



Epping Forest District Council

DECISIONS

Committee:	CABINET
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 6 December 2010

Date of Publication:	14 December 2010
Call-In Expiry:	20 December 2010

This document lists the decisions that have been taken by the Cabinet at its meeting held on Monday, 6 December 2010, which require publication in accordance with the Local Government Act 2000. The list specifies those decisions, which are eligible for call-in and the date by which they must be called-in.

Those decisions that are listed as being “recommended to the Council...”, or request the Chairman of the Council to waive the call-in, are not eligible for call-in.

The wording used might not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes, which will take precedence as the minutes are the official record of the meeting.

If you have any queries about the matters referred to in this decision sheet then please contact:

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Call-In Procedure

If you wish to call-in any of the eligible decisions taken at this meeting you should complete the call-in form and return it to Democratic Services before the expiry of five working days following the publication date. You should include reference to the item title. Further background to decisions can be found by viewing the agenda document for this meeting at: www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/local_democracy

Decision No:

3. MINUTES

Decision:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2010 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

7. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CABINET COMMITTEE - 11 NOVEMBER 2010

Decision:

Economic Development Study of the Lee Valley White Water Centre

(1) That the Council be part of the commissioning of the Lee Valley White Water Centre Economic Development Study in combination with the other stakeholders;

(2) That a financial contribution towards this study be provided by the Council, capped at a maximum of £15,000, and that this cost be met from the existing LDF budget, subject the concerns previously expressed regarding the job description of the Joint Olympic Officer being satisfied; and

(3) That, when appointed, the Joint Olympic Officer be invited to give a presentation to the Cabinet Committee on their key priorities within their role.

8. FINANCE & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CABINET COMMITTEE - 22 NOVEMBER 2010

Decision:

Fees and Charges 2011/12

(1) That a general increase of 5% be applied to the fees and charges levied by the Council in 2011/12, with the exception of the following:

(a) pay-and-display car parking charges;

(b) Local Land Charges; and

(c) Hackney Carriage Operators and Vehicles Licences;

(2) That the proposed erroneous fee for 2011/12 reported to the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee for the Valuation and Legal Charge in respect of the re-sale of properties under the Right to Buy be corrected to £320 per application;

(3) That those fees and charges which incur VAT be increased on 4 January 2011 when the VAT rate reverts to 20%;

(4) That the garage rents for Council property tenants, which do not incur VAT, also be increased on 4 January 2011 to avoid different (higher) rents being charged for non-Council tenants, which do incur VAT;

(5) That the remaining increases be applied from 1 April 2011; and

(6) That the Finance & Performance Management Scrutiny Panel be requested to investigate Development Control fees and charges prior to responding to the current Government consultation;

Draft Continuing Services Budget & District Development Fund Lists 2011/12

(7) That a target of 75% of the identified underspends to be realised as budget savings be set, with Spending Control Officers required to explain in person to the Cabinet Committee if this target not be achieved within their

area of responsibility; and

Triennial Valuation of Pension Scheme

(8) That, as set out in the Essex County Council consultation, scenario (ii) to phase the impact of the increased pension scheme deficit contributions over 27 years with an ongoing contribution rate of 13% be adopted.

9. WAIVER OF CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS - HOUSING CONTRACTS

Decision:

(1) That the requirements of Contract Standing Orders C6 – C12 be waived to allow the Housing Directorate to continue:

(a) to use specialist contractors to undertake a variety of specialist works for the Housing Directorate without undertaking the full tendering processes required by Contract Standing Orders, subject to - in respect of all individual jobs exceeding £1,000 in value - either:

(i) quotes being obtained; or

(ii) works benchmarked and let based on the current schedule of rates used by the Housing Repairs Service; and

(b) to use the specialist service providers listed in the report for services in excess of £25,000 without competition, for the reasons given in the report;

(2) That, in accordance with good practice, the use of specialist contractors and suppliers by the Housing Directorate in 2009/10 be noted, whereby Contract Standing Orders C6 – C12 were not followed as previously agreed by the Cabinet for the reasons given in the report; and

(3) That a retrospective waiver of Contract Standing Order C6-12 be agreed in respect of an aggregated expenditure with Paragon Office Supplies Ltd just in excess of £25,000.

10. KEY OBJECTIVES 2010 / 11 - PROGRESS REPORT

Decision:

(1) That the Council's performance for the first six months of 2010/11 in relation to its key objectives for the year be noted.

11. EXECUTIVE CONSTITUTION

Decision:

(1) That the outcome of the public consultation regarding the form of Executive Constitution to be operated by the Council from May 2011 be noted;

(2) That the retention of the current Cabinet with Leader model be recommended to the Council for approval;

(3) That public notice be given of the adoption of the preferred resolution after the Council meeting on 14 December 2010; and

(4) That the intention of the Government to publish new legislation which would amend the law on Executive Constitutions and require a further public consultation be noted.

