

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES

Committee: Council **Date:** 25 September 2008

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.20 am

Members Present: Councillors J Knapman (Chairman), Mrs P Smith (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, R Barrett, R Bassett, Mrs R Brookes, Mrs P Brooks, K Chana, M Cohen, J Collier, M Colling, Mrs D Collins, D Dodeja, R Frankel, P Gode, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs A Haigh, Mrs H Harding, J Hart, Ms J Hedges, D Jacobs, R Law, J Markham, Mrs M McEwen, G Mohindra, R Morgan, S Murray, J Philip, Mrs C Pond, W Pryor, Mrs P Richardson, B Rolfe, B Sandler, Mrs M Sartin, P Spencer, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, Mrs J Sutcliffe, P Turpin, H Ulkun, Mrs L Wagland, A Watts, C Whitbread, Mrs J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse, D Wixley and J Wyatt

Apologies: Councillors D Bateman, A Boyce, Mrs S Clapp, Miss R Cohen, Mrs A Cooper, Mrs R Gadsby, A Green, Mrs J Lea, G Pritchard and Mrs E Webster

Officers Present: P Haywood (Chief Executive), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), G Lunnun (Assistant Director Democratic Services), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), P Maddock (Assistant Director Accountancy), R Palmer (Director of Finance and ICT) and I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive)

Also in Attendance: Ms N Beach (Waste and Recycling Manager, Essex County Council)

51. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

Councillor J Knapman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

52. FORMER COUNCILLOR ROGER BADDOCK

It was with much sadness that the Chairman informed the Council of the deaths of former District Councillor Roger Baddock and Councillor Peter Crowe, Mayor of Colchester Borough Council. All present stood for a minute's silence in tribute to the memory of former Councillor Baddock and Councillor Crowe.

Following the Chairman's announcement, Councillor S Murray paid tribute to former Councillor Baddock. Members were advised that Roger Baddock had represented the Loughton Roding Ward for 12 years between 1980 and 1988 and between 1991 and 1995. Councillor Murray referred to the professional approach to Council work adopted by former Councillor Baddock and advised that Roger was still remembered by residents he had assisted in the Loughton Roding Ward, although it was now 13 years since he had been on the Council. Councillor Murray also referred to the high esteem Roger had been held by his work colleagues at the London Borough of

Redbridge where he had worked for nearly 19 years. Councillor Murray thanked Councillor Mrs P Smith, Vice-Chairman of the Council, for representing the Council at the cremation service which he had also attended together with former Council chairmen, Joan Davis and Stan Goodwin.

53. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 29 July 2008 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor Mrs J H Whitehouse declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Motion – Credit Union Services) by virtue of being a member of Sense and Essex Savers. The councillor had determined that her interest was not prejudicial and that she would remain in the meeting for the consideration of and voting on the issue.

55. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Announcements by the Chairman

Councillor Knapman reported on his attendance at the following events during the past month:

- (i) raising of an Olympic flag at the Civic Offices to mark the handover of the Olympic Games from Beijing to London;
- (ii) National Scout Conservation Project in Epping Forest;
- (iii) unveiling and dedication of the North Weald 90 year commemorative window at North Weald Airfield Museum; and
- (iv) Battle of Britain Commemorative Service at St Andrew's Church, North Weald.

The Chairman further reported that he would be attending the Costermongers' Harvest Festival parade and service on 28 September 2008.

Councillor Knapman advised that a Business Golf Day held at Theydon Bois Golf Course in aid of his charities had raised almost £6,000. As a result he was now in a position to provide a "wow room" at Jubilee Lodge, Chigwell which would enable the severely disabled to enjoy the experience of "Wii Games". He would also be able to provide St Clare Hospice with all of the pump injection kits they required.

(b) Announcements by the Leader of the Council and Other Cabinet Members

There were no announcements made under this heading.

56. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**(a) Complaints Procedure**

By Parish Councillor C Hudson, North Weald Bassett Parish Council to Councillor Mrs P Richardson, Chairman of the Complaints Panel

"I seek clarification of two points in the current implementation of steps 3 and 4 in the Council's Complaints Procedure.

Step 3 used to involve a face-to-face meeting with a Corporate Director. This post apparently no longer exists. Does the Chief Executive or Deputy now have responsibility for step 3 interviews?

