

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MINUTES**

**Committee:** Cabinet **Date:** 24 October 2011

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 8.50 pm

**Members Present:** Mrs L Wagland (Chairman), Mrs R Gadsby, J Knapman, Mrs M McEwen, G Mohindra, Mrs P Smith and J Wyatt

**Other Councillors:** K Angold-Stephens, R Barrett, R Bassett, K Chana, Mrs D Collins, Mrs A Grigg, Ms J Hart, D Jacobs, D C Johnson, Mrs M Sartin, D Stallan, G Waller, C Whitbread, Mrs J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and D Wixley

**Apologies:** J Philip

**Officers Present:** D Macnab (Acting Chief Executive), J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), R Palmer (Director of Finance and ICT), P Pledger (Assistant Director (Property and Resources)), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and G J Woodhall (Democratic Services Officer)

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### **56. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

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

### **57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor D Stallan declared a personal interest in agenda item 16, Olympic Games "Look & Feel" and Ticket Allocation, by virtue of being a member of North Weald Bassett Parish Council. The Councillor had determined that his interest was not prejudicial and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

### **58. MINUTES**

#### **Resolved:**

(1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2011 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **59. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

(a) Environment

The Environment Portfolio Holder reported that efforts were being made to keep the Civic Amenities site in Ongar open to the public. Although the Parish Council owned the land, it was a privately run establishment. Local Ward Members welcomed the Portfolio Holder's endeavours.

**60. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

The following public question was read out by the Acting Chief Executive on behalf of Ms A Wood of Theydon Bois, who was unable to attend the meeting:

*“On behalf of the residents of Avenue Road.*

*Avenue Road has seven properties that are Council built and situated around a small green, the land being owned and maintained by the Council.*

*Two of these properties have residents who hold disabled parking permits.*

*Three of these properties are small bungalows and are designated by the Council for the over-sixties.*

*The other four are family houses of two or three bedrooms.*

*We have no option but to park on the grass verge, which in the winter can be impossible, and also use the turning head, for this is all we have. We also have a parking time restriction yellow line that was put in place in 2008.*

*We are asking for reassurance that the parking schemes budget will be protected and our parking scheme proceeds to the planning stage, with a schedule that is kept to.”*

The Housing Portfolio Holder gave the following response:

*“Members will see from the new rating table at Appendix 1 of my report on off street parking (agenda item 11) that Avenue Road is third in line to be considered for a scheme to provide off street parking for local residents. My recommendation is to progress the off street parking programme to undertake a feasibility study into whether it is possible to provide an off street parking scheme at Avenue Road in Theydon Bois and if suitable, to carry out a design for that site. Any scheme for that site will of course be subject to a planning application.*

*Members will also be aware that later in the Cabinet agenda, Members will be considering a review of the Capital Programme, which includes the budget provision for off street parking, which is jointly funded from the Housing Revenue Account and the General Fund. I hope that Members will support my recommendation to progress with an off street parking scheme at Avenue Road when considering the Capital Programme.”*

**61. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee reported that the following items of business had been considered at its meeting held on 18 October 2011:

(a) a lively and passionate presentation from the Epping Forest 14-19 Coordinator for Epping Forest Secondary Schools and also the West Essex Secondary Facilitator with the Children’s Commissioning and Delivery Board for Essex County Council;

(b) the Forward Plan & Executive Work Programme, including the Corporate Priorities for 2011/12;

- (c) feedback from a meeting concerning the proposed merger of Barts and the London, Whipps Cross and Newham NHS Trusts;
- (d) the response from Essex County Council to the recommendations made by the Council's Children Services Task & Finish Panel; and
- (e) two reports from the Constitution & Member Services Standing Panel concerning the Remuneration Panel and a review of polling districts and stations.

The Cabinet's agenda was reviewed and the Committee was concerned about the unnecessary expense incurred by holding separate elections in November 2012 for the Essex Police & Crime Commissioner.

