

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF SAFER, CLEANER, GREENER SCRUTINY STANDING
PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2009
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 9.14 PM

Members Present:	M Colling (Chairman), G Pritchard (Vice-Chairman), K Chana, Miss R Cohen, R Frankel, J Philip and Mrs P Richardson
Other members present:	D Bateman, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs M Sartin and J M Whitehouse
Apologies for Absence:	R Barrett, Ms J Hedges, D Jacobs and Mrs L Wagland
Officers Present	J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development), J Nolan (Assistant Director Neighbourhoods), L Ingwall (Environmental Co-ordinator) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

45. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted there were no substitute members.

46. NOTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

The notes from 20 January 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

47. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME

The Terms of Reference and Work Programme were noted.

Work Programme - the Panel noted:

(1) Safer Cleaner Greener:

- a) There were still two vacancies to fill;
- b) Formal launch to be in March;
- c) The Police Accreditation Scheme was delayed until all posts were filled; this would be more cost effective;
- d) Jim Nolan was currently updating the enforcement policy;
- e) The Strategy Document was at this meeting.

(2) Safer Communities (Safer):

- a) CCTV Policy to go to the next Panel meeting.

(3) Essex Waste Procurement process and Joint Committee (Cleaner, Greener):

- a) There has not been one recently;
- b) JMWMS had been agreed and adopted;

- c) There is a report going to the next Cabinet meeting on the Inter Authority Agreement. Because of drafting problems it had not been possible to get this document to this Panel.
- (4) Traffic Management Act 2008**
Completed.
- (5) Waste Management Partnership Board (Greener)**
The minutes were at this meeting.
- (6) Nottingham Declaration (Greener)**
 - b) The 1st draft of the Climate Change Strategy was at this meeting.
- (7) Residential Parking (Safer, Greener)**
This is about parking on housing estates, unsure of current position.
- (8) County Highways Matters (Safer)**
 - a) NAG is still an ongoing process;
 - b) There is a consultation document on the ECC website about Speed Management;
 - c) Freight Strategy is still with the County;
 - d) Officers are still gathering data on road accidents.
- (9) Bobbingworth Tip (Greener)**
Still waiting for better weather to finish off the planting.
- (10) Policing Green Paper**
Completed.
- (11) Essex County Council – Forest Transportation Consultation**
Completed.
- (12) Climate Change Strategy**
On the agenda for tonight.
- (13) Workplace Parking Strategy**
On the agenda for tonight.

48. SAFER CLEANER GREENER STRATEGY

The Director of Environment and the Street Scene, John Gilbert, introduced the draft Safer Cleaner Greener Strategy. The Panel noted that the layout would be professionally designed once the content had been finalised. The Panel would need to satisfy itself on the content of the strategy.

Councillor Frankel was happy that there was a lot of colour and pictures in the strategy. However, he thought that the strategy action plan was a bit dry and could be a bit more user friendly. He was told that the format for an action plan dictated the layout. It was there to set out our purpose for the public to see.

Page 9 mentioned 'illegal drug abuse'. The Panel thought the wording should be slightly altered to read "increase on drug abuse", to cover both legal and illegal drugs.

Councillor Pritchard commented that the booklet needed to make more of tree planting in the district and to get the public more involved. It was acknowledged that

the strategy could be underselling the district on what it does. Perhaps it could be explained on a site to site basis. Epping Forest Countrycare was mentioned at the bottom of Page 17 and this part could be expanded on.

Councillor Whitehouse was not clear on the purpose of the booklet. There is not enough detail. There was nothing in it to say what the public could do for the district. He would also like to know what the environmental response unit (Page 14) does and how could they be called out. He was told that the action plan could be stretched over two pages to add in a column identifying what the council would do.

Councillor Colling said that pages 5, 6 and 7 answered the questions on what the strategy was about. He also asked if useful telephone numbers be added to the back of the booklet to fill up the blank spaces.

Councillor Frankel asked how the booklet was to be distributed. He was told that that decision was still to be made. It could be inserted in with the Forester or circulated to all information desks to be made available to any callers.