Step 4 is an "arms length" review by a Panel of members. Ward councillors are currently "gatekeepers" for step 4, presumably as a filter against vexatious or frivolous complaints. Is there now an additional power of veto vested in the Chief Executive to overrule ward councillors, and, if so, is this compatible with democratic accountability and possible conflict of interest?"

Response by Councillor Mrs P Richardson, Chairman of the Complaints Panel

"(1) The Council's Complaints Procedure does not, and never has, made provision for a complainant to automatically be offered an interview with any senior manager (up to and including the Chief Executive), nor do complainants have a right to such an interview. If a complainant has previously been offered an interview that would have been at the discretion of the officer concerned. An interview would only be held if the Council believes it would benefit the investigation or resolution of a complainant's case.

(2) Ward councillors do not have, and have never had, either control or influence over which complaints progress to step 4. A complainant will automatically be offered the opportunity to have their case considered by the Council's Complaints Panel at step 4 providing that:

(a) the matter has first of all been considered at steps 1, 2 and 3 of the Council's Complaints Procedure; and

(b) the Complaints Panel have the authority to take a further action that it was not possible to authorise at step 3; and

(c) the complaint has not already been fully considered by the Council and/or by the Local Government Ombudsman (unless new, significant and relevant information that could change the previous decision has since come to light and is information that could not have reasonably been obtained and submitted by the complainant at the time the matter was under consideration by the Council or the Ombudsman)."

Supplementary Question by Parish Councillor C Hudson

"If District Councillors who have been overruled at step 4 feel that the veto is improper for any reason, including conflict of interest, can they refer the matter to the Standards Committee for resolution, if not, what redress is open to them."

Reply by Councillor Mrs P Richardson

"I will make a full response in writing but I wish to make it clear at this stage that Councillors are not overruled at the Complaints Panel.

57. REPORTS FROM THE LEADER, CHAIRMAN OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

The Council received written reports from the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder, Community Well-being Portfolio Holder, Corporate Support and ICT Services Portfolio Holder, Environment Portfolio Holder, Housing Portfolio Holder, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder, and Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

The Chairman invited the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and members of the Cabinet to update their reports orally if they wished.

(a) Leader of the Council

Councillor Mrs Collins reported that since her visit to Debden Park High School, the 2008 GCSE results had been published and the school had achieved a 15% increase in their exam results including English and Maths. She informed the Council that she had sent a letter of congratulations to the Head Teacher.

The Leader reported that she had met the new Principal of Epping Forest College, Peter Sadler who had experience of improving failing colleges. The new Principal had been made aware of the need to increase the percentage of local children at the College and had agreed to meet District Council representatives on a regular basis. The College was to be the subject of an Ofsted inspection within the next 4/5 weeks and was facing financial pressures which could impact on improvements in performance.

Councillor Mrs Collins advised that she would be making further visits to St John's Church of England School and King Harold School with Lord Hanningfield, Leader of Essex County Council. The District's schools were in the County Council's third tranche for improvements between 2011 and 2014. Councillor Mrs Collins advised that whilst this would not be an issue for St John's School in view of their redevelopment proposals, she would be emphasising to Lord Hanningfield the problems this would cause for King Harold School in view of their current difficult circumstances.

The Leader reported on her attendance as one of six Essex District Council Leaders at the County Council's CPA inspection. She advised that there had been a round table discussion with the inspectors which had focused on partnership working with the County Council.

Councillor Mrs Collins also referred to a meeting she had attended with the Chief Executive with other Leaders of Essex authorities at Brentwood. The main topic of discussion had been about the allocation of funds for concessionary fares and finance officers had been asked to review the funding arrangements and report back to a future meeting.

(b) Community Well-Being Portfolio Holder

Councillor Ms S-A Stavrou reported that the reference to an "exist" strategy in her written report in relation to the renewal of dispersal orders should read an "exit" strategy.

Councillor Ms Stavrou reported that the District was meeting its targets for reducing crime and she drew attention to the "Not in my Neighbourhood week" which would take place between 13 and 17 October 2008. During that week activities would take place aimed at raising public awareness of the work being carried out by local agencies to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Ms Stavrou advised that the Council's Safer Communities Team and Essex County Council Trading Standards had teamed up again to carry out free electric blanket testing throughout the District. Testing would take place between 10.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. at Loughton Library on 13 October and at the Community Hall, Pelly Court, Hemnall Street, Epping on 14 October 2008. This year, Essex County Fire and Rescue would also be in attendance to promote their Home Safety Fire Scheme. Members noted that this scheme included fire fighters visiting homes in the District to give advice on fire safety and where necessary fit 10-year smoke alarms.