## 62. FINANCE & PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CABINET COMMITTEE - 26 SEPTEMBER 2011

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Economic Development presented the minutes from the recent meeting of the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee held on 26 September 2011. The Cabinet Committee had made recommendations to the Cabinet regarding the: Sundry Income & Debt Policy; and Financial Issues Paper. Other issues considered by the Cabinet Committee had included the: Government Consultation on localising support for Council Tax in England; Annual Outturn Report on the Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators 2010/11; Value for Money and Data Quality Strategies 2010/11 – 2012/13; Annual Governance Report; and Quarterly Financial Monitoring for the period 1 April 2011 to 30 June 2011.

### Decision:

#### Sundry Income and Debt Policy

- (1) That the updated Sundry Income and Debt Policy be adopted; and
- (2) That a further report be considered by the Cabinet Committee, after the expiry of the Support Officer's contract, detailing a clear break down of the debts collected.

#### Medium Term Financial Issues Paper:

- (3) That the 2012/13 budget guidelines be set in accordance with the revised four year forecast as follows:
  - (a) the ceiling for Continuing Services Budget net expenditure be no more than £14.88million, including net growth;
  - (b) the ceiling for District Development Fund expenditure be no more than £763,000;
  - (c) balances continue to be aligned to the Council's net budget requirement and that balances be allowed to fall no lower than 25% of the net budget requirement; and
  - (d) the Council Tax not be increased, with the Council Tax for a band 'D' property remaining at £148.77;
- (4) That a revised Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period to 2015/16 be developed accordingly; and

(5) That communication of the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy to staff, partners and other stakeholders be undertaken.

**Reasons for Decision:**

The Cabinet was satisfied that the Cabinet Committee had fully addressed all the relevant issues in relation to the recommendations and that these should be endorsed.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

The Cabinet was satisfied that the Cabinet Committee had considered all the relevant options in formulating their recommendations. The Cabinet did not consider that there were any further options.

**63. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CABINET COMMITTEE - 3 OCTOBER 2011**

The Leader of the Council presented the minutes of the Local Development Framework Cabinet Committee held on 3 October 2011. The Cabinet Committee had made recommendations to the Cabinet regarding an update on the Lee Valley White Water Centre Economic Development Study. The Cabinet Committee had also considered the Draft National Planning Policy Framework Consultation and had made recommendations to the Planning Services Scrutiny Panel.

**Decision:**

Lee Valley White Water Centre Economic Development Study – Update

(1) That the projects related to the 2012 Olympic Games being delivered by the Council and its partners be noted;

(2) That the progress of and key findings and outputs from the Lee Valley White Water Centre Economic Study be noted; and

(3) That the six-month proposed work programme for the Olympic Regeneration Officer be approved.

**Reasons for Decision:**

The Cabinet was satisfied that the Cabinet Committee had fully addressed all the relevant issues in relation to the recommendations and that these should be endorsed.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

The Cabinet was satisfied that the Cabinet Committee had considered all the relevant options in formulating their recommendations. The Cabinet did not consider that there were any further options.

**64. POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER ELECTIONS - BUDGET PROVISION 2012/13**

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the budget provision in 2012/13 for the Police and Crime Commissioner Election in November 2012.

The Leader reported that budgetary provision would have to be made in 2012/13 to provide resources to administer elections in the District for a Police & Crime Commissioner for Essex under new Government legislation. The estimated cost was £148,000, based on the cost of last year's Referendum on the voting system. It was expected that the Government would refund the cost of this election. The current date for this election was likely to be in November 2012, which meant that additional provision was required in next year's budget separate from the Continuing Service Budget for the District and Parish council elections in May 2012. The effect of holding the election in November 2012 would be to lose the potential economies if the Police election was held alongside the scheduled local elections in May.

The Cabinet was concerned that the Government had not guaranteed to refund the full cost of the election, only a "reasonable" amount. It was also felt that holding a separate election for a Police Commissioner in Essex was not the best use of public money and did not provide value for money; the election should be scheduled alongside local elections in May.

**Decision:**

(1) That a District Development Fund (DDF) growth expenditure item in the sum of £ 148,000 (and a balancing DDF income item in the same sum) be included in the draft budget for 2012/13 in respect of the election of a Police & Crime Commissioner for Essex; and

(2) That, in the event there was any change in the funding regime when regulations were published, the Leader of Council be authorised to consider and include any revised figure for approval by the Council as part of next year's draft budget.

