

## **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 2nd June, 2009**

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

**Time:** 7.30 pm

**Democratic Services Officer:** Simon Hill, Senior Democratic Services Officer, The Office of the Chief Executive  
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**Members:**

**Councillors :**

**MEMBERSHIP DEPENDENT ON ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2009.**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS MEETING IS OPEN TO ALL MEMBERS TO ATTEND**

### **WEBCASTING NOTICE**

Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.

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If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01992 564249.

#### **1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

1. This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking.
2. The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the Internet and will be capable of repeated viewing and copies of the recording could be made available for those that request it.

If you are seated in the lower public seating area it is likely that the recording cameras will capture your image and this will result in the possibility that your image will become part of the broadcast.

This may infringe your human and data protection rights and if you wish to avoid this you should move to the upper public gallery”

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). To declare interests in any items on the agenda.

In considering whether to declare a personal or a prejudicial interest under the Code of Conduct, Overview & Scrutiny members are asked pay particular attention to paragraph 11 of the Code in addition to the more familiar requirements.

This requires the declaration of a personal and prejudicial interest in any matter before an OS Committee which relates to a decision of or action by another Committee or Sub Committee of the Council, a Joint Committee or Joint Sub Committee in which the Council is involved and of which the Councillor is also a member.

Paragraph 11 does not refer to Cabinet decisions or attendance at an OS meeting purely for the purpose of answering questions or providing information on such a matter.

**5. MINUTES (Pages 9 - 20)**

**Decisions required:**

To confirm the minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 16 April 2009.

**6. REPORT ON THE FORESTER CONSULTATION (Pages 21 - 24)**

(Deputy Chief Executive) To consider the attached report.

**7. LEISURE TASK AND FINISH PANEL - FEASIBILITY REPORT ON PROPOSED SPORTS HALL (Pages 25 - 32)**

(Chairman/Lead Officer Leisure Task and Finish Panel) to receive a report on the feasibility of constructing a new sports hall at the site of the Waltham Abbey Swimming

Pool. This was considered in detail by the Leisure Task and Finish Panel on 18 May 2009.

**8. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING (Pages 33 - 56)**

**(a) To consider the attached Work Programme**

The current Overview and Scrutiny work programme is attached for information.

**(b) To consider new item to be added to the O&S Work Programme for 2009/10**

To consider the item put forward for next years Work Programme. The Committee is asked to review and evaluate the proposals and to allocate an appropriate Standing or create a new Task and Finish Panel.

Item attached:

- (i) The Pitt Review - Flood Defences;

**(c) To consider the continuation of the current established Task and Finish Panels**

- (i) Customer Transformation Task and Finish Panel (a copy of the minutes from their last meeting is attached as background information).
- (ii) Leisure Task and Finish Panel.

**9. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP TO STANDING PANELS****Decision Required:**

**(1) To appoint members to the following Standing Panels in accordance with pro-rata in the proportions shown below:**

Standing Panels	Appointments to places required:
Housing	Cons (7): Lib Dem (2): LRA (1): BNP (1):
Constitutional and Member Services	Cons (7): Lib Dem (2): LRA (1): BNP (1):
Finance and Performance Management	Cons (7): Lib Dem (2): LRA (1): BNP (1):
Safer, Cleaner, Greener	Cons (7): Lib Dem (2): LRA (1): BNP (1):
Planning Services	Cons (7): Lib Dem (2): LRA (1): BNP (1):

**(2) To Consider requests for appointments to Standing Panels by non affiliated members; and**

**(3) To appoint a Chairman and Vice Chairman to the following Standing Panels:**

Standing Panels	Appointments Required:
Housing	Chairman: Vice Chairman:
Constitutional and Member Services	Chairman: Vice Chairman:
Finance and Performance Management	Chairman: Vice Chairman:
Safer, Cleaner, Greener	Chairman: Vice Chairman:
Planning Services	Chairman: Vice Chairman:

1. (Assistant to the Chief Executive). The Council has agreed that pro rata apply to Overview and Scrutiny Standing Panels only. The Overview and Scrutiny rules provide that the memberships must reflect pro rata requirements and the lowest

number of members required to achieve cross-party representation whilst allowing the inclusion of members who are not members of a political group or are not members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This year the Standing Panels should have 12 members.

2. The Committee are asked to make appointments to Standing Panels in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure rules.
3. Nominations to Chairman and Vice Chairman of these Panels are excluded from the calculation required under the Council's protocol regarding allocation of Chairman and Vice-Chairman positions between the political groups.
4. Nominations to the Panels, which may be submitted up until the day of the meeting, were sought through the Members Bulletin and officer liaison with the Group Leaders. A list of the proposals submitted to date is attached. Those outstanding will be circulated for consideration at the meeting.

## **10. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP TO TASK AND FINISH PANELS**

### **Decisions Required:**

**(1) To appoint members to the following Task and Finish Panels (if agreed by the Committee) in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny procedure rules:**

- (a) Leisure Task and Finish Panel.**
- (b) Customer Transformation Task and Finish Panel.**
- (c) Pitt Review on Flooding Task and Finish Panel (if constituted by the Committee).**

**(2) To appoint Chairmen and Vice Chairmen to the Task and Finish Panels.**

1. (Assistant to the Chief Executive). The Committee are asked to consider appointments to Task and Finish Panels. Two of the Panels, Leisure and Customer Transformation, are existing Panel's and are asking to be extended into the new year to complete their current workloads. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had reviewed the requests for reviews and has determined which Task and Finish Panel Reviews should be undertaken.
2. The Overview and Scrutiny Rules state that 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panels shall be flexible as to the number of Councillors appointed to membership. There is no restriction on the numbers appointed.
3. Any Councillor may be a member of a 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panel, save that a member of the Cabinet may not be a member of any Panel which bears directly on his or her portfolio. Additionally no 'Task and Finish' Scrutiny Panel can be comprised of members of a single political group only.
4. It is a requirement of the procedure rules that a Chairman and Vice - Chairman should be appointed to each Panel.

**11. CABINET REVIEW****RECOMMENDATION:**

**To consider any items to be raised by the Chairman at the Cabinet meeting on 08 June 2009.**

(Assistant to the Chief Executive). Under the Overview and Scrutiny rules the Committee is required to scrutinise proposed decisions of the Executive. The Chairman is also required to report on such discussions to the Cabinet.

The Committee is asked to consider the 8 June 2009 Cabinet agenda (previously circulated) to see whether there are any items that they wished to be raised at the Cabinet meeting.

**12. 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):

<b>Agenda Item No</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Exempt Information Paragraph Number</b>
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.

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## EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COMMITTEE MINUTES

**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee      **Date:** Thursday, 16 April 2009

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping      **Time:** 7.30 - 10.28 pm

**Members Present:** R Morgan (Chairman), K Chana, M Colling, D Jacobs, G Mohindra, Mrs C Pond, Mrs P Richardson, B Rolfe, Mrs P Smith, Mrs L Wagland and Mrs J H Whitehouse

**Other Councillors:** Mrs A Haigh, R Bassett, D Bateman, Mrs D Collins, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs M McEwen, Mrs M Sartin, Ms S Stavrou, C Whitbread and J M Whitehouse

**Apologies:** - K Angold-Stephens, A Green and J Hart

**Officers Present:** D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), R Palmer (Director of Finance and ICT), J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development), C Wiggins (Safer Communities Manager), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), P Tredgett (Information Assistant), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer), M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant) and G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)

**Also in attendance:** S Williams and C Carrington

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### 86. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman made a short address to remind all present that the meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

### 87. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor K Chana had substituted for Councillor A Green, Councillor Mrs P Smith had substituted for Councillor J Hart and that Councillor Mrs C Pond had substituted for Councillor Angold-Stephens.

### 88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

### 89. MINUTES

#### RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2009 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**90. SCRUTINY OF ESSEX POLICE - UPDATE ON THE DISTRICT**

The Committee received a presentation from Superintendent Simon Williams and Inspector Craig Carrington to inform the members of policing issues affecting the district over the last year.

The officers informed the Committee that crime had been reduced by 11% over the last 12 months, with the detection rate increasing from 27.9 to 29.2% and anti-social behaviour reduced by 24%. The total number of crimes committed in this area by 31 March 2009 was 8,118 this compares favourably with last years figure of 8,850. The Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) figures had also been reduced, for 2007 it was 121 and for 2008 it had reduced to 111; they are working with their partners to continue reducing these figures.

They had carried out a survey around about Christmas time asking just two questions. One was, do you feel safe in this area and the other was, what would you like to be the top Policing priority for your Neighbourhood in 2009? To the question 'do you feel safe in this area' 90 people said yes and 11 said no. Of those that said 'no' the following reasons were given: 3 people said it was because of anti-social behaviour; 2 cited youth nuisance; 2 said knife crime and 1 said the fear of crime.

When broken down, the answers to 'what would you like to be the top Policing priority for your Neighbourhood in 2009' were: Visible Policing (42 people); Youth Nuisance (23 people); none (17 people); Anti-social behaviour (5 people); Community Engagement (4 people); and other (10 people).

