

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF SAFER, CLEANER, GREENER SCRUTINY STANDING
PANEL
HELD ON MONDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2011
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.30 - 8.41 PM**

Members Present: Mrs M Sartin (Chairman), Mrs C Pond (Vice-Chairman), K Avey, W Breare-Hall, Mrs T Cochrane, A Mitchell MBE, G Mohindra (Finance and Economic Development Portfolio Holder), P Spencer and Mrs E Webster

Other members present: K Angold-Stephens, Mrs M McEwen and J Philip

Apologies for Absence: Ms Y Knight

Officers Present K Durrani (Assistant Director (Technical)), B Meuli (Land Drainage Engineer), I White (Forward Planning Manager) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

16. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

The Panel noted there were no substitute members.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor G Mohindra declared personal interest in agenda item 6 as he was a member of Chigwell Parish Council.

Councillor P Spencer declared personal interest in agenda item 6 as he was a member of Buckhurst Hill Parish Council.

Councillors C Pond and K Angold-Stephens declared personal interests in agenda item 6 as they were members of Loughton Parish Council.

Councillor J Philip declared personal interest in agenda item 6 as he was a member of Theydon Bois Parish Council.

18. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The notes from the 7 July 2011 meeting were agreed as a correct record.

Panel members noted that:

- under paragraph 4.1. – a report on the new SITA contract would be coming to this Panel in the new year when contract details were known.
- Under paragraph 6, Councillor Spencer noted he had seen a sign stating there 'may' be CCTV cameras in the vicinity and wondered if this was still a legal statement.

19. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel noted their Terms of Reference and Work Programme. They also noted that the review of the new SITA contract should be added to their work programme.

20. ENVIRONMENT AGENCY CONSULTATION - RIVER RODING CATCHMENT

The Panel considered the Council's response to the Environment Agency Consultation on managing flood risk in the Roding catchment area. This had previously gone to a special meeting of the Planning Services Standing Panel held on 13 September 2011. Since that meeting, EFDC officers had met with Environment Agency (EA) officers and had put the concerns raised by the Planning Services Panel to them. The EA officers were able to answer some of the questions and although a number of concerns still remained, it was now felt that there was sufficient information to enable a formal response to be submitted.

The Panel considered the report setting out the discussions and the basis for the Council's formal objection to the proposals on the grounds of the potentially detrimental effects, in terms of flood risk on the residents of Epping Forest adjacent to the floodplain; individual properties and areas of land including the land owned by the Council; and ordinary watercourses within the district. For some streams in the Roding catchment, the EA was not the enforcement authority but the District Council. This would have resourcing implications for the Council and where they were the riparian owner of the land, if it got flooded or was in need of maintenance it would be up to the District to put it right. Any flooding implication would also have wider implications for planning as well.

Councillor Spencer said that the EA map showed the flood plains. Would there be maps produced (by the EA) updating the flood plains after they have carried out their work. Mr Durrani, the Assistant Director for Environment and Street Scene, noted that the EA were proposing to carry out no maintenance on the River Roding, letting the river revert back to its natural state. The river had a higher element of flooding once it entered Redbridge, with a higher risk of damage to property, so they were looking to stop maintenance in the rural parts of its course. As for the flood plain mapping, they would revise the maps on a regular basis. But officers were unsure of their modelling for this. If left alone the river would start to shift course. But officers could not challenge their modelling as it was their data.

Councillor Mohindra wanted to know the cost implications to the Council. Mr Durrani said it was not clear at this stage; the EA said it should not change much. In the past EFDC used to call on the EA to help out, but they would now have to call on the Parish Councils where they were riparian owner. Officers would monitor the work closely and report back to the Cabinet on the financial implications.

The Chairman asked who would be responsible if there was a big incident such as a chemical spill. She was told that hopefully the EA would be. Their help would certainly be asked for on the larger incidents, as they have said that the main responsibility remained with them.

Councillor Breare-Hall minded that the EA was seeking part funding for the Shonks Mill Flood Storage Area development, asked if there was any funding available for the Council. He was told that there was no indication of any funding that was available for the Council.

Councillor Webster expressed concern about the Abridge area which was prone to flooding and according to the EA report this area would experience little change in

flood risk. She wondered if there anything that could be done in this area. Mr Durrani said that this was one of the areas identified after the 2000 flooding. The EA modelling said that only 15 properties would be adversely affected over the whole district.