**Reasons for Decision:**

It would be a statutory responsibility for the Council's Returning Officer to administer this new election as part of an Essex-wide arrangement.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

There were no other options for action considered, as the administration of this election would be a statutory requirement.

**65. OFF STREET PARKING PROGRAMME**

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented a report regarding the Council's Off Street Parking Programme.

The Portfolio Holder reported that in April 2011, the Cabinet had approved the tender for the construction of off-street parking schemes at Hillcroft and Colebrook Gardens in Loughton and School Lane in Abbess Roding. The Cabinet had also agreed to progress the design of three more schemes in Loughton at Chester Close, Harvey Gardens and Audley Garden. Subject to the retention of the current budget within the Capital Programme, approval was now being sought to progress the construction of these three schemes.

The Portfolio Holder added that the ranking table for the future schemes had been revised, and that approval was now being sought to undertake detailed feasibility studies for the top three schemes at Wormingford Court in Waltham Abbey, Barfields

Gardens in Loughton and Avenue Road in Theydon Bois. A further report would be received by the Cabinet detailing the results of the studies before permission would be sought to commence the construction phase for these schemes.

The Cabinet expressed a little concern over the figures listed in Appendix 1 and questioned whether the results for each location would be different depending upon the time of day when the visit took place, especially in areas blighted by commuter parking problems. The Assistant Director (Property) stated that the Special Parking Requirements score covered any issues not dealt with by the preceding six categories. The Cabinet noted that the review of the Capital Programme was the next item to be considered at the meeting.

**Decision:**

(1) That the revised ranking table for future off-street parking schemes, as attached at Appendix 1 of the report, be adopted;

(2) That, subject to the retention of the current budget for the off street parking programme within the revised Capital Programme and following the completion of the off-street parking schemes at Hillcroft in Loughton, Colebrook Gardens in Loughton, and School Lane in Abbess Roding, Wedge Contracts Ltd be instructed to continue with the construction of the next three schemes, which the Cabinet had already agreed be progressed to the planning stage at:

- (a) Chester Close in Loughton;
- (b) Harvey Gardens in Loughton; and
- (c) Audley Gardens in Loughton; and

(3) That a detailed feasibility study be undertaken on the top three schemes on the revised ranking table, listed below, and a further report be received on the outcome to determine whether to grant authority to proceed to the construction phase at:

- (a) Wormingford Court in Waltham Abbey;
- (b) Barfields Gardens in Loughton; and
- (c) Avenue Road in Theydon Bois.

**Reasons for Decision:**

In order to progress with any further schemes, and in order to divert adequate resources to manage the off-street parking programme, which was one of the most resource intensive programmes within the Housing Assets Section, a Cabinet decision was required, in respect of both the ranking table and the capital expenditure.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To not undertake the construction of the further off street parking bays other than the three committed schemes at Hillcroft, Colebrook Gardens and School Lane. However, this would not resolve the parking problems recognised during recent parking surveys.

To undertake three further schemes at Chester Close, Harvey Gardens and Audley Garden only, which were already designed and had been submitted for planning consent, and to then suspend the remaining programme until further notice. However, once again this would not resolve the parking problems recognised during recent parking surveys

To seek approval from the Cabinet on an annual basis to construct further schemes from the ranking table at the Appendix 1. However, this could lead to abortive design costs should the programme be suspended.

## **66. CAPITAL PROGRAMME REVIEW**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Economic Development presented the review of the Council's Capital Programme for the period 2011/12 to 2015/16.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the revised Capital Programme would form the basis of the Council's Capital Strategy and the Asset Management Plan. The Capital Programme had been prepared by updating the programme approved in February 2011 and adding new schemes and allocations as subsequently approved by Cabinet. Each scheme within the capital programme had been reviewed and spending control Officers had reassessed estimated final costs and the phasing of expenditure profiles for each scheme as part of the capital review. Recommendations had been made to make amendments as appropriate.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the programme covered the five financial years to 2015/16. The detailed capital programme for non-housing schemes was shown by Directorate at Appendix 2 of the report and the detailed capital programme for housing schemes was shown at Appendix 3 of the report. A summary of estimated costs was given in Appendix 1. This showed an estimated capital spend of £46,380,000 over the five year period by the Council. It was highlighted that the compulsory purchase of 8/8A Sun Street in Waltham Abbey was now no longer necessary, and the capital provision had been re-allocated.

