



Epping Forest District Council

CABINET **Monday, 11th June, 2007**

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

Time: 7.00 pm

Committee Secretary: Gary Woodhall (Research and Democratic Services)
Email: gwoodhall@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel:01992 564470

Members:

Councillors Mrs D Collins (Leader and Leaders Portfolio Holder) (Chairman), C Whitbread (Vice-Chairman), M Cohen, A Green, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs M Sartin, D Stallan and Ms S Stavrou

PLEASE NOTE THE START TIME OF THE MEETING
THE COUNCIL HAS AGREED REVISED PROCEDURES FOR THE OPERATION OF
CABINET MEETINGS. BUSINESS NOT CONCLUDED BY 10.00 P.M. WILL, AT THE
DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN, STAND REFERRED TO THE NEXT MEETING OR
WILL BE VOTED UPON WITHOUT DEBATE

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Head of Research and Democratic Services) To declare interests in any item on this agenda.

3. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Cabinet held on 16 April 2007 (previously circulated).

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs (6) and (24) of the Council Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution require that the permission of the Chairman be obtained, after prior notice to the Chief Executive, before urgent business not specified in the agenda (including a supplementary agenda of which the statutory period of notice has been given) may be transacted.

In accordance with Operational Standing Order 6 (non-executive bodies), any item raised by a non-member shall require the support of a member of the Committee concerned and the Chairman of that Committee. Two weeks' notice of non-urgent items is required.

5. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

To receive oral reports from Portfolio Holders on current issues concerning their Portfolios, which are not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

To consider any matters of concern to the Cabinet arising from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

7. OLDER AND DISABLED PERSONS TASK AND FINISH PANEL - FINAL REPORT (Pages 5 - 8)

(Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) To consider the attached report (C/013/2007-08).

8. SMOKING POLICY (Pages 9 - 14)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/001/2007-08).

9. STAFF CONDUCT MONITORING REPORT (Pages 15 - 18)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/002/2007-08).

10. STAFF SICKNESS AND ABSENCE (Pages 19 - 24)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/003/2007-08).

11. CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN (Pages 25 - 36)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/004/2007-08).

12. LEADER LODGE - HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD (Pages 37 - 42)

(Housing Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/005/2007-08).

13. 2012 OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES (Pages 43 - 48)

(Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/006/2007-08).

14. RELEASE OF RESTRICTIVE COVENANT - LOUGHTON HALL (Pages 49 - 54)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio

Holder) To consider the attached report (C/007/2007-08).

15. LINDSEY STREET COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION (Pages 55 - 58)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/008/2007-08).

16. CONSULTATION PLAN AND REGISTER (Pages 59 - 70)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/009/2007-08).

17. NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD - MAINTENANCE BUDGET (Pages 71 - 72)

(Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/011/2007-08).

18. RE-LETTING - SHOP 15, THE BROADWAY, LOUGHTON (Pages 73 - 76)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/012/2007-08).

19. BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2007/08 (Pages 77 - 80)

(Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/014/2007-08).

20. JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (Pages 81 - 86)

(Environmental Protection Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/015/2007-08).

21. REMOVAL OF GRAFFITI POLICY (Pages 87 - 92)

(Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder) To consider the attached report (C/010/2007-08).

22. 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.

Report to the Cabinet

Report Reference: C/013/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Community Wellbeing.
Leisure and Young People.
Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Services for Older People and Disabled People Task and Finish Panel – Final Report.

Officer contact for further information: John Scott (01992 – 564050).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the report of the Services for Older People and Disabled People Task and Finish Panel be endorsed and the following recommendations be agreed:

(a) that the Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing identify grant aid support to help develop the Older People's Advisory Group as an independent and self financing organisation which supports and encourages the valuable contribution made by older people to our society, encourages older people to support each other and that the Council uses that organisation as part of its ongoing consultation strategy;

(b) that the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Young People investigate and report back on how Leisure Services can assist in:

(i) providing a healthy living approach which helps meet the social needs of the growing number of older people;

(ii) continue targeted projects such as that provided through the Arts Service "A Sense of Place"; and

(iii) the continued provision of the seated exercise programme;

(c) that during the course of 2007/08 the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services identify a means by which the DDF grant to the Handyperson Scheme can become part of the CSB so that the value of the money is maintained on an ongoing basis;

(d) that the availability of the Handyperson Scheme be advertised more widely through The Forester;

(e) that the changes to the Concessionary Fare Scheme proposed by Government be kept under review in order to monitor:

(i) any financial implications for the Council; and

(ii) whether in the light of the changes proposed, the separate scheme with Transport for London is still necessary;

(f) that the Council sponsored Day Clubs for the more housebound older people provided in association with Housing Services be kept under review in the light of:

(i) difficulties in recruiting volunteers to help run them;

(ii) difficulties in providing transport to and from the Clubs; and

(iii) falling attendances; and

(g) that work being undertaken to address equality issues within the Council's Services provisions be brought to a conclusion and a Disability Equality Scheme be published without further delay.

Report:

1. The Panel was established in June 2006 to look at the services for older people and for disabled people provided by the District Council and other agencies such as Voluntary Action Epping Forest (VAEF) and at services for the general public which older or disabled people have difficulty in using. The final report of the Task and Finish Panel has been distributed to all members of the Cabinet and a copy placed in the Members' Room; further copies of the report can be obtained from Democratic Services. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed the report at its meeting on 5 April 2007.

2. The full recommendations are set out on page 6 of the report. Recommendations within the report seek portfolio holders to consider specifically recommendations (4), (5), (6(part)), (7), (8), (9) and (10). Recommendation (6) was in part considered by the Cabinet during their budget review earlier in the year.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

3. The Task and Finish Panel have given the recommendations their full consideration and the proposals find the support of all the members of the Panel. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have likewise supported the proposals that underpins the good work already undertaken by the Council and other bodies.

Other Options for Action:

4. To reject some or all of the recommendations.

Consultation Undertaken:

5. Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: As set out within the report of the Panel. The DDF funding for 2007/8 for the Handyperson Scheme has been previously incorporated into the Budget for this year.

Personnel: None.

Land: None.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP reference: None.

Relevant Statutory Powers: None.

Background Papers: Minutes from meetings of the Task and Finish Panel.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.

Key Decision reference (if required): None.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/001/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Smoking Policy.

Officer contact for further information: Tony Tidey (01992 – 564054).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That Cabinet notes the recommendations of the Joint Consultative Committee and in the light of these agrees the proposed Smoking Policy attached at appendix one.**

This draft policy has been subject to consultation with the Joint Consultative Committee

Report:

1. At the 12 April 2007 meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) a report was considered which set out the various options open to the Authority in implementing the Health Act 2006 on its own premises (as opposed to in its enforcement role). The JCC noted that all enclosed premises were required to be smoke free with effect from 1 July 2007, and proposed that in addition the following matters should apply when drawing up a Smoking Policy.

(a) That smoking should be banned in all unenclosed Council premises except for designated smoking areas;

(b) That all Council owned or leased vehicles should be smoke free at all times, as required by the legislation;

(c) That all privately owned vehicles, and those vehicles leased under the Council's car leasing scheme should be smoke free whilst being used for the purposes of carrying of passengers on Council business;

(d) That staff should be permitted to smoke during the working day (i.e. that smoking breaks should be allowed in working hours, and that such breaks should be in the Council's time rather than in the individual's time); and

(e) That when a member of staff is visiting a client in their own home they may ask the client to refrain from smoking, or alternatively seek to re-arrange the meeting for a smoke free location, but in the event of the client refusing to comply with this request that the meeting should continue regardless.

2. In addition, the JCC asked the Head of Human Resources and Performance Management to prepare a policy and covering report for this meeting of Cabinet. This policy is attached at Appendix 1. The report that was submitted to the JCC for consideration provides background information on the smoke free legislation and the options available to

the Authority; this can be viewed via the Committee Management System.

3. Finally, the JCC asked that the Smoking Policy be reviewed after one year of operation, with a view to a consideration of whether the external premises should be completely smoke free. In doing this it was mindful of its community leadership role, and the need to set a positive example.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

4. The proposals contained in the report provide adherence to the legal requirements of the Health Act 2006. They also provide for a means of review after one year of operation.

Other Options for Action:

5. The Authority is required to implement a smoking ban in all enclosed spaces. It is open to the Authority to do no more than that, or go further and introduce a complete ban in all unenclosed premises.

Consultation undertaken:

6. The recognised Trade Unions via the Joint Consultative Committee.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: None at this stage save for new signage that can be met from existing budgets

Personnel: As set out in the report.

Land: N/A.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A.

Relevant statutory powers: The Health Act 2006.

Background papers: N/A.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.

SMOKE-FREE WORKPLACE AND PUBLIC PLACE POLICY

1. Aims of the Policy

This policy implements the provisions of the Health Act 2006 with respect to smoking at work.

The policy seeks to:

- Ensure a smoke-free working environment and protect Council employees, councillors, contractors and members of the public who enter EFDC premises, including vehicles by not exposing them to tobacco smoke;
- Support those who wish to stop;
- Address the issues of smoking in Council and private vehicles, and staff visiting private homes.
- Comply with the core provisions of the Health Act. It will be reviewed after 12 months operation, when changes may be made by the Joint Consultative Committee.

(The policy does not cover the Council's public enforcement role in the community).

2. Introduction

Section 2(2) of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places a duty on employers to:

'provide and maintain a safe working environment which is, so far as is reasonably practical, safe, without risks to health and adequate as regards facilities and arrangements for their welfare at work.'

On 1 July 2007 the Health Act 2006 came into effect. This legislation makes provision for the prohibition of smoking in certain premises, places and vehicles. Section 2(2) states that *premises must be smoke-free if they are used as a place of work including vehicles.*

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy will apply to all staff, councillors, visitors, contractors and other persons who enter the premises or vehicles of the Council, or private vehicles used on Council business. It will also apply to staff when visiting private homes, regardless of whether the occupant smokes.

3.1 Restrictions on Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any part of the premises or at entrances (other than designated external areas) managed, leased or owned by the Council at any time, by any person regardless of their status or business with the organisation. By 'premises' is meant any building or substantially enclosed public or private area. Such spaces include lifts, corridors, stairways, lavatories, rest rooms, reception areas or entrances. (An enclosed area is one which has a permanent or semi permanent roof and has walls (including windows and doors) enclosing more than 50% of its perimeter).

3.2 Staff and Councillors

Staff and councillors are only permitted to smoke in unenclosed designated areas. This applies to councillors while they are on Council premises, and to staff whilst they are at work, including whilst on official breaks, (e.g. lunchtime). Smoking breaks during contracted working hours are permissible and, if taken, must not be excessive. These breaks may be monitored by managers and must not disrupt the day-to-day operational working of the service or team. Any smoking break taken is not deducted from the employee's contracted hours or flexi balance.

3.3 Vehicles

- (i) smoking is not permitted under any circumstances or at any time in vehicles owned or leased by the Council;
- (ii) smoking is not permitted in private cars owned by employees or councillors at times when they are used to carry other employees, councillors, contractors, visitors or any other members of the public on Council business;
- (iii) smoking is not permitted in cars leased by employees under the Council's Car Leasing Scheme when they are used to carry other employees, councillors, contractors, visitors or any members of the public on Council business.

For the avoidance of doubt the views of the occupants of any of the above-mentioned vehicles are immaterial to the application of this policy.

3.4 Visiting clients or staff in their home

Employees visiting clients or staff (on Council business) in their home are not directly covered by the Health Act. This means that clients/staff are not required to refrain from smoking at home whilst being visited by an EFDC employee. However, under this policy employees must not smoke whilst visiting a client/other member of staff, even if the client/staff member is smoking.

Employees visiting clients or staff (including other members of the household) who smoke at home may make a request to the client that all household members refrain from smoking during the visit. They may also ask the client to provide adequate ventilation, for example, in the form of open windows or that the visit takes place at an alternative venue. Such requests must be made sensitively, and the client may refuse to comply. If this is the case the interview must be continued if other reasonable arrangements cannot be made for the interview to take place elsewhere in a smoke free environment.

3.5 Support for those wishing to stop smoking

Information on stopping smoking with support from local cessation services is available from the NHS Smoking Helpline number **0800 169 0 169**. From time to time the Council may promote its own smoking cessation initiatives in conjunction with Harlow Occupational Health Service.

4. Implementation of the Policy

Staff, councillors, contractors, members of the public and volunteers are personally responsible for complying with this policy. Day-to-day responsibility for implementation lies with Heads of Service. To ensure that everyone understands that smoking is only allowed in designated external areas, clear signs will be displayed.

Any member of staff refusing to observe the policy by smoking in unauthorised areas will be liable to disciplinary action in accordance with the disciplinary procedure.

All staff have a role to play in enforcing the policy and are required to report to their manager any observed or reported breaches. If a member of the public refuses to stop smoking in a designated non smoking area they should be asked to leave the premises and informed that the Council will refuse to deal with them whilst they are in breach of the smoking ban.

In the event of a breach of the policy by a visitor (for example from another organisation), she/he should be asked to extinguish all smoking materials and be informed of the availability of external smoking areas. If she/he continues to smoke the matter should be referred to the appropriate manager. In the event that staff or visitors continue to breach the policy, the person/organisation should be advised in writing of the consequences of breaching these requirements by the Manager.

5. Review of the Policy

This policy will be reviewed one year after operation (i.e. July 2008). At that review, consideration will be given as to whether it would be desirable to move to a total ban on smoking in unenclosed Council premises, and whether smoking breaks should continue to be allowed in the Council's time, rather than the individual employee's time.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/002/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Personal Conduct of Staff – Monitoring Report.

**Officer contact for further information: Tony Tidey (01992 – 564054).
Colleen O'Boyle (01992 – 564475).**

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the nature and scope of disciplinary activity during 2006/07 be noted;**
- (2) That the information relating to staff conduct drawn from the Complaints Procedure during 2006/07 be noted;**
- (3) That the information generated by the Code of Conduct notification process be noted;**
- (4) That the new arrangements for continuing criminal background checks of designated staff be noted;**
- (5) That the Cabinet notes that staff will now be asked to sign declarations relating to the newly agreed telephone, internet and email policies; and**
- (6) That the Cabinet decides whether incidents of staff fraud and corruption (if any) which result in dismissal on grounds of gross misconduct be publicised to staff in an anonymised format in order to raise awareness.**

Background:

1. At officer level, Management Board is kept aware of staff conduct issues via regular informal discussions with the Head of Legal, Administration and Estates, the Chief Internal Auditor and the Head of HR and Performance Management, and also by reports on individual issues, when required. The purpose of this report is to provide the Cabinet with an overview of data related to staff conduct issues for the period 2006/07 so that an overall analysis of staff conduct may take place. It is also a requirement of Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE) 4.3 of the Use of Resources assessment that the Council has in place processes for assessing whether or not officers exhibit high standards of personal conduct. The data used in this report is drawn from monitoring information relating to complaints under the corporate procedure, the Code of Conduct and the application of the Council's disciplinary procedure. This report will in future be produced on an annual basis to enable the Cabinet to monitor trends over time.

The Disciplinary Procedure:

2. The application of the disciplinary procedure is monitored by age, gender, grade, ethnicity and disability against the nature of the disciplinary decision. This allows for any trends or issues of potential discrimination under the Council's Equality policies to be identified and investigated. Not all disciplinary action is concerned with misconduct, as some will relate to poor performance. The position for 2006/07 is set out in the following table and

the information has been provided in an anonymised format to prevent identification of an individual.

Table one – disciplinary action taken in 2006/07

Nature of disciplinary action	Gender of staff	Age band of staff	Disability status	Ethnicity of staff
Dismissal – gross misconduct	Male	40-50	No disability	White English
Dismissal – gross misconduct	Male	40-50	No disability	White other
Final written warning – poor performance	Male	40-50	No disability	White English
Dismissal – gross misconduct	Male	20-30	Disabled	White English
Dismissal – gross misconduct	Male	40-50	No disability	White other
Dismissal – capability	Female	60-70	No disability	Black African

3. Of the 6 cases proceeded with under the disciplinary procedure in 2006/07, the issues under consideration were as follows:

- Conduct within work or associated with work, which had the potential to bring the Council into disrepute (4 cases); and
- Poor performance at work (2 cases).

4. In each case the person hearing the charges considered all the evidence presented by the officer conducting the case and that presented by the employee, and formed a view on this. In four cases this led to dismissal on grounds of gross misconduct, whereas in two cases poor performance was at issue, one of which led to dismissal, the other to a final written warning, with standards for improvement identified.

5. All disciplinary hearings were preceded by a full and independent investigation, which usually involved the relevant service manager, the Chief Internal Auditor and a member of the Human Resources Unit. The Head of Legal, Administration and Estates provided advice. In addition, the Staff Appeals Panel heard two appeals against dismissal, but in both cases the Panel upheld the original officer decision.

6. It is also important to note that two cases listed above came about as a result of 'whistle blowing' by staff or other parties, who raised concerns about potential misconduct by employees.

7. Finally, the Head of HR and Performance Management has monthly meetings with all HR staff involved in casework, including that relating to conduct. This provides an opportunity for regular monitoring of staff conduct, and early reference to the Board if necessary. It is also important to note that the 6 cases are from an employee head count of approximately 650 i.e. 0.92%. Under Key Line of Enquiry (KLOE) 4.3 level 4 requires routine consideration of the use of publicity in cases of proven fraud/corruption in order to raise awareness. This takes place with respect to cases of fraud committed by members of the public. The Cabinet is asked to consider whether this should be done in cases relating to staff which result in dismissal on grounds of gross misconduct. If this took place, the publication of information would need to be handled very sensitively, and it would be easy to identify individuals or teams if the detailed facts of the case were given. A more anonymous approach would make the process somewhat bland but may be useful in raising general awareness amongst staff that the Council takes these matters very seriously. The Cabinet is asked to consider if it wishes this to be done.

