

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

Committee: Overview and Scrutiny Committee **Date:** Thursday, 7 June 2007

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.30 pm

Members Present: Councillors K Angold-Stephens (Vice-Chairman) D Bateman, R Church, M Colling, Mrs A Haigh, Mrs H Harding, D Kelly, Mrs P Richardson, Councillor Mrs P Smith and Mrs L Wagland

Other Councillors: Councillors R Bassett, K Chana, M Cohen, Mrs D Collins, Mrs A Grigg, P House, S Murray, D Stallan, Mrs M Sartin, Ms S Stavrou, A Watts, C Whitbread, Mrs J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and P Spencer

Apologies: Councillors R Morgan, R D'Souza, J Hart and G Mohindra

Officers Present: J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), J Gilbert (Head of Environmental Services), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer), M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant) and Z Folley (Democratic Services Assistant)

By Invitation: S Williams (London Underground Limited)

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

In view of the unavailability of the Chairman, Councillor R Morgan, it was noted that the Vice - Chairman, Councillor K Angold – Stephens, would be chairing the meeting.

As a result, the Committee were asked to appoint a Vice – Chairman for the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs A Haigh be appointed Vice – Chairman for the meeting.

2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was reported that Councillor Mrs L Wagland was substituting Councillor R D'Souza and that Councillor Mrs P Smith was substituting Councillor G Mohindra .

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillors J M Whitehouse and D Stallan declared personal interests in agenda item 5 (Scrutiny of London Underground Ltd) by virtue of being regular users of the Central Line Service. They declared that their interests were non-prejudicial.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Committee held on 5 April 2007 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the recommendation in minute 92 (Work Plan monitoring) being amended to specify:

That the bid submitted by Councillor Mrs Harding for the work plan on rural transport be referred to the County's Overview and Scrutiny Committee for review.

5. SCRUTINY OF LONDON UNDERGROUND LTD

The Chairman welcomed back to the Committee, Simon Williams, the Operational Capability Enhancement Manager for London Underground Limited (LULtd).

Mr Williams reported that part of his role was to liaise with the Council on LUL services. His presentation would focus on a number of issues including passenger demand, the station refurbishment programme, Epping Car Park, the investment programme, service and ticket selling plans. Mr Williams addressed a number of written questions from Members as tabled at the meeting.

In terms of current developments, he reported that since the last meeting, the Hainault to Woodford services had been extended to midnight and moved into Zone 3 which had reduced ticket prices for the service. Grange Hill, Chigwell, and Roding Valley now benefited from 24 hour staffing cover. The early signs for usage following the changes were encouraging.

In relation to the written questions, he reported the following:

1) When is London Underground going to expand the car park at Epping LUL station and will they look at their price structure considering it is cheaper to park further down the line than at Epping?

Mr Williams advised that, in January 2007, LUL met with EFDC to discuss the Epping Car Park proposals. A recent network study concluded that there was only room for an additional 70- 150 spaces without major alterations. There was only capacity on the road and tube network for this. One option was to extend the car park onto the adjacent builders yard. The outline design had been completed. A feasibility study was now being undertaken and tendering was underway. A planning application would be submitted in due course.

The price structure for end of line car station car parks was explained. It was questioned whether annual tickets were available for Epping Car Park?

2) What is the progress on the station refurbishments in Epping Forest? How is it decided what will the changes be at each station? Will the problems Metronet is experiencing have any impact on the programme?

LUL planned to carryout an extensive investment programme to improve services up until the 2012 Olympics. This would inevitably result in disruptions to services and the closure of typically 3-5 stations on the network at any one time. Shutting on

weekdays was generally impractical. For example work was currently being carried out at Stratford Station in preparation for the Olympics.

Mr Williams reported on the modernisation and refurbishment programme. This involved the provision of substantive improvement work, the installation of CCTV, PR systems and tactile strips. Details of both were detailed in the Private/Public Partnership Contract (PPP) produced by Metronet. The process for formulated this was explained which involved consultation with LUL. The meeting noted slides showing key features of the recent improvements to Epping, Theydon Bois and Chigwell.

