policy. They would also tend to suggest that important but controversial decisions may be postponed for political reasons until after an election, giving electors no opportunity for democratic protest for four years where whole elections are held;
- On the other hand, those favouring whole elections point to importance of consistency of policies and representatives through a defined period of office, without the interruption and diversion of intervening elections. Whole elections provide a degree of inherent stability with a clear mandate to representatives for a programme of policies during a four-year period, allowing time for the administration to carry its policies through before being held to account by the whole electorate on its record, its success or its failures.

A15. Equally, some commentators will note that where the balance of power within an authority is on a knife-edge, political control could change frequently where the authority elects by thirds, with significant instability as a result. Others note that where authorities elect by thirds and have strong single-party control where the will of the electorate means that the ruling party loses all seats in a given year, overall political control may not change because too few seats are contested at that election and therefore has the desired outcome of leading to greater stability. In short, elections by thirds can lead to greater stability to those areas where one party tends to dominate, but to reduce stability where support for the parties is more evenly balanced.

A16. We would tend to the view that whole elections do provide a degree of inherent stability, providing an administration with a clear four-year mandate to implement its policies on which it can clearly be judged. Indeed, this is one aspect of the mayoral model, which makes Directly Elected Mayors attractive.

Participation and turnout

A17. Another area of conflicting views relates to participation and turnout. Annual or biennial elections hold the potential for more frequent opportunities for participation

by electors. Equally, more frequent elections may tend to dilute public interest in elections and electors may, in practice, tire of passing judgement on their representatives annually.

A18. Good levels of turnout are important to ensure the continued relevance and legitimacy of local government. Continued low turnout may undermine the authority of local government to speak and act on behalf of the communities it represents. Turnout could clearly be affected by the electors' weak understanding of electoral matters, driven in part by confusion over electoral cycles. Equally, electors may perceive a disincentive to vote where they feel they cannot change a council because too few seats are up for grabs at a given election. However, the Commission have drawn upon some research by the LGC Elections Centre at the University of Plymouth.

A19. The Centre's research gives some weight to the notion that more frequent elections may dilute public interest and reduce turnout. They found that over the last 30 years, the four-yearly elected London boroughs generally have had a higher electoral turnout than the metropolitan boroughs, which elect by thirds. Furthermore, turnout in London has been between two and ten percentage points higher than in metropolitan boroughs in all years, except 2002, when both types of authority held elections. Similar differences were present for shire districts. The centre's findings also show that turnout would fall if authorities who normally had whole elections moved to elections by thirds and a rise in turnout could be achieved by moving to whole elections for those operating on thirds or halves.

APPEN DIX 3

Estimated cost of holding elections by thirds and by whole Council, every four years.

Elections to be Held 2007 2008 2009 2010 2011 2012 2013 2014 Totals

Present System

	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
District by thirds	81000	74000	0	75000					230000
Member Training	7500	7500	7500	7500					30000
BY-Elections	5000	5000	5000	5000					20000
Total	93500	86500	12500	87500	0	0	0	0	280000

New System

District Whole Council					179000				179000
Member Training					10000	7500	7500	7500	32500
BY-Elections					0	16000	17000	17000	50000
Consultation					10000				10000
Total					199000	23500	24500	24500	271500

Notes

- 1 Estimates are shown at November 2007 prices, and do not include inflation
- 2 Comparisons show current system of thirds and one Whole Council election.
- 3 No Parish/Town Council costs are included
- 4 Higher staffing levels have been assumed for Whole Council election because of higher polling turnout
- 5 New training budgets are included based on Government guidelines for Parliamentary elections
- 6 Additional member training included for Whole Council election
- 7 An allowance for 10 by-elections is included for Whole Council election over the 4 year cycle.
- 8 A one off consultation cost is included for the Whole Council election.
- 9 Additional costs for printing of ballot papers and count fees are included for Whole Council election.
- 10 The current year budget for elections is £94,470 plus £4,400 supplementary for By-elections, with a recharge for Parish elections of £22,500.
This budget will be reviewed as part of the current estimate process.