Complaints Monitoring:

8. No monitoring information is kept by the Complaints Officer concerning the number of complaints raised at stage 2 of the procedure which involve minor staff conduct issues in some way. That said, formal complaints that dealt solely with staff conduct would generally be referred to the disciplinary procedure where there was an issue of sufficient seriousness. During 2006/07 no complaint at stage 2 required the application of the disciplinary procedure as a result of an investigation under the complaints procedure.

9. If staff conduct at stage 3 of the complaints procedure is an identified issue arising from the complaint itself or as a result of the independent investigation, this would be referred to the disciplinary procedure. Of the complaints dealt with by the Complaints Officer at stage 3 in 2006/07, none raised personal conduct issues to the level where action under the disciplinary procedure was required. In all cases any issues of staff conduct were able to be dealt with informally by means of the usual management processes.

Introduction of a New Code of Conduct for Staff:

10. At its meeting on 4 September 2006 the Cabinet agreed a new code of conduct for all Council staff. Prior to this, the Council had in place clear guidance about matters such as secondary employment, declaration of gifts, hospitality and interests, and related matters in its Staff Handbook. The new Code expands on this.

11. The Code of Conduct has now been distributed to all staff. In accordance with the recommendations of Cabinet, the following actions then took place:

- (a) All staff were required to sign a declaration that they have received the code;
- (b) All staff in politically restricted posts were required to complete a declaration of interests, including nil returns;
- (c) All other existing staff were invited to complete a declaration, save where they had an interest to declare, which was a compulsory matter; and
- (d) All newly appointed staff are required to complete a declaration form as a condition of their contract of employment.

12. In addition, the introduction of the Code was supported by inclusion in the September HR briefing for managers, and the October Team Briefing issued by Management Board. Code of conduct issues are also covered in the Staff Handbook, which is made available via the induction procedure, and in the regular induction programme. A team briefing will shortly be issued reminding staff to make any declarations as their circumstances change.

13. The HR unit maintains the declaration of interest forms on the individual's personal file. Services retain responsibility for the maintaining of registers for gifts and hospitality. Following the receipt of declarations of interest in December 2006, these were reviewed by the Head of Human Resources and Performance Management in conjunction with the relevant Head of Service and Joint Chief Executive (where appropriate). This exercise has determined that no declaration made has led to a conflict of interest, and that where appropriate, Services have in place arrangements to ensure that this does not arise.

New arrangements for regular criminal background checks on staff with substantial unsupervised access to children and vulnerable adults:

14. The Cabinet also agreed that staff in posts that have substantial unsupervised access to children or vulnerable adults will be subject to three yearly disclosures from the Criminal Records Bureau. Existing staff were invited to participate in this exercise on a voluntary basis, whilst for new staff this is compulsory, and contracts of employment have been

modified to reflect this. This ensures that issues of staff conduct, which have a bearing on specific occupations, are identified and acted on at regular intervals. The Joint Consultative Committee also received a report concerning the results of a Compliance Audit from the Criminal Records Bureau, which took place last year. This showed that our procedures in this respect were generally fit for purpose. Certain recommendations were made for improvement, most notably that a small number of posts that were subject to a disclosure did not fall within the relevant definitions and so should be removed from this procedure. This action has now been implemented.

Internet usage, telephone and email policies:

15. Cabinet has now agreed new policies on the use of the Internet, Email and Telephones for staff. These set out standards of conduct which staff must follow, and all employees will be required to sign a statement that they have received the new policies and will abide by them. This exercise will take place in May/June 2007. Changes brought about to these policies recognize developments in technology and learning arising from HR casework and operational issues.

Conclusions:

16. The matters contained in this report indicate that the Council engages actively in staff conduct issues as they arise. In addition to the day-to-day reactive work resulting from disciplinary action, the Council has proactively sought to increase awareness of conduct issues through the introduction of the code of conduct and supporting declaration procedures, a new approach to CRB checks and the publication of detailed policies that relate to staff conduct. Cabinet is asked whether instances of staff fraud/corruption should be routinely publicized to staff on an anonymised basis as and when they arise in order to raise awareness.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

17. The publication of cases of staff fraud/corruption to the workforce could be an additional action in the Council's aim of ensuring that staff meet the highest standards of conduct as public servants.

Other Options for Action:

18. The Cabinet could decide not to publicise cases of fraud/corruption to staff.

Consultation Undertaken:

19. With the recognized trade unions.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: N/A.

Personnel: As set out in the report.

Land: N/A.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A.

Relevant statutory powers: N/A.

Background papers: N/A.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/003/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Staff Sickness and Absence – Update.

Officer contact for further information: Tony Tidey (01992 – 564054).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That Cabinet notes the 2006/07 outturn position with respect to BV12 - The number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence;**
- (2) That Cabinet notes the progress that has been made with actions designed to reduce sickness absence and considers whether to reduce the 'number of days' trigger level for management action under the Managing Absence Policy from 10 days in any rolling twelve month period to 8 days, with a possible further reduction at a later date; and**
- (3) That, in the light of the Authority's current high sickness levels, the Cabinet decides whether to convey to staff:**
 - (a) the Cabinet's recognition of its responsibility for the welfare of all staff and the impact that high sickness levels has on those covering for absent colleagues, and on service delivery;**
 - (b) the Cabinet's concern about the high levels of sickness absence experienced in the Authority, and its wish to see these reduce considerably by means of early and appropriate management action under the Managing Absence Procedure; and**
 - (c) the Cabinet's support for those experiencing attendance difficulties, and its clear commitment to measures to improve attendance.**

Report:

1. At its meeting of 18 December 2006 the Cabinet considered an evaluation of the Recruitment and Retention strategy. It was agreed that attention would in future be focused on tackling the Council's increasing sickness absence levels, and a range of measures were agreed to do this. The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet on progress achieved since that time.

Outturn performance for BV12 – the number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence:

2. At the December 2006 meeting of Cabinet it was noted that second quarter performance against this indicator was worse than at the corresponding period in the previous year. The Council's performance for the whole of 2006/07 has now been established and shows that on average each employee took 12.52 days sickness per year. The figure for 2005/06 was 10.66 days. Performance against this indicator has therefore worsened by 1.86 days per employee in the space of one year. Clearly not all employees take this amount of sick leave, and this represents an average figure, which disguises some

long-term absence for chronic conditions.

3. Outturn figures are not yet available for other Essex Authorities for 2006/07, however it is interesting to compare information relating to the previous year for all District Councils, as follows:

Table 1 – BV12 Number of working days/shifts lost due to sickness absence 2005/06

Rank	No. of days lost
Average	9.64 days
Top quartile	8.29 days
Median quartile	9.54 days
Bottom quartile	10.92 days
EFDC performance	10.66 days (2005/06)
EFDC performance	12.52 days (2006/07)

Information about sickness absence in the Authority:

4. Clearly, the Authority's performance against this indicator is of great concern. At the December 2006 meeting the Cabinet approved the creation of a post of Human Resources Officer for a period of one year in order to address sickness absence. The post has been filled since 1 February 2007 and has carried out a range of tasks to increase our understanding of sickness absence issues in the Authority and to identify and resolve specific cases. These are now considered.

5. Under the Managing Absence Policy there are trigger levels for initiating management action in cases of excessive sickness absence. These are:

(a) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had 5 or more separate occasions of absence; or

(b) during any 'rolling' twelve-month period an employee has had at least 10 working days of any combination of un/self certificated, or medically certificated absences.

6. An analysis of sickness patterns within the Council has revealed that 17.92% of employees in the Council met one or other of the above trigger levels, and an additional 9.34% met both. In response, referrals to our Occupational Health Physician (for employment-related health advice on individual cases) increased in 2006/07 by 88% to 64. This equates to approximately 10% of the workforce referred for medical advice in that year. In addition, during the period December 2006 to March 2007 three staff have been dismissed for sickness absence related reasons, and appropriate support such as adjustments to jobs, phased return to work and counselling have been provided to others.

7. An analysis has also been carried out of the main reasons for staff absence on account of sickness. This is set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Main reasons for staff sickness absence, January – December 2006

Absence reason	No. of staff absent
Infections	280
Gastric, Kidney, Liver etc	214
Muscular-skeletal problems	88
Neurological	79
Eye, Ear, Nose & Throat etc	51
Back problems	48

Stress & Anxiety	40
Genitourinary, Menstrual	38
Respiration & Chest Problems	30
Unspecified	15
Pregnancy Related	13
Heart, Blood Pressure, Circulation	9
Road Traffic Accident	9

8. As would be expected the most significant causes of absence are short-term viral and gastric infections.

9. As a result of this information the HR Officer is now working with line managers on all cases where the trigger level has been exceeded with the aim of developing a plan of action for each one designed to either reduce absence in the future, bring about a return to work for an employee on long term absence or if this is not possible to terminate their employment. As part of this process, issues of staff well being and support are also identified and acted upon. There are a number of examples of best practice with respect to the management of sickness absence in the Authority, not least the work carried out by the Benefits Division in Finance and the Housing Service.

10. Further analysis has also revealed that in addition to short-term absence for viral and similar infections, a significant number of staff has taken continuous periods of long-term absence. Table 3 provides anonymised information about this.

Table 3 – the 20 longest employee absences Jan to Dec 2006, with reasons

Case Identifier	No of days absent	Reason
A	205	Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Mental health and Fatigue
B	183	Heart problems
C	138	Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Mental health and Fatigue
D	129	Heart problems/Muscular-skeletal
E	122	Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Mental health and Fatigue
F	114	Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Mental health and Fatigue
G	107	Gastric problems
H	101	Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Mental health and Fatigue
I	99.5	Various – a range of problems
J	94	Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Mental health and Fatigue
K	88	Musculo-skeletal
L	87	Musculo-skeletal
M	85.5	Various – a range of problems
N	82	Various – a range of problems
O	80	Various – a range of problems
P	75.5	Various – a range of problems
Q	75.5	Musculo-skeletal
R	73.5	Stress, Depression, Anxiety, Mental health and Fatigue
S	73	Gastric problems
T	73	Ear, nose and throat

11. From the above analysis it can be seen that a key reason for absence is stress. In such cases an investigation always takes place into the underlying issues, specifically

whether they are work related or not. In one case the cause was alleged to be work related and a full investigation took place followed by appropriate management action to facilitate a return to work. In the other cases referred to above the causes were generally outside work (e.g. home life issues) and appropriate support, including counselling, is provided where this is of value.

12. In long-term absences advice is received from the Occupational Health Physician, who will often liaise with the employee's General Practitioner on strategies for treatment and a return to work. Sometimes a recommendation is made that the individual should return to work on a part time, phased basis as part of their rehabilitation. This is often helpful in bringing forward a date for return to work and the employee's overall reintegration into the work environment.

Further initiatives to reduce sickness absence:

13. In addition to the casework described above, an Employee Wellbeing Strategy is being developed, to be presented to the Joint Consultative Committee (JCC) in due course. This will integrate existing policies and initiatives within an holistic approach, including matters such as the Stress Strategy, counselling provision and Health and Safety at Work. Also, at the request of staff in the recent Staff Attitude Survey and the JCC, the possibility of providing private healthcare is being considered, although the costs are likely to be substantial.

14. The Cabinet also agreed at its December 2006 meeting that the free health checks previously provided to staff over the age of 40 be extended to all staff, regardless of age. Discussions are now in place with two providers for this to be implemented.

15. In light of the Authority's performance against BV12, a further action, which might assist in the effective monitoring and reduction of sickness absence, could be the reduction in the number of days absence in any twelve month period which would trigger action under the Managing Absence Procedure. As noted at paragraph 5 above, this currently stands at 10 days. Consideration could be given to reducing this trigger level to 8 days, with a further reduction at a later date as sickness levels improve. This change would allow for early identification of any problems and the provision of appropriate support to the employee. The Cabinet is asked to consider this.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

16. The communication of the Cabinet's views and approach to managing sickness absence to all EFDC staff will be valuable in sending a clear message about the importance attached to this matter by Members, and will support the initiatives designed to improve the current poor performance of the Authority.

Other Options for Action:

17. The Cabinet could decide not to communicate this matter to staff. However, given the Authority's current poor performance in managing sickness absence, this might not be appropriate.

Consultation Undertaken:

18. With the recognized trade unions.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: N/A at this stage.

Personnel: As set out in the report.

Land: N/A.

Community Plan/BVPP reference: N/A.
Relevant statutory powers: N/A.

Background papers: N/A.
Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.
Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/004/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Corporate Equality Action Plan.

Officer contact for further information: Tony Tidey (01992 – 564054).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That Cabinet note the significant improvement in performance in BVPI 2b, ('The quality of an Authority's Race Equality Scheme) for 2006/07, representing the return on the investment put into this area during the last year;**
- (2) That Cabinet note that if similar progress is to take place with respect to BV2a ('The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the Authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability') it is a requirement to have in place a Corporate Equalities Action Plan;**
- (3) That Cabinet comment on and agree the draft Corporate Equalities Action Plan set out at Appendix one to this report, and note that it may be amended following further community and staff consultation; and**
- (4) That Cabinet agree that the Corporate Equalities Action Plan be monitored on an annual basis by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Standing Panel.**

Report:

1. At the April 2007 meeting of Cabinet agreement was given to a Disability Equality scheme and Gender Equality Scheme for the Council, thus complementing the existing Race Equality Scheme. A significant amount of work has taken place over the last year in terms of equalities work, much of this driven by legislative requirements. To this end, it should be noted that performance against BV2b 'The quality of an Authority's Race Equality Scheme (RES) and the improvements resulting from its application' has improved from a score of 63% in 2005/06 to 89% at the end of 2006/07. This places the Authority's performance against this indicator in the top quartile of English District Councils, and represents a significant return on the investment put into this area during the last two financial years.

2. In tandem with this Authorities are expected to make progress against the Equality Standard for Local Government, which is measured by BV2a 'The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the Authority conforms in respect of gender, race and disability'. This standard sets out a number of actions Councils must take in order to show an improvement in and commitment to developing equalities issues.

3. Currently EFDC has attained Level 1 of the Equality Standard, which is defined as:

'The Authority has adopted a comprehensive equality policy including commitments to develop equality objectives and targets, to consultation and impact assessment, monitoring, audit and scrutiny'.

However, in practice much more work has been done than would warrant only the award of Level 1. To attain Level 2 the Authority needs to demonstrate that:

‘...it has engaged in an impact and needs assessment process, a consultation process and an equality action planning process for employment and service delivery’.

4. To date we have carried out impact and needs assessments and have in place a consultation strategy and programme. The one element outstanding to attain Level 2 is the establishment of a Corporate Equality Action Plan, and consultation with appropriate stakeholders. This is not too onerous as the impact assessments that have already been carried out by services have generated not only service-specific action plans but also a range of corporate tasks required to embed equalities matters firmly in the Authority. These can now be taken forward as forming the main elements of the Corporate Equality Action Plan.

5. Attached to this report is a draft Corporate Equality Action Plan based upon these principles. Cabinet will note that the timescale for completing this Plan is five years, given the overarching nature and complexity of some of the tasks contained within it. Also, whilst forming a sound basis for taking the Authority forward and attaining Level 2 of the Standard, the Action Plan is effectively an evolving document, on the basis that the Authority is already committed under its Disability and Gender Equality Schemes to consultation with staff, the public and service users on equality issues. It is therefore highly likely that the Plan may need to be amended in due course, in the light of feedback received. If this is the case any amendments will be presented to Cabinet for consideration.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

6. The development of the Council's Corporate Equality Scheme provides a sound platform on which to build future equality developments on a corporate basis. It also complements the existing, ongoing work being carried out in Services with respect to equalities matters, as reflected in their current Service Plans.

Other Options for Action:

7. The Council could decide not to seek to attain Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. However, given the substantial work that has already been done it is sensible to recognize this work formally by attaining level 2.

Consultation undertaken:

8. Consultation with representatives from a range of minority groups is scheduled to take place over the medium term as part of the Disability and Gender Equality Schemes. This consultation will inform the future development of the Corporate Equality Action Plan.

Resource implications:

Budget Provision: None at this stage, although the implementation of the Plan will require resources at a later date. At this stage the amounts required cannot be identified.

Personnel: The Action Plan has both community facing and human resources actions contained within it. These will be developed as the Plan is implemented.

Land: None at this stage.

Council Plan/BVPP Reference: None

Relevant statutory powers: There is a wide range of equalities legislation that would have a bearing on the proposals contained in this report.

Background papers: None

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
General and specific equality duties				
Amend the Council's Race Equality Scheme to bring it up to date to incorporate the current and proposed list of services that are relevant for meeting the Council's statutory duties.	High	Head of HR&PM	July 2008	
Produce procedures and guidance to ensure impact assessments and formal consultation are carried out for relevant proposed policies and the outcomes reported before decisions are made and published	High	Head of HR&PM	July 2008	
Review Managers' Toolkit and Impact Assessment Form following experience of assessing proposed policies under the disability and gender equality duties to ensure they remain fit for purpose.	High	Head of HR&PM	July 2008	
Improving impact of Council services				
Ensure that services that are specifically related to community activities and education (such as town centre management, leisure services, community and culture, arts and museums) use suitable opportunities to proactively promote harmony and understanding between different sectors of the community.	High	Heads of Service	Ongoing	This action will be kept under review as specific opportunities arise.