The top priority was more visible policing and they needed to set priorities for the 30 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in the district. The Police also run Neighbourhood Action Panels (NAPs) for local communities. A transport NAP had been set up to look at issues around the transport structure. There was also a Youth NAP (for Loughton and Limes Farm) looking at the concerns of violence on young people; an Epping Forest College NAP and a Farmers NAP looking at the priorities and concerns of the rural community. These are not only a first for Epping Forest but for Essex as a whole.

The Chairman said that he was very pleased with the way the Farmers NAP was working.

Over the last year the Police had also tackled alcohol and unlicensed taxis; they have seized alcohol and stopped anti-social behaviour and had addressed the drugs issue in the district by using drug detection dogs. They had started the Limes Farm Special Action Group and extended the CCTV coverage in the district by working in partnership with the Parish and the District Councils. They had also developed a partnership with EFDC Community Development in relation to a football project on Limes Farm with Tottenham Hotspur.

In the last six months they had improved community engagement and are now receiving more information from the community at large.

The Limes Farm Special Action Group has been a key success, achieving a 31% reduction in crime for that area and a 39% reduction in anti-social behaviour. This has been achieved with the assistance of the community and other partners.

The Police were also targeting knife crime in the area. They had purchased two 'knife arches' which were regularly deployed in joint operations with the British Transport

Police. The arches were portable and easily and quickly deployed to various sites and had been used at clubs, education establishments and tube stations.

They were also involved in education such as their 'staying safe' presentation at Epping Forest College. They have identified various ways forward, such as:

- to increase detection rates;
- to pursue offenders;
- to reduce crime rates even further by using CCTV and other prevention measures (CCTV van and the automatic number plate reader);
- closer working with the Metropolitan Police;
- they are looking to further reduce KSIs on the roads of the District; and
- the use of more of their assets such as special constables.

The Chairman then opened up the meeting to questions from the members attending.

**Q:** Residents were concerned about responses to reported crimes, has there been an improvement and are you working more effectively now.

**A:** We now have a centralised switchboard which should speed things along. There is also a policing pledge in place and the mobile numbers for neighbourhood police officers had been publicised. If they are not on duty when called, they will get back to the caller within twenty four hours. There is a 20 minute response time for emergency calls. More feedback from NAPs would be useful, at present there is some apathy.

**Q:** The youths of the district generally have football activities organised for them, but what about non sporting activities?

**A:** In Harlow they have a youth bus that has games consuls and are staffed by PCSO, in which they target 'hot spots'. It is used as a meeting point and helps take some of the youths off the streets. We are awaiting the final outcome to this new project.

**Q:** Will we get some consistency in personnel?

**A:** There has been a problem in the Epping Forest District, most of which is out of our control. The public want to know who their neighbourhood bobby is, so local PCs have to stay for at least two years. But such promises can't be made around the command structure.

**Q:** The Ongar area has a good local officer, but he has a wide area to police, could another officer be put in there?

**A:** This officer is supported by two community support officers. This is a wide area but he is supported by a team.

**Q:** Zero tolerance is exercised in Brentwood; and Ongar is now being invaded by the youths from Brentwood. What could be done?

**A:** We have just launched a new operation to target key points on our borders on Friday and Saturday nights.

**Q:** How does the detection rate of 29.2% compare to other areas?

**A:** I do not have the information to hand, but believe that Harlow is about 41% and Brentwood about 31%. But Epping Forest has a wide rural area in the north and an urban one in the south, making it difficult to police.

**Q:** The Community Support Officers are well received; only one criticism, why have they not got more powers. Can their powers be extended?

**A:** They do have a whole menu of powers available to them, but it is Central Government that decides on what powers they have.

**Q:** The Neighbourhood Action Panel's effectiveness seems to be random. The one in Chigwell does not work, can you look again at how they are organised and could district council representatives be put on them?

**A:** We will have a look at it in term of representatives on NAPs; they are key for interaction with the community.

**Q:** Local Policemen have said that burglary was going up, is this right and what is being done.

**A:** There is a national rise in burglary; we do not know why this is happening. The message needs to go out to the community. Hot spots will be flooded with officers and we will use the automatic number plate readers to keep track of them. Currently we are targeting tube stations and bogus callers on elderly people.

**Q:** Can you tell us how our Safer Community Team works with you, do you have any criticisms. Also how is the work with Crucial Crew going?

**A:** The safer Community Partnership is one of the most effective teams that we have worked with. They are involved in the widest terms and are woven into the daily business of the Western Division. They attend daily briefings and are extremely effective.

As for Crucial Crew, this will start in June at Gilwell Park. The ambulance service will also attend as last year, there will be a drugs line, Essex County Council on anti-social behaviour busses. The Reality Road Show will work with year nines at schools.

**Q:** Is staffing in Loughton up to strength?

**A:** Yes it is, although there is a vacancy for a sergeant.

**Q:** The government has brought in some cutbacks such as less cover in weekends and public holidays, is that so here?

**A:** Essex Police is increasing its establishment of officers. There is a promise to increase it by 600 in the next two years and spread them around Essex. But we are funded by the public purse and there will inevitably be drops in funding; but we promise to keep to our minimum staffing levels and not fall below this.

Superintendent Williams reminded the members that there was a ride-along scheme in operation so that Councillors could ride along with police officers. If they wish to do so they should contact Inspector Carrington or Alan Ray.

The Chairman thanked Superintendent Williams and Inspector Carrington for coming and giving an informative talk and answering the questions put to them. He congratulated them on what they had achieved so far.

## 91. SCRUTINY OF CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs Collins introduced the Cabinet's forward plan for the coming year ahead. She indicated that the Cabinet had the following key priorities for the coming year:

- (i) To help mitigate the impact of the current economic conditions on local people and businesses, through appropriate initiatives.
- (ii) To improve access to and information about the Council's services, through the implementation of a Customer Transformation Programme.

- (iii) To ensure the Council provides good value for money, through the development of a comprehensive Value for Money Strategy.
- (iv) To achieve accreditation for the Council's Environment and Neighbourhood Officers under the Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme by June 2009.
- (v) To complete the strategic review of North Weald Airfield, through the continuing work of the North Weald Airfield Strategy Cabinet Committee.
- (vi) The delivery of a Gypsy and Travellers Development Plan.
- (vii) To work with Essex County Council, Epping Forest College and local schools to further the educational opportunities and facilities for the local young people.
- (viii) To complete all the outstanding parking reviews within the District.

It was noted that there were an additional 20 further objectives split between the nine Portfolios.

Councillor Mrs Wagland commenting on priority two, '...implementation of a Customer Transformation Programme...' recommended that the Council should try and avoid 'one-stop-shops'. Councillor Mrs Collins replied that it would be difficult for the district as there are centres of population spread all over and we do not have one big town.

Councillor Mrs Richardson said that there was always a long wait for the Finance reception area. Councillor Mrs Collins agreed that the Council needed to update itself and modernise its customer systems.

Councillor Mrs Richardson referring to item 14 '...development of The Broadway in Loughton...' said they were still waiting for phase two. Councillor Mrs Collins said if they had the money they would do it. They were looking to finishing off The Broadway as soon as possible. Only after that could they look at anything else.

Councillor Mrs Haigh was pleased about the parking review. She added that they were nine months behind at Buckhurst Hill and the Council needed to continue to push on this. She was pleased with the support for education and would like to ask County to put a 6<sup>th</sup> form college in our area. Councillor Mrs Collins replied that County was getting very involved but we were not going to get a new 6<sup>th</sup> form college in the short term. We had to continue working with Epping Forest College today. This was difficult at present as there was no permanent principal in post, just an acting one.

Councillor Mrs Haigh then asked about item 13 '...financial support provided to private occupiers...' was this money ringfenced and should it be advertised. The Director of Finance and ICT said there were specific capital grants to be used only for that purpose. Officers had to be put in post to deal with the spending of these grants. A report would go to Cabinet on how to deal with this.

Councillor Mrs Smith, referring to the first item on '...the impact of the current economic conditions...' asked would it be possible to consult with business by arranging a forum for business people so that they could exchange information. Councillor Mrs Collins said they had discussed this with a member of the small business federation through the LSP who had established a Task and Finish Panel on this matter.

Councillor Mrs Smith expressed the hope that the executives priorities were not set in stone and could be reordered if found necessary. Councillor Mrs Collins said she would keep it under review.

Councillor Bateman referred to item 25 ‘...provide improved facilities at Limes Farm Hall...’ and asked if funds were available now and when would work commence. Councillor Mrs Collins said that Limes Farm Hall was a partnership programme. It had been neglected for many years and was now a major job that needed a lot of capital. The Deputy Chief Executive added that last month an external application for £1.7 million had been made in relation to Limes Farm. There is a sum of £25,000 to meet the backlog on maintenance for the hall.

Councillor Mrs Haigh said she was on the board for the local children’s centre at Limes Farm. It was difficult to access IT equipment, could the £25,000 be used partly for this as it would make a big difference. She was told that it was mainly the responsibility of the County and she should write to the appropriate officer putting this forward as a suggestion and it would feed through. The £25,000 was only for the maintenance of the hall.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse said it was helpful to have these commitments. It would be helpful to know which objectives would be carried out regardless. Councillor Mrs Collins said that things could change very quickly; they were trying to be strategic.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Cabinet priorities for the year ahead and the forward work programme for 2009/10 be noted.

