

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF NEIGHBOURHOODS SELECT COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 29 JANUARY 2019
IN COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICES
AT 7.30 - 8.25 PM**

Members Present: N Bedford (Chairman), A Beales, P Bolton, R Brookes, S Heather, S Neville, M Sartin, D Stocker and J H Whitehouse

Other members present: J Philip

Apologies for Absence: H Brady, K Chana, I Hadley, L Mead and A Patel

Officers Present D Macnab (Acting Chief Executive), Q Durrani (Service Director (Contracts & Technical Services)) and V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer)

40. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)

There were no substitute members for the meeting.

41. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting of the Neighbourhoods Select Committee held on 20 November 2018 be agreed.

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Members' Code of Conduct.

43. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME

(1) Terms of Reference

The Committee noted the Terms of Reference.

(2) Work Programme

The Committee noted the current Work Programme. On item (4), Directorate Business Plan 2019/20, the relevant portfolio holders would present to members at the next Select Committee meeting in March, the highlights of priorities and service challenges within their respective portfolios.

44. CORPORATE PLAN 2018-2023 - PERFORMANCE REPORT QUARTER 3 2018-19

The Acting Chief Executive, D Macnab, reported that a Task and Finish Panel had been set up to review the current framework of the select committees. Going forwards any changes made to the select committees would impact on the key performance indicators sets.

- (1) Aim 1, People live longer, healthier and independent lives, Performance indicator M1.2, Number of take-away restaurants signed up to 'Tuck In'

This was an Essex County Council initiative. The Council had received additional funding for this public health initiative to try and raise the profile of the scheme within the Epping Forest District. A fourth business, The Three Colts (Public House), had signed up to the scheme.

- (2) Aim 3, operational objective 3.2.1, Provide leisure centres

The successful opening of the Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre in November 2018 had resulted in a growth in memberships and users. This was very encouraging as also numbers at Epping Sports Centre and Loughton Leisure Centre had increased.

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked if a decision had been taken on leisure facilities at North Weald. D Macnab replied that a report on the development of St John's Road, Epping, as the preferred site, had gone to Cabinet in December 2018. Meeting the future recreational needs of North Weald would be taken on board.

Councillor M Sartin asked if the leisure/sports centres had their own targets? D Macnab replied, yes, as the number of targets was set in the leisure management contract itself. The Leisure Management Contract Partnership Board regularly reviewed the performance of the contract, of which both the agendas and minutes were available for members to view on the intranet. Going forwards the Leisure Contract Manager, P Charman, would be asked to keep the Neighbourhoods Select Committee members apprised of progress reported at the Partnership Board meetings.

- (3) Aim 4, Delivering effective core services that people want, operation objective 4.1.1, Keeping the District clean and green

Councillor S Neville asked if there was a timeline for when the overview would be completed? Q Durrani, Service Director (Contracts and Technical Services), replied that the Government had recently published its Resources and Waste Strategy for England which would have a huge impact on local authorities and the waste industry. The Council would take part in consultations in the early part of 2019. Both this Council and Essex County Council would be highlighting to MPs some of the challenging issues the industry would be facing. Any changes to waste management services because of the new strategy would be reviewed during the year. D Macnab clarified that this Council was a waste collection authority while Essex County Council was a waste disposal authority.

- (4) Aim 4, Performance indicator M4.2, Percentage of the District with unacceptable levels of litter

Councillor M Sartin asked if the litter thrown from vehicles was in particular areas of the District or widespread? Q Durrani replied that through roads in the District were the worst affected. New legislation coming in April 2019 would allow the Council to use dash cam and photographic evidence given to the Council. Officers would be driving along these roads and use enforcement powers to try and curb such littering offences. Waste Management was also looking into increasing the frequency of the streets mechanical sweeps. Councillor M Sartin asked if an appropriate publicity campaign on this littering problem would be undertaken. D Macnab replied that officers made representations to schools on littering and the Council supported Keep Britain Tidy.

The Chairman, Councillor N Bedford, asked if specific areas were targeted. Q Durrani replied that the Council helped and supported local councils that undertook littering campaigns within their boundaries, but problems in other areas were based on intelligence received. The Chairman added that it might help if Legal Services drafted a statement for the public submitting dash cam footage.

Councillor S Heather asked if Neighbourhood officers could issue on the spot littering fines, to which Q Durrani replied, yes, this was currently done.

- (5) Aim 6, An environment where businesses thrive, corporate objective P114 for St John's Road Development

This was shown as being at the 'closure' stage to reflect that the Council was no longer with the previous scheme but as this was not clear, further clarification would be supplied next time.

- (6) Aim 6, Operational objective 6.3.1 Implement Tourism and Visitor Economic Strategy

Councillor M Sartin asked about progress on the Council's tourism strategy and investment plan, to which D Macnab replied that this was all in hand and on target.

- (7) Aim 6, M6.2 Number of new jobs

The Government was promoting the health of high streets, but only Waltham Abbey met the criteria. It was noted that the increase in visitors to the District shown on this graph for 3 November 2018 was to attend ten firework display events.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Select Committee reviewed and noted the progress of the Corporate Performance Report for 2018/19, Quarter 3 (outturn position), in relation to its areas of responsibility.
- (ii) That the Leisure Contract Manager, P Charman would keep the Neighbourhoods Select Committee members apprised of progress reported at the Leisure Management Contract Partnership Board meetings.

45. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

Councillor J Phillip, Portfolio Holder (Planning Services), provided the following update.