The Portfolio Holder advised that in respect of the funding available to finance these schemes, estimated external funding from grants and private sources of £2,868,000 had been identified, and it was proposed that capital receipts of an estimated £11,545,000 and revenue contributions of an estimated £31,967,000 be applied to finance the capital programme over the next five years. The estimated level of capital resources available now and in the future were given in Appendix 4. In summary, the balance of capital receipts was expected to fall from £18,694,000 as at 1 April 2011 to £8,300,000 by 31 March 2016 and the Major Repairs Reserve balance was expected to increase from £6,540,000 to £14,719,000 by the end of the period.

The Director of Environment & Street Scene explained that the £22,000 allocated for the Town Centre Enhancement Scheme at Loughton Broadway was being held back until the County Council formally adopted the scheme. When the scheme was adopted, the money would be released for the Cabinet to determine where else it should be spent. The Environment Portfolio Holder indicated that any monies available would be allocated to provide further CCTV provision within the Broadway area.

### **Decision:**

- (1) That the latest five-year forecast of capital receipts be noted;

- (2) That the level of usable capital receipts currently predicted to be £8.3million at 31 March 2016 be noted;
- (3) That the revised Capital Programme 2011/12 to 2015/16 be approved; and
- (4) That the following amendments to the Capital Programme be approved or, where relevant, recommended to Council to approve:
  - (a) carry forwards totalling £2.591million from 2011/12 to 2012/13 in respect of the capital schemes as outlined in the report;
  - (b) removal of the remaining sum of £173,000 in the General Capital Contingency;
  - (c) removal of the allocation of £378,000 set aside for the potential purchase of 8/8a Sun Street which was no longer necessary;
  - (d) removal of an anticipated underspend of £71,000 in respect of disabled facility grants to private households within the Housing General Fund in 2011/12;
  - (e) an additional allocation of £410,000 in the Housing Revenue Account capital programme in 2012/13 and 2013/14 to be financed from the increase in the Major Repairs Allowance; and
  - (f) virements within the Housing Revenue Account in respect of the categories of work identified in the report.

**Reasons for Decision:**

The capital programme was based on decisions already approved by the Cabinet or decisions that the Cabinet was soon to consider. The expenditure profiles suggested were based on Member agreed timescales and practical considerations. The proposed decisions were intended to make the best use of the capital resources currently available and forecast to become available for capital schemes to 2015/16.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To reconsider the inclusion of some new schemes or re-assess the inclusion of some existing schemes.

To reduce revenue contributions (RCCO) by increasing the use of usable capital receipts, beyond that which was required. However, the RCCO levels suggested in this report were affordable within the HRA, according to current predictions, and any use of usable capital receipts for HRA purposes would have the effect of reducing capital resources available for the General Fund.

To use the Major Repairs Reserve to reduce RCCO contributions, as it was forecast to increase from £6,540,000 to £14,719,000 over the next five years.

**67. OFF-STREET CAR PARKING - TRAFFIC ORDERS**

The Portfolio Holder for Safer, Greener and Highways presented a report about the Off Street Parking Places Order 2011.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the Council had an Off Street Parking Order which was sealed in 2003. This Order controlled the use of the Council's Car Parks and



was used for the basis of enforcement controls. Since 2003 when the original order was made, there had been a further three orders made which had amended the original order. In addition, the Council had published a number of notices which had varied parking charges over time in accordance with previous budget decisions. The proposed order would consolidate all previously made orders, regularise the use of the Council's RingGo system and introduce a new class of Permit to allow, at the Council's discretion, use of parking places for commercial enterprises.

The Portfolio Holder stated that, although there were no plans to allow commercial enterprises into the Council's car parks at the current time, any prospective enterprises would require planning permission and licences to comply with the relevant legislation as well as a permit from the Council.

