

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

Date: Wednesday, 4 March 2009 **Time:** 7.30 - 9.35 pm

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

**Members
Present:**

Representing Epping Forest District Council:

Councillor(s): J Knapman (Chairman), R Morgan, Mrs M Sartin and
Mrs P Smith

Other Councillors:

Councillor(s): R Bassett

Representing Essex County Council:

County Councillor(s): C Finn, A Jackson, G McEwen, C Pond and
M Tomkins

Representing Local Councils:

Councillor Ms J Bowerman (Matching Parish Council), S Deluca
(North Weald Parish Council), Councillor Mrs D Harris (Sheering),
Ms J Hedges, R James (Waltham Abbey Town Council), P Jones
(Epping Upland PC), Councillor B Murphy (Epping Town Council),
Ms H Nicholas (Roydon Parish Council), Councillor R Northwood
(Sheering Parish Council), J Philip (Theydon Bois PC), S Pryde
(Waltham Abbey Town Council), Ms S Stavrou (Waltham Abbey TC),
J Sullivan (Chigwell PC), B Surtees (Ongar Town Council),
Mrs E Walsh (Loughton Town Council), Evans (Epping Upland
Parish Council), Mrs D Borton (Nazeing Parish Council), R Church
(Buckhurst Hill Parish Council), E Gough (Buckhurst Hill PC),
Mr C Portou (Lambourne PC), G Bastes (Nazeing PC) and S Jones
(Theydon Bois PC)

Apologies:

Parish/Town Councils: -

Councillor S Jackman (Ongar Town Council), A Middlehurst (High
Ongar Parish Council), Councillor R Russell (Stapleford Abbots
Parish Council), Councillor J Salter (Abbess, Beauchamp and
Berners Roding Parish Council), Mrs K Canning (Chigwell Parish
Council) and Councillor Mrs C Pond (Loughton Town Council)

**Officers
Present:**

D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), G Lunnun (Assistant Director
Democratic Services), J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic
Development), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer) and
R Perrin (Democratic Services Assistant)

By Invitation:

R Smith (Essex Playing Field Association) and R Crone (Voluntary
Action Epping Forest & Rainbow Services Harlow)

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2008 be agreed, subject to the following amendment:

- That Christine Buttling and County Councillor M Tomkins had attended the meeting.

19. ESSEX PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION

The Chairman welcomed Robert Smith from Essex Playing Field Association.

Mr R Smith advised the committee that the Association had been founded in 1924, as a charity based organisation, devoting itself to the creation, preservation, improvement and development of playing fields, play grounds and play areas.

The Association provided a source of key information for people who needed help and advice on preserving their green areas and playing fields and were affiliated with Fields in Trust (FIT).

The Association was run by volunteers that relied on generous financial support from Essex County Council, donations from grant-making trusts, companies and individuals. Currently membership was around 200, with only a third from Epping Forest District. Mr R Smith wished to encourage more Essex Parish and Town Councils to take up membership of the Essex Playing Fields and asked for an application form to be included with the minutes.

AGREED:

That the application form for the Essex Playing Fields Association would be included in the minutes.

The Chairman thanked Mr R Smith for attending the Committee.

20. FAIR PROJECT

The Chairman welcomed Richard Crone from the F.A.I.R Project.

Mr R Crone advised that the project provided Funding Advice and Information Resources to voluntary and community organisations with Harlow and Epping Forest District. The range of services for the users included access to GrantNet; an online directory of funding opportunities, support with sourcing appropriate funders, completing application forms and help gathering supporting documentation needed to obtain funding. The project kept organisations informed by providing weekly bulletins including funding and training links, local news, national voluntary sector headlines and a quarterly 'FAIR'S FAIR' newsletters.

Mr R Crone advised that a working shop had been arranged to run for March 2009 in Theydon Bois and invited members to attend.

AGREED:

That, members wishing to attend the workshop should contact Mr R Crone and that the FAIR Project contact details would be included in the minutes.

The Chairman thanked Mr R Crone for attending the Committee.

21. ISSUES RAISED BY LOCAL COUNCILS

Councillor Surtees raised the following items collated from the Epping Forest Local Councils;

(a) Gypsy and Travellers Consultation – Update

An update had been requested on the Gypsy and Travellers Consultation on Options.

The Director of Planning and Economic Development, John Preston, informed the committee that 9,700 responses to the consultation had been received in total. The breakdown of responses had been 8,100 from Action Groups, 900 individual and 700 received online and that the consultation period had closed on the 20 February 2009. Officers would now check for duplicates and attain an initial analysis to present to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel in April 2009.

