

Scrutiny Standing Panel Agenda



Housing Scrutiny Standing Panel Tuesday, 31st January, 2012

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

Time: 5.30 pm

Democratic Services Officer: Mark Jenkins (The Office of the Chief Executive)
Tel: 01992 564607 Email:
democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

Members:

Councillors S Murray (Chairman), A Mitchell MBE (Vice-Chairman), Ms R Brookes, K Chana, Mrs A Grigg, Ms J Hart, Mrs S Jones, W Pryor, D Stallan, H Ulkun and Mrs J H Whitehouse

SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE:

16:30

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.

1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION (Pages 5 - 8)

1. This meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to activate

their microphones before speaking.

2. The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“Due to public interest the first item of this meeting will be webcast for subsequent uploading to the Internet 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. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

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

4. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

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

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

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

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

5. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 9 - 24)

To agree the notes of the Panel meetings held on 25 October and 28 November 2011 (attached).

6. TERMS OF REFERENCE / WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 25 - 32)

(Chairman/Lead Officer) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed the Terms of Reference of this Panel and associated Work Programme. This is attached. The Panel are asked at each meeting to review both documents.

7. PARK HOMES LICENCES - PROGRESS REPORT AND CONSIDERATION OF FURTHER ISSUES (Pages 33 - 46)

(Director of Housing) Both the park home site owners and the park home residents

associations have been invited to nominate one representative from each interest group (site owners and residents associations) to attend the meeting, to orally summarise the views of their interest group on the issues in the report. However, they will not take part in any subsequent debate. Report attached.

8. REVIEW OF SOCIAL HOUSING FRAUD INITIATIVE - PRESENTATION (Pages 47 - 52)

(Director of Housing) To receive a presentation and consider the attached report.

9. FIRE SAFETY IN FLAT BLOCKS (Pages 53 - 68)

(Director of Housing) To consider the attached report.

Officer Report – Page 53

(a) CLG Letter to Councillor D Stallan (then Housing Portfolio Holder) – page 63

(b) Essex County Fire & Rescue Service Letter to Councillor J Knapman – page 65

(c) Essex County Fire and Rescue Service Letter to P Ledger – page 67

10. RESPONSE TO CLG CONSULTATION PAPER ON "REINVIGORATING THE RIGHT TO BUY AND ONE FOR ONE REPLACEMENT" (Pages 69 - 100)

(Director of Housing) To consider the attached report.

11. MEMBER INFORMATION EVENING - LOCALISM ACT AND WELFARE REFORMS

The Housing Scrutiny Panel are asked to note that there will be a Member Information evening on the Localism Act on Tuesday 28 February 2012 at 7pm in the Council Chamber. In addition, the Council's Benefit's Manager will be giving a briefing to Members on the current position regarding the proposed Welfare Reforms.

This is a very important event as it is an opportunity to update Members on a number of discretionary powers being given to Local Authorities and Housing Providers under the Localism Act which means that more decisions about the provision and management of housing can be taken locally. These include:

- Ability to offer new tenants fixed term Flexible Tenancies
- Changes to succession rules for all new tenants and the possibility of granting additional rights above the level set out on the Act
- Having an eligibility criteria for homeseekers joining the Housing Register
- Having the ability to discharge the homelessness duty in the private rented sector without the agreement of the applicant

At future meetings, the Panel will be considering a number of related issues including:

1. The Council's response to the Government's Draft Statutory Guidance on the Allocation of Accommodation and Armed Forces Regulations;
2. Recommending to the Cabinet subsequent changes under the Review of the Housing Allocations Scheme; and
3. Considering a report on the Council's new Tenancy Policy making recommendations to the Cabinet on potential tenure reforms.

It is considered to be essential that all Members attend this event as it will assist them throughout the process.

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

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

13. FUTURE MEETINGS

The Panel agreed to an extra-ordinary meeting scheduled for 5 March 2012 at 5.30p.m. in Committee Room 1. The following meeting will be on Tuesday 13 March at 5.30p.m., also in Committee Room 1.