**92. CONSIDERATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

Councillor Mrs Wagland, the Chairman of the Planning Services Scrutiny Standing Panel introduced the report resulting from Councillor Cooper’s request to scrutiny to clarify some planning matters. The Planning Panel having considered her request, judged that the points raised should be presented as a set of ‘frequently asked questions’ (FAQs) document so that a wider audience would be aware of the points.

**RESOLVED:**

That the ‘frequently asked questions’ document on Planning be noted.

**93. 2008-2009 - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee received the amended annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2008/09 incorporating comments made at their meeting of 5 March 2009.

Councillor Mrs Collins commended the report saying that Overview and Scrutiny had undertaken a lot of work in the last year and they should be congratulated on the variety of work completed.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2008/09 reporting the work undertaken during the past municipal year be agreed and submitted to the Full Council at its meeting on 28 April 2009.

**94. REVIEW OF LONDON UNDERGROUND PASSES**

Before the Committee began discussing the report, the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor R Morgan, received a petition from Councillor D Bateman on behalf of residents who were in favour of Concessionary Travel on those parts of the London Underground extending into the district.

The Committee then received a report from Mr B Palmer, Director of Finance and ICT, regarding Concessionary Travel on London Underground.

The Epping Forest District has several London Underground stations within its boundaries. This had meant that holders of a Freedom Pass could travel free to and from Epping, but residents of the district could not travel free into London. This was perceived as unfair, particularly if they lived close to either an Underground station or the border with a London Borough.

The Freedom Pass Scheme was not extended to cover the district and any similar concession would be prohibitively expensive. The Members were informed that in pursuing a more limited scheme, negotiations with Transport for London (TfL) would need to take place. However before any such negotiations took place clear instructions were needed from members on the scope of any proposed concession.

The Cabinet had decided on 9 March 2009, to enter into an agreement with Essex County Council under which the County Council had taken over the strategic administration and co-ordination of the bus pass scheme. This had fixed the amounts payable by Epping Forest District Council for 2009/10 and 2010/11.

In response to a petition from a number of residents, wanting an extension to the Freedom Pass Scheme, the Full Council meeting on 17 February 2009, had resolved that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should recognise the real benefit to local people of introducing free passes for District residents aged 65 and over, to include the Central Line to Epping. They requested that a Task and Finish Panel be established ensuring a review was completed.

However, at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 March 2009, members asked for a report on the feasibility of free London Underground passes for district residents aged 65 and over. After the meeting, a number of Councillors asked for a further meeting with the Portfolio Holder for Civil Engineering and Maintenance to ensure that their views were included in any report.

The 2006 Budget announced that the statutory minimum for concessionary schemes was being extended to free off-peak local bus travel anywhere in England from 1 April 2008. At the Cabinet meeting of 14 April 2008 it was decided that the benefits provided to pass holders in the district should exceed those set out in the National Scheme. The National Scheme had a start time of 9.30am, and did not include companion, the scheme within the district had a 9am start and offered companion passes.

This enhancement to the previous scheme, meant residents travelled free into London on TfL buses. The new scheme had proved very popular with residents as the number of passes in issue had increased from 10,500 to 16,000, which represented approximately 60% of residents entitled to a pass.

The strategic administration and co-ordination of the bus pass scheme had been transferred to Essex County Council for 2009/10 and 2010/11. Under the agreement, all districts retained the responsibility for issuing passes and dealing with enquiries from the public. Essex County Council would fund the central administration costs of the scheme and would also fund increases in costs.

By fixing the district contributions to a central pool, this agreement had considerably reduced the financial risk until the end of March 2011. At that point it was anticipated that the government would pass the administration of the National Scheme to either a national body or a small number of regional bodies. This change would involve another re-working of the grant allocation formulae. However the Council had not always benefitted from such changes.

Members had previously been advised that under existing legislation it was not possible for this Council to join the Freedom Pass Scheme. To re-confirm this, the Director of Finance and ICT approached London Councils, who co-ordinated the scheme. The Programme Director for Transport and Mobility confirmed that the scheme was operated under the Greater London Authority Act 1999 and as such it was not possible for this Council to join.

Even though the Council could not issue Freedom Passes it was worth considering their costs, as doing so provided an indication of the possible costs of any similar scheme. The total cost of the Freedom Passes Scheme in 2008/09 would be £270 million for the 1,053,000 passes issued. The charge for each Borough depended on the average use made of the passes issued by them and this produced a range of costs from £242 to £278 per pass. If the Council was negotiating a pass similar to a Freedom Pass for a cost of £280 per pass, and the 26,500 residents aged over 60 wanted one the cost would be £7.42 million. Given that the Council's precept for 2009/10 was £7.94 million, a scheme closely mirroring the Freedom Pass was not feasible.

Following the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 March 2009, a number of Councillors asked to see the Portfolio Holder for Civil Engineering and Maintenance, to discuss possible initiatives. The meeting took place on 27 March 2009 and involved District Councillors R Bassett (Portfolio Holder), D Bateman, K Chana and J Markham, along with County Councillor C Pond, with the Director of Finance and ICT in attendance. The meeting examined proposals concerning various options for the adoption of Freedom Passes. However they concluded that its adoption was impractical.

It was not feasible for the Council to issue Freedom Passes or anything that would closely mirror the benefits provided by them. The costs of any such scheme were prohibitively expensive, currently the emphasis was on identifying savings, not growth items.

Pursuing a more limited scheme was possible, but any such scheme would fail to satisfy resident's demands and would represent an additional burden on the budget. It was advised that members who wished to pursue negotiations with TfL needed to determine a format for a scheme before making any approach. Entering into vague negotiations about an undefined pass was wasting time and effort was also unlikely to have any positive outcomes.

Members thanked B Palmer for his report to the Committee. There was mixed feelings among members regarding the introduction of Freedom Passes, with comments made in favour of a negotiated, smaller scheme which would be less expensive. However it was felt that overall it was not realistic to pursue negotiations with TfL as the district's neighbouring authorities had not shown any interest in joint discussions with TfL either.

**RESOLVED:**



To recommend that the Cabinet does not make any approach to Transport for London to seek negotiations for some form of travel concession on the London Underground for Epping Forest District residents.

#### 95. REVIEW OF TOWN CENTRE PARTNERSHIPS

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Councillor Mrs A Grigg, presented a report to the Committee regarding Town Centre Partnerships.

Members had been concerned about the operation of the Town Centre Partnerships (TCPs), it was felt that there had been mixed messages from them regarding accountability and general progress. It had appeared that the Epping TCP had not been publicising its activities, unlike other TCPs, with invites to residents and people who worked within the district. The original aim had been to encourage the vibrancy of the town through bringing together business, voluntary organisations, residents and Town/District council representatives. The TCPs needed terms of reference, annual reports and forums.

During the 1990s Epping Forest District Council looked to set up partnerships in each of the six main centres of the district, Loughton High Road, Epping, Waltham Abbey, Buckhurst Hill, Loughton The Broadway and Ongar. The Partnerships were created with the aim of bringing together traders, businesses and other key stake holders but, at the same time, they were kept at considerable distance from local authority control. To enable effective partnerships, they were supported annually through financial support and officer resource. Currently the District Council provided support in the form of an administration grant of £1,000 per partnership. Additionally a bid could be made for a Special Projects Grant (SPG) of up to £2,000 per partnership for delivering activities to the benefit of the centre. The SPG fund was £6,000, with bids of up to £2,000, this was successfully increased to raise the benefits and outputs of activities and allow each TCP to access funding. As a significant stakeholder and contributor to the partnership, EFDC had been revising a protocol for the TCPs, outlining minimum requirements for a partnership to operate and run as an independent partnership.

At present, each of the six Town Centre Partnerships were at different stages and operating at varying levels for the benefit of the town centre and the town itself.

The Portfolio Holder informed the Committee that on 31 March 2009, the Epping Town Partnership launched a new website, [www.eppingtcp.com](http://www.eppingtcp.com), which contained a lot of useful information and she urged members to view this website.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the Town Centre Partnerships' report be noted.

#### 96. CONSTITUTION & MEMBER SERVICES STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL (SSP) - 6.4.09

The Chairman of the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel, Councillor Mrs McEwen, presented a report to the Committee regarding Officer Delegation – Annual Review 2008/09.

Each year the Council reviewed its scheme of Officer Delegation, the changes were regarding delegation in respect of Cabinet functions and changes to functions remaining the responsibility of the Council, this included regulatory and non-executive functions.

A change which was taking effect from 2009/10 was in relation to the approval of delegation of Cabinet functions to officers. Previously, changes had been referred to the Council for approval but it was now the Leader of the Council who determined whether the scheme of officer delegation was continuing, or whether changes were made.

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That the changes to Officer Delegation regarding North Weald Airfield – Non Commercial Lettings (Delegation Reference N2), Licensing – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers (Delegation Reference S1) and Parking Contravention Notices be approved and submitted for adoption by the Leader of Council;

(2) That the proposed changes to Officer Delegation regarding Development Control (Delegation Reference P4) (g) and (h) and Planning Objections by Parish and Town Councils (Delegation Reference P4) be approved and recommended

Councillor Mes McEwen, presented a second report to the Committee regarding the Police and Justice Act 2006 – Community Safety Committees.