**Decision:**

- (1) That the Director of Environment and Street Scene be authorised to advertise the draft Off Street Parking Order 2011;
- (2) That, should objection be made to the Order within the statutory timescale, the Safer, Greener and Highways Portfolio Holder be given delegated authority to consider and determine such objections and, if appropriate, approve amendments to the Order;
- (3) That, taking into account any possible objections, the Directors of Environment & Street Scene and Corporate Support Services be authorised to make and seal the order in accordance with the statutory regulations;
- (4) That the Director of Environment & Street Scene, in consultation with the Safer, Greener & Highways Portfolio Holder be authorised to seek, consider, negotiate and issue permits and/or enter into contracts on behalf of the Council for Commercial Business Permits envisaged within the Parking Order; and
- (5) That, subject to review each year by the Cabinet and approval of tariffs by the Council, the Director of Environment & Street Scene be authorised to publish notices under Section 35C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to enable the implementation of future variations to parking.

**Reasons for Decision:**

The Council was now part of the North Essex Parking Partnership and it was important that the Council's Parking Orders were robust, up to date and reflected current operation. The proposal for Commercial Permits would allow additional income to be generated within the car parks.

The proposal to delegate decisions on the making of the parking order was in line with previous decisions made by the Council.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

The Council could choose not to make the Parking Order at this time, or to seek to alter its charging regime.

**68. SAFETY OF THE BUND AT NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Economic Development presented a report concerning the safety of the Bund at North Weald Airfield.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the stability of the noise bund adjacent to the M11 motorway had been an issue for a number of years. It had now been established that, although there was no immediate concern regarding failure and risk of it sliding onto the M11 motorway hard shoulder, there was a low to moderate risk of it doing so. The Council's insurance company had assessed the risk and advised that it would be better managed and easier to defend if the Council could prove it had taken "reasonable and prudent measures" to reduce the Risk. Therefore, it was recommended that a planned monitoring regime was implemented comprising of a full topographical survey completed every 5 years (estimated cost £5,000) and a visual survey undertaken every 2 years (estimated cost £3,000). It was also felt that any discussions regarding the future of the Airfield should include the re-profiling or removal of the bund, which would eliminate the long term risk to the Council.

**Decision:**

(1) That, for the on going assessment of the condition of the bund at North Weald Airfield, District Development Funding be sought in the sums of:

- (a) £3,000 for 2012/13;
- (b) £3,000 for 2014/15; and
- (b) £5,000 for 2015/16.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To enable the Council to demonstrate that it was managing the present risk within a reasonable cost.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To monitor the bund every six months so that any slight movement was detected immediately. However, this was considered excessive as the previous findings had not indicated any problems to date.

To re-grade sections 11 and 16 so that any slippage would not pass over the Council's boundary onto the motorway hard shoulder. However, this was a very costly option and was considered out of proportion to the risk indentified.

**69. DOOR STEP TEXTILE COLLECTIONS**

The Environment Portfolio Holder presented a report on the outcome of a pilot scheme for the collection of textiles at the door step.

The Portfolio Holder reminded the Cabinet that the previous door step textile collection service had ceased due to operational difficulties. Until recently it was not possible to reintroduce a door step textile collection service for a variety of reasons, including the provision of sorting facilities, storage and agreement on costs of collections. A pilot scheme for a new door step textile collection was launched in April 2011 by utilising the services of Lawrence M. Barry Limited. The pilot had proven to be very successful with residents generating 2.9 tonnes of recyclable textiles. The sale of the textiles collected had generated an income of £886 in the first five months (April to August).

The Portfolio Holder stated it was felt by Officers that, based on resident feedback, anecdotal evidence and good practice elsewhere, participation would be higher if such a scheme was linked to a charitable cause. It was for this reason that the pilot scheme had been advertised on the basis that all income, after deduction of cost of collection, would be given to the Chairman's charities. In order to ensure that procurement process were fully adhered to, it was proposed to include this service within the procurement exercise to be undertaken for the Council's bring schemes (i.e. recycling banks).