The Local Plan public examination hearings would commence on 12 February 2019. The Planning Inspector and Programme Officer had visited the Civic Offices during January and some changes to the accommodation requirements had been made. The hearing would take place in the combined first floor Committee Rooms with the overflow being accommodated in the Chamber. It was fully expected that there would be certain sessions where a significant number of people would be speaking. The whole proceedings would be webcast live. The hearing statements were also live on the Council's website, as were the Local Plan Submission representations published under Regulation 19 along with all the rest of the evidence and documentation. The Council was well prepared for the public hearing. The Council would open the public hearing with an address to the Planning Inspector. Members would be constantly

informed and kept up to date with the progress of the Local Plan and press releases would be issued.

Councillor J H Whitehouse was reassured that the PA system and mobile webcast would be working with the hearing loop.

46. LEISURE MANAGEMENT CONTRACT UPDATE

Q Durrani, Service Director (Contracts and Technical Services) provided the following update.

The success of the new Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre continued to improve and membership figures had doubled since the opening on 17 November 2018. Loughton Leisure Centre memberships had also increased by 1,000 on last year due to works and facility improvements, such as the energy efficiency of the site. It was noted that an ongoing noise complaint would continue to be monitored.

Memberships at Epping Sports Centre had steadily improved. At Ongar Leisure Centre numbers were fairly static. While the swimming memberships had declined, there had been an upsurge in younger members. There were also ongoing problems with the heating at Ongar and repairs were proving to be challenging.

Councillor R Brookes acknowledged that the Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre had been a great achievement, but enquired if any problems had cropped up. Q Durrani was not aware of any.

Councillor S Heather was concerned that, as the swimming pool had clear windows, whether any complaints had been received from swimmers on people looking in from outside. Q Durrani was not aware of any. D Macnab added that the whole length of the pool had been designed to use natural light. It would be a management issue to take action against any individuals causing a problem. The Chairman remarked that the pool at Loughton had screening fitted to the glass, to which D Macnab replied that he would look into this.

47. ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER AND CORPORATE GREEN WORKING PARTY

The major internal restructure being undertaken, as part of the Council's People Strategy, had gathered pace. The exit of the Council's environmental co-ordinator, E Ainslie, last summer had coincided with this restructure, which had prompted a change in approach to environmental matters. In future, the role of the environmental co-ordinator would be embedded into the work of all the directorates to provide a more holistic approach to the way the Council addressed these important issues. In the meantime, and whilst the transition was taking place, there would be no update reported on these issues.

D Macnab advised that the newly appointed Level 2 Service Manager (Regulatory), S Devine, would be given the responsibility of taking this forward. The Corporate Green Working Party (CGWP) would be kept sight of and he assured members that the Council had a statutory responsibility to monitor environmental performance within the District. A clearer way forward would be sought over the next couple of months.

Councillor S Neville wanted to ensure that the CGWP was not defunct, that each directorate would be involved and member participation would be allowed. D Macnab replied that the CGWP had not met since June 2018. A new internal

officer group was up and running across areas to deal with this issue and would be led by S Devine. Member involvement would be determined by the relevant portfolio holder.

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked about progress on electric charging points. As this came under the responsibility of the Service Director (Contracts and Technical Services), Q Durrani replied that Cabinet had made available £100,000 for the 2019/20 financial year. A feasibility report had gone to Cabinet to install electric charge points in Council car parks. The Council had also wanted to link up with Essex County Council over the provision of electric charge points on public highways, and not work in isolation. The Council had held meetings last year with the ECC officer tasked with this project, but no further progress had been made since that officer had left.

Councillor M Sartin asked about the number of electric charge points in the Civic Offices car park. Q Durrani replied that there were two electric charge points. There were also two electric vans in the Housing fleet. The electric vans' progress would be monitored to see if they were useful and if successful, the Council would possibly rollout more electric vans. D Macnab remarked that as the Local Planning Authority, the provision of electric charge points was already incorporated into the conditions of approved planning applications on the decision notices.

Councillor S Neville asked about progress on the reduction of single use waste plastics in Council buildings, particularly as water bottles were still being provided at Council meetings. Q Durrani replied that ways to reduce plastic usage had been rolled out across all recycling streams. D Macnab said that he would investigate the continued use of bottles of water.

48. BOBBINGWORTH NATURE RESERVE

The progress report by the Local Liaison Group followed a meeting on site on 24 August 2018 at the Bobbingworth Nature Reserve.

Councillor M Sartin asked about any further proactive action that had been taken against rabbits. Q Durrani was not aware of any further rabbit problems so this was under control. Councillor M Sartin also thought that it would be useful if new councillors appointed after the elections had the opportunity to tour around various sites like this one. Q Durrani said that he would look into the possibility of providing such tours for members.

The Chairman asked if a link could be provided on the Council's website to help promote the Bobbingworth Nature Reserve.

Councillor J H Whitehouse asked about the finished 'snake', to which Q Durrani replied that this referred to the snake path that led up to the mound.

Councillor S Heather asked about leachate. Q Durrani replied that as this was a former landfill site, lots of materials were in contact with water, which mixed into a liquid known as leachate.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Local Liaison Group meeting of 24 August 2018 be noted.

- (2) That Q Durrani look into the possibility of organising tours for members around various sites, including the Bobbingworth Nature Reserve.

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

The Chairman reported that there were no reports to be made to the next O&S Committee on 26 February 2019.

50. FUTURE MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Neighbourhoods Select Committee would be held on 19 March 2019 at 7.30pm.