Notification had recently been received from the Home Office that it was intended to bring into force Sections 19-21 of the Police and Justice Act 2006 with effect from 30 April 2009. Sections 19-21 were designed to ensure that every local authority would have a committee which would have the following powers:

(a) To review or scrutinise the decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions; and

(b) To make reports or recommendations to a local authority or any other partnership body on the carrying out of those functions.

The timescale provided by the Government for the introduction of Crime and Disorder Committees was extremely short.

The Standing Scrutiny Panel on the “Safer, Cleaner, Greener Initiative” included within its Terms of Reference monitoring of crime and disorder issues.

The Act required the Community Safety Committee to meet on a minimum of two occasions in every 12 months, it was therefore important that the Council considered how this particular requirement was being met. If a new body was established, two dates were included in the calendar of meetings. If an existing body was being designated as the Crime and Disorder Committee it would be necessary to consider having two designated meetings of the body concerned so that the Council was seen to meet the statutory obligations.

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That in regard to the establishment of a Community Safety Committee under the Police and Justice 2006 Act, the Safer, Cleaner, Greener SSP be designated as the Council’s Community Safety Committee; and

- (2) That consideration be given at this Committee's June 2009 meeting to the following:
  - (a) the manner in which the statutory requirement for at least two meetings of the designated Community Safety Committee will be held;
  - (b) co-option arrangements; and
  - (c) the terms of reference of the Community Safety Committee, its membership and other constitutional changes for adoption by the Council.

## 97. PUBLICITY CODE CONSULTATION

The Deputy Chief Executive, Mr D Macnab, presented a report to the Committee regarding Department of Communities and Local Government consultation on Local Authority Publicity.

At its meeting on 29 January 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee authorised the Constitution and Member Services Panel, to formulate a response to 16 questions from a Government consultation document concerning proposals to change the Code of practice on Local Authority Publicity. In view of the timetable for response, it was not possible to refer the recommendations of the Panel back to Overview and Scrutiny within the Government deadline for return. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that the Panel findings should be submitted to the Cabinet for inspection prior to final submission on the deadline of 12 March 2009.

### RESOLVED:

That the Epping Forest District Council's response to the Government proposals for change to the Code of Practice on Local Authority Publicity, be noted.

## 98. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING

The Senior Democratic Services Officer, Mr S Hill, advised the Committee that no responses from members had been received regarding the 2009/10 Work Programme. However members still had the opportunity to ask for items to be put before the Committee via a PICK form.

The Committee were asked which presentations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2008/09 Work Programme should go forward to the 2009/10 Work Programme.

- Item 2 Provision of Youth Services within the District to go to the July 2009 meeting
- Item 5 Review of strategic direction for Epping Forest College to go to the September 2009 meeting
- Item 6 Scrutiny of Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership to report again next year.
- Item 9 West Essex PCT – Proposal for Joint Scrutiny Review. The Committee noted that legislation was changing the arrangements for joint scrutiny, at

local and county level. There was currently, very limited scrutiny in the neighbouring councils.

- Item 10 District Transport in Rural Area. Final report to come back to this committee in the new year.
- Item 12 Health and Inequalities. Updated report to go to the June 2009 meeting.
- Item 13 Scrutiny of Essex Police – Community Policing Initiative – to remain in the 2009/10 Work Programme.
- Item 15 Scrutiny of London Underground Ltd for the June 2009 meeting.
- Item 16 Scrutiny of Highways Local Service Agreement. The Committee was advised that the Council's new Localism Panel did not stop the committee from scrutinising County Highways. To arrange for autumn 2009.
- Item 17 Presentation from the Fire and Rescue Services. To remain on the 2009/10 Work Programme.
- Item 18 Debt Management Review. The Sub-Committee had its first meeting. They would report back when their work was completed.

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Panel**

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Panel, scheduled for 21 April 2009, had been cancelled.

**99. CABINET REVIEW**

It was noted that there was no business to report to the Cabinet.

**CHAIRMAN**

## **Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of meeting: 2 June 2009**

**Subject: Forester Consultation**

**Officer contact for further information: T Carne**

**Committee Secretary: A Hendry**

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SCRUTINY



### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

- 1. To note the outcome of the Forester public consultation; and**
- 2. To recommend to Cabinet any proposals for the future development of the Forester including the potential involvement of the Local Strategic Partnership.**

### **Report:**

#### **Background:**

1. As part of their terms of reference, the Customer Services Transformation Task and Finish Panel has been undertaking a review of the Council's Forester publication. However, the consultation results were not able to be fully evaluated prior to the preparation and consideration of the Panel's final report to the Cabinet in February. As such, the Cabinet recommended that when available, the Forester review should be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Consultation took place during the latter part of 2008 and early 2009. Residents have already received some feedback in the Spring edition of The Forester. The full report and analysis has been placed in the Members Room.

2. The annual production budget of The Forester for the Council is approximately £54,000, made up of design, print, editorial support, distribution and miscellaneous items such as photography and Braille. Actual production costs are somewhat higher, the balance being met by advertising in the region of £8,000 to £10,000 per edition. The Council receives 25 per cent of advertising revenue above a threshold level of £6,317 per edition.

3. The research gives an insight into which residents read The Forester. Just over 300 residents responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming response was very positive. Many constructive suggestions were received on how The Forester could evolve or be improved but most respondents seem to like The Forester in the current form. However, analysis of the responses does appear to support the view that the largest readership is among older residents. A large number of respondents described themselves as retired (42 per cent). More women than men completed the survey.

4. Three focus groups were held to provide qualitative information. These elicited a great deal of feedback with many responses included in the report. The focus groups provided an opportunity to reach groups that might not have responded directly to the survey questionnaire. They also enabled staff to discuss issues in more detail. Young people were less likely to respond to the quantitative survey. In this regard, the focus group held with representatives of the Youth Council was particularly important. Perhaps surprisingly, even among the young members of the Youth Focus Group, there was a great deal of positive feedback about the current Forester as well as many suggestions for ways to develop and enhance the magazine.

5. For example, members of the Youth Council felt that people welcomed The Forester. When articles relevant to young people such as the 'Big Youth Debate' appeared, Youth Councillors identified good levels of feedback among their peers. However, larger photography, stronger cover design and shorter articles could appeal to a broader cross section of young people. The Forester should emphasise its role as the magazine 'for residents'. It should include a combination of Council and community-based articles. In common with other respondents, members of the Youth Council wanted The Forester to offer information on local activities.

6. The second focus group took place during the morning coffee break at Loughton Methodist Church. The church provided an opportunity to talk with a cross-section of residents dropping in for refreshment or taking part in the various activities in the Church. The third meeting took place at Leonard Davis House in North Weald where members of the district's Tenants' Associations meet regularly with the District Council's Tenant Participation Officers. Comments of all three focus groups are included within the report in the Members Room.

7. The comments fields on the questionnaire and focus groups were designed to encourage people to say how they would change The Forester. In response to member comments at the Customer Service Transformation Panel, the questionnaire also included fields allowing residents to indicate if they wanted The Forester to remain the same. Where respondents were asked to rate the current Forester, satisfaction levels were high.

8. Seventy-eight per cent of respondents felt the quarterly delivery schedule was about right and 75 per cent preferred to retain the existing format. Using a scale of one to five, most respondents felt The Forester was well written, covered interesting and relevant subjects, was clear and easy to read, had good pictures and illustrations and is a useful way of receiving local news.

#### **Local Strategic Partnership:**

9. Since the conclusion of the formal consultation, Officers have developed further proposals to extend the content of The Forester to include Epping Forest District Local Strategic Partnership.

10. As a major partner, Epping Forest District Council has facilitated publicity and awareness raising of the LSP and its activities through The Forester. This has particularly been the case for the Safer Communities Partnership. However, while the activities of Safer Communities get widespread attention, Officers perceive a lack of public awareness in general of the wider LSP.

11. By incorporating LSP contributions, The Forester would be expanding into areas such as health service provision, the volunteer sector and transport issues. Issues covered by the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership such as education, employment and free time could feature as would environmental issues of potential concern to organisations such as the Corporation of London. Partners such as the emergency services could enhance their coverage.

12. The Forester has a high local public profile. It is delivered to nearly all homes and businesses within the district. As can be seen from the consultation, it is generally well regarded in the local community. As such in an enhanced format it could provide a platform not just for the District Council but also for the whole LSP.

13. This could be achieved in various ways. Pages currently dedicated to Council news could be made available to other members of the LSP. However, there is always more demand than space available in the current format and Members may feel that cutting the amount of Council information is not desirable.

14. The Forester could be expanded with additional pages per edition or more editions per year. These options would increase production costs and staff resourcing.

15. Eight pages of advertising currently subsidise the cost of The Forester production. These pages either in block, or an equivalent throughout the magazine, could be offered to the LSP. In return, the LSP would be asked to fund the balance of lost advertising, creating a neutral impact on the Council's production budget but improving the breadth of the content and issues identified in the survey as important to local people.