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
Accessibility of services				
Written communications: Ensure all published documents, leaflets, brochures etc. could be offered in different reading formats (e.g. Braille, large print, computer disc) for sight impaired readers if required.	High	Heads of Service	July 2008	To be provided on request (not speculatively), based on the particular needs of the reader. The Council participates in the Essex County Council translation and interpretation contract.
Include standard wording on all public documents, forms and regular publications (such as <i>The Forester</i> magazine) to communicate their availability in different reading formats on request.	High		Phased over 4 yrs - completed by 2011	Phase introduction and costs by introducing this as each publication is due for reprinting or, where reprinting isn't due for a long time, by addition of printed labels.
<u>Face to face communications:</u> Advertise availability of translation and interpreting services to service users.	High	Heads of Service	July 2008	
<u>Spoken and telephone communications:</u> Review the current availability and plan for future provision/use of facilities to aid/assist people with hearing impairments to access Council services e.g. via induction loops, text phones and TypeTalk.	Med	Heads of Service	July 2009	TypeTalk is a national relay telephone service operated by the RNID which provides a link via an RNID TypeTalk operator between a text phone user and a hearing person using a standard telephone. The provision of text phones at key contact points would allow direct communication from text phone users to Council staff, if this is shown to be required.
Publicise the facilities that are available.	Med	Heads of Service	July 2009	
Ensure the list of employees able to provide such translation services is kept up-to-date and publicised internally.	Med	Head of HR&PM	July 2009	Also need to check that these employees continue to be willing to offer this service – (including the employee who knows BSL) – and that their managers are willing to release them to carry out these duties.
Determine whether external funding may be available for face-to-face and written translations.	High	PMU	July 2008	Access to Work funding may be available to help support employees with disabilities requiring any special assistance.

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
Ensure all managers, front-line staff and councillors are aware of all of facilities provided by the Council to enhance accessibility of council services and information; know how to access them; advise members of the public who may benefit from using them.	High	PMU	July 2008	Some managers know about and use some of the above facilities – others don't, but would welcome more information.
Consider whether the Council's Compliments and Complaints booklets should be more widely available	Med	Public Relations & Marketing Officer		These booklets are currently only available Council offices and satellite buildings such as leisure centres.
Continue to work towards enhancing physical access to Council buildings where needs have been identified.	High	Heads of Service		
Monitoring				
Develop a corporate policy statement on equality monitoring and communicate to the public and all staff.	High	Head of HR&PM	July 2010	
Implement or amend IT systems to collect/store/analyse monitoring data.	High	Heads of Service with Head of ICT	July 2010	
Agree standard corporate monitoring categories with ethnic origin monitoring based on the 2001 census categories – together with any additional break down required to reflect local demographics.	High	Head of HR&PM	July 2010	

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
<p>Prepare guidance on equality monitoring for service managers, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what types of monitoring data to collect and possible methods (linked to existing processes as far as possible) - how data should be analysed and acted upon - to whom the information should be reported and when (e.g. with annual dates for reporting each service) - how to comply with data protection principles and the Freedom of Information Act - model wording to let service users know why monitoring is being carried out and how the information will be stored and used. 	High	Head of HR&PM	July 2010	<p>Monitoring to take 2 forms – depending on the service and ability to collect valid data:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compare service users with population comparators to check whether services are being used by all sectors of the community in similar proportions. This data should be checked at regular intervals to establish trends. 2. Compare proportions of people at different stages in a Council process (e.g. compare percentages of applicants or eligible people from different groups with those who apply or are successful) to ensure Council policies and decisions are not having any unforeseen adverse impact.
Circulate details of the Epping Forest District equality profile based on 2001 census to all Heads of Service to provide a benchmark against which their service-related data can be compared.	High	PMU	July 2010	Already contained as appendix to current RES – may just require internal publicity to signpost the source of the data.
Review information sources already available within EFDC or held by partner organisations to establish what monitoring data is currently available and where gaps need to be filled.	High	Heads of Service	July 2010	Some of this work has already been done via the impact assessments.
Consult relevant contractors and partners to see whether they are able to assist with the collection of relevant monitoring data and whether they supply similar services to other public sector bodies.	Medium			
All relevant services to start gathering monitoring data to highlight any adverse impact in relation to service users, potential users and/or non-users (as appropriate), linked to their gender, disability, race and age. Where appropriate, also consider monitoring on religion.	High		All services to have monitoring systems in place by July 2010	<p>Depending on each service's circumstance, monitoring could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - an ongoing activity on all users/transactions - an ongoing activity on a random sample of users/transactions - one-off exercises/surveys carried out at prescribed times (e.g. for 3 months every two years, for one week every six months, etc.

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
Include equality monitoring questions when conducting surveys/consultation exercises so that the views of different sectors of the community can be analysed separately. Ensure this analysis is carried out and reported.	High	Heads of Service	July 2010	
Ensure all public-facing staff understand the purpose of monitoring and know how to deal with any enquiries or complaints concerning monitoring.	High	Heads of Service/Head of HR&PM	July 2010	
Carry out an equal pay audit.	High	Head of HR&PM	12/06	Completed.
Implement formal monitoring of councillors' equality profiles (in agreement with group leaders) and report at least annually together with the workforce profile.	Low	Head of Democratic Services	December 2011	Equality action plans to address any significant under-representation from particular groups in both employment and council membership.
Consultation				
Agree a corporate policy relating to consultation of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - existing service users/customers - potential service users/customers - those who are eligible for but do not use Council services (whether by choice, lack of awareness or inability to access the service) - those who are affected by Council services. 	High	Head of HR&PM	April 2006	Consultation strategy and planning process agreed by Cabinet.
Seek information about consultation processes used by other authorities to learn from practical experience of what has worked well.	Med	PMU	July 2009	
Where appropriate, ask open questions during feedback surveys/consultation exercises about customers' needs related to their equality profile.	High	Heads of Service	Ongoing	E.g. Do they have particular needs in terms of this service related to their religion, beliefs, disability, cultural traditions, sex, age, etc.?

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
Seek general feedback from Council taxpayers on all forms of Council communication including written, telephone, face-to-face and electronic.	Med	PMU	April 2011	
Use the outcome to develop a corporate Communications Strategy and to address any identified problems.				
Develop a common approach and guidance to different consultation methods and equality monitoring for all consultation exercises, to share best practice.	High	PMU	July 2009	Evaluate existing consultation guide and make improvements.
Consider the extent to which joint consultation can be undertaken to increase efficiency and reduce consultation fatigue of shared customers/users.	High	PMU	July 2009	
Consider extent to which consultation/surveys being carried out by other organisations (formal and informal partners, contractors and other public or voluntary sector bodies) could be used to provide quality feedback for EFDC.	Med	PMU	April 2010	
Ensure employees are regularly consulted about employment matters and working for the Council and that the results of any large-scale consultation exercises can be analysed by equality profile.	High	Head of HR&PM	Jan 2007	Completed - Action Plan produced.
Staff and member training				
Training needs (normally identified via annual service plans and the SDR process) to be supplemented by corporately identified training needs (for members and staff) on cross-cutting topics such as equality and diversity.	High	Head of HR&PM with Management Board and Heads of Service	Ongoing	Equality/diversity training is a corporate need which needs to be driven from the top rather than bottom up. All staff attend 'Dealing with Diversity' course.
Policy decision - attendance at equality training to be made mandatory for all managers and employees following a three year programme to bring everyone up-to-date.	High	Management Board	Programme completed by 3/10	
Consider ability to create training records for all staff so that managers can check who has attended diversity training.	Med	Head of HR&PM	April 2011	

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
Review development needs of all existing staff and members to determine gaps in diversity training.	Med	Head of HR&PM with Managers and Head of Dem Service	April 2011	Training to include the council's general and specific duties to promote equality.
Ensure equality issues are adequately covered via the induction process or induction training for all new staff and members	Med		April 2011	
Ensure line managers are informed if newly appointed employees have not attended diversity training.	Med	Head of HR&PM	Already in place	
Ensure newly promoted or newly appointed managers attend corporate training to cover: - equality legislation (employment and service delivery) - non-discriminatory employment practices (e.g. on recruitment, performance management, etc.) - practical guidance on meeting the Council's general and specific duties to promote equality in service delivery.	High	Learning and Development Adviser/Line Managers (LADA)	April 2010	
Provide regular updates on equality legislation and the practical impact on service provision for service managers.	High	LADA	April 2009	
Ensure the need to promote equality is specifically included in all other training where issues could arise.	Med	All managers responsible for training	Ongoing	Examples include: emergency planning, media training for councillors, employment procedures and practices, etc.
Provide written guidance for managers about the different ethnic/religious/cultural groups within the community and their needs.	High	PMU	April 2009	
Incorporate equality discussions into all services' team meeting agenda, at least once a year, to refresh awareness.	High	MB/SMT		Core briefings to be cascaded from MB/SMT & HR

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
Devise performance management measures for managers which are reviewed at regular intervals.	Med	Head of HR&PM with SMT	April 2010	Some options: - agreeing corporate or service specific SDR managerial objectives on equality, - use corporate equality competencies or - develop checklist of standard questions on how managers are implementing the Equality Standard or implementing equality action plans.
Ensure service managers, HR officers and others responsible for providing leadership on statutory equality duties and responsibilities have the necessary knowledge and skills to do so.	High		Ongoing	Relevant staff to attend regular courses.
Create a network of equality champions and/or a corporate equalities WG to support heads of service in implementing this agenda.	High		April 2009	
Working with external partners and contractors				
Check wording in all current agreements/contracts where external bodies are involved in delivering services to the public on behalf of the Council. Seek agreement for any amendments required to existing agreements/contracts if this is considered necessary/ desirable to meet statutory duties under the RR(A)A2000 and forthcoming equality legislation relating to promoting disability and gender equality.	High	To be developed by: Head of Planning & Economic Development with Head of Legal and relevant Heads of Service performing the client role.	April 2010	
Consider requesting formal written confirmation that all existing external partners/contractors are operating in accordance with the Council's equal opportunities policy and its statutory duties	Med		April 2011	Based on standard wording developed corporately.
Ensure all new contracts/agreements take full account of the Council's duties to promote equality and that clauses are written in, where appropriate, to require other parties to support those duties.	High		April 2010	

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
Consider issuing written guidelines for external partners and contractors, setting out the Council's equality duties and the implications for anyone delivering services on behalf of the Council.	Med	As above	April 2011	
Consider whether places on Council diversity training courses could be offered to external partners and contractors delivering services on behalf of the Council.	Lower	Head of HR&PM with Service Managers		Such places to be offered at a cost to be determined
Positive action measures				
Participate in the Essex Strategic HR Partnership's positive action campaign to encourage applications for local government employment from under-represented groups and to make the LG employer brand more attractive.	High	Head of HR&PM	Dec 2007	Financed by ODPM funding. Current campaign ends December 2007 and a full evaluation will take place.
Include positive action statements on job adverts to encourage applications from groups that are significantly under-represented in the workforce.	Med	Head of HR&PM and Service Managers	April 2010	
Employee welfare				
Check extent of racial incidents and all forms of harassment/bullying experienced by employees from members of the public or other staff.	High	Head of HR&PM	April 2009	Corporate violence at work guidance produced April 2007. Staff survey considered harassment - actions included in this Action Plan.
Consider whether monitoring of informal (as well as formal) harassment/bullying allegations by staff could be implemented to show levels of reporting and types of issues.	Med	Head of HR&PM	April 2010	

CORPORATE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN

ACTION	PRIORITY	RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S)	TARGET DATE	COMMENTS
Review Council processes for recording and following up any acts of verbal/racist abuse against employees or any others working on behalf of the Council e.g. via incident report form and ensure these are examined at an appropriate level (e.g. by Head of HR & PM) and actions are taken to protect staff when required.	High	H&S Officer Head of HR&PM Service Managers	April 2009	
Provide support for employees who suffer racist or other forms of abuse and hostile behaviour – whether overt or disguised.	High	Line managers	Ongoing	As need arises.

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/005/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Housing.

Subject: Leader Lodge - High Road, North Weald.

Officer contact for further information: Alan Hall (01992 – 564004).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Council seeks the improvement and conversion of Leader Lodge, North Weald into four self contained flats, together with the development of an annexe comprising at least two self contained flats within the grounds of Leader Lodge in partnership with one of the Council's Preferred RSL Partners;**
- (2) That the new and converted flats be sold on a shared-ownership basis, as a low cost home ownership initiative for first time buyers in the District who are unable purchase a property on the open market;**
- (3) That, in order to ensure maximum value for money, the Housing Portfolio Holder selects one of the Council's Preferred RSL Partners to undertake the development following a competitive process, based on the plans formulated by the Council's architect and:**
 - (a) the proposed amounts to be paid to the Council by the RSLs; and**
 - (b) any other material considerations considered appropriate by the Housing Portfolio Holder;**
- (3) That the selected Preferred RSL Partner be required to;**
 - (a) produce and submit the detailed planning application at its own cost and risk; and**
 - (b) submit a bid to the Housing Corporation for social housing grant (SHG) funding, which the Council will support;**
- (4) That, subject to the receipt of planning permission and the RSL undertaking the approved development, the freehold of Leader Lodge and the associated land be sold to the selected Preferred RSL Partner, after the outcome of the Housing Corporation Bidding Round is known, for its tendered sum; and**
- (5) That any capital receipt be utilised to provide local authority social housing grant to an RSL to facilitate the provision of affordable housing on another site, and that the Housing Portfolio Holder be authorised to approve its most appropriate use, in terms of the site and RSL.**

Background:

1. Leader Lodge was originally a detached house, within extensive grounds, purchased by the Council under Housing Act powers and converted into 2 two-bedroom flats (on the ground and first floor). The site area is approximately 0.19 hectares. Until 2002, the flats provided tied accommodation for the Manager and Deputy Manager of nearby Norway House, the Council's Homeless Persons Hostel, until it was decided, for operational reasons, that it was no longer appropriate for the hostel management staff to live "on-site". Since that time, the two flats have been used to accommodate two formerly homeless families on non-secure tenancies.

2. Following the vacation of the hostel management staff, a proposal to demolish Leader Lodge and redevelop the site to provide 10 new self-contained flats was formulated. An alternate proposal was also identified, retaining and converting the structure of the existing building to provide four flats and providing a small annexe of two new flats, linked with a communal entrance/stairway. In March 2004, a former Housing Portfolio Holder considered the issue and agreed to the submission of an outline planning application on the basis of the former option.

3. However, in June 2006, despite a planning officer recommendation for approval, the outline planning application was refused by the Area Plans Sub-Committee. This was because the Sub-Committee felt that "the proposals would result in a form of development out of character in this area of predominantly single-family dwellings and detrimental to the street scene" and "would result in an intensification of use out of character with the surrounding properties and likely to result in activity causing disturbance to the occupiers of adjacent properties". Although not forming part of the formal reasons for refusal, it was also apparent that a number of interested parties were concerned at the potential loss of a building considered to have historical links with former RAF North Weald.

4. It is therefore necessary to consider the future use of the site and, in this respect, the following three main options have been identified.

Option 1 – Maintain the Status Quo:

5. Leader Lodge could continue to provide 2 two-bedroom rented flats, but occupied by secure tenants allocated in accordance with the Housing Allocations Scheme. However, in view of the desperate shortage of affordable housing within the District, the extensive grounds which are not being used to their full potential, and the belief that some form of development to increase the amount of affordable housing is possible (see Option 3 below), this option is not recommended.

Option 2 – Disposal of the Site on the Open Market:

6. Since the current occupants do not have security of tenure, the building and grounds could be sold on the open market, realising a capital receipt for the Council, which could be used to help fund the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the District, or for another housing use. If the capital receipt is used for "affordable housing purposes" the Council could retain 100% of the capital receipt. However, if used for any other reason, 50% of the capital receipt would have to be passed to the Government under the pooling arrangements.

7. In order to assess the market value of the site, the Valuation Office has provided a valuation report. However, the Valuer had some difficulty assessing the value, since she was mindful that planning permission had been refused for development, but that the site did have development potential. In summary, the Valuer advised that:

- In order to maximise the value and fulfil the development potential of the site, planning permission should be sought (for a different form of development than the previous unsuccessful outline planning application) before the property is marketed;

- However, reflecting the fact that planning permission has not been obtained for further residential development, but assuming that planning permission would be readily forthcoming for conversion back into one residential unit, the value would be around £500,000; and
- If the property was marketed without planning permission, but was perceived by a developer that planning permission would be granted for three or more detached houses, or if planning permission was given on appeal for the proposal that was refused permission to provide 10 flats, “potential bids could be made at over £600,000”.

8. However, if this option is pursued, although it would result in a capital receipt that could be used for an alternative housing purpose elsewhere, a potential opportunity to provide affordable housing on a site, of which there is currently a dearth in the District, would be lost. It should also be noted that the purchaser of the site could seek to undertake a similar, or more extensive, development to that considered appropriate and refused by the Area Plans Sub Committee, which may be successful on appeal.

9. If the site is declared surplus to the Council’s requirements under this option, the provisions of the Code of Practice on Surplus Land and Property within the Local Charter between the District Council and local councils will apply. Under the Code of Practice, the District Council must notify the local council of the Council’s intention to dispose of the land on the open market. The Parish Council would then be given 28 days to register their interest to purchase the freehold of the land. Where “the proposed use of the land is supported by the District Council”, the Code does make provision for a discount to be offered of up to £25,000, or 25% of the open market value (whichever is the lower).

