

Council Agenda



Epping Forest District Council

NOTICE OF COUNCIL MEETING

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL to be held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING at 7.30 pm on Tuesday, 27 July 2010 for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Peter Haywood'.

PETER HAYWOOD
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services
Officer:**

Council Secretary: Ian Willett
Tel: 01992 564243 Email: iwillett@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

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.

You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy and copies made available to those that request it.

Therefore by entering the Chamber and using the lower public seating area, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for web casting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should sit in the upper council chamber public gallery area

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

BUSINESS

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

1. This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate their microphones before speaking.

2. The Chief Executive will read the following announcement:

“This meeting will be webcast live to the Internet and will be archived for later viewing. Copies of recordings may be made available on request.

By entering the chamber’s lower seating area you consenting to becoming part of the webcast.

If you wish to avoid being filmed you should move to the public gallery or speak to the webcasting officer”

2. MINUTES (Pages 9 - 24)

To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2010 (attached).

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(Chief Executive) To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Apologies for Absence

(b) Announcements

To consider any announcements by:

- (i) the Chairman of the Council;
- (ii) the Leader of the Council; and
- (iii) any other Cabinet Member.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 9.3 of the Council Procedure Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Leader of the Council;
- (b) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; or
- (c) to any Portfolio Holder.

Questions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

6. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER, CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET (Pages 25 - 34)

To receive reports from the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and members of the Cabinet on matters falling within their area of responsibility:

- (a) Report of the Leader;
- (b) Report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) Report of Environment Portfolio Holder;
- (d) Report of Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder;
- (e) Report of Housing Portfolio Holder;
- (f) Report of Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder;
- (g) Report of Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder;
- (h) Report of Operational Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder;
- (i) Report of Performance Management Portfolio Holder; and
- (j) Report of Safer and Greener Portfolio Holder

7. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE

Council Procedure Rule 10.6 provides for questions by any member of the Council to the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any Portfolio Holder, without notice on:

- (i) reports under item 5 above; or
- (ii) any other matter of a non operational character in relation to the powers and duties of the Council or which affects all or part of the District or some or all of its inhabitants.

Council Procedure Rule 10.7 provides that answers to questions without notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer from the Leader or, at the request of the Leader, from another member of the Cabinet;
- (b) direct oral answer from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or, at their request, from another member dealing with that issue as part of an Overview and Scrutiny review;
- (c) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication;
- (d) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner; or
- (e) where the question relates to an operational matter, the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or a member of the Cabinet will request that a response be given direct to the questioner by the relevant Chief Officer.

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 10.8, a time limit of twenty minutes is set for questions. Any question not dealt with within the time available will receive a written reply. The Chairman may extend this period by up to a further 10 minutes to ensure that all political groups and independent members may have their questions answered.

8. MOTIONS

To consider any motions, notice of which has been given under Council Procedure Rule 11.

Motions, if any, will follow if not received in time to be incorporated into the agenda.

9. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE (Pages 35 - 36)

To answer questions asked after notice in accordance with the provisions contained in paragraph 10.3 of the Council Procedure Rules of the Constitution on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the District:

- (a) to the Chairman of the Council;
- (b) to the Leader of the Council;
- (c) to the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or
- (d) to any Member of the Cabinet;.

Council Procedure rule 10.4 provides that answers to questions under notice may take the form of:

- (a) direct oral answer;
- (b) where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
- (c) where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner.

Answers to questions falling within (a) and (b) above will be made available to the member asking the question one hour before the meeting. Answers to questions falling within (c) above will be circulated to all councillors.

Attached is a question to the Environment Portfolio Holder. Other questions, if any, will follow.

10. REPORT OF THE CABINET - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES

To consider a report – to follow after the meeting of the Cabinet on 19 July 2010.

11. REPORT OF THE CABINET - SHARED OLYMPIC OFFICER POST

To consider a report – to follow after the meeting of the Cabinet on 19 July 2010, if required.

12. REPORT OF THE CABINET - GYPSY AND TRAVELLER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - DIRECTION

To consider a report – to follow after the meeting of the Cabinet on 19 July 2010.

13. HANGAR 6, NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD - TEMPORARY CHANGE OF USE - WAIVING OF CALL-IN

Recommendation:

To note that the Vice-Chairman of the Council agreed that the decision of the Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder regarding variation of the lease of Hangar 6 at North Weald Airfield to permit its use for one wedding reception in accordance with conditions should be treated as a matter of urgency and should not be subject to call-in.

(Chief Executive) Sophisto UK Ltd, an event management company, was granted a licence on 12 March 2010 to hold Asian and Jewish weddings for a period of 12 months on the Northern Showground Site, North Weald Airfield. They held four events whilst their planning application was being determined but this application was subsequently refused on the grounds of disturbance to local residents and no further events were held. The company was able to re-arrange the weddings provisionally booked on the Airfield except for one wedding to be held on the evening of Friday 2 July .

An approach was made to the tenant of Hangar 6 to seek their consent to hold this Asian wedding for 400 guests on their hard standing area. The tenant, Weald Aviation Ltd, sought landlord's consent under the lease on 24 June 2010.

Hangar 6 is a large T2 aircraft hangar let for aviation use on a ground lease expiring in 2057. It includes an extensive hard standing area for aircraft parking. Subletting is permitted with the Council's consent. The hangar is at least 800 metres from houses adjacent to the M11 motorway.

The Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder agreed to the proposed temporary change of use subject to numerous conditions and having regard to the date of the event determined that any delay in implementing the decision would seriously prejudice the public interest. The Vice-Chairman of the Council agreed in all the circumstances that the matter should be treated as urgent and not subject to call-in.

Background Paper: Decision Notice and form signed by the Vice-Chairman of the Council.

14. REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

Recommendation:

To note that the Leader of the Council has appointed (a) Councillor Penny Smith, Safer and Greener Portfolio Holder, as the Council's representative and Councillor Syd Stavrou, Operational Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder as the deputy on the Crime and Disorder Strategy Panel and (b) Councillor Brian Rolfe, Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder, as the Council's representative on the Essex Supporting People Commissioning Body with no deputy appointed.