16. Officers believe that the 'Forester brand' is strong. There is good local recognition and although there is scope for development, the core branding should be retained. Epping Forest District Council should also retain ultimate editorial control. The Council would continue to edit, co-ordinate production and meet the largest proportion of costs. The magazine would need to retain strong District Council themes and associations with residents.

17. These proposals have only reached a theoretical stage in Officer discussions. Before a formal approach to the LSP Board, District Council Members are invited to indicate whether such an approach would be desirable from the Council's perspective.

#### **Conclusion:**

18. Respondents to the Forester consultation survey and focus group participants agree that the A4 colour magazine format, quarterly production schedule and mix of council and community news and information items should be retained. There are high levels of satisfaction with the current Forester format but there is also scope for improvement. A refreshed design appealing to a younger audience should be combined with a continued mix of council and more community news.

19. Members are asked to note the conclusion of The Forester consultation and indicate support for integrating suggestions into the development of The Forester during 2009. Members are also asked to indicate whether Officers should approach the Local Strategic Partnership with an offer to incorporate The Forester into a joint Council/LSP publication.

#### **Resource Implications:**

Potential additional staff resourcing and production costs depending on Member decision.

#### **Budget/Personnel/Land:**

Existing – Advertising revenue subsidy £8,000 to £10,000 per issue.

#### **Relevant Statutory Powers:**

#### **Background Papers:**

The Forester Magazine Public Consultation February 2009 – Members Room

#### **Environment/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:**

#### **Key Decision Reference:**

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## **Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

**Date of meeting: 2 June 2009**

**Subject: Sports hall provision at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool**

**Officer contact for further information: J Gilbert**

**Committee Secretary: A Hendry**

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### **Recommendation:**

- (1) To note the recommendations of the Leisure Task & Finish Panel;**
- (2) To consider whether:**
  - (a) to agree with the recommendations and forward to Cabinet for consideration at its next meeting;**
  - (b) to reject the recommendations; or**
  - (c) to formulate alternative recommendations for submission to Cabinet**

### Background

1. The Panel has met on two occasions to consider the possibility of providing a new sports hall on the site of the current Waltham Abbey swimming pool. These deliberations arose as part of the Council decision to bring the current Joint Use Agreement between the Council and the King Harold School, for the management of the Waltham Abbey Sports Centre to an end with effect from January 2010. This decision might result, subject to the intentions of the School Governing Body, in the community use of the facility coming to an end. However, it should be stressed that other secondary schools in the District make their sports facilities available for community use and every support and encouragement would be given to King Harold School to facilitate this.

2. The Panel recognised the importance to the local community of the sports centre and in particular the sports hall which provided for 5-a-side football, badminton, roller skating and a wide range of other sports and events. The Panel therefore felt that there was merit in investigating the possibility of re-providing a sports hall at another location, with the obvious site being that of the Waltham Abbey swimming pool. It is also worthy of note that Waltham Abbey has been identified as having one of the worst health outcomes of any area within the District and a new facility such as is proposed could greatly benefit the fitness of, and better health outcomes for, the local community.

3. The Panel therefore recommended to Overview & Scrutiny Committee, following its meeting on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of September 2008, that a feasibility study be undertaken and that Cabinet be requested to make the necessary capital provision available. This recommendation was endorsed by Cabinet in November 2008 and Council agreed a capital provision in the sum of £6,000.

### The core requirements

4. The core requirements for the new facility were identified as:
  - (i) a 35m by 17m sports hall (equivalent to 4 badminton courts – the same size as Epping and Ongar sports centres);
  - (ii) new changing facilities, separate from those used by swimmers;

- (iii) storage facilities;
- (iv) a reconfigured reception area;
- (v) additional car parking; and
- (vi) if possible a crèche to facilitate family use.

5. It was considered that these facilities would enable a suitably wide range of community activities and would provide a very welcome addition to the existing swimming pool and gym facilities.

#### The feasibility

6. Attached to this report are:

- (a) the addendum report considered by the Panel at its most recent meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May 2009.

7. The feasibility outcome suggests that, subject to detailed planning consent etc, it would be feasible to develop a sports hall facility adjacent to, but as part of, the existing Waltham Abbey swimming pool complex. The estimated capital cost of the new facility is just over £1.72 million, with a design and construction period of around 16 months from the time of planning consent.

#### Resources

8. The use of the £1.72 million identified above carries with it a range of revenue consequences, and these are set out in the addendum report at paragraph 6. The total revenue consequence is estimated at just over £64,000 per annum, which has to be seen in the context of the identified savings arising from ending the Joint Use Agreement of £270,000 (£68,000 in 2009/10 and an additional £202,000 from 2010/11 on) which has been built into future budget projections.

9. Within the £1.72 million is the £41,000 required to develop the project to the pre-planning application stage, at which point there should be reasonable certainty as to the likelihood of the proposal receiving planning approval. However, it should be noted that there is a risk associated with this component of expenditure, in that should the proposal not go forward at that stage, the capital expenditure up to that point in time (£6,000 feasibility and the £41,000 pre-planning) would have to revert to revenue as district development fund (DDF) expenditure.

#### Panel recommendations

10. The Panel considered 5 recommendations at its meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, all of which were carried. Recommendation (5) required the Panel to consider the consequences of the time period, some 16 months between the ending of the Joint Use Agreement and, if the proposal was to proceed, the availability of the new sports hall. The Panel were reminded that, following the end of the Agreement, the fate of the Waltham Abbey Sports Centre rested with the Governing Body of the King Harold School. The Panel were informed that the Governing Body had yet to formally respond to the service of the notice ending the Agreement, despite officers' attempts to engage with them. Officers undertook to press for a response in order to establish the Governing Body's intentions.

#### Overview and Scrutiny considerations

11. This Committee is being requested to consider the Panel's recommendations. It has three options available to it:

- (1) accept the recommendations in full and submit them to Cabinet for consideration;
- (2) reject the recommendations, in which case the proposal ends and no further work will be undertaken; or

(3) the Committee formulates an alternative approach for recommendation to Cabinet.

12. The key considerations are around the budgetary implications, and in particular the effects of capital reverting to DDF and the longer term revenue consequences of operating the new facility. However, in general capital costs terms, and subject of course to formal tendering processes, the new sports hall is considered to represent good value, and would provide a much needed replacement provision in the event that Waltham Abbey Sports Centre was no longer to be available for community use.

13. The timetable set out in paragraph 4 of the addendum report has been structured to take into account key decision dates in the Council's 2010/11 budget preparation cycle.

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# **Addendum Report to Leisure Task & Finish Panel**

**Date of meeting: 18 May 2009**

**Portfolio: Leisure & Young People**

**Subject: Feasibility study on the construction of a new sports hall at the site of the Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool**

**Officer contact for further information: J Gilbert / Laura MacNeill**

**Committee Secretary: Adrian Hendry**

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## **Revised recommendation(s):**

- (1) To note the receipt and content of the feasibility study of the construction of a new sports hall at the site of the Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool;**
- (2) To recommend to Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet that the proposals be further developed to enable:
  - (a) a planning pre-application submission to be made; and**
  - (b) subject to the satisfactory of the pre-application a full planning application to be made.****
- (3) That the proposal be progressed to the pre-planning application stage at an estimated cost of £41,000 and that contract standing orders be set aside to enable the appointment of Stace to undertake this work;**
- (4) That capital provision in the sum of £1.721 million be sought for the construction of the new sports hall; and**
- (5) That the indicative time frame for the project be noted and that consideration be given to the time period between the cessation of the Joint use Agreement with the Governors of King Harold School in January 2010 and the earliest likely date of opening of any new facility in the Summer of 2011.**

1. Since the issue of the agenda for the Panel, additional information has been forthcoming which will enable the Panel to better consider how they wish to proceed with this project. Specifically the additional information relates to:

- (a) the costs of taking the proposal to the planning pre-application stage and the consequences of that;**
- (b) the suggestion that contract standing orders be set aside to enable Stace to undertake this part of the project;**
- (c) the indicative time lime for the proposal and its alignment with the Council's decision making processes; and**
- (d) additional detail on the estimated capital and revenue costs.**

2. As indicated in the original report, it has been suggested that the proposal be worked up to the pre-planning application stage. This suggestion was made in order to reduce the exposure of the Council to the financial consequences of the proposal being refused, with little likelihood of eventual success, and the reversion of capital expenditure to revenue and the consequential effects upon the revenue (DDF) budget.

3. Stace, the Council's consultants, have discussed with the Council's Planning Directorate the information they would require to enable them to provide clear advice on the likelihood of a successful formal planning application. The total estimated cost of attaining this stage is £41,000. Expenditure at that level would ordinarily require, to comply with contract standing orders, the obtaining of at least three quotations from relevant companies. However, given Stace's work to date in advising the Council, it would seem sensible to allow them to take the project forward to the pre-planning application stage and setting aside contract standing orders accordingly. In the event that planning consent is deemed probable, and the Council resolves to proceed with the proposal, all further consultancy and project advice would be subject to a full tendering exercise in accordance with contract standing orders.