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ELECTORAL CYCLE

Year	Elections to be held	
2007	District (1/3)	Parish (1/2 of Councils))
2008	District (1/3)	Parish (1/2 of Councils)) Election by Thirds
2009	County	European) Present System
2010	District (1/3)	-)

2011	District (Whole Council)	Parish (1/2 of Councils))
2012	-	Parish (1/2 of Councils)) Whole Council
2013	County	-) New System
2014	European	-)

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Report to the Council

Committee: Audit and Governance Committee.

Date: 19 February 2008

Chairman: Councillor J Knapman.

Item: 12

Recommending:

That the attached revised Local Code of Governance be adopted.

Background

1. At its meeting in September 2007, the Audit & Governance Committee was advised that CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and SOLACE (Society of Local Authority Chief Executives) had updated their earlier guidance to local authorities on assessing their corporate governance responsibilities. The corporate governance framework had now been revised due to the development and reform of local government, and had addressed some areas not previously covered. The new framework aimed to reflect the dimensions of the local government role, which were seen as:

- (i) to provide leadership for and with the community, and engage in effective partnerships;
- (ii) to ensure the delivery of high quality local services whether directly, in partnership, or by commissioning;
- (iii) to perform a stewardship role that protected the interests of local people and made the best use of resources; and
- (iv) to develop local democracy and citizenship.

2. The Committee was advised that work had begun on the new Local Code of Corporate Governance, and that the updated Code of Governance would be submitted to this Committee.

3. The Committee was also advised that the scope of the new Governance Statement would be far wider than the former Statement on Internal Control, as this had focused on corporate and service issues related to internal control and risk management. The new Governance Statement would relate to the whole organisation, and reflect the changes, challenges and expectations that had now been placed upon local authorities. In particular, joint working arrangements and partnerships would be given a higher profile, reflecting their increased prominence due to the development of Local Area Agreements and the change to Comprehensive Area Assessments.

4. The final version of this document "Delivering Good Governance in Local Government" was published by CIPFA and SOLACE in July 2007, and the Council's Code of Governance has been reviewed in light of this best practice document.

Revised Governance Framework for Local Government

5. The document presents a framework of six core principles, with supporting principles

and urges local authorities to:

- (a) review their existing governance arrangements against this framework;
- (b) develop and maintain an up-to-date local code of governance; and
- (c) prepare an annual governance statement to publicly report the extent to which they comply with their own code and setting out improvement plans, where appropriate.

6. The six core principles that underpin and define the meaning of good governance are set out below:

- **focusing on the purpose of the Authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;**
- **members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;**
- **promoting values for the authority and demonstrating the values of good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;**
- **taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and managing risk;**
- **developing the capacity of members and officers to be effective; and**
- **engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.**

7. To achieve good governance, each local authority should be able to demonstrate that they are complying with the core and supporting principles contained in the framework and should therefore develop and maintain a local code of governance comprising the requirements of best practice outlined within the framework.

Code of Corporate Governance

8. A revised Code of Corporate Governance has been prepared based on the best practice requirements of the CIPFA/SOLACE framework and is attached at Appendix 1 for recommendation to the Council for adoption. Adoption of this code will ensure that the Council complies with the requirement to develop and maintain an up to date local code of governance.

Annual Governance Statement & Annual Review

9. The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, as amended by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (Amendment) (England) 2006, require local authorities to “conduct a review at least once in a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control” and to prepare a statement on internal control “in accordance with proper practices”. The governance framework published in July 2007, defines the proper practice that is now to be followed to meet the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations. In practice this means that the Council will be required to produce an Annual Governance Statement that will subsume the Council’s existing Statement on Internal Control. The Governance Statement will be reported with the annual Statement of Accounts in June each year.