Councillor Breare-Hall asked if any properties would benefit from the current EA scheme. He was told the area from the M25 downwards would benefit from this scheme as the stream would be slowed down. All properties downstream of the Shonks Mill flood storage area should have a better level of protection from flood events of higher return periods.

Councillor McEwen said it seemed like the northern half of the District had been abandoned. The EA standard would be such that the riparian owners could not afford the repairs and would be held liable. She was also told that Highways would be responsible for flooding on roads, how could they help? Mr Durrani replied that if the flood had caused any blockage of the highway then they would maintain it. As for riparian owners, the standard would not be any different and the EA would work with them. Recently they had held an event in Ongar explaining this.

Councillor Philip said there was a chance that the storage area would not get built and that would make it worse for our district. Would it be possible to ask for some of the proposed £150k savings to be paid to us to help us maintain the river? They could give us about a fifth, say £30k.

Councillor Angold-Stephens said that the Roding went through his ward. There was serious eroding along this stretch which would mean that the river would change its course over the long term. Some of this erosion was caused by people and animals. There was also a lot of detritus in the river. All these problems would cost the Council in the future. He supported Councillor Philip's proposal that we ask for a proportion of their savings.

Asked if Planning Section had any comments, Ian White, the Forward Planning Manager, said that his concern was the impact on the flood zones, as he was looking for development and growth but that could be limited in the future.

The Fyfield Parish Council Chairman and a local resident were at the meeting and expressed their concerns over the risk to flooding in the Fyfield area. They noted that only a few properties had been visited by EA inspectors to assess the risks of flooding, leaving many other, lower lying houses, to fend for themselves. These were not thought to be in any extra flooding danger by the EA. Residents were very concerned and wanted to be informed of what was going on. To what extent was the risk of flooding to be increased and how would the District cope with this.

The Chairman thanked them for sharing their concerns. She noted that the District were opposing the EA's plans and would make the EA aware of the need to have an accurate assessment of the number of houses at risk of flooding.

Mr Durrani noted that the EA had said that only 15 properties were in increased danger of flooding the remainder did not have any increased chances of flooding and remained at the same risk of flooding. Cripsey Brook and Loughton Brook are to continue to be maintained. He urged the Parish Council to make their views known to the EA.

The Chairman thanked the members for their contribution and noted that officers would take their opinions back to the EA.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report to the Planning Services Standing Panel on 13 September be noted;
- (2) That the outcome of the discussions with the Environment Agency be noted;
- (3) That the Council's objection to the proposed strategy be agreed, due to the potentially detrimental effects, in terms of flood risks on:
 - the residents of Epping Forest adjacent to the floodplains;
 - individual properties and areas of land, including land owned by the Council; and
 - ordinary watercourses within the District.
- (4) That the amended formal response to the Environment Agency Consultation be agreed, incorporating comments on:
 - The cost to private land owners (and appropriate help by the EA) of their maintenance of the river;
 - the impact of Shonks Mill Flood Storage Area not being built;
 - asking for some of the £150k savings made being passed on to the District to help in their maintenance work; and
 - noting that Redbridge would benefit while this District would not.
- (5) That a copy of the formal response be made available to the affected Town and Parish Councils; and
- (6) That a further report be submitted to this panel once the strategy was in place and the wider implications were known.

21. WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD (DRAFT) MEETING OF 16 JUNE 2011

The Panel noted the Waste Management Partnership Board minutes of 16 June 2011. They noted the good recycling figures at 62.6%, but were disappointed that the minutes took so long to get to this Panel.

22. BOBBINGWORTH FORMER LANDFILL SITE LOCAL LIAISON GROUP (DRAFT) MEETING OF 25 MAY 2011

The minutes of the Bobbingworth Former Landfill Site Local Liaison Group meeting held on 25 May 2011 were noted.

23. INTER-AUTHORITY AGREEMENT MEMBER WORKING GROUP (UNAPPROVED) MEETING OF 7 JUNE 2011

The minutes of the Inter Authority Agreement Member Working Group meeting held on 7 June 2011 were noted.

24. FUTURE STARTING TIMES

The Panel debated the merits of moving the start time of these meetings to 7pm. On reflection they agreed that it should stay at 7.30.

RESOLVED:

That the start time of this Panel remain at 7.30pm.

25. FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings of the Panel were noted.