(Leader of the Council) At the Annual Council meeting on 25 May 2010, the Leader reported on appointments made to Outside Organisations carrying out Executive functions. Following the Annual meeting, Portfolio Holder responsibilities were revised in recognition of the creation of a ninth Portfolio. These revisions included responsibility for Community Safety being with the Safer and Greener Portfolio Holder and responsibility for the Supporting People initiative with the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder. In recognition of these revisions, changes have been made to the appointments to Outside Organisations reported at the annual meeting.

15. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

To receive any reports, ask questions and receive answers on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations.

16. APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DESIGNATION OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

Report to follow.

17. DELEGATED AUTHORITIES HELD BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Report to follow.

18. 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):

Agenda Item No	Subject	Exempt Information Paragraph Number
19	Appointment of Acting Chief Executive and Designation of Head of Paid Service	1

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.

19. APPOINTMENT OF ACTING CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND DESIGNATION OF HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

To consider a report arising out of recommendations to be included in the report under item 16 (to follow).

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EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES

Committee: Council **Date:** 29 June 2010

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.40 pm

Members Present: Councillors Mrs A Grigg (Chairman), K Angold-Stephens (Vice-Chairman), R Barrett, R Bassett, A Boyce, W Breare-Hall, Mrs R Brookes, Mrs P Brooks, K Chana, Mrs T Cochrane, R Cohen, Mrs D Collins, D Dodeja, Mrs R Gadsby, P Gode, A Green, J Hart, Ms J Hart, Ms J Hedges, D Jacobs, D C Johnson, Mrs S Jones, B Judd, L Leonard, A Lion, J Markham, Mrs M McEwen, S Murray, J Philip, Mrs C Pond, B Rolfe, B Sandler, Mrs M Sartin, Mrs P Smith, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, Mrs J Sutcliffe, H Ulkun, Mrs L Wagland, Ms S Watson, A Watts, Mrs E Webster, C Whitbread, J M Whitehouse, D Wixley and J Wyatt

Apologies: Councillors Mrs C Edwards, C Finn, J Knapman, Ms Y R Knight, Mrs J Lea, G Mohindra, R Morgan, W Pryor, Mrs P Richardson, P Spencer and Mrs J H Whitehouse

Officers Present: P Haywood (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), C O'Boyle (Director of Corporate Support Services), R Palmer (Director of Finance and ICT), I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), G Lunnun (Assistant Director (Democratic Services)), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer), P Maddock (Assistant Director (Accountancy)) and T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer)

22. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Assistant to the Chief Executive, on behalf of the Chairman of the Council, reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

23. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 May 2010 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the substitution of "R Cohen" for "Rebecca Mellissa Cohen" in the list of members present.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor S Murray declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Questions by Members Under Notice – Roding Valley Recreation Area) by virtue of using the area on a regular basis. The councillor had determined that his interest was not prejudicial and that he would remain in the meeting for the consideration of this item.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillors P Gode and B Judd declared personal interests in agenda item 10 (Report to the Cabinet – Community Governance Review – Greensted/Ongar Town) by virtue of being members of Ongar Town Council. The councillors had determined that their interests were not prejudicial and that they would remain in the meeting for the consideration of and voting on this item.

25. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Announcements by the Chairman of the Council

(i) Attendance at Events

The Chairman reported on her attendance at the Alderton Junior and Roydon Primary Schools as part of a West Essex Partnership initiative to raise aspirations and recognise the achievements of children in primary schools. She advised that she had been impressed with the enthusiasm of the children and she looked forward to attending a visit to Nazeing Primary School shortly.

The Chairman also reported on her attendance at a Volunteers Awards Tea organised by Voluntary Action Epping Forest at which she had presented major volunteer awards. She referred to the delight shown by volunteers at receiving unexpected awards.

Councillor Mrs Grigg reported on her attendance at the Ninefields Community Centre to open art sculpture and entrance refurbishment works.

The Chairman thanked officers and members who had participated in the Officers and Members Golf Day at Chigwell Golf Club and helped to raise approximately £800 for her charities.

(ii) Flowers from the Meeting

The Chairman announced that in view of the high temperature in the Council Chamber due to a fault with the air conditioning she would delay until the close of the meeting making a decision on sending the flowers to an organisation or individual.

(iii) Director of Environment and Street Scene

The Chairman advised that John Gilbert had returned from his voyage and she asked members to hand to him their sponsorship money in aid of her charities if they had not already done so.

(iv) Race for Life

The Chairman announced that she would be running the Race for Life at North Weald Airfield in July and she invited members to sponsor her.

(b) Announcements by the Leader of Council

There were no announcements by the Leader under this heading.

(c) Announcements by Portfolio Holders

There were no announcements by Portfolio Holders under this heading.

26. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The Council noted that there were no public questions for this meeting.

27. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER, CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

The Council received written reports from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the Environment Portfolio Holder, the Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, the Housing Portfolio Holder, the Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder, the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder, and the Operational Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder.

The Chairman invited the Leader, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Members of the Cabinet to provide an oral report or an oral update of their written reports.

(a) Leader of the Council

Councillor Mrs Collins reported that as part of the initiative by the West Essex Partnership to help raise aspirations and recognise the achievements of children in primary schools she had attended Limes Farm Infants School, the Leverton Infants School and Lambourne Primary School to present awards.

The Leader referred to a recent meeting with two of the three local Members of Parliament and local County Councillors. They had discussed recent ministerial announcements regarding the abolition of regional bodies, Comprehensive Area Assessment and regional strategies. Members noted that some of the intentions required legislation and that pending clarification there was uncertainty about how various functions would be undertaken in the future. In relation to planning the Government had indicated a return to local decision making but it was unclear how this would be achieved in relation to issues such as the expansion of Harlow. The Leader reported that she had a meeting the following day with representatives of Harlow and Uttlesford Councils to discuss a number of issues.

Councillor Mrs Collins advised that she had written to the new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the Right Hon Eric Pickles MP to seek removal of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document Direction. A reply was expected in the near future and when received would be circulated to all Members of the Council.

The Leader drew attention to the coalition Government requirement for local authorities to publicise all spending over £500 and to a request from Grant Shapps MP, Minister for Housing and Local Government, seeking views on what burdens currently imposed on local government could be reduced or removed in order to achieve savings. She advised that all local authorities had been asked to identify five such burdens and that following consultation with members and officers a list had been submitted on behalf of the Council.