Mr Williams reported that the Buckhurst Hill project had been excluded from the PPP contract. He reported the intention was to defer the work but to ensure elements were undertaken alongside the projects within the contract to be completed by 2011. The Grange Hill refurbishment scheme was due to be complete in 2009. Members hoped that the refurbishment plans would improve the lower parts of Buckhurst Hill East and the Subway at the station. It was clarified that the subway would be part of the scheme. LUL were of the view that all contracted projects should be completed and were committed to covering any shortfalls which might arise to deliver them.

Concern was expressed about press reports regarding Metronets ability to supply the funding necessary for the refurbishment work and whether this would affect the work for the 2012 Olympics? It was anticipated that the cost of the work was due to rise from 2010 onwards. There was a shortfall in funding for the commitments. The public sector might be required to meet these costs. The implications of this were noted.

The improvements works to Epping Station and the Hainault loop had been completed. The work to improve Platform 1 at Epping had reached final stages. A member stressed the need for the footpath to Centre Drive to be repositioned as it directly faced traffic. Mr Williams undertook to take this back.

3) The residents of Epping Forest and the country as a whole are under increasing pressure to recycle more. When will LUL going to do more considering the fact that there are now 3 free newspapers which are littered about their trains on a normal working day?

Mr Williams reported that approximately 30% of litter on the network was recycled. The target for 2008 was 35%. The staff at Hainault, Leytonstone and West End stations carried out litter picking duties. Consideration was being given to introducing further recycling measures. The Mayor of London had expressed a commitment to improving performance in this area.

4) For what reason are LUL trying to get rid of the newspaper kiosk at Epping considering the fact it has been there for years, and provides a service to LUL customers. I accept that they have now extended the lease until 2008, but the kiosk is still under threat. Will they reconsider their decision and take away the threat to the livelihood.

LULs Managing Director had expressed concern about the amount of items on platforms particularly in London. This was making platforms too congested and detracting from the ambiance of stations. As a result, a lot of items were being decommissioned to improve the accessibility of stations. A statement of the Managing Director on this issue explaining this position was read out to members. It was intended that the kiosk would trade until contract expiry in 2008. A review would also be conducted with a view to identifying alternative arrangements for the facility. In response, a member pointed out that 620 people had signed a petition against the

proposed closure. It provided a valuable service and had been a feature of the station for many years without any problems.

5) I am always being asked by pensioners living within a few hundred yards of the boundary with Redbridge when are we going to get our free LU pass?

Mr Williams reported that the passes were provided by the Local Authority not LUL. Thus the issues raised should be put to the relevant Local Authority for the area.

In response to other questions reference was made to the recent service suspensions at Liverpool Street station between 29-31 May 2007 due to signal failures. These had now been rectified and were not related. He warned of possible closures between Liverpool Street and Leytonstone due to improvement work.

The number of paper tickets bought from stations had decreased mainly due to the success of the Oyster cards and the availability of tickets on the internet. As a result, approximately 40 ticket offices across the network would close. All of the staff concerned would be redeployed. It was intended that the facilities would be withdrawn from stations where there was a low volume of paper ticket sales. Concern was expressed at this proposals. A lot of elderly people relied on these facilities.

The incidents of people travelling without a valid ticket had decreased due to action to deal with this. More information could be found out on this.

A Member expressed appreciation at the quality of customer service at Chigwell Station. However there was a lack of visible staffing presence at night. This should be addressed to improve customer safety and security at the station. Mr Williams undertook to take this concern back. He supported the need for a visible presence at all stations at night.

It was asked whether there were any plans to expand the Central Line from Stratford to Stansted to facilitate the 2012 Olympics Games and reduce traffic on the road network for this area especially the M11? It was reiterated that there were no plans for such action. The network would not be able to accommodate the additional passenger numbers this would generate. The Cross Rail Initiative should provide additional capacity for east to west travel.