4. The original report set out some potential timings for the progress of the proposal. Given the current economic circumstances and the likelihood of the need for future reductions in revenue expenditure, that time table has been further reviewed to ensure that decisions required can be considered in the full context of the then financial circumstances. On that basis, the following sets out a revised probable timeline for the proposal:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Comments</b>
18 May 2009	Task & Finish Panel consideration	
2 June 2009	Panel's recommendations to Overview & Scrutiny Committee	
13 July 2009	Consideration by Cabinet	Consent sought to take proposal to pre-planning application stage and to make capital provision available for the entire scheme
22 Sep 2009	Resources considered by Council	Approval sought for inclusion of £1.7 million in capital programme. Early consideration given to the financial consequences of the scheme progressing relative to the budget situation at that time.
23 Sep 2009	If Council approve, planning pre-application process to commence	Estimate 2 months to work scheme to pre-planning application stage
November 2009	Submit planning pre-application	
January 2010	Planning pre-application outcome known (Cessation of Joint Use Agreement for WASC with King Harold School)	
1 February 2010	Cabinet to consider outcome of planning pre-application and to make decision on overall scheme	
16/18 February 2010	Council to consider financial implications and approve scheme	Overall scheme considered as part of annual budget (2010/11) consideration
February 2010	Prepare & issue tenders for consultancy/project management	Use of Essex Procurement Hub if framework agreement exists
March/April/May 2010	Main scheme tender preparation and tender period and review	
June 2010	Appoint contractor	
August 2010	Commence main contract	
May 2011	Complete main contract	

5. It should be noted that the above table, particularly from February 2010 onwards, makes no specific allowances for meeting democratic deadlines and meetings and therefore the end date could easily be later than May 2011. This revised timetable lengthens the period between the cessation of the joint use agreement at the Waltham Abbey Sports

Centre and the availability of a replacement facility at the Waltham Abbey Pool to around 16 months. In reality, this could easily extend to 18 months. However, the advice set out in the original report that the Council should take no action to extend the joint use agreement remains, in view of the costs of keeping WASC operational.

### Resources

6. The original report set out the underpinning resource requirements. The table below brings these figures up to date:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Est. capital cost £</b>
Develop proposal to planning stage (RIBA stage D)	130,000
Develop and oversee proposal to completion	130,000
Main construction costs	1,133,000
Other costs – sports equipment	46,250
sub station	100,000
EFDC officer costs (estimated)	25,000
<b>Total construction related costs</b>	<b>1,564,250</b>
Contingency @ 10%	156,425
<b>Total project cost</b>	<b>1,720,675</b>

7. It can be seen from the above table that the total capital cost is estimated at £1.721 million. The use of this capital carries with it a revenue consequence added to which are the direct revenue costs of operating the new facility. This results in an overall annual revenue cost as set out below:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Est. revenue cost £</b>
Use of £1.721 million of capital at 2%	34,420
Additional SLM management fee	15,350
Estimated NNDR	10,500
Estimated annual building costs	4,000
<b>Total additional revenue</b>	<b>£64,270</b>

8. The report to Cabinet in December 2008 identified revenue savings of £270,000 per annum, from 2010/11 onwards, arising from the decision to cease the joint use agreement with King Harold School in January 2010. The revenue expenditure identified above will therefore reduce those CSB savings to £205,730 per annum.

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Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme – June 2009

Overview and Scrutiny Committee			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Scrutiny of Essex Police – Community Policing Initiative	April 2010	Came in April 2009. – To arrange again for April 2010	<b>02nd June 2009</b> 09 <sup>th</sup> July
(2) OS Annual Review/ Annual Report	April 2010	Final Report went to April 09 meeting.	03 <sup>rd</sup> September 8 <sup>th</sup> October
(3) Scrutiny of London Underground Ltd	June 2009 – London Underground has withdrawn from this meeting at the last moment.	Last Came in April 2008 – to rearrange again for another 2009 meeting. To also ask TfL to attend same meeting.	12 <sup>th</sup> November 17 <sup>th</sup> December
(4) Scrutiny of Highways Local Service Agreement	Autumn 2009	Came in April 2008 – The Council has created a new Localism Panel. This should be allowed to 'bed in' for six months before seeking further scrutiny.	<b>28<sup>th</sup> January 2010</b> 4 <sup>th</sup> March 15 <sup>th</sup> April
(5) Provision of Youth Services within the District	July 2009?	Came in July 2008 - Lonica Vanclay (who is the local officer responsible for youth provision in the District) attended July' 08 meeting to discuss this issue. <b>To arrange again for July 2009?</b>	
(6) West Essex PCT – Proposal for Joint Scrutiny Review	Update went to December 2008 meeting – endorsed in principle.	Further meeting to be arranged with Harlow / Uttlesford to discuss topics and method of any review. It is thought prudent to wait for the outcome of ECC's review of PCT scrutiny arrangements before progressing this review.	

(7) District Transport in Rural Areas		Survey now completed – Data has now been sent to County for their action. To report back to the Committee when County has taken any follow up action. Cllr Hume attended January 09 meeting.	
(8) Scrutiny of Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership – Chairman and Member level EFDC representatives	March 2010	Last came in March 2009 - Representatives of the partnership to report on an annual basis.	
(9) Scrutiny of Cabinet Forward Plan	April 2010	Last looked at in April 2009.	
(10) Six monthly review - (a) Monitoring of OS recommendations (b) OS work programme	November 2009	Last completed in November 08	
(11) To review the strategic direction of Epping Forest College, its vision for the future and its relationship with the Community	September 2009	Principal addressed of Epping Forest College addressed the December 2008 meeting. To be invited again in September 2009.	
(12) Budget Report	January 2010	Last completed January 2009	

<p>(13) To receive a Health and Inequalities presentation as requested by the Audit Commission.</p>		<p><b>Completed November 08</b> - received a presentation from Alison Cowie. Updating report to go back to O&amp;S June/July 09 meeting</p>	
<p>(14) To receive a presentation from the Fire and Rescue Services.</p>	<p>July 2009</p>	<p>Members agreed to have this presentation at their April 09 meeting.</p>	
<p>(15) Debt Management Review.</p>		<p>A sub-committee, consisting of four members has been constituted to look into this topic. A report will be brought to this Committee once completed.</p>	

## Standing Panels

### Housing Standing Panel

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Annual Ethnic Monitoring Review of Housing Applicants	High	For July 09 meeting	30 July 2009 29 October
(2) Review of the Homeless Strategy	High	For July 09 meeting	
(3) Review of Housing Performance Indicators	High	For July 09 meeting	21 January 2010 25 March
(4) Older People's Strategic Review – Response to Consultation	High	For July 09 meeting	
(5) Private Sector Housing – Resourcing the Strategy	Medium	For July 09 meeting.	
(6) Review of Housing Standards.	Medium	For July 09 meeting.	
(7) Presentation by In Touch Support	Medium	For July 09 meeting	
(8) Annual review of the Housing Allocations Scheme	High	For October 09 meeting	
(9) Housing Service Strategy on Housing Allocations	Medium	For October 09 meeting	
(10) Housing Service Strategy on Housing Advice	Medium	For October 09 meeting	

(11) Housing Service Strategy on Equality and Diversity	Medium	For January 2010	
(12) Housing Service Strategy on Harassment	Medium	For January 2010 meeting	
(13) Six monthly Progress report on Housing strategy Action Plan	Medium	For January 2010 meeting	
(14) Six-monthly Progress report on Housing Business Plan Action Plan	Medium	For January 2010	
(15) Updated draft HRA Business Plan	High	For March 2010 meeting	
(16) Tenant Participation Progress Report	Low	For March 2010	

<b>Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel</b>			
<b>Item</b>	<b>Report Deadline / Priority</b>	<b>Progress / Comments</b>	<b>Programme of Future Meetings</b>
(1) Review of June 2009 Elections	June 2009		29 <sup>th</sup> June 2009 14 <sup>th</sup> September 2 <sup>nd</sup> November
(2) Overview and Scrutiny Review including Government White Paper on Empowerment			11 <sup>th</sup> January 2010 22 <sup>nd</sup> March
(3) Statutory requirement for establishment of a Crime & Disorder Committee.			
(4) Member Training Review	January 2010		
(5) Annual Review of Financial Regulations.	January 2010		
(6) Annual Review of Contract Standing Orders	January 2010		
(7) Annual Review of Officer Delegation	March 2010		

(8) Protocol on Civic Events			
(9) Review of Internal Audit Report - External Partner Organisations -			

## Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Panel

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
<p>(1) Safer, cleaner, greener (general)</p> <p>(a) completion of establishment etc formal "launch"</p> <p>(b) accreditation progress</p> <p>(c) enforcement activity</p> <p>(d) Strategy Document</p>	<p>(a) Completed</p> <p>(b) June 2009</p> <p>(c) August 2009</p> <p>(d) August 2009</p> <p>(e) September 2009</p>	<p>(a) Establishment now complete</p> <p>(b) Now scheduled for July 2009</p> <p>(c) Corporate accreditation achieved May 2009. Individual officer training scheduled for completion mid August 2009.</p> <p>(d) Enforcement policy document to the 23 June meeting.</p> <p>(e) agreed by this Panel at its February 2009 meeting, to Cabinet for adoption in Sept. 09.</p>	<p>23 June 2009</p> <p>1 September</p> <p>27 October</p> <p>8 December</p> <p>25 February 2010</p> <p>29 April</p>
<p>(2) Safer communities (Safer)</p> <p>(a) CCTV policy</p>	<p>(a) June 2009</p>	<p>(a) policy document to the 23 June meeting with example warning signs for consideration.</p>	
<p>(3) Essex waste procurement process and Joint Committee (Cleaner, Greener)</p> <p>(a) minutes of joint Committee</p> <p>(b) JMWMS</p> <p>(e) Inter authority agreements</p>	<p>(a) Ongoing</p> <p>(b) Adopted.</p> <p>(c) Completed.</p>	<p>(a) No recent meeting to report.</p> <p>(b) No further action required until review.</p> <p>(c) Agreed at March 2009 Cabinet. Letter of intent signed May 2009.</p>	