Option 3 - Conversion and Provision of a new Annexe:

10. As explained earlier, an alternative development proposal was previously identified by the Council’s architect in 2004, which would result in the retention and conversion of the existing building to provide 4 one bedroom flats (thereby overcoming the concerns about the loss of a historical building) and the provision of a small annexe of 2 two bedroom flats, linked with a new communal entrance/stairway.

11. Discussions with the planning officer have established that she would have no objections in principle but she emphasises that, in view of the previous refusal by the Area Plans Sub-Committee, members may have a different view. She has also suggested that any application for planning permission should be detailed, and not outline.

12. The budget costing for the proposed works is £513,000 (exclusive of fees, usually around 8%). However, it is emphasised that this is only a rough estimate and has not been provided by a quantity surveyor.

13. There are two potential ways of undertaking the proposed development. The Council could either:

(a) undertake the development itself, with the capital costs funded from the Housing Capital Programme, then manage and maintain the properties itself and receive the associated rental income; or

(b) sell the building and associated land to one of the Council’s Preferred RSL Partners, on the basis of an existing use valuation, for the RSL to undertake the development and then either let them at affordable rents, or sell them on a shared ownership basis, and receive the associated rental/sales income; the Council would receive nomination rights as usual.

14. To assess the most cost effective option, Enterprise BMWL consultants were appointed to undertake a financial appraisal of the two options, as well as a comparison with the status quo. The appraisal makes the following key assumptions:

- VAT on the works cost would be payable by an RSL, which is not payable by the Council;
- The RSL may be able to receive £60,000 social housing grant (SHG) from the Housing Corporation towards the cost of constructing the two new properties for rent, or £24,000 for the provision on a shared-ownership basis;
- The Housing Corporation would not fund an RSL for the conversion costs;
- The average initial equity shares for the shared ownership option would be 50%, with rents charged at 2.5% of the unsold equity per annum
- The ongoing housing management costs of an RSL for the rented option would be higher than the Council's

15. A summary of the outcome of the appraisal (showing the situation both with and without SHG from the Housing Corporation) is as follows. It should be noted that all figures are indicative and are subject to competition/negotiation, building costs and property values:

Option	Net Present Value (NPV) over 30 Years ^(*)	EFDC Capital Required
Status Quo	(Positive +) £33,000	Nil
EFDC Development (Rented)	(Negative -) £260,000	£513,000
RSL Development (<i>Rented</i>):		
<i>With SHG</i>	^(#) (Negative -) £165,000	£165,000
<i>Without SHG</i>	^(#) (Negative -) £225,000	£225,000
RSL Development (<i>Shared Ownership</i>):		
<i>With SHG</i>	^(@) (Positive +) £100,000	Nil
<i>Without SHG</i>	^(@) (Positive +) £76,000	Nil

(*) NPV represents the value of income and expenditure received/incurred in later years as of today's date. As a simple example to demonstrate the effect of NPV, the NPV of £1 is the amount that needs to be invested now, in order to accumulate £1 over a given period at compound interest.

(#) The negative valuations under the two RSL Development Options (Rented) mean that, on transfer, the Council would need to pay the RSL a dowry, equivalent to the negative valuation

(@) The positive valuations under the two RSL Development Options (Shared Ownership) mean that, on transfer, the Council receive a capital receipt, equivalent to the valuation.

16. This appraisal shows that the RSL Development Option (Shared Ownership) is the most sound financially, since it would deliver a small potential capital receipt of up to £76,000 or £100,000, depending on the receipt of social housing grant. In addition, it would substantially improve the existing building as well as providing an additional four affordable properties to the existing provision of two (rented) properties. Furthermore, the NPV assessment is between £265,000 and £300,000 higher than the RSL rented options, depending on the availability of SHG.

17. The two rented options would require capital provision of £165,000, £225,000 or £513,000 depending on the option selected and the receipt of social housing grant (with

development by the Council requiring the most investment), but would provide additional rented housing (which always requires greater subsidy than shared ownership). These options would also bring Leader Lodge up to the decent homes standard, compared to the status quo option, which would require additional investment by the Council in the near future anyway.

Proposed Way Forward:

18. Having considered the three main options, Option 3 is recommended. It is further recommended that the provision be in the form of shared ownership, as a low-cost home ownership initiative for first time buyers in the District who are unable to purchase a property on the open market. This is because:

- of the financial advantages;
- there is no capital budget provision to provide an RSL with a dowry; and
- there have not been any shared ownership developments completed recently in the District.

19. It is therefore suggested that Leader Lodge and associated land be sold to one of the Council's Preferred RSL Partners to undertake the development, in return for a capital receipt and the usual nominations rights, covered by the District-wide Nominations Agreement.

20. In order to ensure that the Council obtains maximum value for money, it is suggested that the RSL is selected through a competitive process, whereby each of the Council's four main Preferred RSL Partners would be asked to submit a tender on the amount they would pay to the Council to undertake the development, based on the plans formulated by the Council's architect (to ensure a "level playing field"). It is further suggested that the Housing Portfolio Holder be authorised to select the Preferred RSL Partner, based primarily on the amounts tendered, but also taking account of any other material considerations that the Housing Portfolio Holder considers appropriate (e.g. significant building quality issues).

21. One of the further benefits of the RSL Development Option is that the selected RSL would then be required to produce the detailed drawings for the submission of a detailed planning application, and to meet the associated costs, all at their own risk.

22. Since it will not be known whether or not social housing grant is to be provided by the Housing Corporation (and therefore the purchase price cannot be confirmed) until the outcome of the forthcoming bid round is known (around April 2008) it is suggested that the land is not sold until after this is known.

23. Since the Council can only retain 100% of any capital receipt if it is used for affordable housing (otherwise it must return 50% to the Government under its pooling arrangements), it is suggested that any capital receipt be utilised to provide local authority social housing grant to an RSL to facilitate the provision of affordable housing on another site, and that the Housing Portfolio Holder be authorised to approve its most appropriate use (in terms of the site and RSL).

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

24. Consideration has been given to three main options for the future of Leader Lodge, and the recommended action provides the most affordable housing, whilst providing a low-cost home ownership opportunity for first time buyers in the District who are unable purchase a property on the open market and a small capital receipt, which could be used to provide social housing grant to facilitate affordable housing on another site.

Other Options for Action:

25. To continue to provide 2 two-bedroom rented flats, but occupied by secure tenants allocated in accordance with the Housing Allocations Scheme. However, in view of the

desperate shortage of affordable housing within the District, the extensive grounds are not being used to their full potential.

26. To sell the site on the open market, realising a capital receipt for the Council, which could be used to help fund the provision of affordable housing elsewhere in the District, or for another housing use. However, although it would result in a capital receipt that could be used for an alternative housing purpose elsewhere, a potential opportunity to provide affordable housing on a site, of which there is currently a dearth in the District, would be lost.

Consultation Undertaken:

27. The Council's Preferred RSLs have been consulted on the proposed way forward and consider it to be appropriate and would be willing to submit tenders on the this basis.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: Nil – Potential capital receipt.

Personnel: Nil.

Land: As set out in the report.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP reference: Meeting Housing Need.

Relevant statutory powers: Housing Act 1985.

Background papers: Housing Policy File H758.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: The environment should be improved through the improvement scheme.

Key Decision Reference (if required): N/A.

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/006/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Leisure and Young People.

Subject: 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games.

Officer contact for further information: Derek Macnab (01992 564260).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That the Essex Legacy Action Plan from the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games be endorsed; and**
- (2) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to extend the terms of reference of the Leisure Task and Finish Panel, to undertake a review of the opportunities presented by the 2012 Olympic & Paralympic Games and bring forward proposals as to how the Council may wish to respond, including priorities for action and any resource implications.**

Introduction:

1. The East of England was one of the foremost supporters of the London 2012 Olympic Bid with Essex being a strong contributor in helping the Region register the highest level of public support for the Games, across the whole of the United Kingdom. Epping Forest played a part in this initiative, hosting the 2012 Bid Roadshow and actively canvassing local support through schools etc.
2. It is generally recognized that Essex is uniquely positioned in many respects, to capitalize on the vast range of opportunities that the hosting of the largest multi-national event in the world will bring to London in 2012. The Economic Impact Study commissioned to support the Olympic Bid, projected that the benefit to the Eastern Region could be as high as £600million and for Essex as much as £139 million. However, in order to achieve these benefits concerted effort will need to be taken.
3. To this end an "Action Plan for a Legacy from the 2012 Games" has been developed, following extensive consultation across Essex, Southend and Thurrock. This included a successful Stakeholder Conference "Essex Ahead of the Games" held at Essex University at the end of last year, attended by the Leader of Council and the Head of Leisure Services.
4. A formal request has now been received from the Chairman of the Essex Working Group for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, to endorse the Action Plan and to indicate how Epping Forest may seek to benefit, in practical terms, from the staging of the Games.

Background:

5. London's success in its bid to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, was announced by the International Olympic Committee on 6 July 2005. In the run up to the bid, an Essex Working Group was established, having received official endorsement through the Local Strategic Partnerships of Essex, Southend and Thurrock. Councillor Murray-Foster, Leader of Southend Borough Council, currently chairs the Group.

6. One of the Working Group's initial initiatives was to commission an auditing process to identify opportunities for legacy. Epping Forest were actively engaged in this process and in the summer of 2006, the Head of Olympics and Sports Development at the County Council, Loretta Stollar, (who is the Lead Officer co-ordinating Olympic activity across Essex), visited the District and was briefed on the local "Sports Scene", to include potential training venues and the strength of the local voluntary sector. It was stressed to her at this time, that whilst the only Olympic event planned for Essex was the Mountain Bike Event at Weald Park, Brentwood, literally just over the border in Broxbourne, was the site for the Olympic White Water Canoeing venue, which clearly would also have implications for West Essex.

7. This cross-country consultation has now culminated in the publication of the "Essex Legacy from the Olympics, Action Plan".

The Legacy Action Plan:

8. The Legacy Action Plan (a full copy of which has been circulated to Cabinet Members and further copies placed in the Members' Room) is an invitation to everyone in Essex to play some part in securing a legacy from the Games. The Plan identifies a wide range of practical areas in which there are opportunities and starts to set out some of the events and actions that could take place. The Plan also includes a process for implementation, communication requirements and the development of a reporting and measurement framework. The Plan is not intended to be prescriptive but rather a statement of common intent and a catalyst for all organisations, including District Councils, to develop their own Action Plans and Priorities.

9. The criteria used for the inclusion of current actions within the Plan have been based on interest already expressed by partners, during the consultation process. Members will note that many of the actions are very broad and require a significant level of further planning and the commitment of resources, before they can be realized in full.

10. The lifetime of the plan is 2007 – 2012, and although the focus for the delivery agency for the 2012 Games, LOCOG, (London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games) has largely focused on the land assembly, funding, planning and development issues in relation to the main Olympic Park site in Stratford, East London, the London Olympiad officially starts, immediately after the Beijing Games in 2008. It should also be recognised that there are considerable areas of embargo in terms of the promotion of the 2012 Games in advance of Beijing in 2008. However, once they have ended, the International Olympic Committee, will signal the main promotional thrust for the London Games in 2012 to begin.

Structure of the Action Plan:

11. The Action Plan is divided into two main sections, namely Cross Cutting Themes and Action Areas. These broad headings are not mutually exclusive and offer a menu of opportunities which different agencies can opt in or out of to varying degrees, thus creating their own Legacy Plan. Based on their own individual circumstances and resource availability, it is hoped that actions will be reported and monitored centrally, to enable the sum total of the benefits and legacy that Essex are seeking, to be clearly identified.

Alignment with other Strategies:

12. The Action Plan has been designed so that it does not create a lot of new work for which additional human and financial resources would be required to realise. Indeed a major justification for including any action, was that it was likely to be already identified within other strategies or major policy areas. The value therefore, of including a particular action within the Legacy Plan is the high profile and time imperative that the Olympics bring. The document therefore has been drafted to help meet National and Regional Strategies. For example the Regional Plans for Sport, the Regional Economic Strategy, the Regional Cultural Strategy and the Countrywide Sports, Economic Development and Tourism Strategies.

Components of the Strategy;

13. Listed below are the **Cross Cutting Themes** within the Plan.
- (a) Young People - To involve young people in both the decision-making and the implementation of the Plan.
 - (b) Equity/Inclusion - To ensure equity of access and opportunity, adopting an inclusive approach to all sectors of the community.
 - (c) Sustainability - To ensure that any Games related activity is environmentally friendly and sustainable.
 - (d) Friendships and Cooperation - To celebrate international relations in order to build better cross cultural awareness and appreciation
 - (e) Inspiration/Aspiration - To use the Games to increase the personal aspirations of people and to raise their self esteem
 - (f) Entrepreneurship and Innovation - To encourage entrepreneurship and innovation including the adoption of new technologies
 - (g) Image of Essex - To present a renewed image of Essex that creates pride and positively builds the reputation of the County

Action Areas:

14. In addition to the Key Themes there are 13 Action Areas, where specific practical initiatives can be taken forward in support of the overarching Cross Cutting Themes, namely:

- Supporting Volunteers;
- Preparation and Training Camps;
- Increasing Physical activity and Sports Participation;
- Cycling Development;
- Improving Sports Performance;
- Culture and Festivals;
- Tourism;
- Points of Entry, Transport and Logistics;
- Winning 2012 Games Related and Other Supply Contacts;
- Business Displacement;
- Learning and Development;
- Weald Country Park; and
- Thames Gateway South.

Implementing the Plan:

15. It is proposed that the Essex Working Group for the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games will continue to take a Leadership role for the Action Plan. Served and resourced through Essex County Council, there is support from the Unitary Authorities of Southend and Thurrock for the work to cover Greater Essex. The Working Group will take a direct responsibility for implementation of the Cross Cutting Themes and has also established a number of Sub Groups to manage the delivery of the Action Areas. A Measurement and Reporting Framework is also being developed to evaluate the success of the identified Actions.

Opportunities for Tourism and Economic Development:

16. Olympic related tourism has emerged as one of the key economic legacies for host

cities and countries. It is expected that the event itself will attract 500,000 visitors with further post Olympics visits.

17. With our proximity to the main Games site and special character, with respect to environment and heritage, Epping Forest is well placed, to capitalise on increased tourism. This will result in increased visits to local attractions and visitor spend, having a positive economic benefit. Co-ordinated action could maximize this opportunity.

Getting Our Communities Active, Healthier and Safer:

18. The Olympics can be a powerful tool for promoting the positive benefits of adopting a healthy lifestyle and inspire people of all ages and abilities to get active.

19. School sport plays an important role in this area in order to combat the increasing levels of childhood obesity evident in the District. The Council's Sports Development Team in liaison with the West Essex School Sports Partnership have been developing a proposal to host a "mini-Olympics" in the year of the games, hopefully involving all primary school aged children in a major celebratory event. In addition, through the Council's Leisure Bursary Scheme a number of talented individuals have been identified and supported as having the potential to compete in either the 2012 Olympics or Para-Olympics. These young people provide excellent role models to inspire other children to participate and excel.

Community Cohesion by Developing a Feel Good Factor and Enhanced Pride:

20. The ethos of the Olympic movement can be maximized and used as a means of bringing people together from different communities to share positive experiences and gain greater understanding.

21. A stakeholder conference is being considered in the run-up to the Games to encourage and develop community-based ideas/events to develop this area of positive impact. An idea has also been mooted, to host a large Multi-National Youth Festival at North Weald Airfield, bringing together young people who would like to share the Olympic experience, but possibly could not afford the likely cost of accommodation in Central London.

Create a Significant Cultural and Sporting Legacy:

22. A Cultural Olympiad is planned for 2008-2012 in support of the Games. To facilitate this, a Cultural Consortium named the 'Legacy Trust UK' has been established. Currently they are working on criteria to distribute the £40m available to support the Cultural Olympiad. There is potential for the District to Bid for this external funding, to support Cultural celebratory events locally.

Partnerships with local businesses to enhance investment and identify procurement and employment opportunities:

23. The LOCOG will be responsible for procuring Services to deliver and run the Games, with the majority of their needs, (outside of the main construction contracts), focusing on the staging of the event itself. The procurement requirements are likely to cover goods and services such as sports equipment, venue temporary seating, security, venue dressing, hospitality and catering, staff and volunteer uniform, transport and official merchandising.

24. In January 2007, the Leisure Portfolio Holder, Leader of Council and Head of Leisure Services, met with the County Council's Portfolio Holder for Sport and Regeneration, who is championing the Essex involvement in the Games. As such Councillor Stephen Castle is a member of the "Nations and Regions Group" the LOCOG Sub Group, charged with promoting and encouraging involvement in the Games outside of the Capital.

25. Councillor Castle reported on the success of a number of "Business Breakfasts" he has been involved in with Essex Business Link, to promote procurement opportunities for

small and medium sized companies, to bid for Olympic related contracts. Subsequent to this meeting the Head of Leisure Services has met with representatives of Essex Business Link and obtained an assurance that they would be willing to promote an event of this nature, at an appropriate venue in the District. Unfortunately, Business Link have been undergoing a period of structural change, involving their events staff and a suitable date has yet to be identified. However, it is hoped to report orally to Cabinet on the date of what should be an important networking and advice opportunity for local businesses, as to how to capitalize on the Games.

In Summary:

26. Whilst it can be seen that there are potentially some exciting opportunities to be pursued, with respect to the Olympics, the Council will need to examine the extent to which it may wish to be involved relative, to the potential benefits. To this end it is proposed that the terms of reference of the Leisure Task and Finish Panel 2007/08 be extended. The Task and Finish Panel would review and subsequently recommend to the Council where it may wish to prioritise its efforts and identify a local Action Plan as recommended by the Essex Wide Legacy Plan.