Members were concerned about the possibility of the theft of textiles left out for collection, and the Portfolio Holder undertook to investigate further. One option would be to post a receipt at the property when the textiles were collected. In response to further queries from the Members present, the Portfolio Holder agreed to examine the possibility of tetra pack collection and recycling, and that the scheme should be advertised more widely to increase its use. The amount collected was very small at the moment, 7.1 tonnes against a total recycling figure of 30,000 tonnes (0.02%), but any form of textile could be collected, regardless of whether it was fit to be worn.

**Decision:**

- (1) That, in view of the success of the pilot scheme launched in April 2011, the doorstep textile collection service be continued;
- (2) That the estimated income of £2,130 derived from the sales of textiles collected at the door step, after deducting collection costs, be donated to the Chairman of Council's charities for 2011/12;
- (3) That any decision on income from the scheme in future years be kept under review;
- (4) That the scheme be advertised more widely throughout the District to increase its use by residents; and
- (5) That the doorstep textile collection service be included within the procurement exercise for the Council's bring schemes (i.e. recycling banks).

**Reasons for Decision:**

To seek approval for the ongoing provision of the door step textile collection and transfer of income received to the Council Chairman's charities.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To ignore the success of the pilot door step textile collection service and not continue the service on an ongoing basis. However, although some residents would be able to make their own arrangements, there was a risk that a proportion of recyclable textile materials would end up in landfill.

To not pay the income generated to the Chairman's charity could create difficulties with the residents as the pilot scheme was advertised on this basis.

**70. OLYMPIC GAMES - "LOOK & FEEL" AND TICKET ALLOCATION**

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Wellbeing presented a report on Olympic Games "Look and Feel", and also the proposed method for distributing the tickets allocated to the Council.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the Olympic Games would take place in July and August 2012. The white water events (canoe and kayak) were scheduled to take place at the White Water Centre located just across the border from Waltham Abbey in the Borough of Broxbourne. The transport hub and taxi hub were both located adjacent to the venue within the District, and one of the park and ride facilities would operate from North Weald Airfield.

The Portfolio Holder reported that a key element of the Olympic celebration would be the decoration of the venue and the surrounding area, referred to as "Look and Feel". "Look and Feel" included items such as lamp column banners, flags, bunting and barrier covers. £270,000 had been provided to Broxbourne Borough Council for the decoration of the area around the White Water Centre. Of this sum, a significant proportion would be utilised within the District in dressing Waltham Abbey, parts of the route to the venue, the transport hub and the park and ride at North Weald Airfield.

However, the Portfolio Holder felt that it was important that the whole District was able to join in the Olympic celebration. It was therefore proposed that a fund be established whereby local Town and Parish Councils could bid for "Look and Feel" dressing, with the costs being jointly met by the District Council on a match funding basis. Broxbourne Borough Council had recently considered this issue and had resolved to allocate an additional budget of £50,000 for "Look and Feel" in its Borough away from the main venue area.

The Portfolio Holder advised the Cabinet that the Council had been approached by the Government Olympic Executive in November 2010 to bid for tickets for the Opening and Closing ceremonies of both the Olympic and Paralympic Games, as well as a number of the Canoe Slalom events at the Lea Valley White Water Centre. The total cost of the Council's allocation was £2,875. It was proposed that all the Council's tickets be allocated to local residents, either through the Council's annual Citizen of the Year awards or by public nomination. No Councillors or Officers would be eligible for any of these tickets. In addition, it was proposed to allocate some tickets to St Clare Hospice, Chigwell Riding Trust, Oakview School in Loughton and King Harold School in Waltham Abbey. Tickets via public nomination would be decided by a Panel consisting of the Chairman of Council, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing, and the Council's Olympic Champion.

There was significant support for the proposals from the Members present, as there was much excitement amongst the young people of the District over the Olympics, and it was an opportunity for the District to promote itself through having a showcase event so close to Waltham Abbey.

A group of Members present expressed their concern about spending £38,000 on the Olympic Games at the current time. It was highlighted that the Council was not receiving any payment for the use of North Weald Airfield as a park-and-ride facility from the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG) and that consideration should be given by the Council to compensating the parish of North Weald Bassett. It was also felt that if the Council was to buy tickets then they should be distributed all the schools in the District, by lottery if necessary, and not just a few schools in or around Waltham Abbey. In addition, the Council should look to make savings within its District Development Funding budget to pay for this rather than seeking new finance, either as a supplementary estimate or as a growth bid.