<p>(4) Waste Management Partnership Board (Greener)</p> <p>(a) minutes of Board  (b) review of garden waste  (c) Introduction of food waste collection  (d) recycling in flats and similar buildings  (e) new food and garden recycling service.</p>	<p>(a) Ongoing  (b to c) prelim results went to October 08 meeting.  (d) Ongoing  (e) Implementation Team updates</p>	<p>(a) Minutes of WMPB on 18 March and 20 April for 23 June meeting..  (b &amp; c) new service agreed at Cabinet at special meeting on 19 January 2009. New scheme due to commence September 2009.  (d) Some progress in 08/09. Further progress as part of new service rollout.  (e) Procurement of major assets in progress. Key Partners/stakeholders being identified road shows being programmed. Presentation to SCG Standing Panel.</p>	
<p>(5) Nottingham Declaration (Greener)</p> <p>(a) Sustainability action plan  (b) Climate change strategy – completed.</p>	<p>(a) First draft went to February 09 meeting  (b) Went to February 09 meeting</p>	<p>A report on the consultation exercise on the green strategy is to be produced by the Director of Planning and Economic Development.  New Cycle scheme now being advertised.  Staff travel survey is underway.  Climate change went to February 09 meeting. Went to Cabinet in April 09.</p>	
<p>(6) Residential parking (Safer, Greener)</p>		<p>Parking on Housing estates. Not yet addressed. Topic likely to be transferred to the newly formed Highways Panel in 2009/10 Council year.</p>	
<p>(7) County Highways matters (Safer)</p> <p>(a) Nazeing Action Group  (b) speed management  (c) freight strategy  (d) Monitoring of Road Accidents.</p>		<p>(a) Follow up meeting on 26 Nov.08 – to report back.  All matters on highways to go to Localism (Highways) Panel.</p>	

<p>(8) Bobbingworth Tip (Greener) (a) Management Group</p>		<p>Cabinet has agreed to defer creating a monitoring Group until scheme is completed. Tree planting taking place at present. Management group to be set up in new municipal year.</p>	
<p>(9) Flooding matters (a) Strategic Flood Risk assessment (b) Pitt Review and Flood and Water Bill</p>	<p>(a) to be completed in time to contribute to East of England development plan (b) Overview and Scrutiny currently considering request for inclusion in programme</p>	<p>(a) Being produced jointly with Harlow District Council. Bulk of the work completed, final report compilation outstanding. (b) The Council responded to the consultation for the Pitt Review, this and the forthcoming Flood and Water Bill will have implications for the Council.</p>	

## Planning Services Standing Panel

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
<p>(1)                      (i) New Local Development Scheme and East of England Plan – EFDC Response to Final Version                      (ii) To consider matters that arise through the East of England Plan                      (iii) In association with the above, to keep an overview of work associated with securing a sound New Local Development Framework</p>	<p>Regular updating reports</p>	<p>(i) Final version of the East of England plan incomplete. Awaiting the results of a legal challenge and the results from the gypsy/traveller consultation.                      (ii) To receive a progress report at each meeting.                      (iii) LDF timeline to be presented.</p>	<p>18<sup>th</sup> June 2009                      8<sup>th</sup> September                      10<sup>th</sup> November                        5<sup>th</sup> January 2010                      11<sup>th</sup> February                      27<sup>th</sup> March</p>
<p>(2)                      (i) Re use of buildings in the Green Belt/Traffic Issues in the Roydon and Nazeing Areas.                      (ii) To keep an overview on transport matters that were the subject of a focus day in Nazeing in March 2007, and the action plan.</p>		<p><b>On going</b> – VOSA attended meeting of the old Environment and Planning Standing Panel on 28 Feb 2008.                      Awaiting Essex C.C. transport freight strategy for the Nazeing area.</p>	

<p>(3) To consider the provision of Value for Money within the following Planning Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) . Development Control (including Appeals)</li> <li>b) Forward Planning</li> <li>c) Building Control</li> <li>d) Enforcement</li> <li>e) Administration and Customer Support</li> <li>f) Economic Development</li> <li>g) Environment Team</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) VFM Completed (Subject to annual review in August 2009)</li> <li>b) January 2009 This has had to wait because of staff shortages &amp; work on Gypsy &amp; Traveller issues.</li> <li>c) Review in March 09.</li> <li>f) To be discussed at June meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) VFM Task and Finish report went to September meeting and the November O&amp;S Cttee meeting where it was endorsed.</li> <li>f) To include response to Economic Downturn.</li> </ul>	
<p>(4) Update on current staffing situation</p>	<p>Regular agenda item.</p>		
<p>(5) Improvement Plan</p>	<p>Regular agenda item.</p>		
<p>(6) Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of Area Planning Cttees. to be invited to a meeting to provide feedback.</p>		<p>Considered at the March 09 meeting.</p>	
<p>(7) Update on Gypsy and Traveller Consultation</p>	<p>Regular item.</p>	<p>Update to every meeting.</p>	

(8) Report from legal on performance at Planning appeals.	June 2009		
(9) Report reviewing the recruiting process for the Asst Director's Post	June 2009		
(10) Comments from the planning agents and amenity groups required matching.			
(11) That a report be produced setting out the benefits of creating an additional senior officer post, replacing the Compliance Officer post with reference to outcomes, options for funding the new post with consideration given to alternative options for securing the same benefits			
(12) That a report be produced for the Panel setting out the possible route any planning enforcement investigation could take			

Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
(1) Key Performance Indicators – Performance Outturn 2008/09	Performance report to be considered at year end.	Outturn KPI performance report for 2008/09 to be considered at the meeting to be held on 16 June 2009. Performance report to be produced for inclusion in E-Annual Report in place of former Best Value Performance Plan.	<b>16 June 2009</b> 25 August 17 November
(2) Key Performance Indicators – Performance Monitoring 2009/10	Performance report to be considered on a quarterly basis.	Quarterly KPI performance report for 2009/10 to be considered at the meetings to be held on 25 August 2009, 17 November 2009 and 23 February 2010.	<b>12 January 2010</b> 23 February 22 April
(3) Quarterly Financial Monitoring	Reports to be considered on a quarterly basis.	First quarter Information to be considered August 09, 2 <sup>nd</sup> quarter in November 09 and 3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter figures at the February '10 meeting.	
(4) Performance (Services to be scrutinised in Rotation)	Ongoing	The Panel looked at the Council's land and accommodation strategy at its meeting in November 2007. Further issues for consideration may be identified during the year.	
(5) Essex Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2008-2011	Relevant performance reports to be considered on a quarterly basis.	Performance reports in respect of the indicators within the LAA that the Council 'has regard to' to be considered as part of regular quarterly KPI monitoring arrangements.	
(6) Council Plan 2006-2010 Performance Monitoring	Performance report considered on an annual basis.	Performance report for third year of the Council Plan (2008/09) to be considered at the meeting to be held on 16 June 2009.	

(7) Value for Money Cost and Performance Analysis	Analysis updated on an annual basis to reflect latest available cost and performance information.	Revised arrangements for consideration of the Value for Monday Analysis agreed in March 2009. The Audit Commission's VFM Profile tool is updated during late February early March each year, and in order for the VFM analysis to be developed from this tool, the analysis will be considered during the April-June cycle each year.
(8) Annual Consultation Plan	Report considered on an annual basis.	Last completed August 08. Consultation Plan considered at first meeting of each municipal year. Next report due June 2009.
(9) Detailed Portfolio Budgets	To go to the January 2010 meeting.	To be considered January '10 - Annual review of the Portfolio Holders Budgets.
(10) Medium Term Financial Strategy	To go to the February 2010 meeting.	Financial issues Paper to 17 November 2009. Review the Council's medium term financial strategy 12 January 2010.
(11) Equality and Diversity - Monitoring and Progress	Report considered on an annual basis.	Monitoring report in respect of the Council's Equality Schemes and progress with equality issues to be considered at the meeting to be held on 22 April 2010.
(12) Capital Outturn 2008/09 and use of transitional relief in 2008/09	To go to the June 2009 meeting	To be considered at the June 2009 meeting.
(13) Provisional revenue Outturn 2008/09	To go to the June 2009 meeting	To be considered at the June 2009 meeting
(14) Fee and Charges	To go to the November 2009 meeting	Last considered at the November 2008 meeting