27. Notwithstanding, it is recommended that there are significant advantages in joining with other Partner Agencies in endorsing the Essex Legacy 2012 Plan, particularly as the Council, whilst benefiting from collective action, would still be in a position to determine the extent of its own involvement.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

28. All parties including local authorities, public sector agencies and other partnerships are being formally asked to endorse the Plan. This public endorsement will also raise and maintain the profile of the Plan. Partners are also being asked to respond with any local proposals or priorities and whether they intend to allocate additional resources.

29. Clearly the Olympics will present a number of opportunities for the District and to date a number of ideas and initiatives have been emerging, although these have yet to be formally considered by the Council. For example:

Other Options for Action:

30. The Council may elect not to endorse the Essex Legacy Action Plan.

Consultation Undertaken:

31. Essex Olympic Working Group, Essex Association of Culture and Leisure Officers, Attendees of the Essex Ahead of the Games Conference 2006, Essex County Council, Essex Business Link, Essex District, Borough and Unitary Authorities.

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: Currently, there are no specific resource implications, (apart from some officer time) with respect to the endorsement of the Essex Legacy Action Plan. Thereafter, the Council can determine its own resource requirements in the years leading up to the Games, dependent on the degree it wishes to be involved in facilitating games related initiatives. These would be considered on a cost benefit basis. Essex Business Link have indicated that they will be willing to contribute financially to the cost of the Business Breakfast and further sponsors will be sought to meet any additional costs. The Legacy Trust will be seeking external applications for funding for Cultural Events.

Personnel: No specific implications.

Land: The Council's own facilities, may present opportunities to generate funds. For example, North Weald Airfield has already been identified in the Legacy Plan as a potential Park and Ride, facility for the Games.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP: Promote Healthy Living, Maintain Special Character of the District and promote Economic Prosperity & Investment.

Relevant Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1974; Local Government Act 2000.

Background Papers: Legacy Action Plan.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Implications: N/A.

Key Decision Reference (if required): N/A.

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/007/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Release of Restrictive Covenant - Loughton Hall, Epping Forest College.

Officer contact for further information: Richard O'Connell (01992 - 564135).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 - 564470).

Recommendations:

(1) That the Restrictive Covenant affecting Loughton Hall within the grounds of Epping Forest College, be released and new covenants be imposed:

(a) prohibiting the use of the Hall for any purpose other than residential care home, community, education or health purposes; and

(b) specifically prohibiting the use for any residential purpose, other than as a residential care home, to enable the College to:

(i) sell Loughton Hall for refurbishment and reuse;

(ii) purchase the Essex County Council Library site and commence development of the new campus; and

(iii) invest the capital receipt from Loughton Hall in the development of the College Campus; and

(2) That the Council does not exercise its right of pre-emption to purchase Loughton Hall and the library site adjoining Epping Forest College.

Report:

1. In 1998 the Council agreed to Epping Forest College's request to release a restrictive covenant free of charge from surplus land within its ownership in Borders Lane, Loughton. The land, totalling 7.9 acres/3.20 hectares, is shown outlined black and marked 'Residential Development Land' on the plan attached as Appendix 1. On 10 April 2006 the Cabinet further agreed to release the same covenant from an additional 2.4 hectares shown hatched black on the plan to facilitate residential development and investment of the capital receipt into the redevelopment of the College Campus.

The Restrictive Covenants:

2. The college site, including Loughton Hall, was transferred in 1952 to Essex County Council (ECC) by the then London County Council (LCC) subject to a restrictive covenant that the site be used only for educational purposes. The benefit of the LCC covenant is now vested in Epping Forest District Council (as successors to the LCC) and the ECC interests

are vested in the Epping Forest Further Education Corporation. Essex County Council retained the remainder of the site for the library development.

3. More particularly, the covenants restrict use of the college site as follows:

“ Not without the previous written consent of the Council to use or allow to be used the land hereby conveyed or any part thereof for the any purpose other than for the purpose of the Education Act 1944 and/or the National Health Services Act 1946”; and

“Not to erect any buildings on that part of the campus save in accordance with layout and site plans first submitted to and approved by the Council”. However, no approval is needed for the elevation of such buildings save that EFDC have the opportunity to examine the character of the proposed development.

4. In addition, the title documents contain an arguable right of pre-emption such that on any disposal of any part of the College site it should first be offered for sale to EFDC at the current market value. The wording is poorly drafted and open to interpretation but as the proposed development requires the disposal of Loughton Hall and also the purchase of the library site (a new facility to be included in the new campus), the Council is required to waive its right to be offered the site for sale in the first instance.

5. The Council sought specialist advice from Montagu Evans, Chartered Surveyors, in 1998 on the removal of the restrictive covenant relating to the use of the land as a compensation payment would normally be payable to reflect the increase in the value of the land resulting from the new development potential. The advice confirmed that if the Council refused to release the covenant, the matter would be referred to the Lands Tribunal who would be likely to agree to the release. The level of the compensation would be based on the reduction of the purchase price when the transfer occurred in 1952. Therefore, any compensation would have been nominal. For the original 7.9 acres/3.20 hectares in 1998 the compensation was considered to be in the region of £5,000 to £10,000 - 50% to 100% of the original sale price.

Development Proposals:

6. The College have been granted planning consent to redevelop the College Campus. The proposal includes the disposal of the residential development land and hatched land shown on the plan. This sale, with additional borrowing by the College and gap funding from the Learning Skills Council will enable the development of the new college campus.

7. In addition, the Council's Planning Service has linked the college development with the refurbishment of Loughton Hall, which is a grade II listed building and in a dilapidated condition. Under the draft Section 106 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Legal Agreement (S106 Agreement) obligations, the College will not be able to commence the new development until a schedule of works for the Hall is submitted for approval by the Council. Furthermore occupation of the new college facilities will not be possible until the works to the Hall have been carried out to the Council's satisfaction.

8. Whilst the work to satisfy the requirements of the S106 Agreement is expected to cost in the region of £600,000 the total refurbishment works to the Hall are estimated to cost in excess of £2 million, reflecting the specialist nature of the refurbishment and the considerable deterioration of the internal and external fabric of the building.

9. The College, wishing to limit their liability, arranged for their surveyors Nattrass Giles to offer the Hall on the open market for sale or to let. After a national marketing exercise, a few tenders were received from interested parties; all but two offered to purchase the Hall for a negative value. The bidder being considered is willing to sign a development agreement,

which will not contractually complete until the works are finished and the Section 106 Agreement obligations are fulfilled.

10. The bidder wishes to use the Hall as a residential care home for the elderly and proposes to offer 30 bedrooms with ancillary office space. A Planning Application to change the use has been submitted and approved by the Area Plans Sub-Committee A, (reference EPF/2131/2006).

11. The College have requested that the Council consider amending the covenant to permit the proposed care home use for no consideration to assist in the sale of the Hall and associated renovation subject to a restriction against use for residential dwellings.

12. Whilst the Council's Planning Service have approved the design and layout of the redevelopment of the campus site, and have indicated the works they require to the Hall, formal approval to the works is required from the Council as a party in the original agreement.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

13. The proposed sale of Loughton Hall will enable the redevelopment of the College to proceed and facilitate the refurbishment of the building. Whilst the College may receive some consideration from the sale, this will result in the gap funding from the Learning Skills Council being reduced by a corresponding amount. The College will not financially benefit from the sale of the Hall.

14. Removal of the restrictive covenant relating to use of the Hall will enable the successful bidder to fully utilise the building as a means of recouping their considerable financial commitment on refurbishing a landmark listed building.

15. The specialist advice confirms the view of the Head of Legal Administration and Estates that on the evidence available the Lands Tribunal is likely to agree to release this obsolete covenant with a nominal level of compensation payable to the Council.

16. The Council's approval to the redevelopment of the campus is required separately and in addition to the planning approval. This consent and the waiver of the Council's right to purchase both the Hall and the Library site are required to facilitate the full redevelopment proposed.

Other Options for Action:

17. To authorise the release of the educational covenant, give formal approval to the proposed redevelopment and waive the Council's right of pre-emption at nil consideration but subject to a condition that the property must not be used as residential dwellings; or

18. To seek payment for the release of the education covenant although this could lead to the Council having to meet the costs of any unsuccessful defence action in the Lands Tribunal and delay the College's development plans.

Consultation Undertaken:

19. A planning application for redevelopment of the college and for the associated residential development has been publicly advertised. Ongoing negotiations with the College's representatives Natrass Giles, Chartered Surveyors.

Resource Implications:

Budget provision: Lands Tribunal compensation foregone for the release of the 1952 restrictive covenants.

Personnel: Valuation and Estate Management Service.

Land: Loughton Hall, Epping Forest College Borders Lane, Loughton.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP reference: Community Wellbeing.

Relevant Statutory Powers: Law of Property Act 1925 - release of restrictive covenants and compensation.

Background papers: Property File EV/1019 and Planning Application EPF/2131/2006.

Environmental/Human Rights/Crime and Disorder Act implications: None.

Key Decision Reference (if required): N/A.

Loughton Hall
Rectory Lane
Loughton

VE/1019

Drawing
No. LP/09/C/0012/50b

Scale
N.T.S.

Date **5.4.06**

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Residential Development Land

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RECTORY LANE

**Epping Forest
College**

Parasitology Society of America

BORDERS LANE

Library

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/008/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Lindsey Street Community Association.

Officer contact for further information: Mark Scott (01992 – 564407).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the request by Epping Town Council for the District Council to transfer the freehold interest in the Lindsey Street Community Association site at Frampton Road, Epping at nil consideration be agreed.

Report:

1. In 1963 Epping Urban District Council (UDC) purchased land from the Copped Hall Estate comprising an area of approximately 0.176 hectares/0.4 acres at the northeastern end of Frampton Road, Epping. The site is indicated by black border on the attached Ordnance Survey extract.
2. In the Deed of Purchase, Epping UDC covenanted not to use the land or any building erected on the land for any purpose other than as a community centre and recreation ground. The land did not form part of Epping Town Council's portfolio until 1982 following parish council boundary changes, although they had been collecting ground rent for the land since 1974.
3. On 15 July 1964, Epping UDC granted the Lindsey Street Community Association a 21 year lease at an annual rent of £12. Upon expiry, Epping Town Council completed a new lease with the Community Association for a further term of 21 years at a rent of £52 per annum. Under the terms of these leases the Community Association have built club facilities on the site.
4. The Town Council now wish to grant the Community Association a new lease on similar terms. However, the Town Council has established that although they retain the original lease documents, the District Council owns the freehold interest. They state they were under the impression that the freehold interest had transferred to their Council upon local government re-organisation in the 1970s and have acted as the landowner, evidenced by their decision to renew the original Epping UDC lease in 1985. To regularise the position, they formally request that the freehold interest be transferred to their Council free of charge.
5. There is a general disposal consent in effect that permits a local authority to dispose of land for less than the best consideration. The general consent is limited to:
 - (a) a sale or transfer at a price not exceeding a difference of £2 million between the open market value and the transfer value; and
 - (b) to transactions the disposing authority considers will help secure the improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of an area.
6. Although the site has not been valued formally, the value of the freehold reversion,

subject to the covenants and conditions mentioned above, is minimal. If the Cabinet considers the transfer of the land to Epping Town Council will promote social and environmental well-being by taking the property into its ownership, the general consent will apply to this transfer and the Secretary of State's consent will not be required.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

7. The site is outside the approved settlement limits for Epping and is subject to Green Belt policy. Other community land and property assets vested in the District Council have been transferred to the appropriate parish or town council for management. It is suggested that this is the appropriate course in respect of this site also.

8. The proposed transfer of this community asset will enable Epping Town Council to renew the lease to the Lindsey Street Community Association for a further term.

Other Options for Action:

9. To retain the site and inherit ongoing lease management responsibilities and a modest ground rent.

Consultation undertaken:

10. Ongoing negotiations with Epping Town Council, Lindsey Street Community Association and their legal representatives.

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: Current ground rent £52 per annum foregone.

Personnel: Valuation and Estate Management Service.

Land: Land at Frampton Road, Epping - Lindsay Street Community Association.

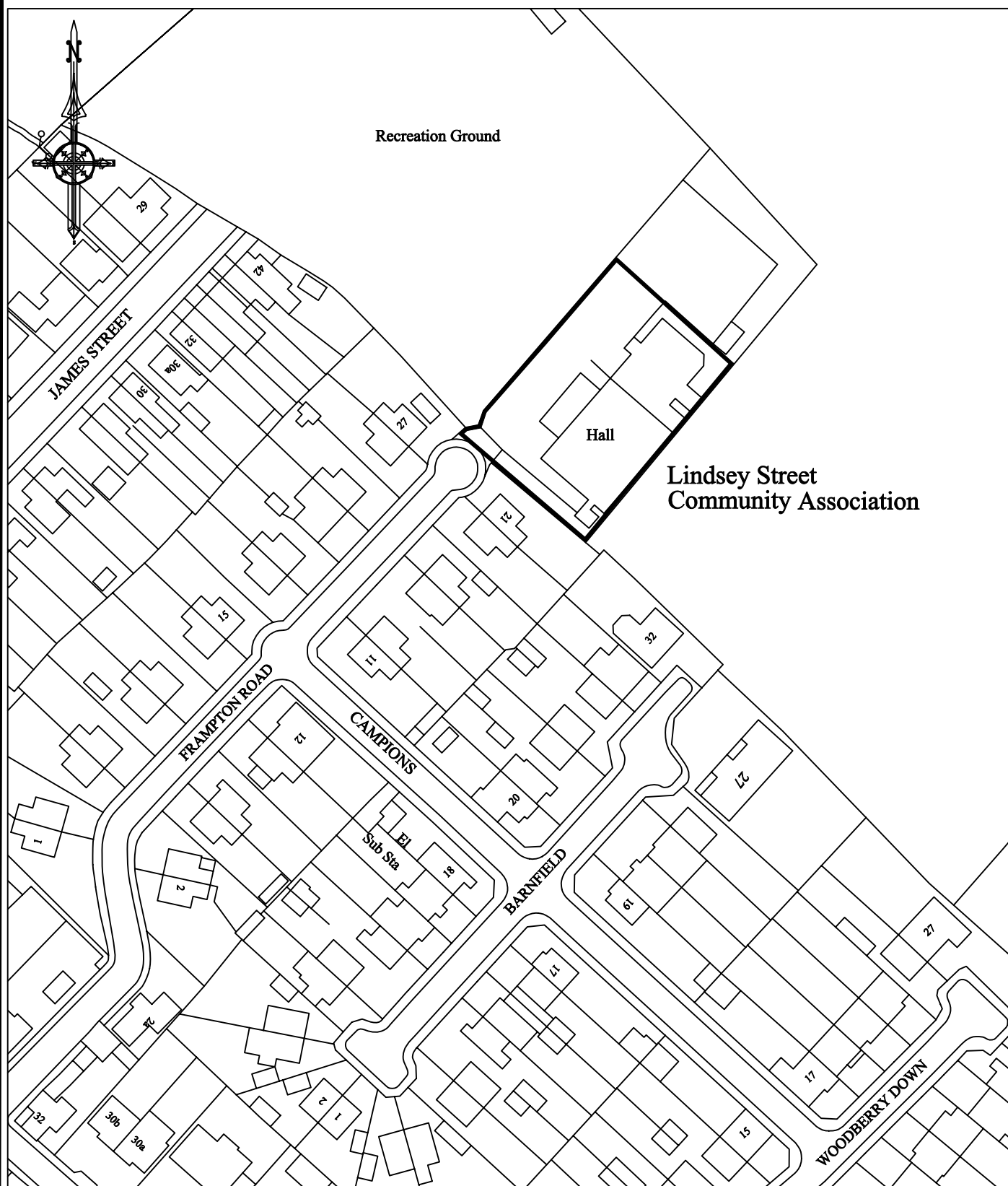
Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP reference:

Relevant Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1972

Background Papers: Property File EV/766.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: N/A.

Key Decision reference (if required): N/A.



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Project
Transfer Plan

Content
Land at Frampton Road
Epping
Lindsey Street
Community Association

Name
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Project No.

Date
4.4.07

Scale
1:1250

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Drawing No.
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Epping Forest District Council

Report to the Cabinet

Report Reference: C/009/2007-08

Date of Meeting: 11 June 2007

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Consultation Plan and Register 2007/08.

Officer contact for further information: Stephen Tautz (01992 - 564180).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 - 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Consultation Plan for 2007/08, setting out those issues on which public consultation is planned to be undertaken during the municipal year, and detailing those consultation exercises completed during 2006/07, be noted.

Report:

1. During the latter part of 2005, the Audit Commission undertook a User Focus assessment across Essex, looking at how effectively councils engaged with local communities, the results of which have previously been reported to the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel. Although the assessment confirmed that the Council's strengths in relation to public engagement outweighed its weaknesses, the Commission identified a number of possible areas for improvement in relation to the authority's approach to public consultation, particularly in respect of ensuring engagement with minority communities and other hard to reach groups.

2. The Council's existing Consultation Strategy was originally published in 1999 in response to the introduction of Best Value legislation. As a result of the User Focus assessment, the need to develop robust consultation proposals in relation to the new Council Plan for 2006-2010, and a likely future Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) focus, a new Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy was adopted in April 2006, setting out how the council will plan and undertake future consultation exercises. All consultation and engagement exercises undertaken by and on behalf of the Council are now required to comply with the provisions of the Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy. A revised consultation toolkit has also been produced in order to standardise consultation approaches and methodologies wherever possible.