The Leader advised that she had received information which indicated that cuts by Essex County Council both in the core funding and performance reward grants to LSPs were likely. Members noted that schemes not yet commenced could not proceed and that without adequate funding it was difficult to envisage how LSPs could continue with the good work they had undertaken.

The meeting noted that the Leader had attended a joint Leaders/Chief Executives meeting regarding shared services in Essex. Consultants' reports were awaited but it was difficult to envisage how a number of services could be shared in view of the current financial position of several authorities.

Finally, the Leader advised that together with other Cabinet members she had met the County Council's Highways and Transportation Portfolio Holder to discuss parking reviews and other local issues.

(b) Operational Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder

Councillor Stavrou advised that, as reported together with other Cabinet members she had met Councillor Norman Hume, the County Council's Highways and Transport Portfolio Holder. She advised that a note was being prepared outlining the District Council's understanding of the issues raised and actions to be taken and that once this had been agreed a report would be submitted to the next meeting of the Cabinet. However, in relation to the three outstanding parking reviews all work had been suspended pending clarification of the costs of advertising and implementation.

The Operational Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder reported on a recent meeting of the Local Highways Panel at which Essex County Council officers had presented budgets of £2.8m capital and £1.9m revenue for the Epping Forest District for 2010/11. She pointed out that these amounts were subject to confirmation by the County Council as budgets were still being finalised and that pending completion of that exercise County Council officers were only able to issue orders for up to 50% of the budget value until authorised to release the whole budget. Members noted that in setting its budgets the County Council was giving priority to the maintenance of the highway network.

Councillor Stavrou advised that the County Council representatives at the meeting had confirmed that localism was an important element of the Highway Service enabling the community to influence highway issues. The Portfolio Holder pointed out that this had been achieved in the last year by Panel members putting forward items and influencing priorities. She advised that some 30 schemes had been included in the locally determined revenue budget of £129,275 which was part of the £1.9m revenue budget. This budget was to be spent on the provision of a Highway Ranger service (£60,000), disabled bays, signage and lineage, completion of some five schemes outstanding from 2009/10 and undertaking schemes put forward by the Panel but not included in the County Council's Work Programme for the current year. The Portfolio Holder invited members to submit suggestions for works to be undertaken by Highway Rangers with requests being made to Rosa Tanfield at Essex County Council by 9 July 2010. Members noted that the types of work which could be carried out by Highway Rangers would be published in the Council Bulletin. Members also noted that Parish and Town Councils were being invited to submit schemes.

(c) Performance Management Portfolio Holder

Councillor Bassett apologised for not submitting the written report which he had prepared but appeared not to have been received by officers. He undertook to circulate that report with the Council Bulletin.

He advised that the key objectives for 2010/11 had now been finalised and agreed and that work was progressing on the new Council Plan for 2010/14. Members noted that the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee had reviewed the outcome of the key performance indicators for 2009/10. A range of 58 KPIs had been measured with an ambitious target of at least 80% to achieve target performance by the end of the year. The Portfolio Holder advised that results had been mixed and that final performance against a number of indicators was not yet available as they were reliant on external organisations. The Portfolio Holder advised that in reviewing the results for 2009/10 several conclusions had been made as to how matters could be improved.

The Portfolio Holder also advised that the Corporate Risk Register had recently been reviewed and a new risk had been identified to cover possible disruption to services during the London Olympics.

The meeting noted that Essex County Council had made a decision to create a powerful partnership operation to mastermind the county's response to emergency or disaster and to deal with the effective recovery from any such incident building on the Fire Service's lead resilience role in chairing the Essex Resilience Forum. The framework explored the role and resilience of individuals and communities before, during and after an emergency. A report on the considered response to the consultation would be forthcoming shortly.

28. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE**(a) Coalition Government Request for Ideas on Reducing Burdens on Local Government**

Councillor Murray referred to the letter received from Grant Shapps, MP, Minister for Housing and Local Government and asked the Leader what consultation had taken place with other members prior to formulating a response. He also suggested that the Leader appeared to have shown a lack of enthusiasm for some of the recent coalition Government initiatives.

Councillor Mrs Collins apologised if she had given a wrong impression about the Government initiatives and emphasised that her concern had been the number of such initiatives which had been received within a very short space of time and the need to decide how to deal with issues in the absence of some of the organisations which had been or were to be abolished. The Leader pointed out that the letter from Grant Shapps had been received on a Tuesday with a reply required by the following Friday.

The matter had been considered at Management Board level and officers had produced a list of suggestions which had been viewed by members of the Cabinet and reduced to the requested number of five. Councillor Mrs Collins outlined some of the suggestions which had been put forward and offered to provide a full list in the Council Bulletin.

(b) Leisure Facilities – Free Swimming for those aged 60 and over

Councillor Wixley asked the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder if free swimming for those aged 60 and over would be ceasing.

Councillor Rolfe advised that he had received confirmation that the Council would not be receiving a Government Grant of £39,000 which formed the basis of the funding for the project. He advised that the effect of this would be discussed at a pre-Cabinet meeting and he would advise all members of the outcome as soon as possible.

(c) Council's Non-Operational Land and Properties

Councillor Wixley asked the Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder whether consideration had been given to the community use of public houses owned by the Council. He drew attention to the role which had been played by the Winston Churchill Public House on Debden Day and suggested that as public houses provided a valuable community asset they should not be lost.

Councillor Mrs Wagland advised that she shared the views of Councillor Wixley's on a personal level but that as a Portfolio Holder she had to take account of all aspects in relation to the future of the Council's non-operational properties.

(d) Council's Summer Holiday Activity Programme

Councillor Philip drew attention to the Council's Summer Holiday Activity Programme and asked if in future increased provision could be made for young people in their mid-teens.

Councillor Rolfe advised that he would be happy to discuss this possibility with Leisure Officers for future years.

(e) SLM Capital Investment

Councillor P Brooks asked the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder if the SLM guaranteed capital investment of £250,000 over three sites would be divided equally between the sites.

Councillor Rolfe advised that he would need to seek further advice from officers and would report further in due course.

(f) Parking Reviews

Councillor Sutcliffe asked the Operational Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder if the letter to be sent to County Councillor Hume could be copied to relevant Ward Councillors so that they could respond to their constituents about the future of these schemes.