A Member referred to the need to expand the transport network to address the implications of the East of England Plan and the Thames Gateway proposals. One option was to reinstate the Epping to Ongar Line. LUL had investigated this option using optimistic predictions on future demand. Even on this basis it was not possible to make a business case for the proposal.

Concern was expressed at overcrowding during peak hours. The problem was becoming intolerable and getting worse. One solution was to increase the frequency of trains, but as they were already running at a frequency of 30 per hour (every 2-3) minutes this might not be achievable. Another more realistic alternative was to extend the peak hour period; provide more lines or increase the capacity of the bus and tram network.

Copies of LUL station works programme was circulated to Members. It was noted that a copy of the presentation would be published on the Councils internet site.

The Chairman thanked Mr Williams for his informative and interesting presentation.

RESOLVED:

That Mr Simon Williams of LUL be thanked for his progress report and welcomed back to a future meeting.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER TASK AND FINISH PANEL - INTERIM REPORT OF PANEL

The Chairman of the Panel, Councillor Cohen, presented the interim report of Panel.

The Chairman requested that the Panel be re-established for 2007/08 for completion of its terms of reference particularly in relation to the provisions of the Police and Justice Act 2006.

Members requested that the Panel report back to the Committee, in six months time, on progress with its work and that the OS work plan be amended accordingly.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report be regarded as an interim report of the Panel;
- (2) That the Panel be re-established to enable completion of the tasks it has been given particularly in relation to regulations yet to be issued under the provisions of the Police and Justice Act 2006;
- (3) That the current membership be reappointed for the new year in the light of the work already done and the benefits of applying that knowledge to the tasks still outstanding;
- (4) That the following observations be noted:
 - (a) that since the Council is defined as a responsible authority under the provisions of the law, it has no choice other than to play its part in the CDRP. How that will change depends on regulations still to be issued;
 - (b) that the Council is regarded by other partners in the CDRP process as a key player and its participation to date at both Member and officer level is greatly valued;
- (4) That provisions should be made in the annual work programme for a review of the activities of the CDRP and the outcomes it achieves through scrutiny of the CDRP Chair and the Council's representatives, both Member and Officer, in that body;
- (5) That an obligation be placed on individual Ward Members to secure a response to constituents' concerns on community safety issues and the need to agree arrangements for how that is to happen once the regulations are issued;
- (6) To note and support the development of Neighbourhood Action Panels and Joint Action Groups;
- (7) That the details of future meetings of Neighbourhood Action Panels be published in the Council Bulletin;

(8) That Ward Members be encouraged to attend meetings of the Neighbourhood Action panels insofar as they are able;

(9) That the Panel report back to the Committee in six months time.

7. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP OF STANDING PANELS

The Committee were asked to make appointments to Standing Panels in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny rules. The Committee were reminded that the Council had agreed pro rata applied to Standing Panels and that membership should be kept to a minimum to allow each Group to have representation . It was noted that on this basis it had been calculated that Panels would consist of 11 Members.

It was reported that nominations to Chairman and Vice Chairman to Standing Panels were excluded from the pro rata calculation rules required for such positions contained in the Council's constitution.

The Committee had before them a report detailing a list of nominations received. The Senior Democratic Services Officer reported on a number of late nominations and changes to the schedules.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments to Standing Panels annexed to these minutes be adopted.

8. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP OF TASK AND FINISH PANELS

The Committee were asked to consider appointments to Task and Finish Panels.

It was noted that any Member could be appointed to Task and Finish Panels. However Cabinet Members would not be able to serve on panels which bore directly on their Portfolio. In addition no panel could comprise of members of a single political group and restrictions on numbers did not apply.

Members were also asked to appoint a Chairman and Vice Chairman to each Panel.

The meeting had before them a report detailing a list of nominations received. The Senior Democratic Services Officer reported a number of late nominations and changes to the schedules. No nominations had been submitted for some of the Vice – Chairmanships. It was agreed these appointments be made at the first meeting of the Panels concerned.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the appointments to Task and Finish Panels annexed to these minutes be adopted and;

(2) That the vacancies for Vice – Chairmen be appointed at the first meeting of the Panels concerned.

9. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING

The Committee considered their up to date work programme.

It was reported that the next meeting of the Committee scheduled for 12 July 2007 had been brought forward to 10 July 2007.

It was anticipated that the Task and Finish Panels would be submitting proposals to the next meeting of the Committee on the scope of their work and work plans. The Standing Panels would also be asked to ascribe exact deadlines to each of their work plan items at their first meetings. A computerised programme had been implemented to facilitate work planning and would be emailing out notifications of timescale for agendas and reports.

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

(Item 2) (Scrutiny of Highways Local Service)

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs D Collins, report that, earlier on in the day, she had attended a meeting with the County Portfolio Holder, Councillor Hume, to consider possible changes to the way Highway services were delivered and the review of the Local Service Agreement. It was hoped that the new agreements would address local concerns and improve services and liaison. She reported that proposals would be brought forward in course.

Item 5 (Scrutiny of Essex Police – Neighbouring Policing Initiative)

The Committee were asked to consider whether a further presentation was necessary during the current year as Essex Police had only recently attended a meeting of the Crime and Disorder Task and Finish Panel to talk about Community Policing. They also considered whether the item should be referred to the Task and Finish Panel for consideration.

The Committee agreed that the OSC should receive the presentation. They felt that this would facilitate greater Members attendance and engagement in the liaison which was important given the many concerns about policing. It was agreed that presentation should be scheduled for the new year. This would allow sufficient time for the new Community Policing Initiative and the Neighbourhood Action Panels to settle down.

RESOLVED:

That Essex Police be asked to report back to the OSC in the new year on the Community Policing Initiative

(b) Environmental and Planning Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Panel, Councillor Mrs P Smith, reported that the Panel last met on the 26 April 2007.

At the meeting, the Panel discussed the focus day held on Saturday 10 March 2007 for local Members and interest groups on pressures in Rural Areas. Its next meeting, on 26 June 2007, the Panel would consider the findings and formulate an action plan to pursue the key points. The Panel began the task of monitoring the 2005 Panels recommendations on Residential Parking as requested by this Committee on 5 April 2007. They heard that ECC Highways were prepared to support an EFDC Member forum to discuss Highways matters. The Panel expressed concern at the level of service offered under the new arrangements and requested that a report be made to the next meeting of the Panel detailing the latest position regarding the 2005

recommendations, current policy and ways of taking forward our local Highways concerns.

The Panel considered the measures made available by the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005 and the Rogers Review, a government sponsored review which has looked at, and makes recommendations in respect of local authorities' enforcement priorities. The Panel agreed that a small Sub – Group of the Panel should meet to give some detailed consideration to the issue. An item would be placed in the Members Bulletin publicising this.

The Panel also noted the proposal to hold a single issue Council meeting on the County Waste Strategy in July 2007. This would enable members to be brought up to date ahead of some major decisions to be made towards the end of the year. The Head of Environmental Services reported that since the meeting, the presentation had been brought forward to the June 2007 Cabinet meeting.

The Committee was reminded that at its 24 April 2007, full Council had adopted a motion on the effects of Climate Change and steps to deal with this. The motion requested that the Panel be tasked with exploring the matter. It was agreed that the work plan would be adjusted to reflect this.

RESOLVED:

That the issue of Climate Change be explored by the Panel and the work plan be amended accordingly.

10. CABINET AGENDA - 11 JUNE 2007

The Committee considered the Cabinet agenda for the 11 June 2007 meeting.

(a) Item 16 - Consultation Plan and Register

Members would receive a further chance to consider the document at the next meeting of the Finance and Performance Scrutiny Panel meeting on 19 June 2007. A member stressed the need for the details of forthcoming consultations to be made available to members.

(b) Item 14 - Release of Restrictive Covenant – Loughton Hall

A Member expressed a number of concerns on the item.

(Councillor S Murray declared a personal interest in this item by virtue of being an active Member of Debden Community Association. He declared that his interest was not prejudicial and that he would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the item).