The Leader of the Council responded that other schools within the District had benefitted from the White Water Centre, for example receiving free entry to the test events. It was important to get the local young people involved in the local venue, hence the eleven tickets being made available for King Harold School in Waltham Abbey. It was highlighted that twenty of the Council's tickets were available via public nomination with the decision being taken by the proposed Panel. No supplementary estimate had been requested and that growth bids for DDF expenditure were being made for 2012/13.

It was suggested that the Council should investigate whether local Town and Parish Councils wished to get involved with celebrating the Olympic Games. It was accepted that local councils did not have to participate and that the Council would only issue packs to those that wished to, however a surge of interest was expected as the Games got closer. The Council would expect the local council to match fund the District Council for the "Look & Feel" items. The Director of Environment & Street Scene reminded the Cabinet that it was limited to the items contained within the "Look Book" and that as these items were Olympic branded, they could not be used for anything else.

**Decision:**

- (1) That a bid for £35,000 of District Development Fund (DDF) expenditure in 2012/13 for the funding of community Olympic "Look and Feel" schemes be approved;
- (2) That the local Town and Parish Councils be given the opportunity to request "Look and Feel" pound for pound match funding to assist their local communities in celebrating the 2012 Olympic Games;
- (3) That a bid for £3,000 of DDF expenditure be agreed in 2012/13 to purchase the Olympic and Paralympic Tickets awarded to the District Council;
- (4) That the Olympic and Paralympic Tickets awarded to the Council be allocated as follows:
  - (a) 2 x £150 Olympic Opening Ceremony tickets to the Citizen of the year 2012/13;
  - (b) 2 x £150 Olympic Closing Ceremony tickets to the Young Citizen of the Year 2012/13;
  - (c) 2 x £35 Olympic Canoe Slalom tickets to the Citizen of the Year Runner-Up 2012/13;
  - (d) 2 x £35 Olympic Canoe Slalom tickets to the Young Citizen of the Year Runner-Up 2012/13;
  - (e) 5 x £35 Olympic Canoe Slalom tickets to a person resident in the District and their family in the care of St Clare Hospice;
  - (f) 5 x £35 Olympic Canoe Slalom tickets to a young person resident in the District and their family participating at Chigwell Riding Trust for Special Needs;

- (g) 5 x £35 Olympic Canoe Slalom tickets to a young person resident in the District and their family attending Oakview School in Loughton;
- (h) 6 (3 pairs) x £35 Olympic Canoe Slalom tickets to residents of the District nominated by members of the public;
- (i) 11 x £20 Olympic Canoe Slalom tickets for nine pupils and two teachers at King Harold School in Waltham Abbey;
- (j) 14 (7 pairs) x £20 Olympic Canoe Slalom tickets to residents of the District nominated by members of the public;
- (k) the estimated allocation of 6 (3 pairs) x £75 Paralympic Opening Ceremony tickets to residents of the District nominated by members of the public; and
- (l) the estimated allocation of 6 (3 pairs) x £75 Paralympic Closing Ceremony tickets to residents of the District nominated by members of the public;
- (5) That the allocation of the tickets nominated by members of the public be determined by a panel consisting of:
  - (a) the Chairman of the Council;
  - (b) the Leisure & Wellbeing Portfolio Holder; and
  - (c) the Council's Olympic Champion; and
- (6) That neither Epping Forest District Councillors nor Epping Forest District Council Employees be nominators for, or recipients of, any publicly nominated tickets.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To enable all local Town and Parish Councils within the Epping Forest District to celebrate the Olympic Games.

To purchase and allocate tickets for the Olympic games to deserving residents within the District.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To make the "Look and Feel" dressing available to Town and Parish Councils, but for the District Council to offer no match funding.

For the District Council to meet all of the costs for communities.

To exclude all local Town and Parish Councils, apart from Waltham Abbey, from the "Look and Feel" exercise.

To not acquire all/some of the Olympic tickets which had been allocated to the Council.