## Task and Finish Panels

### Leisure Services

Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
<p>(1) Future Management of Waltham Abbey Sports Centre - (a) to assess the feasibility of providing a new Sports Hall at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool; and (b) to evaluate the service and financial implications as opposed to entering into longer term Dual Use Management arrangements at Waltham Abbey Sports Centre.</p>		<p><b>Underway:</b> New dual agreement and timetable to be brought to next meeting.</p> <p>(a) Report went to November O&amp;S Cttee. Feasibility report to the May 09 meeting.</p> <p>(b) Have given notice to quit to the Sports Centre.</p>	<p>8<sup>th</sup> July 2008                  23 September 2008 (went to WASC)</p> <p>20 November 08 (Cancelled)</p> <p>18 May 2009</p>
<p>(2) Monitoring of Youth Initiatives Scheme</p>		<p><b>Ongoing</b> - Scope of review considered on 5 July 2007 – consultations will not take place until <b>autumn 2008</b>. The consultation on this is delivered into three parts. Consultation with Town/Parish Councils and the Police is now complete. There may also be issues emerging from the 'Big Youth Debate' on 19 November and results from the survey carried out in July, August, following which an overall analysis of all the results will be carried out in due course.</p>	



Customer Transformation			
Item	Report Deadline / Priority	Progress / Comments	Programme of Future Meetings
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To improve access to services and improve response to enquiries.</li> <li>2. There is a need to revisit the Customer Services Agenda, to see where improvements can be practically achieved.</li> <li>3. To improve services to customers of the Council.</li> <li>4. The Council has a duty under Equalities Legislation to ensure that all sections of the Community have access to the Council's Services. The provision of high quality and timely information is necessary to this end.</li> <li>5. Within the new National Indicator Set are measures to assess the effectiveness of the Council's ability to deal</li> </ol>	March 2009	<p>Terms of Reference submitted to OSC on 10 July 2008</p> <p>Interim report to go to the December meeting.</p> <p>The Panel visited Contact Harlow on 14 October 08 to review their Contact Centre.</p> <p>The Panel also visited EFDCs switchboard and the Environment and Street Scene new call monitoring system.</p> <p>Draft Final Report went to the 25 November meeting.</p> <p>Final report went to December 2008 O&amp;S Committee, then to Cabinet in February 09.</p> <p><b>EXTRA MEETING HELD ON 30 APRIL 2009.</b></p>	<del>1<sup>st</sup> July 2008</del> <del>15 September 2008</del> <del>14 October 2008</del> <del>25 November 2008</del>

<p>with enquiries. The Council does not have a CRM (Customer Relationship Management System) in place to enable the authority to readily assess its current performance.</p>			
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**Impact on the social, economic and environmental well-being of the area:**

The District does suffer from river and other water courses (fluvial) and surface water (pluvial) flooding in various locations.

There are a number of flood risk assets within the District additionally some public infrastructure and residential properties remain at a high risk of flooding. The proposed change changes in legislation will improve the management of flood risk and communication between various organisations.

It is essential that the Council fully understands and participates in the early stages of the implementation of the new legislation to gain maximum benefits for its residents.

**Council Performance in this area (if known: Red, Amber, Green):**

The Council has a proactive approach to addressing flooding issues. It has maintained a Land Drainage Section since the 1970s and continues to invest in flood risk management.

The recommendations within the Pitt Review place additional responsibilities on Local Authorities in respect of management and coordination of all forms of flooding.

The District also implements Planning Policy Statement 25 'Development Control and Flood Risk' which seeks to reduce the impact of new build. There are changes proposed in the Pitt Review to further improve the work being done under this policy.

**Keep in Context (are other reviews taking place in this area?)**

County Councils are recognised as the lead authorities, working in partnership with Districts where appropriate, for those matters affecting local authorities within the Pitt Review Recommendations.

Essex County Council have not so far indicated the likely split of responsibilities between County and Districts but it is reasonable to assume that Districts will have a role to play in implementing the recommendations, specially a District like EFDC which takes flood risk management seriously.

**Office Use:**

**Pick score:**

**Considered By OSCC:**

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**NOTES OF A MEETING OF CUSTOMER TRANSFORMATION TASK AND FINISH**  
**PANEL**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY, 30 APRIL 2009**  
**IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING**  
**AT 7.30 - 8.35 PM**

**Members Present:** B Rolfe (Chairman), J M Whitehouse (Vice-Chairman), D Bateman, A Boyce, Mrs R Brookes, Ms J Hedges, Mrs J Lea, R Morgan and J Philip

**Other members present:**

**Apologies for Absence:**

**Officers Present** D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), J Chandler (Assistant Director - Community Services and Customer Relations), M Warr (Performance Improvement Officer) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

**33. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

The Panel noted that there were no substitute members.

**34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**35. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes from 25 November 2008 were noted and agreed as a correct record.

Councillor Jon Whitehouse asked about the current position of the report on the Forester consultation. He was told that the report would go to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee in June. Officer were also currently in talks about incorporating some regular LSP articles (from the Police, Health, Fire etc) into the Forester magazine. They could pay for the space used, thus helping to reduce reliance on the amount of advertising in the publication.

**36. CONSIDERATION OF FINAL REPORT BY CABINET**

The meeting noted that the Panel's final report went to the Cabinet on 5 February 2009 where it was well received. The Cabinet accepted that communication with residents was important and as such the Council's website required additional resource and proposed that an extra Website Officer be employed on a three year fixed term contract. This Panel's Chairman was requested to reconvene the Task and Finish Panel and further prioritise the remaining seven recommendations of the report for further consideration by the Cabinet.

The Panel noted the suggested order of priority for the remaining recommendations as set out in the agenda.

Councillor Philip remarked that the Panel needed to put them in order of priority and not just of affordability. He thought that the Council needed a contact centre and to redesign its reception areas.

Councillor Whitehouse agreed with Councillor Philip. The Panel needed to think about how residents contacted the Council. Where should the money go, on people, telephones or the website? He thought that the number of visits in person would reduce in time and therefore it was probably the telephone system that needed to be looked at first.

The Assistant Director of Community Services and Customer Relations, Julie Chandler, had visited Waltham Forest Council recently where the manager told them that they would not have purchased their CRM system but would have developed their own. Councillor Philip said that customers often said it would be cheaper to develop a system for themselves, but it rarely was. But there are often alternatives to just buying off the shelf.

Councillor Mrs Brookes said that she was sorry for the receptionist who had to deal with a lot of people at the same time, it was so much better in Harlow where they had 2 or three receptionists on at any one time. This should be a high priority. Councillor Philip agreed, which was why he said the Council needed a contact centre. They needed to get that structure in place to focus on the workload. He would not put a CRM above a contact centre.

The Panel agreed that they should consider the report on NI 14 – Avoidable Contact before they came to any decision on prioritising the recommendations.

**AGREED:** that the Panel consider the next report on the agenda, NI 14 – Avoidable Contact, before they come to any conclusions on this item.

### **37. REPORT ON NI 14 - AVOIDABLE CONTACT**

The Performance Improvement Officer, Mike Warr reported back on the completion of the 'NI 14 – avoidable contact' measuring exercise. A total of seven service areas were included as part of the measuring exercise. These were: Planning, Finance (benefits), Finance (Council Tax), Licensing, Electoral Services, Housing and Environmental Services. Staff were asked to note all types of contact and record it if they thought it was avoidable or unavoidable, this was recorded in five different ways. It was a paper based exercise, collated on a daily and weekly basis. The overall result was that the council had an overall 'Avoidable Contact' result of 26.9%, with a telephone avoidable contact result of 36%. This would be reported as part of the National Indicator Set to the government.

Mr Warr tabled a paper that broke down the results into service areas and the types of contact recorded by number and percentages. The Panel noted that there was a much higher avoidable contact figure by telephone and the poor call transfer figure was high. The various directorates had been tasked to take this on and produce improvement plans to try and reduce the final avoidable figures.

Members thought it was clear they needed to address contact as a whole. Telephone contact may reduce over time if the other areas were improved.

It may be that a consultant be asked to design the reception areas and also asked to look at putting in a Contact Centre incorporating CRM for the future when funding may be more readily available. The Panel needed to say what its priorities were and

how they could be delivered. A feasibility study may need to be commissioned. Perhaps Overview and Scrutiny should be asked to task this Panel with looking further into this. A lot could be done in house.

The Panel summed up by saying that work on 'The Forester' was a given. The Forester survey had already been carried out and any redesign could be accommodated within the existing budget. There was no need for additional resources and if some money could be had from the LSP to replace some of the present advertising, that would be helpful.

The other recommendations needed to be prioritised. There was a need to look at how the council could do things more efficiently. There was a need to get a contact centre in place; this should be done by putting in a CRM system and redesigning the reception areas. There would be a need for financial due diligence to take this forward.

The Panel did not want to alter anything in their original report, but did want to keep Cabinet financial concerns in mind. There was, therefore, a need to look at this in more depth as a Panel before they reported back to the Cabinet and would ask Overview and Scrutiny to extend the life of the Panel into next year.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the National Indicator 14 (Avoidable Contact) report be noted and that the results be suitably communicated to the public, perhaps through the Forester and the website.
2. That the redesign work on the Forester, including the possible link up with the LSP be agreed.
3. That the Panel ask the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to authorise their continuance into the new municipal year to further define and prioritise their original recommendations to the Cabinet.

**38. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was raised.

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