3. As part of the new Public Consultation and Engagement Strategy, the Cabinet has previously requested that a Consultation Plan be developed as part of the annual business planning process from 2006/07 onwards, in order to focus consultation and engagement on priorities and operational issues to be faced in the coming year. The Consultation Plan also incorporates the results of consultation exercises undertaken during the preceding twelve months, through a Consultation Register that enables members to scrutinise consultation results and processes.

4. The Consultation Plan for 2007/08 is attached to this report, and sets out the issues on which individual services will be consulting or engaging residents or customers during the year, the overall objective for each consultation exercise, and how each exercise will be undertaken. In establishing this approach, it has been recognised that the need for some consultation exercises will arise subsequent to the development of the Consultation Plan

each year, as a result of unforeseen circumstances or priority issues. In addition, it should be noted that regular on-going satisfaction surveys such as housing report cards, or consultation carried out in relation to planning applications, will not be included within the Consultation Plan.

5. The Cabinet is requested to note the Consultation Plan for 2007/08, and the details of those public consultation exercises completed in the last year (attached). These documents are to be considered by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 19 June 2007.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

6. To address the findings of the Audit Commission's User Focus assessment and to develop an overall corporate approach to public consultation and engagement that promotes inclusivity amongst minority groups and communities that may not always be fully engaged or represented.

Other Options for Action:

7. None. The Council is expected to take action to address the results of the Audit Commission's User Focus assessment. User Focus was an important element in the methodology for the second-round of CPA for upper-tier authorities and is expected to also feature significantly in the development of comprehensive area assessments.

Consultation Undertaken:

8. The Cabinet and the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel have previously agreed the development of an annual Consultation Plan.

Resource Implications:

Budget: None.

Personnel: None.

Land: None.

Council Plan 2006-10/Best Value Performance Plan reference: Section 8 – 'How we Measure Our Achievements'.

Relevant Statutory Powers: None.

Background papers: None.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: None.

Key Decision Reference: (if required) N/A.

CONSULTATION PLAN 2007/08

Ref	Subject Matter/Issues	Dates	Objectives	Target groups	Method	Feedback of results
No.	Subject matter or issues to be consulted about	When the consultation will take place	The purpose of the consultation exercise	The groups/individuals to be consulted	The communication channels and methods to be used	How the results of the consultation will be reported
1	Choice Based Lettings	Prior to the implementation target date of October 2007	All external agencies were invited to a consultation event in December 2006 to ensure that relevant agencies will support vulnerable people to assist them to be able to participate in Choice Based Lettings. 65 invitations sent out, only 8 attended. Therefore, we will be holding another consultation in September 2007, prior to the target go live date of October 2007. Further consultations will take place with tenants, leaseholders and applicants.	External agencies, CAB, Residents Associations, Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, tenants, leaseholders and RSLs.	Surveys were undertake with presentations to local groups. It is intended to do more of this type of consultation.	Results will be published in the tenants magazine "Housing News." The results will inform how the scheme is operated.
2	Implementing Local Protocol between Epping Forest Housing Needs and Local Community Drug and Alcohol Team	Within the next 2 months	Ensuring good service delivery is maintained between respective teams	Housing staff within the section and external staff within the CDAT	Further meeting set for 6 months to evaluate effectiveness	An initial meeting has taken place on the 23/04/2007 to agree terms within the document. This is now being shared between these parties by e-mail to agree amendments before being signed to
3	Voids Re-let Standards	To consult in the Summer. Any comments will be incorporated in the standards.	To seek comments and views from tenants on the voids re-let standards	Tenants and Leaseholders Federation	To provide them with a copy of the Voids Re-let Standards and seek their views at future meetings of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation.	As the consultation will take place at a meeting of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation the feedback will be given at that time.
4	Designation of properties for occupation by older people	During the summer 2007. Results will be minuted and available following the Portfolio Holders decision	To review the housing stock which is set aside for older persons occupation	Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, Housing Scrutiny Panel, Housing Portfolio Holder	Through meetings with target groups	Report back at future meetings. A list will be formulated of properties designated for older people based on the outcome of the consultation

CONSULTATION PLAN 2007/08

Ref	Subject Matter/Issues	Dates	Objectives	Target groups	Method	Feedback of results
No.	Subject matter or issues to be consulted about	When the consultation will take place	The purpose of the consultation exercise	The groups/individuals to be consulted	The communication channels and methods to be used	How the results of the consultation will be reported
5	The Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency	TBA	To seek comments and views on the draft Strategy, and to incorporate any agreed comments within the final version	Epping Forest Tenants and Leaseholders Associations Essex Energy Advice Centres Citizen Advice Bureau's within the District	They will be consulted through the provision of a Consultation Draft, on which they will be invited to comment upon.	Agreed comments from the consultation exercise will be incorporated within the final version. All consultees will receive a copy of the final version of Housing Service Strategy on Energy Efficiency.
6	Setting up Local Service Level Agreement for Floating Support Scheme	Within the next 2 months	Ensuring good service delivery is maintained between respective teams	Housing staff at EFDC and staff working for In-Touch Floating Support provider	An initial meeting has taken place on the 20/04/2007 to agree terms within the document. This will be shared between these parties by e-mail to agree amendments before being signed to	Further meeting set for 6 months to evaluate effectiveness
7	Leaseholders satisfaction on information provided.	During 2007/08 – Information will be monitored and made available to senior management and reported to the Leaseholder Association.	The purpose of this exercise is to analyse the feedback in order to assess if the Council is providing enough support/information to leaseholders in an understandable format.	All leaseholders will be consulted during this year via a newsletter enclosing a questionnaire during 2007/08. (This will be done after the census survey results (to be completed in 2007/08) have been analysed in order to take into account minority/hard to reach groups or un-represented groups).	As above. This will be analysed and amended dependent on feedback. (Taking into account the information from the census).	See above.

CONSULTATION PLAN 2007/08

Ref	Subject Matter/Issues	Dates	Objectives	Target groups	Method	Feedback of results
No.	Subject matter or issues to be consulted about	When the consultation will take place	The purpose of the consultation exercise	The groups/individuals to be consulted	The communication channels and methods to be used	How the results of the consultation will be reported
8	The provision of off-street parking at various sites across the District.	The consultation will take place once the feasibility study for each site is completed, which is anticipated in late Autumn.	To seek comments and views from residents on the provision and location of new off-street parking. The results of the consultation exercise will determine if there is sufficient local support for the work to go ahead or not.	Local Ward Members Local Residents in the immediate location affected by the works Appropriate resident / community / tenant associations	They will be consulted through the provision of a consultation letter and plan of the site with a pre-paid reply questionnaire, on which they will be invited to comment upon. Depending on the level of returns, it may be appropriate to do one-to-one home visit consultation to gauge resident's views.	The results will be included in future Portfolio Holder reports, which will determine future programmes of work.
9	Updating local protocol between Epping Forest Housing Needs and Essex Probation service	Within the next 2 months	Ensuring good service delivery is maintained between respective teams	Probation staff based at Harlow Probation Office	An initial meeting has taken place on the 16/04/2007 to agree terms within the document. This is now being shared between these parties by e-mail to agree amendments before being signed to	Further meeting set for 6 months to evaluate its effectiveness.
10	Planned improvements or major repairs on blocks of flats containing Leaseholders	The consultation will take place throughout the year, depending on the relevant programme of work, but most importantly, at the appropriate times as determined by the Leasehold legislation.	To seek comments and views from leaseholders in line with relevant leasehold legislation.	Individual Leaseholders	They will be consulted through the provision of a consultation letter, giving them the opportunity to view the specifications, condition reports, tender documents and tender returns. The format for the consultation is set out within the relevant leasehold legislation.	Any consultation results that do not support the proposed approach need to be considered and the decision on the outcome of that consideration needs to be communicated in writing back to the leaseholder.

CONSULTATION PLAN 2007/08

Ref	Subject Matter/Issues	Dates	Objectives	Target groups	Method	Feedback of results
No.	Subject matter or issues to be consulted about	When the consultation will take place	The purpose of the consultation exercise	The groups/individuals to be consulted	The communication channels and methods to be used	How the results of the consultation will be reported
11	Right To Buy (RTB) Applicants on the satisfaction on the service they receive from the RTB/Leasehold section when they apply to buy their property.	During 2007/08 – Information will be monitored on a monthly basis and made available to senior management and reported to the Tenant and Leaseholder Federation annually.	The purpose of this exercise is to analyse the feedback in order to assess if the Council is providing enough support and information, required to applicants.	All RTB applicants will be consulted after the offer letter has been issued. (This will be done after the census survey results have been analysed in order to take into account minority and hard to reach groups or under-represented groups during 2007/08).	A satisfaction survey will be sent out to each applicant (after a formal offer has been made). This will be analysed and amended dependent on feedback. (Taking into account the information from the census).	See above.
12	To consult the residents of Springfields on the colour and finishes that are to be applied to the blocks of flats as part of the major improvement scheme.	Between the hours of 3pm and 8pm on a weekday (to be agreed), so as to attract the widest possible audience of local residents. The results will be published in a newsletter to residents prior to the work commencing on site.	To agree the final choice of colour and finishes for the external render, doors and other attributes where colour and finish is open to choice.	To hold a public exhibition at the Brookways Hall open to all local residents in and around Springfields Flats	Visual displays, one-to-one discussions and a questionnaire to be completed by residents to vote for their preferred finishes. The majority choice will be incorporated in the final design.	Via the contact with the main contractor
13	To involve residents of Springfields in the selection process for contractors as part of the major improvement scheme.	Once the tenders have been received and opened, but prior to the report on the tenders being presented to the Cabinet in July 2007.	To select the most suitable contractor, based on a best value approach, taking into account not only price but quality and resident engagement.	The representatives are to be nominated by the Roundhills Residents Association. Two individual tenants (as volunteers) to represent the estate as a whole on the interview panel.	To enable the representatives to participate in the question and answer sessions and to participate in the evaluation of the contractors. The outcome will be included in the report that will eventually be presented to Cabinet on the outcome of the tender exercise	Through the tender report to the Cabinet and via a newsletter to residents

CONSULTATION PLAN 2007/08

Ref	Subject Matter/Issues	Dates	Objectives	Target groups	Method	Feedback of results
No.	Subject matter or issues to be consulted about	When the consultation will take place	The purpose of the consultation exercise	The groups/individuals to be consulted	The communication channels and methods to be used	How the results of the consultation will be reported
14	Development of Disability Equality Scheme	May to September 2007	To develop a disability equality scheme	Disabled groups, disabled staff.	Initially a round table discussion to plan consultation activities	Results will be reported to Cabinet, to special interest groups and to staff.
15	Development of Gender Equality Scheme	September to November 2007	To develop a gender equality scheme	Groups/staff with gender equality interests.	Initially a round table discussion to plan consultation activities	Results will be reported to Cabinet, to special interest groups and to staff.
16	Leisure Services Non-user survey about participation in Leisure and Cultural opportunities targeted at those who currently do not take part or make use of facilities and services provided by the Council.	Summer 2007 with results available in September 2007.	To establish current patterns of use, barriers to participation and how to most effectively market the services we currently provide or alternatively re-design them to make them more attractive and accessible.	A representative sample of the demographic make up of the District, potentially face-to-face interviews with 1,000 residents.	The majority of interviews to take place on face-to-face basis but for some hard to reach groups telephone interviews and/or focus groups at accessible locations are being considered. Liaison will be undertaken with other Partners, Agencies and Stakeholders to access hard to reach groups e.g. Youth Service, Primary Care Trust, Council for Voluntary Service.	Results of Consultation will influence Leisure Services Marketing Plan and Business Plan. Results of the consultation will be reflected in the design of services and promotional materials.
17	User Forums at Council's Leisure Facilities have been established to gauge customer satisfaction and seek feedback from users of the four Council's leisure facilities now managed under contract by SLM Ltd	Any significant issues of concern arising from the quarterly meetings held at each Centre will be fed into the monthly Contract Management Core Meeting, as well as being reported to the Contract Monitoring Board Chaired by the Leisure Portfolio Holder.	As part of the Leisure Management Contract monitoring arrangements the Customer Forums allow useful feedback from customers on the performance of the Contractor and assist Client Officers in identifying what issues are important to users. The Customer Forums are attended by Client Officers as well as nominated Members of the Council.	Representatives of clubs and casual users of the Council's leisure facilities.	Meetings are held regularly at least four times per annum at the Leisure Centres. The agenda is advertised and minutes published. In addition to the forums, feedback is obtained through Customer Comment Cards, Chartermark consultation, and by the use of an electronic device called <i>The Opinion Meter</i> .	Outcomes will be published with agreed list of Action Points. Progress will be monitored through Client Officers and Forums.

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL PUBLIC CONSULTATION REGISTER 2006/07

Reference	Subject	Date	Commissioned by	Carried Out By	Purpose	Comments	Results Reported To	Method
PMU/CONS/01/06	Homelessness Strategy 2006/07 2008/09	2006	Housing Needs Manager	Office of Deputy Prime Minister	To contact various stakeholders on proposed strategy. To assist in preparation of forthcoming strategies.	Results received were positive. Those partners involved in assisting the authority in its Homeless function.	Results of Strategy will be passed to forthcoming CPG. Will be available in the Homelessness Strategy when this is made a public document	Postal survey undertaken to the above
PMU/CONS/02/06	Stock Transfer – Wickfields, Chigwell (Stage 1 Consultation)	February – March 2006	Cabinet	Head of Housing Services	To consult residents (formally) on the proposals within the Consultation Document on a transfer of Wickfields and its tenants to Home Group Ltd (Warden Housing), to enable a major improvement scheme to go ahead.	All secure and non-secure tenants of Wickfields. Number of responses received 17, (100%). Tenants "in favour" 12 (70.6%). Tenants "not in favour" 0. Tenants "not sure" about the transfer 5 (29.4%). Tenants did not make any comments 7, whilst 10 residents did make comments.	Housing Portfolio Holder and residents	Postal survey with detailed Consultation Document. A question and Answer Session was also held during the consultation period.
PMU/CONS/03/06	Homeless Exit Survey	Mar-06	Housing Needs Manager	ASA Consultants	To contact people in temporary accommodation, Norway, House, Bed and Breakfast and SAFE, ensuring residents were satisfied with service provided.	Families owed a duty to accommodate under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 Pt V11. The majority of residents were satisfied with the service provided. Results analysed to ensure residents in temporary accommodation were satisfied with accommodation service provided.	To be used in forthcoming Homeless Strategy.	By personal contact, face to face interviews, and telephone contact. £1,475
PMU/CONS/04/06	Homeless Exit Survey	Mar-06	Housing Needs Manager	Housing Information Strategy Division	To undertake a postal survey of people occupying different forms of temporary accommodation in the district under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 Pt V11	Residents at Brook Haven, New Start, homelessness prevention service clients. Results were positive. The majority of residents were satisfied with the service provided.	To be used in forthcoming Homeless Strategy.	By post to targeted group.
PMU/CONS/05/06	Homeless Exit Survey	13th to -24th March 2006	Housing Needs Manager	Homeless Officers and Homeless prevention officers	To undertake survey on members of the public seeking advice and assistance on a housing difficulty they were faced with	Positive response. Members of public seeking help with their housing difficulty, of which most people were satisfied with service given.	Housing Information Strategy Division	Prepared form completed and returned at completion of interview
PMU/CONS/06/06	Springfield's Improvement Scheme	24-Apr-06	Roundhills Residents Association	Assistant Head of Housing Services	To advise the Roundhills residents Association Members and residents of the Springfield's estate at their AGM of progress on the improvement scheme planned for Springfield's Flats.	Invitation to the Roundhills Residents Association AGM issued to all residents of the Roundhills Estate, which includes the flats at Springfield's, invitations issued by the Roundhills Residents Association Committee Members.	No results recorded. An oral presentation with question and answer session only. Feedback was given to the Springfield's Project Team and Housing Management manager following the meeting. No action necessary and no results to report on this occasion	Oral presentation only, th cost was limited to a meeting allowance.
PMU/CONS/07/06	Stock Transfer – Wickfields, Chigwell (Stage 2 Ballot)	April - May 2006	Head of Housing Services	Electoral Reform Services (Independent scrutinzers)	To ballot residents on the proposal within the detailed Consultation Document (as amended following the Stage 1 consultation) on a transfer of Wickfields and its tenants to Home Group Ltd (Warden Housing) to enable a major improvement scheme to go ahead.	The total number of tenants balloted - 16. Ballot papers received 14, (87.5%). In favour of the transfer - 11 (78.6%). Not in favour of the transfer 3 (21.4%)	Housing Portfolio Holder, residents and Secretary of State. To demonstrate to the Secretary of State that a majority of secure tenants were in favour of a transfer to Warden Housing. Report to Housing Portfolio Holder – May 2006 - COMS System	Formal ballot
PMU/CONS/08/06	New Waste Management Contract	Dec-06	Stephen Metcalfe for Environmental Protection	Public Relation	To seek views on matters relating to the new waste management contract such as: (i) attitude to wheeled bins (ii) attitude to alternate weekly collections (iii) should residual waste be collected during the summer months? (iv) attitude to enforcement of litter, recycling etc (v) opinion of street cleansing standards (vi) willingness to pay more for more recycling or enhanced street scene etc	To inform the specification of the new waste management contract	(i) Portfolio Holder Advisory Group on the new waste management contract (ii) Residents via Forester, press release etc (iii) Open letter delivered to all residents	(i) On line web response (ii) Open letter in local newspapers) (iii) Open letter delivered to all residents

PEPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL PUBLIC CONSULTATION REGISTER 2006/07

Reference	Subject	Date	Commissioned by	Carried Out By	Purpose	Comments	Results Reported To	Method
PMU/CONS/09/06	Installation of two scooter stores at Hadders Close	Oct-06	Head of Housing Services	Housing Manager (OPS)	To seek tenants views on the Council installing scooter stores at the scheme.	To inform the need to apply for planning permission	Assistant Head of Housing Services and Housing Assets Manager	Letter sent, cost 'zero'
PMU/CONS/10/06	Lighting in Communal areas of Grove Court	Oct-06	Head of Housing Services	Assistant Repairs Manager	To seek tenants views on lighting in communal area of blocks of flats and establish if they would prefer sensor lights	To inform on the need for sensor lights in Grove Court (Older People Services)	Housing Repairs Manager	TBA
PMU/CONS/11/06	Sale of Former Poundfield Road Garage Site to Local Residents – Proposed Variation of Terms of Sale	Mar-06	Housing Portfolio Holder (Olr David Stellan)	Head of Housing Services	To ask the residents adjoining the former garage site (who were not seeking to purchase the land) if they had any objections to a proposed variation to the terms agreed by the Council's Cabinet requiring the purchasing residents to break up and remove the existing concrete shortly after purchase.	At the end of the two-week consultation period, seven letters (64%) were received from non-purchasing residents, all of whom supported the purchasing residents' request not to break up and remove the concrete. No letters of objection were received.	The results were included in the Head of Housing Services' report to the Housing Portfolio Holder. As a result of the consultation exercise, the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed with the purchasing residents' request, and varied the Council's requirement.	Letter sent to 11 non-purchasing residents.
PMU/CONS/12/06	The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2006	Apr-06	Head of Housing Services	Head of Housing Services	To seek comments and views on the draft HRA Business Plan prior to consideration and adoption by the Housing Portfolio Holder; to incorporate any agreed comments within the final version; and to incorporate the views of the Tenants & Leaseholders Federation within the final version.	Having considered the Business Plan, the Federation said: 'the Business Plan was comprehensive, well thought out, interesting and well written'; it was clear and easy to read, especially the Plan English Summary; they agreed with the objectives, the key housing priorities and the action plan'. - they were pleased that the revised Financial Plan did not identify a deficit on the Housing Revenue Account for 21 years, although they were concerned that this had reduced from the 27 years forecast in the previous year's Business Plan; and- they recognised and applauded the various quality initiatives undertaken by Housing Services, particularly the achievement of the Charter Mark Award and the ISO 9001:2000 ISO Quality Assurance Standard.	The comments of the Federation were included within the final version considered by the Housing Portfolio Holder. Section 1.8 of HRA Business Plan 2006	Federation members were sent a copy of the draft HRA Business Plan Housing Strategy, including a Plain English Summary, in advance of a Federation meeting. The Head of Housing Services attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the main issues, and asked for the Federation's views. The cost was minimal
PMU/CONS/13/06	Tree Maintenance	Apr-06	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)	Housing Services	To reduce the backlog of tree maintenance work	To reduce the backlog of tree maintenance work	Results were passed to Cabinet and it was agreed by the Cabinet to increase the budget in future years to clear the backlog of work	TBA
PMU/CONS/14/06	Romelands Refuse Arrangements	Jun-06	Housing Management (North)	(Housing Officer, North)	To see whether alternative refuse arrangements could be made for the estate	Residents Group	There was no consensus of opinion as to how changes should be made. No action was taken	By post to residents
PMU/CONS/15/06	The Council's updated Housing Service Strategy on Empty Council Properties	Oct-06	Head of Housing Services	Head of Housing Services	To seek comments and views on the draft Housing Service Strategy on Empty Council Properties prior to consideration and adoption by the Housing Portfolio Holder, including the proposed Action Plan; to incorporate any agreed amendments or additions within the final version.	The Federation supported the draft Housing Service Strategy and did not propose any changes.	The minutes of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation Meeting – 17.10.06 (Available from Head of Housing Services)	The Federation members were sent a copy of the draft Housing Service Strategy in advance of a Federation meeting. The Head of Housing Services attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the main issues, and asked for the Federation's views. The cost was minimal

EPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL PUBLIC CONSULTATION REGISTER 2006/07

Reference	Subject	Date	Commissioned by	Carried Out By	Purpose	Comments	Results Reported To	Method
PMU/CONS/16/06	Housing Services Strategy on Equality and Diversity	Oct-06	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)	To meet the requirements of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act.	There was positive feedback	Housing Scrutiny Panel	Meetings with Citizens Advice Bureau, Tenants and Leaseholders Federation
PMU/CONS/17/06	Review of Housing Allocation Scheme	Nov-06	Housing Services	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)	An annual review of the Housing Allocations Scheme was undertaken to ensure it reflects the current local housing situation and any changes in Law and to meet the Governments Target to reduce the number of people living in temporary accommodation.	One result received was very positive. It was also agreed that homelessness applicants who are granted non-secure tenancy will in the future be granted secure tenancies to meet the Governments target of reducing the number of people living in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010. The scheme was not amended as there were no adverse comments.	Cabinet report – December 2006	All Registered Social Landlords in partnership with EFDC, Postal Survey to registered social landlords
PMU/CONS/18/06	Sheltered Housing Tenant Participation Agreement (TPA)	Nov-06	Head of Housing Services	Housing Services Tenant Participation Officer	To seek agreement to the draft TPA	Agreement to the draft TPA	Tenants and Leaseholders Federation, Sheltered Housing Forum, all tenants via Housing News	Discussion with Sheltered Housing Forum
PMU/CONS/19/06	Housing Services Strategy on Harassment	Dec-06	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)	Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations)	To meet the requirements of the Ant Social Behaviour Act.	Meetings with Anti-Social Behaviour Violent Crime Tasking Group, Citizens Advice Bureau, Tenants and Leaseholders Federation	Positive feedback. Housing Scrutiny Panel	Meetings
PMU/CONS/20/06	Proposed Environmental Improvement Scheme at Loughton Way Flats/Shops	Dec-06	Housing Services	Legal, Administration and Estates	To consult upon proposals to improve refuse storage and collection arrangements, access arrangements to flats, hard landscaping, lighting etc.	Residents in favour of proposals with some discussion and minor modifications.	David Barrett/Julie Chenery at Limes Farm Housing Office	Postal Survey followed by meeting with 2 households who raised particular points for discussion
PMU/CONS/21/06	Sheering Residents Consultation Day	Dec-06	Housing Services and Leisure Services	Housing Services Tenant Participation Officer and Leisure Services Community Development Officer	Part of an initiative identified in Equality Impact Assessments to engage residents living in rural areas, especially in relation to the provision of housing and leisure services. Potentially to form a residents association. Specific issues raised on the day have been dealt with as appropriate.	All residents of Sheering were invited, approx 100 attended, 65 took part in survey conducted as part of the open day. Residents gave opinions on a wide range of services and amenities, enabling the council to gauge interest in a proposed residents association for future consultations. This consultation did not seek to address specific issues.	Reports available from Housing Services Tenant Participation Officer	Public open day involving council, local school and other agencies. The cost was approximately £250
PMU/CONS/22/06	Choice Based Lettings	Ongoing throughout 2006	Assistant Head of Housing Services	Cabinet	To consult and inform all relevant groups on the Council's plan to introduce a Choice Based Lettings scheme during 2007/08	To provide information on the way in which the scheme is delivered	Housing Scrutiny Panel. Contained within the Housing Scrutiny Panel reports	Various meetings with external Agencies, RSL's, Tenants and Leaseholder's Federation, Sheltered Forum/Rural Tenants Forum, Citizens Advice Bureaus and also a consultation exercise with tenants through Housing News
PMU/CONS/01/07	Housing Benefits Information Consultation	Feb-07	Housing Services	Older Peoples Services Manager	To assess whether older people are receiving sufficient information on the benefits available to them	Housing Services consultation with Sheltered Housing Forum, follow up visits to tenants by Benefits Officer (Finance). Sheltered Housing Forum, Housing Management	Group agreed the more information should be made available on housing benefits and the implications of receiving benefits in relation to other incomes such as pension tax credit	Housing Services consultation with Sheltered Housing Forum, follow up visits to tenants by Benefits Officer (Finance)
PMU/CONS/02/07	Transfer of Land at Turners Close to the Town Council	Mar-07	Area Housing Manager	Area Housing Manager	To see if residents living adjacent to the site are happy with the proposals	Nine Residents living adjacent to site. Five residents responded. Four object to the proposals	Town Council	By post to nine residents

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/011/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Leisure and Young People.

Subject: North Weald Airfield - Maintenance Budget.

Officer contact for further information: Derek Macnab (01992 - 564260).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 - 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Council be recommended to approve a carry forward of an £11,000 underspend from North Weald Airfield Maintenance Budget 2006/07.

Report:

1. In order to undertake essential survey works on the infrastructure of North Weald Airfield, sufficient provision was set aside within the maintenance budget for the Airfield in 2006/07.

2. The consultant engineers appointed to co-ordinate the project had to engage a specialist sub- contractor who unfortunately could not practically undertake some aspects of the work until 7/8 May 2007. The final survey report is due to be completed by 30 May 2007. As a result, whilst the order was raised in the 2006/07 financial year, the Council were not in receipt of the services until the 2007/08 financial year.

3. This report therefore requests that the Cabinet approve a carry forward of £11,000 underspend within the North Weald Airfield Maintenance Budget 2006/07, to fund the final payment of the works. If the Cabinet and the Council give such approval, the carry forward will be treated as DDF and will be included in the 2006/07 Outturn report, in early summer.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

4. Although it would be possible to underspend in 2006/07, the Airfield requires ongoing maintenance to ensure its safe and efficient management. The maintenance programme for 2007/08 would inevitably suffer if resources had to be found in this year's budget.

Other Options for Action:

5. To decline the request for a carry forward.

Consultation Undertaken:

6. Robert West Consulting.

Resource implications:

Budget Provision: Carry forward of £11,000 underspend from 2006/07 to 2007/08.

Personnel: Nil.

Land: North Weald Airfield.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP reference: Nil.

Relevant Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1974.

Background papers: Held within Environmental and Leisure Services.
Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Nil.
Key Decision reference: (if required): Nil.

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/012/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Re-letting – Shop 15, The Broadway, Loughton.

Officer contact for further information: Michael Shorten (01992 - 564124).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 - 564470).

Recommendations:

- (1) That the premises be let to Sprays Bakeries Limited on a lease for a term of up to 12 years for use as a bakers, on the terms reported by the Head of Legal, Administration and Estates;**
- (2) That in the event that Sprays Bakeries Limited do not complete the lease, the premises be offered, subject to the receipt of satisfactory references, to Pithers of Barkingside also for use as a bakers; and**
- (3) That Contract Standing Order C5 be waived in relation to contracts in excess of £20,000 in view of the special circumstances relating to the proposed letting.**

Report:

1. Shop 15, The Broadway, Loughton was let to Messrs Bulkan & Gersch on the terms of a 12 year lease at a rental of £19,320 for use as a bakers. The tenants also rented two garage units to the rear of the premises on separate agreements.
2. At Harlow County Court on 19 February 2007, the Council were granted a Possession Order for rent arrears in the sum of £17,198 plus court costs. In accordance with the terms of that Order, the Court Bailiff secured possession on 9 May 2007.
3. The usual procedure for gaining possession and re-letting have been complicated by a Receiver acting for a company called Mothers Kitchen Limited, which is the former tenant's trading name. To realise some of the company's assets, the Receiver is seeking to sell the equipment at the premises. He has also approached the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio Holder to introduce two prospective tenants - Sprays Bakeries Limited and Pithers of Barkingside - to continue the bakery business and to offer a premium payment to the Council to offset part of the former tenant's rent arrears. The Portfolio Holder has expressed a willingness to co-operate with the Receiver to achieve a re-letting of the premises for continued use as a bakers with minimal delay and to secure a premium payment to offset the former tenant's rent arrears.
4. Meetings with the two prospective tenants and the Receiver have produced the following offers:

	Pithers	Sprays Bakeries Limited
Rent per annum	£20,300	£20,300
Premium payable on completion of the lease	£6,000	£11,000
Rent free period	None	2 months
Lease	12 years, 4 year rent reviews	12 years, 4 year rent reviews
User	Retail bread and cakes and wholesale bakery to rear	Retail bread, cakes, sausage rolls, pies, pasties, sandwiches, filled rolls and tea/coffee area
Garages	Not required	Additional income of £1,028 pa + VAT (£1,290 + VAT from 29 September 2007)
Legal fees payable	£444	£444

5. The proposed rental of £20,300 per annum is consistent with the tone of rental values at The Broadway parade established through recent open market lettings and negotiated rent reviews and lease renewals. Whilst both prospective tenants have submitted the same rental offer, Sprays Bakeries Limited are willing to pay a higher premium to secure the premises. In support of their application, they draw attention to their good record as a longstanding tenant of a Council-owned shop at Borders Lane, Loughton. References in support of Pithers' application have not been sought at this stage.

6. The proposed letting by way of a restricted invitation to submit rental offers prior to formal recovery of possession is a departure from the Council's usual practice of offering premises on the open market by the invitation of sealed rental offers for a new lease. Contract Standing Orders require that the disposal of any interest in land and property having a contract value in excess of £20,000 be subject to market testing. (Contract Standing Order C5 refers).

7. The Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 provides public authorities with greater flexibility in relation to the management and disposal of their land and property assets. The terms of the Consent mean that specific consent from the Secretary of State is not required for the disposal of any interest in land or property which the Authority considers will help it to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area.

8. Having regard to this legislation, the Portfolio Holder has expressed a preference for proceeding on the restricted invitation basis on this occasion to secure a re-letting for continued use as a bakers with minimal delay, possible re-employment of the former tenant's staff and a premium payable towards the rent arrears. To proceed on this basis, Cabinet approval is required to waive Standing Order C5 relating to contracts in excess of £20,000.

9. Instructions, pending final approval, have been issued to Legal Services to prepare a new lease effective from 10 May 2007, in accordance with the Portfolio Holder's earlier instructions.

10. The Council has also received an unsolicited approach from Property Consultants acting on behalf of another bakery firm with some 50 outlets in the region. They request that the Council favourably considers their request to be given an opportunity to submit a rental offer for consideration in the usual way.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

11. Co-operation with the receiver will achieve a re-letting of the premises for continued use as a baker's shop with minimal delay and will secure a premium payment to offset the former tenant's arrears. As this involves a contract over £20,000, a request to waive the relevant Standing Order and special circumstances apply.

Other Options for Action:

12. To market the premises in accordance with an open market tendering procedure providing interested parties with an opportunity to submit rental offers for the Council's consideration.

Consultations Undertaken:

13. Private treaty negotiations between the Receiver acting for the former tenants, the Portfolio Holder and two prospective tenants.

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: Rental income £20,300 per annum from the grant of a 12 year lease, subject to 4 year rent reviews. £11,000 payment towards the former tenant's rent arrears.

Personnel: Valuation and Estate Management Service.

Land: Shop 15, The Broadway, Loughton.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP Ref: FPM1 – Maximise rental income.

Relevant Statutory Powers: Section 123 Local Government Act 1972 – Best consideration for land and property assets and Local Government Act 1972: General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.

Background papers: Property File EV/264.D.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act: N/A.

Key Decision Reference (if required): N/A.

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**Epping Forest
District Council**

Report to Cabinet

Report Reference: C/014/2007-08.

Date of Meeting: 11 June 2007.

Portfolio: Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

Subject: Best Value Performance Plan 2007/08.

Officer contact for further information: Steve Tautz (01992 - 564180).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 - 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That a report be made to the Council at its meeting to be held on 28 June 2007, recommending that the draft Best Value Performance Plan for 2007/08 be adopted; and**
- (2) That the Joint Chief Executive (Resources) be authorised to amend the draft Best Value Performance Plan as necessary prior to its adoption by the Council, to incorporate outstanding details in relation to the Council's user satisfaction performance for 2006/07.**

Report:

1. The Local Government Act 1999 and the Best Value regime require all local authorities to publish an annual performance plan by no later than the end of June each year. The draft version of the Council's Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) for 2007/08 has been circulated separately to the Cabinet, and a copy placed in the Members' Room.

2. It will be noted that the draft BVPP reflects the portfolio structure of the authority that was in operation until the recent annual council meeting. Members are reminded that the BVPP is statutorily required to be formally adopted by the authority, and must therefore be considered at the meeting of the full Council to be held on 28 June 2007. The adoption of the BVPP is additionally a matter reserved to the Council by its constitution.

3. The requirement to prepare an annual performance plan provides an opportunity for authorities to articulate proposals for improvement in the coming year, including how weaknesses will be addressed, opportunities exploited and better outcomes delivered for local people. BVPPs are required to:

- (a) summarise the Council's successes in meeting its key priorities, objectives and targets for the last year (2006/07);
- (b) show where these priorities, objectives and targets were not met; and
- (c) detail key priorities, objectives and targets for the forthcoming year (2007/08).