Mr J Preston advised that the Regional Office of the Government had reduced the allocation of additional gypsy and traveller site pitches for Epping Forest District by ten from 49 to 39. The Examination in Public (EiP) Report into the Review of Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in the East of England published on 18 December 2008 would form the basis of recommendations to the Government which would be holding further consultation before issuing the final allocations in 2010.

A committee member asked whether new sites identified would have any implications on the consultation that had taken place.

Mr J Preston advised that sites identified in addition to the consultation would be considered and would have to go through the same initial assessment criteria however the public consultation would not be carried out again.

The Chairman asked whether the outcome of the consultation would be before the next general election and if the consultation could be prevented

J Preston advised that the process would be lengthy and most probably continue into 2010, and although it could be discontinued, a considerable amount of time and funding had been applied.

A committee member asked how planning applications on identified sites in the consultation would be dealt with.

J Preston explained that any planning application would be dealt with according to the normal planning requirements.

The Chairman commented that a number of residents had complained about certain compulsory questions, which they felt required a more substantial knowledge of the District and expressed dislike about commenting on other sites within the consultation.

A committee member asked whether the consultation had impacted on the District Councils' work load.

Mr J Preston advised that the consultation had a considerable impacted on the District Council in particular the forward planning team and would continue to effect the performance of the Planning Directorate due to the strict time table and volume of work involved in the consultation.

AGREED:

That if any Parish/Town Councils had any further concerns or comments to contact Mr J Preston.

(b) Communication with Local Councils and Essex County Councils

Information had been requested regarding the amount of notification Parish/Town Councils received with regards to business considered by Essex County Council and Epping Forest District Council.

The Assistant Director of Democratic Services, Graham Lunnun advised that a basic statutory requirement to convene a public meeting required that the agenda must be published 5 days before the meeting. EFDC normally published the notice of the meeting on the internet between 7/9 days before the meeting with paper copies of the agenda dispatched to Parish/Town Councils and information points across the District. Any queries could be forwarded to Mr G Lunnun.

The Deputy Chief Executive, Derek Macnab advised that the Cabinet published a work programme, which sets out key decisions made within a three month period ahead. In addition Overview and Scrutiny Committee also continuously reviewed their work programme. Mr D Macnab advised the Committee that they could contact Key Officers to answer their queries.

AGREED:

Agreed that Mr D Macnab would circulate an information guide with contact details of Key Officers at EFDC for the Parish/Town representatives and inform how to access the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Forward Plans.

(c) Procedure for assessing Community Initiative Fund/Youth CIF/Road CIF Applications

Committee members requested further information on the Community Initiatives Fund (CIF), to enable more Parish/Town Councils to benefit from the initiatives.

D Macnab advised that the Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) helped fund projects or initiatives that promoted the social, economic or environmental well-being of the locality and resulted in the creation or enhancement of physical assets. Mr D Macnab suggested that this item should be raised on the West Essex Forum agenda, where the scheme had been administrated by the County Council

AGREED:

That Mr D Macnab would raise Community Initiatives Funding at the West Essex Forum.

(d) The Impact on Local residents of the Call for Sites for potential Development.

Mr J Preston advised the committee that the Council would be commencing work on the Core Strategy, the key document of the new Local Development Framework (LDF). The immediate priority of the LDF would be to make sufficient land allocations to meet the housing and employment targets and infrastructure requirements of the East of England Plan (EEP) which dealt with the period up to 2021.

The EEP would be an immediate comprehensive review with the time-span extending probably to 2031. The Council therefore considered that the Core Strategy should take account of this later date, with implications for further provision of land for housing (including gypsies and travellers) and employment. Mr J Preston advised that the Call for sites, sought opinion on sites that might have genuine potential for development over at least the next fifteen years. The process allowed public and private land to be suggested for future sites.

Committee members asked for information concerning the relevant Parish/Town Council affected by the sites, whether sites were dismissed or not, to be updated at the earliest opportunity.

(e) Functionality of the 'Iplan' System and continued distribution of paper copies of planning documents.

Members commented on teething problems with the system and wanted to be reassured that paper documents would continue to be supplied.

J Preston advised that the system had been implemented successfully and had only experienced a few problems which would be rectified. The system should allow a greater number of people to view planning applications and that this would be the way forward. J Preston advised that once all the problems had been resolved then electronic documents would eventually take over from paper documents. Mr J Preston advised that officers would provide initial support to Town/Parish Councils and he agreed to advise his staff of their concerns and problems.