**71. COUNCIL CREDIT RATING**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Economic Development presented a report

regarding the attainment of a credit rating by the Council.

The Portfolio Holder reminded the Cabinet that it had decided on 18 July 2011 to obtain a credit rating, as this would give the Council the best possible options in reviewing and obtaining external finance for the self financing of the Housing Revenue Account debt settlement. On 19 September 2011 there had been an unexpected reduction in Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) interest rates for HRA self financing loans, which had made market financing less attractive and consequently had undermined the case for the Council obtaining a credit rating.

**Decision:**

(1) That the previous decision made by the Cabinet on 18 July 2011 to obtain a credit rating for the Council be reversed, due to the unexpected reduction in interest charges by the Public Works Loans Board.

**Reasons for Decision:**

In reducing the interest rates from the Public Works Loans Board, the Government had fundamentally changed the borrowing options for local authorities. The Cabinet had made its previous decision in July based on the information and advice available at that time; as the situation had now changed, it was appropriate to reconsider that decision.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To proceed with the obtaining of a credit rating, although the rating was unlikely to be of any practical use if obtained.

**72. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

In accordance with Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, together with paragraphs (6) and (24) of the Council Procedure Rules, the Leader of the Council had permitted the following item of urgent business to be considered following the publication of the agenda:

(i) Government Consultation – Local Government Resource Review: Proposals for Business Rates Retention.

**73. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCE REVIEW: PROPOSALS FOR BUSINESS RATES RETENTION**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Economic Development presented a report on the Council's suggested response to the Government consultation on proposals for Business Rates Retention as part of the Local Government Resource Review.

The Portfolio Holder reminded the Cabinet that the Government had published its 'Local Government Resource Review' consultation paper on 18 July 2011. The review proposed that the current local government finance system, under which the Government distributed Business Rates to Local Authorities, was replaced. The proposed reforms would allow Local Authorities to keep a share of the growth in local Business Rate income to incentivise them to promote business growth; however they would also bear the impact of any reduction in Business Rates. Following the publication of the consultation paper, the Government released eight technical papers on 19 August 2011 which aimed to provide more detail on the proposed

reforms. The deadline for responses to the consultation was 24 October 2011 with the Government aiming for legislation to be enacted by April 2013.

The Portfolio Holder added that the proposed responses to the consultation had been prepared following discussions with other Essex authorities and after considering the views expressed in responses from the Society of County Treasurers and the Society of District Council Treasurers. Hence the report had been prepared very close to the date of the meeting and published on a supplementary agenda. The Council's proposed response to the consultation was attached at Appendix 1 of the report and the Cabinet was requested to approve it for transmission to the Government before the deadline expired at midnight.

Two initial concerns with the proposals were highlighted, that the cost of the proposals was being transferred from central to local Government, and the most depressed areas of the country would lose out under the proposals. The Portfolio Holder emphasised that a pooling system had been included in the proposals for more deprived Councils and each Council would have a different baseline value.

The Director of Finance & ICT emphasised the key areas with the proposals highlighted in the report and in particular the fact that any monies due to the Council from the New Homes Bonus would be "top-sliced" by using funding from the growth in Business Rates due to the Council anyway. There were so many variables within the proposed scheme that the modelling had been very difficult and the outcomes were still not certain. It was highlighted that if every Council in Essex pooled their business rate increases together then there would be an additional £3.8million of funding available within Essex, even though three Councils would see a reduction in funding. The Cabinet agreed the Council's proposed response, with the comment that this was another example of the central Government looking to replace direct grants with incentive based funding for local authorities.

#### **Decision:**

- (1) That the Government proposals for Business Rates Retention be noted; and
- (2) That the proposed response by the Council to the Government consultation on Business Rates Retention, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved.

#### **Reasons for Decision:**

The consultation contained a number of inter-related options, which made it difficult to predict with any confidence the likely impact on this Council. However, within the broad principals of the scheme there were aspects that would either be more favourable or more detrimental to this Council. Therefore, it was important to respond to the consultation to seek the best possible outcome for this Council.

#### **Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To not respond to the consultation, however the Government would not then take account of the Council's views.

**CHAIRMAN**