Councillor Stavrou advised that she envisaged the reply from County Councillor Hume would be more illuminating and that copies of that would be circulated when received.

(g) Healthworks Project for Young People

Councillor Dodeja asked the Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder for a definition of young children at which this project was aimed.

Councillor Rolfe advised that the project had only recently been agreed and that he would provide further details to members in due course.

(h) Council Car Park, Church Hill, Loughton

Councillor Markham asked the Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder for an update on the future of the car park in Church Hill, Loughton. He drew attention to the proposal to refurbish the petrol filling station at The Broadway, Loughton, and asked if this was likely impact on the future of the petrol filling station adjoining the car park in Church Hill.

Councillor Mrs Wagland advised that she was meeting officers later in the week to discuss issues included within her Portfolio and she would raise this issue and report back to members in due course.

(i) Car Parking – The Broadway, Loughton

Councillor Mrs J Hart advised that there were two off-street car parks in the vicinity of The Broadway. The one in Burton Road free on Saturdays but the one in Vere Road was subject to charges. She asked the Operational Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder if having regard to the location of the Vere Road car park in relation to the shops and the fact that it was some distance from the Underground Station and unlikely to be attractive to commuters an exception could be made to policy so that both car parks could be free on Saturdays. She also asked if additional signage could be provided drawing attention to location of the car parks.

Councillor Ms Stavrou advised that free parking on Saturdays across the District had been agreed by the current administration. A consistent approach had been taken as to the number and location of these car parks and she did not consider it possible to make an exception to policy at The Broadway as this would be unfair to other areas. The Portfolio Holder agreed to investigate the possibility of providing additional signage to the car parks.

(j) Current Economic Climate

Councillor Murray asked the Leader of the Council if she had given any thought as to how the Council would deal with the current difficult economic climate and cuts in Government funding. He asked if attempts would be made to provide services more efficiently or whether some non-statutory services would need to cease.

Councillor Mrs Collins advised that provision had been made for a 3% year on year reduction in the budget for the next three years. However, the Government now required a 25% reduction over five years which equated to over 6% a year. In the light of this there would be a need to review carefully all budgets and savings would be made as and when identified. The Leader advised that if possible non-statutory services would be maintained but that careful consideration would need to be given to future budgets in view of the reductions required. She confirmed that all members would be involved in making decisions on these matters.

29. MOTIONS

The Council was advised that there were no motions for consideration at this meeting.

30. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE**(a) Roding Valley Recreation Ground Lake**

By Councillor S Murray to Councillor B Rolfe, Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder

“Could the Portfolio Holder please update members as regards the following:

- (a) the plans for the Roding Valley Recreation Ground Lake;
- (b) the progress made on these plans (including the control of fishing by bailiffs), with implementation dates if relevant; and
- (c) what other plans are in place to deal with the anti-social behaviour of some fishermen (usually not locals) before the implementation of any longer term arrangements”.

Response read by Councillor B Rolfe, Leisure and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder

“I will reply to the three parts of the question in turn:

(a) The plans for the Roding Valley Recreation Ground Lake

The last meeting of the Roding Valley Lake Group consisting of Epping Forest District Council officers, Parish/Town Council representatives and the Environment Agency representatives was held on 12 May 2010.

The update on the situation is as follows:

- (i) the fishing platform installed last year has sustained some damage to the lower board, this is being repaired.
- (ii) land bank erosion

There are two critical areas. One area was completed last year. The area by the footpath is now being dealt with and should be finished by the end of June. Much of the erosion is caused by geese and it is planned to consider installing a gravel area to enable the birds to get in/out of the water without continually eroding the banks.

There is another potential worn area by the old slipway and this area is being assessed to see if planting reed beds will help.

- (iii) Erosion of the main river bank

The Environment Agency is monitoring the river erosion. Loughton Town Council is concerned about three areas in their part of the Roding Valley and its impact on the path.

- (iv) Reed Beds

Reed beds are being planted in one area of the lake to improve water quality. Works will be started in one month to six weeks.

(v) Platforms

Platforms for use by fishermen are being installed and will be linked to the footpath.

(vi) Funding

The Environment Agency has assisted by grant funding part of the platform work and also the reed planting programme. Essex County Council helped to fund the platform for use by disabled people.

(vii) Fish Stock

The Environment Agency has donated some fish and those were released into the lake on June 18th.

(b) The progress made on these plans (including the bailiffing of fishing) with implementation dates if relevant

An attempt has been made to interest a fishing club in managing the site but to date this has been unsuccessful. The Environment Agency has supplied a list of clubs and those clubs will be approached to see if they will assist the Council to manage fishing activities in a better way.

(c) What other plans are in place to deal with the anti-social behaviour of some fishermen (usually not locals) before the implementation of any longer term arrangements

The Council has been dealing with some anti-social behaviour issues in the Roding Valley. Loughton Town Council have a member of staff who patrols their managed area of the Roding Valley. Management of the lake by a fishery club will improve management on the site. Once the management agreement for the part of the recreation area which is in Buckhurst Hill has been resolved, management responsibilities on the areas adjacent to the lake will be much clearer."

Councillor Murray advised that he did not wish to ask a supplementary question arising out of the original question or the response.

31. REPORT OF THE CABINET - COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - GREENSTED/ONGAR TOWN

Mover: Councillor Mrs D Collins – Leader of the Council

The Leader submitted a report following a request for a Community Governance Review of the rural part of the Greensted Parish Ward of Ongar Town to the Parish of Stanford Rivers.

In presenting the report the Leader drew attention to an e-mail received earlier in the day from a representative of Greensted residents expressing disappointment at the recommendations of the Cabinet. As a result it had been suggested that representatives of the Ongar Town Council should meet with residents of Greensted to discuss the issues further.

An amendment moved by Councillor Jacobs and seconded by Councillor J M Whitehouse to defer consideration of the matter pending the outcome of the meeting

between representatives of the Town Council and residents of Greensted was withdrawn following debate.

By leave of the Council, the Leader amended the recommendations of the Cabinet to clarify the extent of the proposed transfer.