10. The governance statement should include the following information:

(i) an acknowledgement of responsibility for ensuring there is a sound system of governance;

(ii) an indication of the level of assurance that the systems and processes that comprise the authority's governance can provide;

(iii) a brief description of the key elements of the governance framework, including reference to group or partnership activities where those activities are significant;

(iv) a brief description of the process that has been applied in maintaining and reviewing the effectiveness of the governance arrangements; and

(v) an outline of the actions taken, or proposed, to deal with significant governance issues, including an agreed action plan

11. The Annual Governance Statement will be prepared following a detailed review of the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements. This review will consider each of the items in the "How we are achieving this..." column of the Code of Governance attached as Appendix 1. The results of this review and the first Annual Governance Statement will be presented to Members in June 2008.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL CODE OF GOVERNANCE

1. What we mean by Governance

- 1.1 Good governance is about how the Authority ensures that it is doing the right things, in the right way, for the right people, in a timely, inclusive, open, honest and accountable manner.
- 1.2 It comprises the systems, processes, culture and values, by which the Authority directs and controls its functions, and through which it accounts to, engages with and, where appropriate, leads the community.
- 1.3 This Local Code of Governance has been developed in accordance with and is consistent with the Framework for Delivering Good Governance in Local Government, published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE).

2. Core Principles of Good Governance

- 2.1 The core governance principles of the Authority are:
 - (a) focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the community and creating and implementing a vision for the local area;
 - (b) Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles;
 - (c) promoting values for the authority and demonstrating good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour;
 - (d) taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and management of risk;
 - (e) developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective; and
 - (f) engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability.

3. Annual Review and Reporting

- 3.1 Each year the Council will carry out a review of its governance arrangements to ensure compliance with this Code and the delivery of good governance within the local Business Assurance Framework and current good practice. The purpose of the review will be to provide assurance that governance arrangements are adequate and operating effectively, or to identify action that is planned to ensure effective governance in the future.
- 3.2 The outcome of the review will take the form of a Governance Statement prepared on behalf of the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. It will be submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee for consideration and review.

- 3.3 The preparation and publication of the Governance Statement will meet the statutory requirement of the Accounts and Audit Regulations which requires authorities to conduct a review at least once a year of the effectiveness of its system of internal control, to prepare a Governance Statement in accordance with proper practices, and include the Statement with the Council's Statutory Statement of Accounts.

4. Applying the Core Principles of Good Governance

- 4.1 The six core principles set out at paragraph 2 above are supplemented by a number of supporting principles, which, in turn, have a range of specific requirements that apply across the Authority's business. These are detailed in the following tables, which also describe how the Council is achieving each of the requirements.

<i>Focusing on the purpose of the authority and on outcomes for the local community, and creating and implementing a vision for the local area</i>		
Supporting Principles	Specific requirements	How we are achieving this
Exercising strategic leadership by developing and clearly communicating the Authority's purpose and vision and its intended outcome for citizens and service users.	<p>Develop and promote the Authority's purpose and vision for the District, and review on a regular basis this vision and the implications for its governance arrangements.</p> <p>Ensure that partnerships are underpinned by a common vision of their work that is understood and agreed by all partners.</p> <p>Publish an annual report on a timely basis to communicate the Authority's activities and achievements, its financial position and performance.</p>	<p>Community Strategy, Council Plan, Local Code of Governance</p> <p>Partnership protocols</p> <p>Annual financial statements and Annual Report</p>
Ensuring that users receive a high quality of service whether directly, or in partnership, or by commissioning.	<p>Decide how the quality of service for users is to be measured and make sure that the information needed to review service quality effectively and regularly is available.</p> <p>Put in place effective arrangements to identify and deal with failure in service delivery.</p>	<p>Council Plan, Best Value Performance Plan, Service plans, medium term financial strategy and annual budget. Essex Compact Epping Forest Compact</p> <p>Monitoring of performance indicators, Complaints procedure Partnership protocols</p>
Ensuring that the Authority makes best use of resources and that taxpayers and service users receive excellent value for money.	<p>Decide how value for money is to be measured and make sure that the Authority or partnership has the information needed to review value for money and performance effectively.</p> <p>Measure the environmental impact of policies, plans and decisions.</p>	<p>Value for money strategy Service plans 4 Year Financial Forecast Budget monitoring process Service plans Reference in Committee reports</p>

