

## Scrutiny Standing Panel Agenda



### **Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing panel Tuesday, 27th October, 2009**

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

**Time:** 7.30 pm

**Democratic Services Officer:** Adrian Hendry, Office of the Chief Executive  
email: ahendry@eppingforestdc.gov.uk Tel: 01992 564246

**Members:**

Councillors G Pritchard (Chairman), A Boyce (Vice-Chairman), R Barrett, A Clark, M Colling, Miss R Cohen, R Frankel, Ms J Hedges, D Jacobs, R Law and Mrs E Webster

Please note the venue for this meeting.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

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

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

**3. 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.

**4. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING (Pages 3 - 8)**

To agree the notes of the last meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2009.

**5. CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY - POLICE AND JUSTICE ACT 2006 (Pages 9 - 10)**

To consider the attached report.

**6. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY METING**

To consider which reports are ready to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its next meeting.

**7. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The next programmed meeting of the Panel will be held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2009; and then on:

25<sup>th</sup> February 2010; and  
29<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**NOTES OF A MEETING OF SAFER, CLEANER, GREENER SCRUTINY STANDING**  
**PANEL**  
**HELD ON TUESDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2009**  
**IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING**  
**AT 7.30 - 9.28 PM**

**Members Present:** G Pritchard (Chairman), , M Colling, R Frankel, D Jacobs, R Law, Mrs E Webster, D Wixley and A Boyce

**Other members present:** Mrs M Sartin and Ms S Stavrou

**Apologies for Absence:** R Barrett, Miss R Cohen and Ms J Hedges

**Officers Present** J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), L MacNeill (Assistant Director (Operations, Administration & Finance)), C Neilan (Conservation Officer) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

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

It was reported that Councillor D Wixley was substituting for Councillor R Barrett and Councillor A Boyce for Councillor Ms R Cohen.

**22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor D Wixley declared a personal interest in agenda item 6 by virtue of being on a relevant Committee of the Loughton Town Council and agenda item 7 of the agenda by virtue of being a Tree Warden for the Loughton Area.

**23. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

The notes from 23 July 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

**24. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME**

The Terms of Reference were noted.

Items on the Work Programme were updated by the lead officer, John Gilbert. The Panel noted that:

**Item 2** – Safer Communities- the CCTV policy was not yet ready and will go to a future meeting.

**Item 3** – Essex Waste procurement – the joint committee would be meeting in the near future;.

**Item 4** – Waste Management Partnership Board – the Waste Management Partnership Board minutes for 20 July 2009 were attached to this agenda and that a new KPI on recycling in flats and similar buildings was agreed at the last Finance and Performance Management Standing Panel.

That the commencement of the new food and garden wheeled bins was imminent. It was noted that the Environment and Street Scene Call Centre had received an unprecedented 601 telephone calls in one day enquiring about this new service. Once the service was up and running it was hoped that this would settle down.

**Item 10** – Crime and Disorder Scrutiny meetings – the first of these meetings is due in October 2009. An item will be put in the members bulletin asking if members had any specific questions or topics for the crime and disorder panel to look at.

**Item 11(a)** – Waltham Abbey Sports Centre – this was being called in and would be discussed at the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting to be held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2009.

**Item 11(b)** – Youth Initiatives and Play Strategy – the Panel was informed that the facilities were on target for completion. The Panel noted that the Hoe Lane installation had been recently vandalised, and was currently being repaired.

## **25. WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD MINUTES**

The Panel noted the minutes of the Waste Management Partnership Board Meeting for 20 July 2009. They also noted that:

- SITA had recently appointed a new manager, who had transferred in from Maidstone;
- Under item 9 of the minutes the fourth line should read 'decreased' instead of 'increased'.

Councillor Pritchard asked what was happening about weed spraying. John Gilbert replied that in the past EFDC had received funding from the County for three sessions of spraying a year. This year there was only enough money for two sessions. Talks are being held between County and EFDC officers, asking if county would let this Council decide when to do the spraying as this would be more efficient.

Councillor Jacobs said the minutes in item 6 used the word 'statics' what was statics? He was informed that this referred to the street cleaners who operated in an area with manual brooms and barrows. Councillor Jacobs then asked if street cleaning was improving and was told it was. SITA had completed a review of the cleaning schedules and this resulted in a number of 'statics' being reinstated, although the review itself was still work in progress.

Councillor Jacobs asked what if people wanted larger bins than the 180 litre bins that were being distributed. He was told that there would be no larger bins for garden refuse, but, if thought necessary, households could be issued with a second bin of the same size. The potential difficulty was that SITA would have to collect two bins instead of one, and may charge the council. Officers were still in discussions with them.

Asked if Essex had any 'In Vessel Composting' (IVC) sites Mr Gilbert said that it did not, but there were some smaller facilities available. It was also estimated that Essex would get an IVC plant in the near future.

Councillor Jacobs, referring to a visit to be organised to the Sandy IVC, asked if this would be open to all, he was told that it would be.