12. REFERENDUMS - BUDGET PROVISION 2011/12

Decision:

(1) That provision be made in the draft District Development Fund budget for expenditure in 2011/12 in the sum of £160,000 (maximum) regarding the Government referendum on the voting system and an associated item for income in the sum of £160,000 (maximum) to reflect the likely contribution from the Government to the cost;

(2) That the possibility of Mayoral Referendums for this Council and Essex County Council be noted and a further report be submitted on supplementary District Development Fund estimates for this purpose should the need arise; and

(3) That the funding of any Mayoral Elections be deferred for a report to a later meeting should these become necessary.

13. STRAW BALES AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT - MILLFIELD, HIGH ONGAR

Decision:

(1) That the Cabinet's previous decision in principle – to develop the vacant Council-owned land to the rear of 25-29 Millfield, High Ongar for affordable housing - be confirmed;

(2) That the site be developed to provide four affordable rented houses by Hastoe Housing Association, in the form of a small, innovative, energy efficient and eco-friendly, "exemplar" affordable housing scheme constructed from straw bales;

(3) That Hastoe Housing Association be encouraged to source the straw bales from local providers within the District if possible and appropriate;

(4) That other sustainable construction measures be explored by Hastoe Housing Association as part of the development design, including rain water harvesting, ground source heat pumps and "green roofs";

(5) That an "open book" approach be adopted to Hastoe Housing Association's development costs and income, and that any residual land value be paid to the Council in the form of a capital receipt, once the buildings had been constructed (possibly with the provision of advanced stage payment(s) during the construction process);

(6) That the Housing Portfolio Holder be authorised to agree:

(a) the detailed arrangements for the development, including the mix, tenure, rent levels and sustainability measures, once the national housing policy and any planning issues relating to the proposed development were clearer and confirmation from Hastoe Housing Association that adequate buildings insurance cover can be obtained for the properties; and

(b) on completion, the residual land value;

(7) That, subject to the receipt of planning permission, the Council-owned land be leased to Hastoe Housing Association for 125 years, with the Council receiving nomination rights in accordance with the District-wide Nominations Agreement with Hastoe Housing Association;

(8) That any capital receipt received by the Council be utilised to provide local authority social housing grant to a housing association to facilitate the provision of affordable housing on another site, or to provide additional funding for the Council's new Open Market Shared Ownership Scheme, and that the Housing Portfolio Holder be authorised to approve its most appropriate use; and

(9) That the Director of Housing be authorised to implement a Local Lettings Plan for the development, in accordance with the Council's Housing Allocations Scheme, on the basis that applicants were primarily selected with regard to their housing need and their choice, but also with regard to the need for occupants to be:

(a) fully supportive of the environmental objectives;

(b) able to obtain the greatest benefit from the energy efficiency measures; and

(c) willing to accommodate visits from other interested organisations in the future.

14. HOME OWNERSHIP GRANTS SCHEME

Decision:

(1) That the current position with regard to the Home Ownership Grant Scheme in 2010/11 be noted;

(2) That the scheme be suspended for one year in 2011/12, with no funding made available, other than £112,000 for 4 grants of £28,000 carried forward from 2010/11; and

(3) That budget provision for Home Ownership Grants be reviewed annually from 2012/13.

15. POTENTIAL REVENUE SAVINGS - COMMUNITY ARTS & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Decision:

(1) That, in accordance with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, the following budget reductions in the Community Arts and Public Relations budgets be agreed:

(a) a £35,000 reduction in project budget and deletion of part-time Art Administration Post within Community Arts; and

(b) a £65,000 saving from reducing the number of Forester editions from four to three per annum, and the deletion of the currently vacant Marketing Officer and part-time Public Relations Assistant posts within Public Relations.

16. WEST ESSEX COUNCILS GROUP - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Decision:

(1) That the following amendment to the Memorandum of Understanding, prepared by the West Essex District Councils' Group, be agreed:

"The Councils therefore undertake to:

- Always look first to a West Essex Councils Group approach to the influencing, commissioning and delivery of services for the benefit of the communities they serve *whenever it would facilitate best practice, best outcomes and best value.*"

(2) That the underlying principles and the outcomes contained within the West Essex District Councils' Memorandum of Understanding, as amended, be recommended to the Council for endorsement; and

(3) That the formal agreement of the Memorandum of Understanding, as amended, and the delegation of authority to the Leader of the Council to sign on behalf of the Council be recommended to the Council for approval.