Councillor Frankel said that there tended to be a resistance for local authorities to put their contact numbers on publications. Perhaps each section could put their email addresses on. He was told that this could generate a lot of emails to officers, however, there was a general email address listed at the bottom of page 26. Also, the back page of the Forester lists a lot of contact numbers. The number of generic email addresses could be expanded from the basic 'contact us' address.

Councillor Philip noted that on page 27 the heading of 'Area Problem Solving Groups' did not appear anywhere else in the booklet and needed some sort of explanation. There was also the need to involve the populous and tell them what the Council wanted them to do to help us, such as using low energy lightbulbs etc.

Councillor Bateman said that the address was missing from Page 29.

Councillor Whitehouse said that on page 6, it should give whole council responsibility not just focus on the Environment and Street Scene Directorate. This was agreed.

A paragraph on page 10 mentions the next 12 months; what 12 month period was being highlighted. It needed to be made clearer.

RESOLVED:

That, officers will take back the comments made by the Panel and update the Strategy accordingly. They will then circulate it to members for their final agreement before taking it to Overview and Scrutiny and then to Cabinet.

49. WORKPLACE PARKING STRATEGY

The Panel considered the Department for Transport consultation document on the Government's proposals for regulations to enable local authorities to introduce workplace parking levy schemes should they choose to do so.

On consideration the Panel thought that this was not something that the Panel should consider at present. If County ever decided to implement this then they would be obliged to consult before implementing such a scheme. The Panel would be more in a position to consider such a proposal then.

RESOLVED:

That the Workplace Parking Levy Scheme not be considered by this Panel at present.

50. CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Director of Planning and Economic Development introduced the draft climate change strategy. This strategy came into being to bring something meaningful out of the Nottingham Declaration. This would also help with the five National Performance Indicators.

This document is a starting point as a strategy and will change over the years. It would go to the Cabinet in April. Members were asked for their comments on the draft.

Councillor Pritchard liked the document. He would like to see something about trees added to the objectives and something about carbon capture and the role for the council to act as an exemplar for local business. He was very aware of the low level of maintenance of people's houses in the private and the rented sector.

Councillor Whitehouse also welcomed the strategy. He wanted to know just how well the District Council performed on the energy rating. Also, broader recycling issues were missing, such as what the public could do for themselves. There was also no mention of the leisure centres, such as the swimming pools which were heavy energy users and the action plan gave no clue of what had been approved and funded, there was a need for more of an explanation.

Councillor Philip asked if the Defra figures take two years to come through, how could the council undertake National Indicators on a yearly basis. He was told that the Audit Commission had picked up on this. The Council needed to show that they were making progress; otherwise the targets would get tougher.

Councillor Frankel was pleased to see the strategy placing the council as a community leader. He thought that energy saving in the council was really down to personal responsibility by the staff. He asked about the deferring of the provision of solar panels to offset energy spends; did the Council get energy saving trust grants? He was concerned that they had strings attached to them and how they were managed by the government. He was told that some other council offices had some large schemes that we do not seem to have locally, although the cost effectiveness of some of these schemes are suspect. Also this was a conservation area and the chances of putting things on the roof were slim. Grants for low carbon building programmes are available and they are very popular. There was always the need to make your own property as efficient as possible.

Councillor Frankel thought that after roofs and double glazing, it would become less easy to make old properties effectively insulated. The main thrust should be on new builds.

Councillor Pritchard said another worry was the amount of commuting undertaken. There was no mention of mileage allowances for officers using cars on business. This gave more money for large cars, which was no incentive to get a smaller car. The Council also needed to generate publicity on local initiatives; or offer reductions in the Council Tax if people improved energy efficiency on their new homes. He was

told that the idea of a reduction in Council Tax had been put to the executive some years ago, but it was thought to be too resource intensive.

RESOLVED:

That the Panel considered and commented on the Draft Climate Change Strategy.

51. MINUTES OF THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Panel noted the minutes of the Waste Management Partnership Board meeting for 6 November 2008 and 13 January 2009.

52. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No further business was reported.

53. REPORT TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To report to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the conclusions reached at this meeting on the two strategies that were considered.

54. FUTURE MEETINGS

The last meeting of the Panel for this year was noted.