Councillor Frankel asked if kerb side caddies would be issued on request. Mr Gilbert said they would not, but if a resident did not have space for a wheeled bin, they could ask for a kerb side caddy for their food waste. Officers will talk to the householder to make sure that they understood what was required.

Councillor Mrs Webster commented that at different times of the year there would be more garden waste than others, and some months there would be only food waste and no garden waste. Mr Gilbert said that officers did at first think about issuing kerb side caddies to everyone but SITA had a problem with this. Officers will have to see how it goes; in most years garden waste does not trail off altogether in winter.

## 26. TREE STRATEGY

The Assistant Director Environment and Street Scene, Laura Macneill, introduced Epping Forest's Tree Strategy. This was requested at the June meeting of this panel.

The Council's current strategy was entitled "Trees – Information, Objectives and Policies" which was finalised in August 2008. The panel noted that the Council used to be very reactive to tree problems but are now taking a proactive stance and would like to make sure that they got the right tree in the right place. The council has now developed a database for the whole district and is able to provide help and advice on trees.

Section 2 of the strategy set out what the Council was responsible for and outlined the difficulties with estates owned by Essex County Council and the need for a management programme.

The Panel noted that:

- officers tried to get round to each street tree once every four years to tidy it up;
- it was emphasised that the Council had nothing to do with the Forest itself;
- there was a list of useful contact numbers in section 5;
- every enquiry received was logged onto a computer system, visited by an officer and prioritised for the work needed;
- a 'green infrastructure group' meets once a quarter when they consider their key objectives;
- virtual plaques have been established for special trees in the district;
- officers are presently updating the County's rescinded TPOs;
- officers are currently working on area community tree strategies, but it took a lot of time to complete one;
- the Local Plan has policies for trees in it;
- there was the 50 favourite trees project and officers are presently recording all the veteran trees in the district and putting them on the council's website;
- photo's were inconsistent in their headings, some were labelled by site and some not;
- the Arboretum could also do some more publicity within the strategy;
- the last sentence in appendix three had a typographical error in, it should say 'wary' and not 'weary';
- Epping was not identified on the map following appendix 4;
- Stapleford Abbots was spelt wrong on the map;
- there was nothing about conservation areas in the strategy.

Councillor Pritchard said the strategy was very good, but could the roles of trees in respect to carbon footprint etc. be discussed in there. He would expect EFDC to have

a better footprint than other areas. It also does not give targets for the number of trees that are wanted in the future and it should set targets for the nature reserves. There should also be a date set to refresh the strategy, something like the summer of 2010.

Councillor Mrs Webster said the strategy was excellent work. Was there something the Council could do to stop developers taking trees down before putting in a planning application; could the council pre-empt this destruction? The Landscape and Arboriculturist Officer, Chris Neilan, replied that it was difficult. If officers got any information about something like that about to happen then they may be able to put a tree protection order (TPO) on the appropriate tree(s). It was also a criminal offence to damage preserved trees or damage highway trees. Prosecutions do happen but were not publicised, perhaps they could be put in the Forester.

Some members were dismayed about appendix three and the frivolous health and safety warnings given as this could bring the Council into disrepute. Mr Gilbert said that in these litigious times the Council could not completely ignore this and had to take a balanced view.

Councillor Ms Stavrou liked the strategy as it set out exactly what EFDC thought about its trees and its heritage. She would like this type of information to be given to new councillors when they attend their planning training sessions. This was thought to be a good idea by the Panel.

Councillor Frankel asked about trees that cause damage to properties, this could lead to legal battles etc. Did this strategy document help in that respect? Ms Macneill replied that the Council was usually asked to do a condition report when something like that cropped up. They would then take it to County or Housing and from there to the insurance companies. Mr Neilan added that they had a special way to deal with preserved trees. Insurance companies usually tended to ask that the offending tree was cut down first, without looking for causes. Officers would gather the relevant information and take it to a Planning Sub-Committee for their decision. Local policies allow them to do this. If consent to cut down a tree is given then officers ask for a replacement tree of a more suitable size and variety.

Councillor Pritchard asked if there was some way of encouraging landowners to plant more trees. Mr Neilan said that Country Care did a lot of work along those lines. There was a landscape study being done and within that they could point out areas which needed more trees. This strategy did not have that kind of information in it. Maybe what was needed was something like a landscape document. Ms Macneill said that this could be taken back to the 'green infrastructure working group' and they could outline what a new document should contain. They could also look at carbon capture etc.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) The Panel noted the Tree Strategy document.
- (2) That the Panel review this document again in April 2010 with an interim report and again in September 2010, linking it to a bio-diversity strategy.

**27. REPORTS TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To report to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on the conclusions reached at this meeting on the strategy that was considered.

**28. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The dates of the future meetings of the Panel were noted.

This page is intentionally left blank



## **Report to Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel**

**Date of meeting: 27 October 2009**

**Subject: Crime and Disorder Scrutiny**

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

**Committee Secretary: A Hendry**



---

### **CRIME AND DISORDER SCRUTINY ROLE – POLICE & JUSTICE ACT 2006**

#### Background

1. Crime is consistently one of the top concerns for communities everywhere, and this is clearly reflected in the recent “Place Survey”, where, despite reductions in crime levels overall, our residents remain concerned and fearful about crime in the district.