(c) Item 13 – 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games

The Cabinet would be asked to recommend that the task of considering the opportunities presented by the Games for the District be referred to the Leisure Task and Finish Panel. The Committee supported this proposal.

(d) Development Land Sale - T11 Industrial Estate, Loughton

A Member suggested that the issues surrounding the Junctions at Chigwell Lane and Loughton Broadway be addressed prior to the commencement of the work. It was requested that a recommendation be added to the report to secure this.

CHAIRMAN

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****Final Version****

Overview and Scrutiny Panels 2007/08

Standing Panels

Constitution and Member Services Panel

Members –

Conservative Group (6): R Church, J Demetriou R D'Souza,
Mrs M McEwen, B Rolfe, D Stellan

Liberal Democrats Group (2): Mrs P Brooks, Mrs J H Whitehouse

LRA Group (1): J Markham

BNP Group (1): T Richardson

Independent Group (1): R Morgan

Chairman: R Church

Vice-Chairman: R Morgan

Finance and Performance Management and Customer Services and ICT

Members –

Conservative Group (6): R Bassett, M Colling, J Hart, G Mohindra,
Mrs P Smith, A Watts

Liberal Democrats Group (2): D Jacobs, J M Whitehouse

LRA Group (1): A Lee

BNP Group (1):TBA

Independent Group (1): R Morgan

Chairman: Liberal Democrats Group: J M Whitehouse

Vice-Chairman: G Mohindra,

****Final Version****

Housing

Members -

Conservative Group (6): K Chana, Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs H Harding, Mrs J Lea, Mrs L Wagland, J Wyatt

Liberal Democrats Group (2): Mrs P Brooks, Mrs P K Rush

LRA Group (1): K Angold – Stephens

BNP Group (1): Mrs P Richardson

Independent Member: S Murray

Chairman: S Murray

Vice-Chairman – R Gadsby

Environment and Planning

Members –

Conservative Group (6): R Bassett, D Bateman, Mrs A Cooper, Mrs P Smith, H Ulkun, Mrs L Wagland

Liberal Democrats Group (2): R Frankel, M Woollard

LRA Group (1): P House

BNP Group (1): Mrs P Richardson

Independent Group (1): J Knapman

Chairman: Mrs P Smith

Vice-Chairman: D Bateman

Task and Finish Panels

Leisure

Members -

Conservative Group: K Chana, Mrs R Gadsby, Mrs H Harding, G Pritchard, B Rolfe, H Ulkun

Liberal Democrat Group: Mrs P Brooks, Mrs A Haigh, Mrs K Rush, Mrs J Hedges

LRA Group: P House

BNP Group: P Turpin

Independent Group: None

Independent Member: S Murray

Chairman: Mrs H Harding

Vice-Chairman K Chana

Provision of Value for Money within Planning Services

Members -

Conservative Group: R Bassett, M Colling, P Mcmillan, G Mohindra, H Ulkun, Mrs L Wagland

Liberal Democrat Group: R Frankel, D Jacobs

LRA Group: A Lee

BNP Group: P Richardson

Independent Group: R Morgan

Chairman: Mrs L Wagland

Vice – Chairman*

TASK AND FINISH PANELS

Town Centre and Car Parks

Members -

Conservative Group M Colling, J Demetriou, Mrs R Gadsby, J Hart, Mrs J Lea
P McMillan

Liberal Democrats Group: Mrs P Brooks, Mrs J Hedges

LRA Group: K Angold – Stephens

BNP Group: T Richardson

Independent Group:

Chairman: M Colling,

Vice – Chairman:

Crime and Disorder

Members -

Conservative Group: D Bateman, Mrs H Harding, G Pritchard, B Rolfe, H Ulkun,
J Wyatt, M Cohen

Liberal Democrat Group: Mrs A Haigh, D Jacobs, P Spencer

LRA Group: Mrs C Pond

BNP Group: R Law

Independent Group: R Morgan

Labour: P Gode

Chairman: M Cohen

Vice – Chairman: Mrs A Haigh