Report as amended ADOPTED

RESOLVED:

That a Community Governance Review in respect of the Greensted Ward of Ongar Town Council be not pursued for the following reasons:

- (a) the representations made for the proposed transfer of the rural part of the Parish Ward of Ongar Town to the Parish of Stanford Rivers do not make a strong enough case for reflecting the identities and interests of residents of that Ward more effectively and conveniently than the present arrangements;
- (b) the case presented does not provide a convincing justification for concluding that the concerns expressed by Greensted residents and in particular those from Greensted Green will be better served by transferring the Ward to a different Parish Council; and
- (c) the absence of any view expressed by the Stanford Rivers Parish Council.

32. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW - MORETON, BOBBINGWORTH AND THE LAVERS PARISH COUNCIL

Mover: Councillor Mrs D Collins – Leader of the Council

The Leader submitted a report following a request for a Community Governance Review for the Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council area.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

- (1) That this Council agrees to embark on a Community Governance Review for the Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council area;
- (2) That the Council publishes this decision and the reasons for launching the review, namely:
 - (a) the proposal of Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council for revised warding for the three Lavers Parishes will achieve a more balanced electoral representation across the Parish area;
 - (b) the review will enable this Council to assess whether the local community support this proposal and wish to raise any other governance issues; and
- (3) That a new Committee be established to be responsible for progressing the review and making recommendations to the Council with

membership and terms of reference as submitted by the Returning Officer in a separate report.

33. **COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS - APPOINTMENT OF NON EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

Mover: Councillor Mrs D Collins – Leader of the Council

The Leader reported that following consideration of the earlier report concerning the Community Governance Review requested by Moreton, Bobbingworth and The Lavers Parish Council, the Cabinet had requested the Returning Officer to draw up terms of reference for its preferred option for taking that review forward, namely a Non Executive Committee.

The Leader reported on the proposed terms of reference of the Committee which would report direct to the Council on specific reviews or policy.

First amendment moved by Councillor Mrs D Collins and seconded by Councillor C Whitbread

“That recommendation (1) be amended by the addition of a new sub-paragraph (a) (iii) as follows:

“(iii) to report to the Council with a preliminary assessment of the steps required to achieve a reduction in the number of District Councillors serving on this Authority, including the question of changing to whole Council elections every four years with a view to assisting the Council in making decisions on those matters;” and

That an additional recommendation to be numbered (4) be approved as follows:

“(4) That the need for a larger membership for the proposed Committee be kept under review bearing in mind its future workload”.

By leave of the Council, Councillor Mrs Collins withdrew the above amendment and moved the following alternative amendment which was seconded by Councillor C Whitbread:

“(1) That paragraphs (a) and (b) of recommendation (1) be amended to read:

“(a) To consider and make recommendations to the Council on:

(i) requests for community governance reviews and how and when they should be carried out;

(ii) any future Parliamentary and District reviews;

(iii) the outcome of such reviews;

(b) To be responsible for progressing such reviews, including conducting public consultation in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007; and

(c) To keep under review the need for a larger membership for the Committee bearing in mind its future workload.”

Carried

Second amendment moved by Councillor D Stallan and seconded by Councillor J Philip

“That in the interests of continuity, named substitutes be appointed to the Committee”.

Carried

The Chairman invited Group Leaders to nominate members and substitutes to the Committee following which the Council elected a Chairman and appointed a Vice-Chairman from the nominated members.

RESOLVED:

(1) That a non executive Committee be appointed with the following terms of reference:

Title: Community Governance Review Committee

Purpose of Committee:

- (a) To consider and make recommendations to the Council on:
 - (i) requests for community governance reviews and how and when they should be carried out;
 - (ii) any future Parliamentary and District reviews;
 - (iii) the outcome of such reviews;
- (b) To be responsible for progressing such reviews, including conducting public consultation in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007;
- (c) To keep under review the need for a larger membership of the Committee bearing in mind its future workload;

Membership:

5 Councillors and 5 substitutes appointed by the Council in accordance with pro rata requirement.

Chairman and Vice-Chairman:

To be appointed each year by the Council.

Meetings:

The Committee shall meet as when necessary.

The Committee will meet in public session, be open to all District Councillors and shall be authorised to invite external organisations to attend for the purpose of fact finding and consultation.

Conduct of Reviews

The Committee shall be authorised to agree the detailed arrangements for consulting local communities on such reviews subject to the policy and budget approved by the Council.

Policy Issues

The Committee shall if necessary consider and make recommendations to the Council on future policy to be adopted in regard to such reviews;

(2) That the following members and substitutes be appointed to the Committee:

Conservative Group: Councillors J Philip, D Stallan and C Whitbread (substitutes: Councillors Mrs M Sartin, Mrs S Watson, Mrs E Webster)
LRA Group: Councillor D Wixley (substitute: Councillor Mrs C Pond)
Liberal Democrats Group: Councillor D Jacobs (substitute: Councillor J M Whitehouse);

(3) That Councillor J Philip be elected Chairman of the Committee for the current municipal year; and

(4) That Councillor D Stallan be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the current municipal year.

34. REPORT OF THE CABINET - HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - REFORM

Mover: Councillor C Whitbread - Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder reported that in July 2009, the Department for Communities and Local Government had published a consultation paper "Reform of Council Housing Finance" following a review of Council Housing Finance which had begun in March 2008. Following the conclusion of the consultation the Department had been working on a prospectus for a voluntary offer to local authorities to buy themselves out of the current HRA subsidy system. The issues had been considered by the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee who had taken account of the views of consultants appointed to advise the Council on these matters.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the Council's response to the Government consultation as set out in the Appendix to the report to the Council be approved.

35. STATUTORY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/10

Mover: Councillor A Green - Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee

Councillor A Green presented a report and the draft Statutory Statement of Accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2010.

Councillor Green advised that the Committee had also considered the draft Annual Governance Statement which was normally presented with the Statutory Statement of Accounts. The Committee had decided that part of the draft Statement should be reworded, a view endorsed by the external auditor, and an amended version of the Statement would be presented to the next meeting of the Committee. As a result the Committee was unable to recommend the Statement as drafted to Council and it had not been included with the Statutory Statement of Accounts at this time.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the Statutory Statement of Accounts for the financial year ending 31 March 2010 be approved.

36. REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTION AND MEMBERS SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - E-PETITIONS

By leave of the Council, Councillor Mrs M McEwen, Chairman of the Panel, made an oral report on this item.