Members and officers working together to achieve a common purpose with clearly defined functions and roles		
Supporting Principles	Specific requirements	How we are achieving this
Ensuring effective leadership throughout the Authority and being clear about executive and non-executive functions, and the role of the scrutiny function.	<p>Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of the executive and of the executive's members individually, and the Authority's approach towards putting this into practice.</p> <p>Set out a clear statement of the respective roles and responsibilities of other Council Members, Members generally and of senior officers.</p>	<p>Council Constitution</p> <p>Member and Officer Protocol</p> <p>Induction programme</p>
Ensuring that a constructive working relationship exists between Council Members and officers and that the responsibilities of Members and officers are carried out to a high standard.	<p>Determine a scheme of delegation and reserve powers within the Constitution, including a formal schedule of those matters specifically reserved for collective decision of the Council, taking account of relevant legislation, and ensure that it is monitored and updated when required.</p> <p>Make a Chief Executive or equivalent responsible and accountable to the Council for all aspects of operational management.</p> <p>Develop protocols to ensure that the Leader and Chief Executive (or equivalents) negotiate their respective roles early in the relationship and that a shared understanding of roles and objectives is maintained.</p> <p>Make a senior officer (the S151 Officer) responsible to the authority for ensuring that appropriate advice is given on all financial matters, for keeping proper financial records and accounts, and for maintaining an effective system of internal financial control.</p> <p>Make a senior officer (usually the Monitoring Officer) responsible to the Council for ensuring that agreed procedures are followed and that all applicable Statutes and Regulations are complied with.</p>	<p>Constitution</p> <p>Scheme of delegation, conditions of employment, performance management</p> <p>Member and Officer Protocol</p> <p>Scheme of delegation, conditions of employment, performance management</p> <p>Scheme of delegation, conditions of employment, performance management</p>
Ensuring relationships between the Authority, its partners and the public are clear so that each knows what to expect of the other.	<p>Develop protocols to ensure effective communication between Members and officers in their respective roles. Ensure that effective mechanisms exist to monitor service delivery.</p> <p>Set out the terms and conditions for remuneration of Members and officers and an effective structure for managing the process, including an effective Member Remuneration Panel.</p>	<p>Member and Officer Protocol</p> <p>Guidance to Members and officers on representation on outside bodies</p> <p>As set out in the Terms of Reference for the EFDC Remuneration Panel</p>

Promoting values for the Authority and demonstrating good governance through upholding high standards of conduct and behaviour		
Supporting principles	Specific requirements	How we are achieving this
<p>Ensuring Council Members and officers exercise leadership by behaving in ways that exemplify high standards of conduct and effective governance.</p>	<p>Ensure that the Council's leadership sets a tone for the organisation by creating a climate of openness, support and respect.</p> <p>Ensure that standards of conduct and personal behaviour expected of Members and officers, of work between Members and officers and between the Authority, its partners and the community are defined and communicated through codes of conduct and protocols.</p> <p>Put in place arrangements to ensure that Members and employees of the Council are not influenced by prejudice, bias or conflicts of interest in dealing with different stakeholders, and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.</p>	<p>Member and Officer Protocol</p> <p>Members' and officers' Codes of Conduct, performance appraisal, Complaints procedure</p> <p>Codes of Conduct, Financial Regulations and Contract Standing Orders</p>
<p>Ensuring that organisational values are put into practice and are effective.</p>	<p>Develop and maintain shared values including leadership values for both the Authority and staff reflecting public expectations, and communicate these with Members, officers, the community and partners.</p> <p>Put in place arrangements to ensure that systems and processes are designed in conformity with appropriate ethical standards, and monitor their continuing effectiveness in practice.</p> <p>Develop and maintain an effective Standards Committee.</p> <p>Use the Authority's shared values to act as a guide for decision-making and as a basis for developing positive and trusting relationships within the Council.</p> <p>In pursuing the vision of a partnership, agree a set of values against which decision-making and actions can be judged, as demonstrated by partners' behaviour both individually and collectively.</p>	<p>Member and officer Codes of Conduct Customer Charter Partnership protocols</p> <p>Member and officer Codes of Conduct</p> <p>As set out in the Terms of Reference for the EFDC Standards Committee</p> <p>Established decision-making and reporting processes The Council's Vision and Values Statement</p> <p>The existing protocol on working with outside bodies is being extended into a more strategic partnership document</p>

Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and management of risk

Supporting principles	Specific requirements	How we are achieving this
<p>Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are taken and listening and acting on the outcome of constructive scrutiny.</p>	<p>Develop and maintain an effective scrutiny function which encourages constructive challenge and enhances the Authority's performance overall and that of any organisation for which it is responsible.</p> <p>Develop and maintain open and effective mechanisms for documenting evidence for decisions and recording the criteria, rationale and considerations on which decisions are based.</p> <p>Put in place arrangements to safeguard Members and officers against conflicts of interest and put in place appropriate processes to ensure that they continue to operate in practice.</p> <p>Develop and maintain an effective Audit Committee, which is independent of the executive and scrutiny functions, or make other appropriate arrangements for the discharge of the functions of such a Committee.</p> <p>Ensure that effective, transparent and accessible arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints.</p>	<p>Terms of Reference for Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Standing Panels; annual scrutiny review process</p> <p>Established procedures for publishing and publicising decisions by the Council, Committees and Panels, and Portfolio Holders; webcasting of meetings</p> <p>Member and officer Codes of Conduct</p> <p>Terms of reference and membership of the Audit and Governance Committee supported by the officer Corporate Governance Group</p> <p>Compliments and Complaints procedure supported by a dedicated officer, publication of statistics</p>
<p>Having good quality information, advice and support to ensure that services are delivered effectively and are what the community wants/needs.</p>	<p>Ensure that those making decisions, whether for the Authority or the partnership, are provided with information that is fit for the purpose, relevant and timely, and gives clear explanations of technical issues and their implications.</p> <p>Ensure that proper professional advice on matters that have legal or financial implications is available and recorded well in advance of decision making, and used appropriately.</p>	<p>Member induction and training</p> <p>Data Quality Strategy</p> <p>Key reports are subject to review by relevant officers or Corporate Executive Forum</p> <p>Appropriate reference in reports and in the record of decision making</p>

Taking informed and transparent decisions which are subject to effective scrutiny and management of risk

Supporting principles	Specific requirements	How we are achieving this
<p>Ensuring that an effective risk management system is in place.</p>	<p>Ensure that risk management is embedded into the culture of the Authority, with Members and officers at all levels recognising that risk management is part of their role.</p> <p>Ensure that effective arrangements for whistle blowing are in place to which officers and all those contracting with or appointed by the Council have access.</p>	<p>Constitution Corporate Risk Management Strategy Service Business Plans</p> <p>Anti-fraud and corruption policy</p>
<p>Using the Authority's legal powers to the full benefit of the residents and communities in the District.</p>	<p>Actively recognise the limits of lawful activity placed on the Authority by, for example, the ultra vires doctrine, but also strive to utilise the Authority's powers to the full benefit of the residents of the District.</p> <p>Recognise the limits of lawful action and observe both the specific requirements of legislation and the general responsibilities placed on the Council by public law.</p> <p>Observe all specific legislative requirements placed upon the Council, as well as the requirements of general law and, in particular, integrate the key principles of good administrative law (rationality, legality and natural justice) into the Council's procedures and decision making processes.</p>	<p>Constitution Monitoring Officer role Application of statutory provisions</p> <p>As above</p> <p>As above</p>