4. The BVPP is produced in two versions each year. The detailed version subject of this report is primarily prepared for the Council itself, the Government, the Audit Commission, and other bodies involved in the evaluation and assessment of performance. It is intended that the audience for performance plans should be primarily the authority itself, as members and officers with responsibility for delivering local services need to be aware of priorities in order to influence improvement measures. However, the detailed BVPP is also available to those who require a comprehensive explanation of how well the Council is performing and its future plans. In addition and in accordance with a recommendation of the Audit Commission, a

summary of the BVPP is distributed to all households in the district within the explanatory leaflet issued with the annual Council Tax demands in March each year. The summary version of the BVPP issued in March 2007 also reflected the previous portfolio structure of the authority, and was agreed by the Cabinet on 19 February 2007.

5. The Department of Communities and Local Government issues guidance to local authorities on the content of BVPPs, stipulating what matters should be included. In recent years the Government has focused on improvement and performance as its main priorities, and has given authorities classified by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process as either 'Excellent' or 'Good', freedom from BVPP reporting in as much detail as originally necessary. BVPPs are required to concentrate on improvement planning and how weaknesses will be addressed, and to demonstrate improvement proposals for the coming year. In accordance with the Government's approach to deregulation, it is no longer necessary to publish information in performance plans that can be obtained from other sources and, as a result, the following no longer need to be published in the BVPP:

- CPA scores (where available);
- Summary financial information;
- Progress in implementing improvement measures over the past three years (e.g. Best Value Reviews);
- Progress against Local Public Service Agreements (now known as Local Area Agreements);
- Details of the way in which the Council exercises its functions.
- The five-year programme of Best Value Service Reviews;
- An efficiency summary or consultation statement;
- Historical, quartile and other comparative data on Best Value Performance Indicators; and
- Local Performance Indicator data.

6. However, local authorities may choose to include any, or all of this information in their plans if they consider that it helps improve understanding of improvement proposals, or their context. With the exception of CPA scores and the efficiency summary, the majority of these matters have traditionally been included in the Council's BVPP.

7. To reduce the overall length of the BVPP, the majority of the detail not now statutorily required has been transferred to the Council Plan for 2006 to 2010. However, areas such as the Council's CPA score and improvement proposals, and Local Performance Indicator (LPI) data have continued to be detailed in the BVPP. Although not required to be included, it is considered appropriate to continue to incorporate these matters and historical, quartile and other comparative data on Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) within the BVPP, as these details are an essential part of the Council's performance monitoring arrangements.

8. Annual BVPPs are required to include details of outturn performance over the past year for all BVPIs, and to include targets for the forthcoming year and subsequent two years. Although these details are provided within the draft BVPP for the majority of BVPIs and LPIs, the results of number of indicators related to customer satisfaction are currently awaited from research agencies that have recently conducted surveys on behalf of the Council, and it has not therefore been possible to include performance outturns for these indicators. These outstanding details will be incorporated within the BVPP prior to the consideration of the draft plan by the Council.

9. The Cabinet is requested to consider the draft BVPP for 2007/08, to recommend to the Council at its meeting on 28 June 2007 that the Plan be adopted, and to authorise the Joint Chief Executive (Resources) to amend the draft document as necessary prior to its adoption by the Council, to incorporate the information currently outstanding in relation to user satisfaction. The draft BVPP has been circulated to all members of the Finance and Performance Management Overview and Scrutiny Panel, which has not yet met during the 2007/08 municipal year, and any comments received from members of the Scrutiny Panel will

be reported to the Cabinet meeting.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

10. The agreement of the recommended action will enable the publication of the BVPP to meet the prescribed timescale. Failure to adopt and publish the BVPP by 30 June 2007 will result in the qualification of the Plan by the Audit Commission.

Other Options for Action:

11. No other options are available in this respect. The Council is statutorily required to publish its BVPP for 2007/08 by 30 June 2007. Adoption of the BVPP is a matter reserved to the Council, which is not currently scheduled to meet again in order to meet this deadline.

Consultation Undertaken:

12. The draft BVPP for 2007/08 was issued to all members of the Cabinet and the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel immediately following the annual council meeting on 17 May 2007. The format and content of the draft BVPP for 2007/08 has been subject to consultation with Management Board and all Heads of Service.

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: Publication of the BVPP can be met from the budget provision of the Performance Management Unit for 2007/08.

Personnel: Publication of the BVPP can be met from the staff provision of the Performance Management Unit for 2007/08.

Land: Nil.

Council Plan/BVPP Reference: Council Plan 2006-2010 Section 8 – 'How we Measure Our Achievements'.

Relevant Statutory Powers: Local Government Act 1999.

Background Papers: Nil.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Nil.

Key Decision Reference (if required): Forward Plan - Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services.

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/015/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Environmental Protection.

Subject: Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy – Memorandum of Understanding.

Officer contact for further information: John Gilbert (01992 - 564062).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 - 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Protection be authorised to sign the Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of the Council

Report:

1. The Council has been working collaborately with the County Council and the other Essex districts and boroughs towards the development of the Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS). It has achieved this through its participation in the Waste Management Advisory Board and its membership of the Constitutionally formed West Essex Waste Management Joint Committee. Other members of the Committee are Harlow, Brentwood, Braintree and Uttlesford Districts.

2. The County, with Southend Unitary Authority is making an application to Government for PFI funding to assist in meeting the costs of new capital infrastructure that will be required to achieve the high recycling strategy, which has been adopted for waste management in the County. The total costs are estimated to be in the region of £300 million pounds and Government have set aside £90 million of PFI credits.

3. For the strategy and the PFI bid to be successful it is essential that the County Council, its partner districts and boroughs and Southend Unitary Authority can demonstrate their commitment to partnership working in terms of delivering the agreed JMWMS. This will be demonstrated in two ways:

(a) a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by each of the twelve constituent waste collection authorities; and

(b) a letter of support from each of the three Area Waste Management Joint Committees (East, West and Thames Gateway) signed by the Joint Committee Chairman on behalf of each of the constituent waste collection authorities demonstrating district and borough councils' support and commitment to the PFI Reference Project

Item (b) will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet.

4. The MoU, which is attached is not a legally binding document, but it does clearly demonstrate the commitment of this Council to remain engaged in the development of the JMWMS and to work in partnership with the County in terms of its own recycling strategies and the delivery of materials to its waste disposal plants, once constructed. The key elements are set out in para. 3.2 (a to e) of the MoU.

5. This is the second MoU. The first was agreed to by way of a Portfolio Holder decision in February 2006. Whilst the wording in this version has changed a little, it does not

materially alter the commitment of the Council. This version was unanimously adopted by the West Essex Waste Management Joint Committee at its meeting on 18 April 2007. The Districts have been requested to sign the document no later than the end of July 2007.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

6. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is a key element of the Joint Waste Management Strategy, which is already part of the Council's agreed policy framework. The MoU underpins the County Council's and The West Essex Joint Waste Committee's overall strategy for the future management of waste within the County.

7. If the PFI and the JMWMS are to be successful, the MoU (and later the letter of support) is essential in demonstrating partnership working between the County and the district and boroughs.

Other Options for Action:

8. The only option is not to sign the MoU at this time, or indeed at any time. Given the Council's own agreed waste strategy and its membership of the West Essex Joint Committee, this is not an option that can be recommended.

Consultation Undertaken:

9. None.

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: Nil.

Personnel: Nil.

Land: Nil.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP Reference: Continued improvement to levels of recycling of household waste: "Green & Unique".

Relevant Statutory Powers: The Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Background Papers: Previous Portfolio Holder decision, reports to the Environment Standing Scrutiny panel, minutes of West Essex Waste Management Joint Committee.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Enhanced levels of recycling plus contribution to the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

Key Decision Reference (if required): N/A.

Memorandum of Understanding - West

1. Purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding

- 1.1 The Essex Waste Partnership is made up of Essex County Council as a Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) together with the twelve Essex Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) and Southend-on-Sea Borough Council as a Unitary Authority (both WDA and WCA function).
- 1.2 The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding is to:-
- a. Demonstrate the Councils recognise the need to take a wider view on waste management than that of an individual WCA or of the WDA on its own;
 - b. Show the Councils understand that the co-ordination of action in accordance with an agreed strategy will be more effective than individual action by a single authority;
 - c. Re-iterate and reinforce the principles of joint working contained in the Area Joint Committee Constitutions and Business Plans;
 - d. Evidence the support given by the five WCAs within the West Essex Waste Management Joint Committee¹ to the submission of an Outline Business Case to Defra by the Partnership to secure PFI credits to assist the procurement of advanced waste disposal technology and the provision of a supporting infrastructure of transfer stations. The procurement of these facilities is an essential component to the delivery by the Partnership of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex and the Municipal Waste Management Strategy for the Borough of Southend on Sea.

2. Status of the Memorandum of Understanding

- 2.1. This Memorandum of Understanding is intended to be an operational document that will evolve as the procurement of treatment technology progresses. Unlike the formally approved Joint Committee Constitutions and Annual Business Plans it is not, of itself, a formal or legally binding contract. It is however recognised that by signing this Memorandum of Understanding each Partner demonstrates its intention to fully explore the creation of formal legally binding Inter Authority Agreements to support the delivery of an integrated waste management system.

¹ Braintree District Council, Brentwood Borough Council, Epping Forest District Council, Harlow District Council, and Uttlesford District Council

- 2.2. Through a resolution of the Joint Committee, each partner authority has agreed to use all reasonable endeavours to comply with the content and spirit of this Memorandum of Understanding.

3. Principles of Partnership Working

- 3.1. The Partnership through resolutions of the Joint Committees has adopted the procurement approach and Reference Case as set out in the Outline Business Case.
- 3.2. In order to support the delivery of an integrated waste management system (of which the PFI disposal procurement is an essential component), each partner authority hereby agrees to:-
- a. Work with the Partnership on the detailed design and delivery of an integrated waste management solution initially by engaging in, and supporting, a systems design modelling exercise;
 - b. To deliver all agreed residual waste and agreed recyclables to transfer / processing facilities;
 - c. As a minimum to make a contribution to reach and maintain the levels of county-wide recycling and composting performance committed to in the Local Area Agreements (39.5% household waste recycling in 2008/09) and to ensure that budgets are made available to maintain this level of performance;
 - d. Prior to implementing any significant changes to their collection methodology or systems to discuss the potential impact on the development and implementation of the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Essex and the Municipal Waste Management Strategy for the Borough of Southend on Sea;
 - e. To work with the Partnership to develop waste acceptance criteria (such as the type, quantity, quality and composition of waste delivered) that will form part of the PFI contract.
- 3.3. The Partnership accepts that the "do nothing" option is not a viable solution and in designing and delivering the optimal long term integrated waste management collection and disposal systems, financial benefits will accrue to the Partnership.
- 3.4. The Partnership is committed to ensuring these financial benefits are allocated equitably amongst the partners. In order to do this, the Partnership will develop and agree an inter-authority allocation formula that seeks to address additional costs and benefits of recycling beyond individual authorities' statutory recycling targets (including targets financed through the Local Area Agreements) and

shares efficiencies and savings amongst the partner authorities,
e.g. the market value of recyclable materials.

Signed

_____	for Braintree District Council	/	/ 2007	Date
_____	for Brentwood Borough Council	/	/ 2007	Date
_____	for Epping Forest District Council	/	/ 2007	Date
_____	for Essex County Council	/	/ 2007	Date
_____	for Harlow Council	/	/ 2007	Date
_____	for Uttlesford District Council	/	/ 2007	Date

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Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/010/2007-08.

Date of meeting: 11 June 2007.



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Community Wellbeing.

Subject: Removal of Graffiti Policy.

Officer contact for further information: Caroline Wiggins (01992 – 564122).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 – 56 4470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That consideration be given to the outcome of consultation with Parish and Town Councils regarding a new policy for managing the budget for graffiti removal;**
- (2) That the attached policy and procedural arrangements be approved; and**
- (3) That the Portfolio Holder for Community Wellbeing be authorised to amend the policy and procedural arrangements after considering any further representations arising from the Local Councils' Liaison Committee meeting on 13 June 2007, subject to any further changes not increasing the budget for this year.**

Report:

1. Graffiti is an illegal, anti social activity that creates a negative impression of an area and contributes to people's fear of crime. It can be any writing or picture scribbled or drawn on a wall without the owner's consent. There is no legal requirement for a local authority to remove graffiti.

2. The District Council has reacted to the need to deal with graffiti removal and has included specific provision within its budget for several years. However, as in most other local authority areas, the procedures for dealing with graffiti have tended to evolve in response to the developing situation rather than a policy being determined in advance. The Council has attempted to remove graffiti wherever it occurs in response to complaints from the public or councillors.

3. During 2006/07, the District Council set aside the sum of £30,250 for the removal of graffiti. Demand for removal within the District is almost limitless and in consequence there was an over spend of approximately £5000. An amount of £8000, identified from within the Safer Communities Budget, was transferred into the Graffiti Budget to make up the deficit and to provide for the continuation of the service until April 2007. There were also occasions in previous years when significant supplementary estimates were approved in view of increasing demand for the service.

4. The difficulty in containing this budget has resulted from a well meaning attempt to remove all graffiti wherever it occurs including locations which are properly the responsibility of private individuals or other public bodies. This has been found to be unsustainable in practice.

5. The incidence of graffiti is increasing significantly and there is no sign of any change in that trend. To prevent a repeat of the over spend in 2007/08 it is recommended that a new policy be introduced for prioritising removal of graffiti within available resources.

6. All parish and town councils are being consulted about the new policy (attached) and any comments received will be reported at the meeting. An item has also been placed on the agenda for the next Local Councils' Liaison Committee to receive any further comments. As this is two days after this meeting, it is recommended that the Portfolio Holder should be authorised to consider any further views and to amend the document, subject to no change being made which increases the budget requirement for the service.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

7. The Graffiti budget has been overspent over the last three years and there is an urgent need to formalise a policy, which matches the service to the available budget.

Other Options for Action:

8. To reject the policy as put forward or to approve the document with modifications as the Cabinet deems appropriate. Other options could arise if the budget is to be increased but the Portfolio Holder has been clear that a policy should only operate within the existing budget.

Consultation Undertaken:

9. Parish and Town Councils have been consulted. Comments received by the date of the Cabinet meeting will be reported at the meeting. Matters raised at the Local Councils' Liaison Committee will be considered subsequently by the Portfolio Holder.

Resource implications:

Budget provision: £30,250.

Personnel: Existing provision.

Land: The policy will mainly focus on District Council property.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP reference: Crime and Disorder element of Community Wellbeing Section and Street Scene element of Environmental Protection Section in BVP 2006/07.

Relevant statutory powers: The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

Background papers: Nil.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: Removal of Graffiti leads to an improved environment and thereby discourages further acts of graffiti and anti-social behaviour.

Key Decision reference (if required): None.

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL - STATEMENT OF POLICY REGARDING GRAFFITI REMOVAL

1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out the Epping Forest District Council's ("the Council") approach for dealing with and preventing graffiti within the District.

2. Definition - What is Graffiti?

2.1 Graffiti is an illegal, anti-social activity that creates a negative impression of an area and contributes to fear of crime within the community. Graffiti can be any writing or picturing which is drawn on any building, wall, sign or other construction.

2.2 Offensive graffiti is illegal and unauthorised defacing of a building, wall or other edifice and may contain some or all of the following elements:

- (a) obscene language.
- (b) language of a politically/racially/religiously insulting or inciting nature.
- (c) a statement denoting hatred, intolerance or violence.
- (d) an image which is graphically explicit and obscene or otherwise offensive.
- (e) an image which is visually offensive or textually offensive by reason of the message which it conveys.

3. Application of the Policy

3.1 The Council recognises that any kind of graffiti has a negative impact on the environment. However, the Council has decided, in line with other local authorities, to utilise its resources only to remove graffiti from its own properties and street name signs.

3.2 For graffiti incidents on privately-owned buildings/land, the Council will provide information on companies who will provide a professional removal service if required.

4. How to Report Graffiti Incidents

4.1 The Safer Communities Unit of the Council may be contacted via the Graffiti Hotline Tel No: 01992 564122 or via the Epping Forest District Council Internet site which has a direct link to the Graffiti Hotline section.

4.2 Each report of graffiti should contain the following:

- Date and time of reported incident
- name, address and contact telephone number or e mail address of person reporting
- graffiti type, or description of TAG etc
- the method used to commit the offence, e.g. paint, pen etc

5. Legal Requirements

5.1 There is no legal requirement for the Council to remove graffiti but the Council is determined to exercise its discretion so as to improve the well-being of residents. The Council will therefore commit resources to the extent set out in 3.1 of this policy.

6. Service Levels

6.1 The Council will remove all graffiti on its own land and buildings. It also undertakes to remove all graffiti from street name signs.

6.2 The Council will not remove graffiti from private property. In such circumstances the Council will undertake to provide information on companies which will provide a professional removal service to those owners if required.

6.3 Some graffiti is so offensive to communities, however, that the Council acknowledges that limited exceptions to this policy will be necessary. The Council, after consultation with the Epping Forest Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership Hate Crime Operational Group, may decide to remove specific instances of obscene, racial and sexual graffiti where removal is considered to be urgent.

6.4 In cases dealt with under 6.3 above, the Council will establish whether there are legal powers to remove the graffiti covered, seek recompense wherever possible and seek to

prosecute or assist the Police in prosecuting where there is sufficient evidence to support that course of action.

7. Response Times

7.1 The Council aim to remove graffiti within two weeks of being reported to the Safer Communities Team.

8. Prosecutions and Recovery of Costs

8.1 Where the District Council has sufficient evidence it will consider prosecuting those responsible with a view to recovering costs.

9. Highway Road Signs

9.1 Any inquiry regarding graffiti on highway signs (including direction and warning signs) is a matter for Essex Highways Authority. Any such inquiry will be forwarded by the Safer Communities Team to that Council and the complainant notified of contact details.

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