Councillor Ms Stavrou encouraged all members interested in health issues to attend the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 November 2008 when they would have a opportunity to question Alison Cowie, Director of Public Health, West Essex PCT.

(c) Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Sartin reminded members that the period of weekly collection of residual waste would end on 3 October 2008 when collections would revert to fortnightly. She advised that a new leaflet would be delivered to residents with the dates of collections.

Councillor Mrs Sartin advised that places were still available for the visit to the North London Waste Recycling Plant on 22 October 2008. She also advised that arrangements were being made to visit a materials recycling facility (MRF) on 30 October 2008. Details of this latter visit would be published in the Council Bulletin later in the week.

Councillor Mrs Sartin reported that over 1,000 responses had to date been received in relation to the public consultation on the waste and recycling service. She encouraged members to seek more responses.

Members noted that only approximately 150/200 lorry loads of soil remained outstanding in relation to works at the Bobbingworth Tip.

(d) Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder

Councillor R Bassett drew attention to the Highways Capital Maintenance Budget which had been published in the Council Bulletin.

Councillor Bassett advised members that maps in relation to the current parking and traffic reviews could be viewed in the Members' Room and he encouraged members to submit comments as soon as possible.

(e) Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor R Morgan reported that the meeting of the Committee scheduled to take place on 29 September 2008 had been cancelled due to a lack of business.

58. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE**(a) Public Consultation on Waste and Recycling Service**

By Councillor S Murray to Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Murray asked which members had been consulted about the questions in the survey. He suggested that the questions were inadequate and as a result the process would be flawed and he questioned why all members had not been involved in approving the survey.

Response by Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Sartin advised that the questions had been drawn up by officers in consultation with herself and the Leader of the Council. The timescale for publishing the survey in the Forester magazine, which was considered the best publication for obtaining a good response, had dictated against wider consultation with members. Councillor Mrs Sartin apologised for being unable to consult other members within the timescale.

(b) Parking Reviews

By Councillor P Spencer to Councillor R Bassett, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder

Councillor Spencer referred to the long delays in undertaking the parking reviews in Epping and Buckhurst Hill and asked the Portfolio Holder what lessons had been learned for the future.

Response by Councillor R Bassett, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder

Councillor Bassett advised that this process had been mainly out of the control of the District Council. The work had been undertaken by Essex County Council Highways on behalf of the District Council and they had suffered staff resourcing problems. The officer who had been dealing with the issue had left and the matter had remained unresolved until that officer had been taken back on a temporary basis solely for the purpose of completing the reviews. Councillor Bassett urged members to help conclude the process by submitting views. He advised that the County Council had given a date of 23 October 2008 by which time information would have been received in relation to all of the outstanding reviews.

(c) West Hatch School

By Councillor Mrs A Haigh to Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council

Councillor Mrs Haigh referred to the inability of children at Limes Farm to gain entrance to West Hatch High School. She asked the Leader of the Council if there had been any discussion at the recent meeting about the school's definition of what was regarded as children being within a reasonable walking distance of the school. Councillor Mrs Haigh referred to the one mile radius distance which the school referred to but she pointed out that from her experience many parents with children within that one mile radius of the school continued to drive their children to school.

Response by Councillor Mrs D Collins, Leader of the Council

Councillor Mrs Collins advised that she had raised this issue and the school had referred to their existing definition, ie. a one mile radius distance. Councillor Mrs Collins said that she had asked the school to give children residing in the Epping Forest District the same opportunities as those given to children outside of the District.

(d) Waiting Restrictions – Palmerston Road, Buckhurst Hill**By Councillor Mrs A Haigh to Councillor R Bassett, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Mrs Haigh advised that she had been approached by residents in Palmerston Road about the requirement to pay £15 for a dispensation notice each time it was necessary for a vehicle to park in the restricted area in order to deliver goods. She asked the Portfolio Holder if he was aware of these charges, and, if not, to consider the matter as she considered the charges to be unfair.

Response by Councillor R Bassett, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder

Councillor Bassett advised that he was not aware of this requirement and stated that he would obtain information and reply in writing in the Council Bulletin.