Councillor Mrs McEwen advised that on 24 June 2010 the Panel had received a report on the new procedures for dealing with petitions including the introduction of electronic petitions. She advised that the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 required the Council to have arrangements in place by 15 June 2010 to comply with the procedures for dealing with petitions in compliance with the legislation. It also required that an electronic petitions procedure be approved by 15 December 2010.

Councillor McEwen reported that the Panel had concluded that devising a scheme for petitions was a task which would take time and involve careful discussion of all the options available. Accordingly, it had not been possible to deal with these issues at one meeting and the matter would be considered again at the next meeting of the Panel.

The Council noted that although the Act had been given Royal Assent in December 2009, statutory guidance had only been issued in March 2010 and the Council had been given relatively little time to consider what was a complex subject.

Councillor Mrs McEwen assured the Council that pending adoption of the new procedures the Council would continue to deal with petitions in accordance with its current procedure which had operated successfully for many years.

37. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - AMENDED STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Mover: Councillor Mrs P Brooks - Chairman of the Licensing Committee

Councillor Mrs Brooks reported that the Gambling Act 2005 made the Council responsible for issuing various permissions, permits and notices relating to the use of premises for gambling activities within its District. The Act required the Council to make decisions having regards to the Act, regulations, guidance issued by the Gambling Commission and its own policy document referred to in the Act as a Statement of Principles.

Councillor Mrs Brooks submitted a revised Statement of Principles to replace the current Statement which had been placed for three years.

Councillor S Murray questioned the list of consultees contained in Appendix B to the Statement. Councillor Mrs Brooks advised that the Director of Corporate Support Services would write to Councillor Murray advising him how the list of consultees had been compiled.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the Gambling Act 2005 amended Statement of Principles be adopted.

38. APPOINTMENTS OUTSTANDING FROM THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING

(a) Vice-Chairman of the Complaints Panel

The Chairman reported that the appointment of a Vice-Chairman of the Complaints Panel had been deferred at the Annual Council meeting. Members noted that in accordance with the protocol on the Allocation of Chairmanships and Vice-Chairmanships in the Constitution, the appointment should be on the nomination of the LRA Group.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Ms R Brookes be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Complaints Panel for the municipal year 2010/11.

(b) West Essex Area Forum

The Chairman reported that the appointment of a representative on the West Essex Area Forum had been deferred at the Annual Council meeting. Members noted that the protocol on the Allocation of Appointments to Outside Organisations in the Constitution was not a statutory pro rata requirement and that strict pro rata allocation had not been achieved for several years. Members noted that other authorities appointed their Leaders to attend the West Essex Area Forum.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council, be appointed as the Council's representative on the West Essex Area Forum for the municipal year 2010/11.

(c) Local Government Association – Rural Commission

The Chairman reported that the appointment of a second representative on the Local Government Association – Rural Commission had been deferred at the Annual Council meeting. At the Annual meeting, Councillor A Boyce had been appointed as the voting representative.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs M McEwen be appointed as the second representative on the Local Government Association – Rural Commission for the municipal year 2010/11.

39. PORTFOLIO HOLDER RESPONSIBILITIES

The Council noted the Portfolio Holder responsibilities agreed by the Leader of the Council following the creation of a ninth Portfolio.

40. CIVIC OFFICES CONDER BUILDING - CONTRACT FOR NEW WINDOWS AND INFILL CLADDING PANELS - WAIVING OF CALL-IN

Members noted that the Chairman of the Council had agreed that the decision of the Cabinet regarding the award of a contract for new windows and infill cladding panels in the Conder Building at the Civic Offices and the virement of a sum of £40,000 to provide the budget required should be treated as a matter of urgency and should not be subject to call-in.

41. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

There were no reports on the business of joint arrangements and external organisations under this item.

CHAIRMAN

Report to Council

Date of meeting: 27 July 2010

Subject: Overview and Scrutiny report to Council – July 2010

Chairman: Councillor Richard Morgan



Recommendation:

That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from June 2010 to the present be noted.

Report.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 12 July 2010.

1. At the July meeting, the Committee considered a call-in of a Cabinet decision on the Housing Portfolio Holder Report on the 'Adoption of revised Standard Caravan Site Licence Conditions for Permanent Residential Sites in Epping Forest District'. The call-in cited that there had been no consultation with residents and insufficient contact with local ward members. It also indicated that there was insufficient consideration given to the impact on privacy of residents by lowering hedges and fences to 1 metre. Members requesting the call in would like the existing hedges and fences to remain at a maximum of 2 metres. In support of the call-in, six separate petitions were received from the various caravan and mobile home parks in the district. The meeting was well attended by both councillors and the public, with about 220 members of the public being accommodated in the public gallery and the atrium in the reception area, where they followed the meeting on the big television screens showing a live feed from the chamber.

2. Unusually for a meeting considering a call-in, the Chairman allowed all the lead petitioners to speak at the meeting, giving each one a three minute spot to put their case forward. It must be said that they all gave a good account of themselves, putting forward the case for their residents in a clear and persuasive manner.

3. After a long and involved debate the Committee agreed to refer the decision back to the Cabinet to re-consider their decision, taking into account the need for a more in depth consultation with residents and further consideration on the hedges and fences heights. They may like to consider applying this rule for new builds and/or redevelopments only. The Portfolio Holder for Housing suggested that the entire decision be given to the Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel to consider in depth at one of their meetings and to make detailed recommendations to a future Cabinet meeting. This was fully endorsed by the Committee.

4. The Committee then went on to receive a presentation from the manager of the Local Strategic Partnership, John Houston, who took the Committee through the partnership work done over the last year. Their role was to make a better quality of life for the district, to meet any challenges ahead and to act as ambassadors for the District. They set up Task and Finish Panels to look into various items, to quickly make changes and then step down. They identified grants for local causes and partnership funding from external bodies, organised a seminar on jobs and were in the process of producing a Local Community Strategy.

5. They then considered a report on 'Value for Money, Equality and Diversity' where the committee were asked if they wanted this work transferred to them from the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Standing Panel. On consideration they decided that it should stay where it was.