<i>Developing the capacity and capability of members and officers to be effective</i>		
Supporting principles	Specific requirements	How we are achieving this
<p>Making sure that Members and officers have the skills, knowledge, experience and resources they need to perform well in their roles.</p>	<p>Provide induction and training programmes tailored to individual needs and opportunities for Members and officers to update their knowledge on a regular basis.</p> <p>Ensure that the Statutory Officers have the skills, resources and support necessary to perform effectively in their roles and that these roles are properly understood throughout the Authority.</p>	<p>Induction and training programmes for Members and officers, Leadership and Management Development Programmes</p> <p>Constitution</p> <p>Personal specifications</p> <p>Induction and training programmes</p>
<p>Developing the capability of people with governance responsibilities and evaluating their performance, as individuals and as a group.</p>	<p>Assess the skills required by Members and officers and develop those skills to enable roles to be carried out effectively.</p> <p>Develop skills on a continuing basis to improve performance, including the ability to scrutinise and challenge and to recognise when outside expert advice is needed.</p> <p>Ensure that effective arrangements are in place for reviewing the performance of the executive as a whole and of individual Members, and agreeing an action plan to address any training or development needs.</p>	<p>Member training programme</p> <p>Officer Learning and Development Plan</p> <p>Officer appraisals (PDRs)</p> <p>As included above</p> <p>Member training programme</p>
<p>Encouraging new talent for membership of the Council so that best use can be made of individuals' skills and resources in balancing continuity and renewal.</p>	<p>Ensure that effective arrangements are in place designed to encourage individuals from all sections of the community to engage with, contribute to and participate in the work of the Council.</p> <p>Ensure that career structures are in place for Members and officers to encourage participation and development.</p>	<p>Establishment of Youth Council</p> <p>Representation of independent people and interest groups on Committees, Panels and Action Groups</p> <p>Consultation strategy</p> <p>Website; Webcasting of meetings</p> <p>Training programmes, Succession planning, Leadership and Management Development Programmes</p>

Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

Supporting principles	Specific requirements	How we are achieving this
<p>Exercising leadership through a robust scrutiny function which effectively engages local people and all local institutional stakeholders, including partnerships, and develops constructive accountability relationships.</p>	<p>Make clear to the Council and its staff the ways in which the Council is accountable to residents, communities and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Consider those institutional stakeholders to whom the Council is accountable and assess the effectiveness of the relationships and any changes required.</p> <p>Produce an annual report on the activity of the scrutiny function.</p>	<p>Community Strategy, Customer Charter Council Plan Best Value Performance Plan Service Plans Key Performance Indicators Officer appraisals (PDRs)</p> <p>Communication and Consultation Strategies Local Strategic Partnership Partnership protocols</p> <p>Annual report of Scrutiny</p>
<p>Taking an active and planned approach to dialogue with and accountability to the public to ensure effective and appropriate service delivery whether directly by the Council, in partnership or by commissioning.</p>	<p>Ensure that clear channels of communication are in place with all sections of the community and other stakeholders, and put in place monitoring arrangements and ensure that they operate effectively. Furthermore, to hold meetings in public unless there are good reasons for confidentiality.</p> <p>Ensure that arrangements are in place to enable the Council to engage with all sections of the community effectively, recognise that different sections of the community have different priorities, and establish explicit processes for dealing with these competing demands.</p> <p>Establish a clear policy on the types of issues the Council will meaningfully consult on, and engage with the public and service users about including a feedback mechanism for those consultees to demonstrate what has changed as a result.</p>	<p>Communication strategy is in development Consultation strategy Webcasting of meetings</p> <p>Race Equality Scheme Gender Equality Scheme Disability Equality Scheme Corporate Equalities Action Plan</p> <p>Youth Council Consultation strategy Partnership policy is in development</p>

Engaging with local people and other stakeholders to ensure robust public accountability

Supporting principles	Specific requirements	How we are achieving this
Continued..	<p>On an annual basis, publish a performance plan giving information on the Authority, strategy, plans and financial statements as well as information about its outcomes, achievements and the satisfaction of service users in the previous period.</p> <p>Ensure that the Council, its officers and partner representatives are open and accessible to the community and service users. Furthermore, to ensure that the Council has made a commitment to openness and transparency in all its dealings, including partnerships, subject only to the need to preserve confidentiality in those specific circumstances where it is proper and appropriate to do so.</p>	<p>Council Plan Best Value Performance Plan Service Plans Annual Report</p> <p>Constitution Council Plan Communication strategy Race, Gender and Disability Equality Schemes Freedom of Information Act arrangements</p>
Making best use of human resources by taking an active and planned approach to meeting their responsibilities to staff.	Develop and maintain a clear policy on how staff and their representatives are consulted and involved in decision making.	<p>Constitution Joint Consultative arrangements Learning and Development Programmes EFDC Training and Development Policy HR Policies Investors in People process</p>