2. The role of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP), known in Epping Forest District as the “Epping Forest District Safer Communities Partnership” (SCP) is to bring together the key partner organisations within the district to deal with residents’ concerns around crime and disorder and to make a real difference to levels of criminality and disorder within the district. The SCP in the district is currently made up as follows (\* denotes a statutory member):

Epping Forest District Council (\*)  
Essex County Council (\*)  
Essex Police Service (\*)  
Essex Police Authority (\*)  
Essex Fire & Rescue Service (\*)  
West Essex Primary Care Trust (\*)  
Voluntary Action Epping Forest  
Essex Probation Service (\*)

3. The SCP is managed via Strategy Panel which meets every quarter, and the Strategy Panel has established a number of key subsidiary groupings charged with the local delivery and monitoring of strategies and policies. The SCP is also a key member of “One Epping Forest”, the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), where it has the responsibility for the delivery of one of the key themes of the LSP, “Safer & Stronger Communities”.

4. The SCP has been successful in the delivery of its key aims around crime reduction, managing anti-social behaviour, dealing with prolific offenders. In 2008/09 overall crime levels reduced by 8%, well ahead of the 5% target, although within that figure there remain some areas of concern such as burglary rates and levels of repeat domestic violence. The Partnership set itself a further challenging target for 2009/10 of a further reduction of 5% in overall crime. This target is proving difficult, given the effects of the recession etc. However, whilst at present we are not achieving the 5% overall reduction, crime levels in 2009/10 remain below those for the comparative period in 2008/09.

#### The new scrutiny role

5. Scrutiny is a key role for non Executive members, enabling them to challenge the decisions of the Executive and to examine in detail their policies and strategies. However, the SCP effectively sits outside of the Executive as a partnership organisation, and therefore was not subject to the same scrutiny arrangements. Sections 19 and 20 of the Police & Justice

Act 2006 have given powers to local authorities to be able to scrutinise the work of CDRPs/SCPs in the same way as they can the Executive and CDRPs/SCPs are now required to invite this scrutiny at least once a year.

6. Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered how best to arrange this scrutiny role and concluded that it could best be discharged through the existing Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Scrutiny Panel. This Panel in turn decided that it would undertake this important role through allocating two special meetings, the first being in October 2009 (this meeting) and the next in February 2010. Furthermore, since this role was a new and untried one, the Panel decided that this first SCP scrutiny meeting should be restricted to topics raised by Members rather than inviting the public at large or other organisations to contribute. The meeting in February is however intended to involve a wider audience and in any event both meetings remain open to the public to attend.

7. The scrutiny role also includes dealing with "Councillor Calls for Action" (CCfA), where they are related to the CDRP function. CCfA is a means whereby a ward councillor, having exhausted all normal avenues in order to deal with an issue, has a means whereby that issue can be put into the scrutiny process. However, the operation of scrutiny within the Council is such that a Member can raise any issue for consideration, so it is likely that CCfA will not be required to any great degree.

#### Matters for potential scrutiny

8. In order to determine possible topics for discussion at this first scrutiny meeting, Members were requested, via the Members' Bulletin, to bring forward suggestions. Three issues arose from that exercise, namely:

- (i) cross border effects of anti-social behaviour and dispersal orders;
- (ii) crime/violence and licensed premises; and
- (iii) the protection of vulnerable individuals/families from targeted anti-social behaviour

9. All three are worthy topics for scrutiny, but time limitations preclude being able to deal with all at one meeting. Therefore, given the on-going issues around item (ii) above, only items (i) and (iii) will be dealt with at this meeting. Item (ii) can be considered again alongside any other topics for inclusion at future SCP scrutiny meetings.

#### (i) Cross border effects of anti-social behaviour and dispersal orders

10. This matter was originally raised by Ongar ward members in respect of young people from the Brentwood area being transported into Ongar due to restrictions on their activity in Brentwood itself, and causing problems for local residents. There have subsequently been similar concerns raised involving Waltham Abbey and Nazeing, with young people coming into the district from Broxbourne. The members who raised this issue have been invited to attend the meeting to present their concerns and hear the SCP's response.

#### (ii) The protection of vulnerable individuals/families from targeted anti-social behaviour

11. This concern was raised following the recent tragic case involving a mother and her daughter who died following a lengthy period of intimidation at their home and where the authorities have been judged to have failed in their duty to support and protect them. The Member who raised the issue has sought assurance from the SCP that should the need for such support/protection arise in this District, the SCP will be able to provide it. The Member been invited to attend the meeting to present their concerns and hear the SCP's response.

12. In order to ensure that Members receive a detailed response to the issues raised, all appropriate members of the SCP have been invited to attend the scrutiny meeting, along with relevant supporting officers.