6. The Committee then received a report updating an earlier report that first went to the Committee in November 2009. This was on a review of debt and money advice undertaken by a sub-group of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, looking at, amongst other things, the operation and District Council support of the of the Citizens Advice Bureau. This report updated recommendations made last year and reported on any progress made.

7. The Constitution and Member Service Standing Panel Chairman, Councillor Mrs McEwen reported on the latest annual review undertaken on the elections held in May 2010. Their finding indicated that the elections were carried out without any major problems and were considered to be quite successful in organisation and execution.

8. Finally, the Committee endorsed the CCTV delivery plan that originally went to the Safer Cleaner Greener Standing Panel and will now go on to Cabinet in September for their final approval.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2010

Subject: Finance and Economic Development Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Chris Whitbread

Item: 6(d)

Recommending:

That the report of the Finance & Economic Development Portfolio Holder be noted

Accountancy

The Government continue to make announcements about a number of projects and services and officers are working to evaluate the impacts of these. However, until the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review are made public in the autumn we will not have clarity over our revenue grants for the next four years. Against this background of uncertainty officers have started modelling a number of scenarios that will be reported as part of the Financial Issues Paper to the next meeting of the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee.

Benefits

Members may have seen the press coverage of the largest benefit fraud prosecution the district has undertaken. Over a period of more than ten years a couple had fraudulently obtained £130,000 in benefit payments. The operation to investigate their activities involved close working with other agencies and the police. Initially the couple entered not guilty pleas but faced with the quantity and quality of evidence our officers had amassed they changed their pleas to guilty. The husband was sentenced to thirty months imprisonment and the wife received a twelve month suspended sentence and 150 hours of community service.

I hope this acts as a strong deterrent to other would be fraudsters and would like to congratulate our investigators who have again demonstrated their high level of professionalism and dedication in bringing this couple to justice.

Revenues

The first quarter collection statistics for both Council Tax and National Non-Domestic Rates show slight improvements on last year. This is very pleasing given the ongoing difficult economic circumstances and I would like to thank the staff in Revenues as I know they are facing increasing hostility and have to deal with some very challenging circumstances.

Economic Development

The District's six Town Centre Partnerships, with the help of the Town Centres Officer, are continuing to promote their town centres with several seeking to progress their partnerships into a new phase with business and marketing plans aimed at increasing their effectiveness.

The Economic Development section has provided a Local Economic Assessment to the County Council to enable its drafting of the County-wide Economic Assessment. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill placed a new duty on county councils and unitary authorities to conduct an Economic Assessment. The evidence collated in producing the Assessment will be used to inform a new county-wide economic development strategy (with a working name of the Integrated County Strategy) in late 2010.

Economic Development is continuing to work with Harlow and Uttlesford, as an M11 Corridor grouping to deliver a programme of work to EEDA. This comprises quarterly economic intelligence reports so EEDA is better able to understand what is happening on the ground locally and the development and delivery of an advocacy plan to ensure promotion of the key issues locally as well as our key priorities etc.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 27 July 2010
Subject: Housing Portfolio **Item:** 6(e)
Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Stallan

Recommending:

That the report of the Housing Portfolio Holder be noted.

New Licence Conditions for Park Home Sites

At its meeting on 12 July 2010, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered a call-in of a decision of the Cabinet to issue new licence conditions, based on Model Conditions produced by Communities and Local Government, for all of the Park Home (Mobile Home) Sites in the District.

Around 220 park home residents attended the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting, and 6 lead petitioners addressed the meeting.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee decided to refer the matter back to the Cabinet on 10 September 2010, but also agreed my suggestion that, in the meantime, the Housing Scrutiny Panel be asked to consider the proposed new licence conditions and to make recommendations to the Cabinet on any changes to the proposed conditions that it considers appropriate.

National Comparison of Tenant Satisfaction Levels

Communities and Local Government (CLG) has recently published a national comparison of all the tenant satisfaction results for 2008. It provides details of the satisfaction levels, in relation to the 9 main subject areas surveyed, for all 182 stock-retaining councils in England.

For 8 of the 9 subject areas, the Council was within the top 25% of all council landlords. For 5 of the subject areas, the Council was within the top 15% of councils (with 3 within the top 6%).

The Council's overall satisfaction levels, across the 9 subject areas, was within the top 10% of all councils

The detailed results of the comparisons were reported in a recent issue of the Council Bulletin, and will be considered by the Housing Scrutiny Panel and the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation.

Housing Service Standards, Housing Charter and “Local Offer to Tenants”

At its meeting on 29 July 2010, the Housing Scrutiny Panel will be considering a report on the Housing Directorate’s performance against the 106 Housing Service Standards, and considering proposed changes, additions and deletions to the Service Standards in the light of that performance and current circumstances, as well as undertaking a review of the Housing Charter.

In April 2010, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) introduced its new Housing Regulatory Framework. In addition to setting out National Standards, with which the Council must comply, the Regulatory Framework also requires Registered Providers of Housing (including the Council) to consult with tenants and publish, by April 2011, a “Local Offer”, setting out the service that tenants can expect, and explain how the Council will meet the TSA’s National Standards.

The nature of the Local Offer is very much left to local discretion but, crucially, must be based on what the Council’s tenants expect.

At its meeting to be held on 20 July 2010, the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation will be considering the methodology to be adopted for considering and formulating the Local Offer.

It has been suggested to the Federation that the Federation forms a small Local Offer Sub-Group to work with senior housing officers to discuss and develop the Local Offer, and to put forward, in the first instance, a draft Local Offer to the Federation and myself for consideration.

It has also been suggested that, once the draft Offer has been agreed by the Federation and myself, all the Council’s tenants be consulted on the Local Offer - through the “Housing News” – with an invitation to comment on the Draft Local Offer, before the final Local Offer is agreed before the deadline of 1 April 2011.

Proposed Reduction of Heating Charges - Ninefields, Waltham Abbey

The communal heating systems in many of the Council-owned blocks of flats on the Ninefields Estate still date from the 1960’s and have now become costly to run. As a result, in 2010/11 the Council has had to make a £22.19 per week heating charge to tenants and leaseholders just to cover costs, a charge that is clearly disproportionate for a one-bedroom flat.