D Macnab added that if numbers allowed committee members could attend the internal training for District Members.

Members expressed concerns regarding the poor search facilities and suggested that improvements would be required on the resolution before paper copies were removed.

(f) Waste Collection Services for Village Halls and other similar establishments.

Councillor Surtees advised that Mr C Thomson wished to comment on this agenda item but had sent his apologies.

Mr D Macnab informed the committee that a report concerning Waste Collections should be on Cabinet agenda on 20 April 2009, and if Colin Thomson would like to advise Mr J Gilbert of the issues, they could be addressed in the report.

AGREED:

That due to the time scale and absence, Councillor Surtees would advise Mr C Thomson to contact Mr J Gilbert.

(g) Local Police Pledges Appear to be uniform across the District/County – should there be a mechanism for Communities to contribute?

Councillor A Jackson, a member of ECC Police Authority forum advised that the Police pledge had been a national pledge which Essex had been one of the first to sign up to and already achieved most, if not all of the aims. It should not to be confused with the Local targets, which were separate from Essex and National targets.

22. LOCAL HIGHWAYS PANEL

Councillor Bassett advised the committee that under the Essex County Council "Localism" initiative, the District Council planned to establish a Local Highways Panel to carry out annual consultation with Essex County Highways concerning priorities for the use of a devolved highway maintenance budget.

An information leaflet was handed out to members providing details of the highways scheme.

The scheme would be implemented on a phased basis across the County and Epping Forest had been invited to participate in the process from April 2009. The panel would be established along the following lines;

- a) that the number of District Councillors serving on the Panel would total 11, pro rata political groups and representative of the three geographical areas (East, South, West) ;
- b) that the number of Parish/Town Councillors serving on the Panel would be 3, representative of the three geographical areas (East, South & West);
- (c) that the Panel will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Civil Engineering & Maintenance (or any successor Portfolio Holder) who would be counted as one of the nominees of the appropriate political group;
- (d) That a Vice-Chairman will be appointed from among the other District Councillors;
- (e) That only District members of the Panel would have voting rights;
- (f) That representatives of Parish Councils should be able to attend panel meetings and speak, provided that they have given advanced notice of matters they wished to raise so that an agenda item placed before the Panel;
- (g) That other District Councillors should be able to attend and speak on the same basis as (h);
- (h) That meetings should be open to the press and public and held in the evenings at the Civic Offices, Epping;
- (i) that a minimum of six meetings should be held each year;
- (j) that designated County Council Highways should nominate a lead officer to support the Panel;
- (k) that the Essex County Council Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation would be able to invited to attend when necessary; and
- (l) that the agenda and minutes of the Panel would be circulated to each District Councillor and to each Parish/Town Council.

Proposed training session would be held for the appointed members of the Panel and other interested Councillors.

Councillor Pond raised concerns regarding the three geographical areas and suggested that the South of the District should have greater representation because of the higher

population in that part of the District and therefore a higher vehicle usage with the roads requiring more maintenance.

Councillor Bassett advised that the Highways Panel would endeavour to achieve an even geographical representation of the District but advised that if particular issues were raised, Parish/Town members could attend meetings.

Councillor Surtees advised that the item would be considered at the next meeting for Epping Forest Local Councils Branch and the Highways Panel would be advised accordingly of the Parish/Town representatives.

AGREED:

That interested members would contact Councillor Surtees.

Councillor Bassett advised the committee that if they had any issues or concerns that they could contact him.

23. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor B Murphy advised the Committee that he had meet with the District Commander, Chief Inspector Alan Ray and no major concerns had been raised.

24. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The future meeting dates for this Committee were noted.

CHAIRMAN

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ESSEX PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

Please send your completed application to:
EPFA Membership, 76 Buckingham Road, HOCKLEY, Essex SS5 4UE

Your details

Title First Name Organisation name (if applicable)

Surname Daytime phone number

Address e-mail address

We promise that any information that you give will be used for EPFA purposes only.

Type of membership:

- Life Member £50
- Individual £10 per annum
- Corporate Member £100 per annum
- District / Unitary Authority £50 per annum
- Parish / Town Council £25 per annum
- Sports Club / Association £15 per annum

Payment details

- I enclose a cheque for the sum of £.....
made payable to the Essex Playing Fields Association.

Signed.....

Date.....

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THE WORK OF
THE ESSEX PLAYING FIELDS ASSOCIATION
(Registered Charity No. 301448)

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