

# **EPPING FOREST LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE**

## **NOTICE OF MEETING**

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping      **Date:** Wednesday, 28th November, 2007

**Room:** Council Chamber      **Time:** 7.30 pm

**Democratic Services Officer:** Adrian Hendry (tel: 01992 564246)  
Email: ahendry@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

### **Members:**

#### **District Council Representatives:**

Councillors Mrs C Pond (Chairman), J Knapman, R Morgan, B Sandler and Mrs M Sartin

#### **Local Council Representatives:**

Clerks and Chairmen/Members of Parish and Town Councils

#### **County Council Representatives:**

Members for the following divisions:

North Weald and Nazeing:	Councillor A Jackson
Loughton Central:	Councillor C Pond
Ongar and Rural:	Councillor G McEwen
Epping and Theydon Bois:	Councillor T Spencer
Buckhurst Hill and Loughton South:	Councillor C Finn
Chigwell and Loughton Broadway:	Councillor M Tomkins
Waltham Abbey:	Councillor Mrs E Webster

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>PLEASE NOTE THE START DATE OF THE MEETING COFFEE/TEA WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE FROM 7.00 P.M IN THE MEMBERS ROOM</b></p>
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### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

### **2. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 20)**

To confirm the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 13 June 2007 (attached) and matters arising.

### **3. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS**

To discuss the following matters raised by Local Council's:

**i) Quality Councils**

At the Local Council's Liaison Committee meeting on 7 March 2007, Councillor Ed Borton (Nazeing Parish Council) asked that the issue of Quality Councils be raised at this meeting. They would like to know how Quality Councils would affect local councils and how the delegated functions would affect them.

As this was very much a political issue, they asked that the Leader and the Cabinet be invited to participate in the debate.

**(ii) Community Involvement in Section 106 Planning Gain Decisions on Applications**

**(iii) Update on Proposed Return Visit of Councillor Norman Hume Highways Portfolio Holder for Essex County Council**

**(iv) Police Liaison Issues**

**4. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

**Recommendation:**

**To receive a presentation from the District Council's Assistant Head of Housing (Operations) on the operation of the local Choice Based Lettings Scheme.**

1. The implementation of a Choice Based Lettings Scheme is necessary in order to meet the requirements of Government that such a scheme be in place by 2010 at the latest.

2. Under a Choice Based Lettings scheme, all vacant social rented properties would be advertised to applicants on the Housing Register in a two-weekly publication, website, and other media giving details of location, type, rent, service charge, council tax band and landlord of the available accommodation. Applicants would apply for a property by "expressing an interest" either in person, by post, telephone, text, email or Internet. Limits to the number of "expressions" per applicant would be in place, which would include restricting "expressions" for properties to those households, which only have an assessed need for a particular property type.

3. At the end of the two weekly cycle, the Council would analyse the "expressions of interests" received and allocate each property following a prioritisation and selection process in accordance with its own Allocations Scheme. In general terms, the property would be offered to the applicant in the highest band, who has been registered the longest, who had "expressed an interest" for the specific vacancy. The results of the "expressions of interest" on each property advertised is then published in the next periodic publication, setting out the number received on each property, as well as the Band and registration date of the successful applicant. This helps applicants to see how long the successful applicant has been waiting and gives greater transparency in the allocation of accommodation, as each applicant would be able to clearly understand how the scheme works.

4. The Government encourages authorities to work in partnership and has made

grants available to assist with set up costs based on a bidding process. The Council took the lead in setting up the Herts and Essex Housing Options Consortium (HEHOC), which is a partnership of the following authorities:

Brentwood Borough Council  
Chelmsford Borough Council  
Broxbourne District Council  
Uttlesford District Council  
East Herts District Council  
Epping Forest District Council

5. Following the submission of a successful bid to the Government, HEHOC received a grant of £96,000. Around £60,000 of the grant is funding a Consultant to Project Manage the implementation of the scheme, which will be managed by an external Choice Based Lettings Agency. The balance of the grant will go towards the set up costs.

6. Any Choice Based Lettings Scheme must be developed in a way that takes into account the needs of vulnerable groups. This would involve close liaison with Social Care and a wide-range of partner agencies, ensuring that vulnerable people are able to participate fully in any scheme.

7. The Assistant Head of Housing Services (Operations) will be attending the meeting to explain how the scheme works in more detail.

8. At the time of writing the report it is expected that the scheme will go live on 19 November 2007. It was hoped to explain the scheme at the last meeting, but unfortunately due to other pressing agenda items the matter was deferred.

## **5. PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL REMUNERATION SCHEMES - REVIEW**

The District Council wrote to Parish and Town Council clerks on 30 October 2007 about the need to review their remuneration schemes where these have been in operation.

The recruitment of an independent person to a vacancy on the independent panel is currently in progress and it would be helpful if local Councils could give replies by the end of the year.

## **6. YOUTH COUNCIL**

To receive report from D MacNab (Deputy Chief Executive).

## **7. UPDATE ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS) AND GYPSY AND TRAVELLER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD)**

The Council has been Directed by The Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government (Hazel Blears) to amend the Local Development Scheme (LDS) submitted to GO East in October 2006. This Direction requires the Council to produce a separate Development Plan Document (DPD) on "Gypsy & Traveller Site Provision", and for this DPD to be submitted for examination by 30 September 2009.

This matter was considered by Cabinet on 12 November 2007, and the amended LDS was agreed. This has now been re-submitted to GO East for their approval.

It is currently anticipated that the Issues & Options consultation for this DPD will take place in Spring / early Summer 2008.

**8. UPDATE ON FIFTY FAVOURITE TREES PROJECT (Pages 21 - 22)**

The receive a progress report on County Care's Fifty Favourite Trees project

The purpose of the project is to determine the fifty favourite trees within the District via nominations from people and organisations within the District. The Project is being run A website for the project had been set up at [www.favouritetrees.org.uk](http://www.favouritetrees.org.uk).

Officers will be in attendance to provide an update on the exhibition at Waltham Abbey District Museum.

**9. VETERAN TREE HUNT PROJECT**

**10. EPPING CONSERVATION AREA - DRAFT CHARACTER APPRAISAL - PUBLIC CONSULTATION (Pages 23 - 24)**

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Meetings of the Committee are scheduled for the following date next year:

23 March 2008