The Council is undertaking a programme of work to replace the boilers in the 216 affected properties, but this work will not be fully completed until 2011/12. Until each occupier has their new system installed they will have to continue to pay these high charges which, in my view, is unreasonable. Therefore, I am proposing to the Cabinet on 19 July 2010 that the charge be reduced to £16.69 a week, which is the amount paid by these tenants and leaseholders in 2009/10, until they each have their own boiler installed. If the Cabinet agree this proposal, a request for a Supplementary Estimate of £57,000 will be reported to this meeting of the Council.

The ward members were consulted on this proposal; one response was received which supported the proposal.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2010

Subject: Legal and Estates Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lesley Wagland

Item: 6(f)

Recommending:

That the report of the Legal and Estates Portfolio Holder be noted

Since the last Council meeting I have had the opportunity to spend some time getting to know some of the officers who work in my portfolio areas and finding out more about their current projects.

Information and Communications Technology

Mobile working is one of the ways to work smarter and improve efficiency across the Council. Officers in Benefits and Planning already use mobile technology and other services are keen to develop better ways of working. When I visited ICT the staff were excited about trialling live links from the Council's Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rate systems to a laptop that officers were taking to Court that afternoon to recover money owing to the Council. When officers attend Court to obtain liability orders they can be dealing with hundreds of cases and cannot possibly take all the paperwork on every case with them. The live links enabled the officers to demonstrate to the Magistrates the current balances and exact payment histories on accounts and refer directly to correspondence. This ensured that officers were able to deal robustly with any challenges or payment queries and obtain liability orders in cases that would have previously been adjourned.

Another issue where ICT have assisted in getting money into the Council is the new cash receipting and income management system. To provide greater confidence in electronic transactions a standard has been brought in called PCIDSS, which is Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards. The old system could not be amended to comply fully with these requirements and if the Council failed to put in a compliant system it could have lost the ability to accept payment by card. I am pleased to report that the new system went live earlier this month and is working well.

The final ICT issue to bring Members up to date with is the 'virtualisation' project, which involves replacing old servers with newer faster ones that are much smaller and require far less power and air conditioning. This project is currently ahead of schedule and of the 87 servers being virtualised 66 have now been completed.

Estates and Valuation

The proposed development of Langston Road Depot is being progressed on a number of fronts with emphasis on finding a solution to upgrading the traffic flows in Chigwell Lane. Further meetings are taking place between Essex Highways Authority

and the consultant jointly employed by the Council and the owners of the adjacent development site. These discussions will include defining the parameters necessary to prepare a model of traffic flows which will allow a detailed assessment of the traffic impact of the proposals. Following these discussions a meeting will be held to discuss whether it is felt that a viable scheme has been proposed that can be taken forward with the Council's Planning Department.

The Council have appointed Colliers International to provide development and valuation advice in respect of Langston Road and they are currently considering proposals in detail before advising on different options that the Council will have.

On 26 May 2010 the Council completed the purchase of the long leasehold interest in 148 Brooker Road, Waltham Abbey from the receiver. The Council already own the freehold interest and now have full vacant possession of the property which will be occupied by the Museum Service for storage and other services.

The Council currently leases 25 parking spaces from Punch Taverns the owners of the Black Lion Public House and have negotiated the purchase of the freehold interest subject to contract and Council approval. This will secure these parking spaces for the Civic offices in the future and provide a valuable return on the money invested due to the future saving in rental payments (6-7% Yield).

The Valuation & Estate Management Section has been very active in re-letting the Council's commercial properties including shops at the Broadway, industrial units and Hanger 5 at North Weald Airfield. It is seen as imperative to re-let vacant properties as soon as possible to maintain income flow.

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 27 July 2010

Subject: Safer and Greener Portfolio

Item: 6(j)

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Penny Smith

Recommending:

That the report of the Safer and Greener Portfolio Holder be noted

1. Safe and Sound Project

The "Safe and Sound" Project commenced 9 April 2010. A liveried van is now in use to further enhance the service. The service was formally launched on 30 June by Chairman of Council at Leonard Davis House, North Weald in the presence of representatives of all the Agencies involved. Publicity is available from all Council and Partner Information outlets and on EFDC website.

Preventing falls in the home and guarding against uninvited callers in the target age group is a priority of the Community Safety Partnership. Through the "Safe and Sound" scheme residents aged 60 and over, both Council tenants and private occupiers can be assisted to live independently at home through the provision of additional safety aids e.g. handrails, security locks. Safe and Sound is funded by Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership, Epping Forest District Council, NHS West Essex and Essex County Council with cooperation of the Fire Service (smoke alarm and fire prevention advice).

2. Portfolio Holder Decision - Dispersal Order – Nazeing

Community Safety Officers, local Police and Nazeing Parish Council have for some time been gathering evidence to address anti-social behavior issues in Nazeing. All relevant parties have been consulted including the relevant Authorities outside of Epping Forest District. The Order is effective for six months from the expiry of the call-in period and is to cover those specific areas identified with anti-social behaviour difficulties.

3. Epping Forest District Safer Communities Partnership (SCP)

At the AGM of the Epping Forest Community Safety Partnership held on 8 July, the Portfolio Holder for Safer and Greener was elected as Chairman of the SCP Strategy Panel. This appointment runs for two years. The SCP Chairman and officers have recently attended a joint Essex Police and Essex Probation Conference to deal with the new statutory obligations put on CSP's effective 1 April 2010 in relation to Integrated Offender Management.

4. Country Care Manager

It is appropriate to acknowledge formally the outstanding contribution that Paul Hewitt has made since joining the Authority 20 years ago. Developing Country Care and securing long serving Volunteers and Staff, with the whole aim of maintaining and enhancing our Nature Reserves, SSI's, special landscape features, advice to schools and community groups and much more. Paul is moving away from the District.

Questions by Members under Notice

(a) Collections of Residual Waste

By Councillor S Murray to Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

“(1) Does the Portfolio Holder consider it acceptable for there not to be weekly collections for residuals (black wheelie bins) during the summer months;

(2) What advice would she give to young families who are finding it extremely difficult to hygienically keep soiled nappies for 13 days between collections during the hot summer months (particularly in households with more than one youngster in nappies); and

(3) What steps does she intend to take in order to help solve this problem for the rest of the summer weeks and in future years, particularly bearing in mind the current Government’s recent statement in favour of the weekly collection of residuals”.

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