(e) Housing Appeals and Review Panel – Successor Tenants**By Councillor B Rolfe to Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Rolfe asked the Portfolio Holder what progress had been made in relation to a decision of the Panel concerning the Council's successor tenant's policy. Councillor Rolfe advised that the Panel had asked the Portfolio Holder to review the policy as they had considered it ambiguous.

Response by Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder

Councillor Stallan advised that he was still waiting to discuss with officers the detail of this reference. He pointed out that a meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel would be held shortly which would be considering the Allocations Scheme and it was possible that the matter would be raised at that meeting. He advised that he would approach officers in Democratic Services and inform members of the current situation by including an item in the Council Bulletin.

(f) Street Cleansing**By Councillor D Jacobs to Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Jacobs advised that during the last two weeks there had been a considerable increase in the number of street cleansing complaints. In one week, 99 complaints had been received and there had only been a slight reduction in this figure in the past week. He pointed out that in the week before the last two weeks there had only been six complaints. Councillor Jacobs asked the Portfolio Holder what had caused this increase in the number of complaints and what remedial action was proposed.

Response by Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Sartin stated that she was not aware of these figures and did not know, therefore, whether there were specific problems in specific areas. She stated that the specification for street cleansing was set out in the contract and that she would not expect the contractor to be performing below that specification. She advised that she would speak to officers about the situation and would respond in detail in the Council Bulletin.

(g) Traffic Congestion**By Councillor Mrs L Wagland to Councillor R Bassett, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Mrs Wagland advised that on Friday and Saturday of last week traffic had been stationary in a large area from Buckhurst Hill through Chigwell into the adjoining London Borough. The situation had been caused by works being undertaken by Thames Water and had been exacerbated by the traffic restriction measures they had imposed. Councillor Mrs Wagland expressed gratitude to the Portfolio Holder for managing to resolve the problem and asked if he had any further information about how the situation had arisen and in particular why the measures introduced by the Water Authority had caused total traffic gridlock.

Response by Councillor R Bassett, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder

Councillor Bassett stated that he had undertaken some preliminary investigations and part of the problem appeared to relate to the failure of the temporary traffic control signals which had been installed. He stated that he was concerned about the lack of control over utility companies in relation to works to the highway and about the role of the police in such situations. He stated that he would be raising this issue at his next meeting with Essex County Council Highways with a view to receiving an explanation as to how they manage such situations and whether they monitor such situations after temporary solutions had been put in place.

(h) Call for Sites – Call-in of Decision**By Councillor S Murray to Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Murray asked the Portfolio Holder what important lessons had been learnt in relation to this decision. He also asked for an update on the further consideration being given to the issue following the decision of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Response by Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder

Councillor Stallan reported that one lesson which had been learnt had been the need to make more detailed information available to members both in the Council Bulletin and at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, particularly in relation to the criteria used to determine sites and the reasons for rejecting sites. Councillor Stallan advised that since the Overview and Scrutiny Committee he had met with officers on several occasions and had been considering a number of options. In relation to the process he could confirm his previous decision, could agree in total with the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or could refer the matter to the Cabinet or the full Council. He advised that he had decided not to refer the matter to the Cabinet or

the full Council but to make a further decision himself taking account of the views which had been expressed by members. He had not yet decided on his further decision but this would be finalised shortly and that decision would be published in the Council Bulletin.

(i) Parking Restrictions – Upper Park, Loughton

By Councillor J Hart to Councillor R Bassett, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder

Councillor Hart reported that he had been attempting to get the County Council to impose parking restrictions in Upper Park, Loughton as traders and commuters parked in that road, resulting in a dangerous situation at the junction with the High Road where pedestrians were forced to walk in the carriageway. He advised that the County Council had drawn up a scheme to tackle the problem but were now stating that this scheme was being held up by the District Council. He asked the Portfolio Holder to comment on the current situation and to give an indication of when the proposed restrictions would be in force.

Response by Councillor R Bassett, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder

Councillor Bassett stated that unfortunately all of the parking reviews had been collated together resulting in almost 100 schemes which had taken a considerable time to process. He advised that since he had been Portfolio Holder he had wished to take account of the views of local members as those members were better aware of the specific issues than himself. In relation to Upper Park, Loughton the proposals had met with most letters of objection and most letters of support for amendment. It was apparent that the majority were in favour of some form of control. Residents of High Gables had requested a residents' parking scheme and this would need to receive further consideration. Councillor Bassett stated that he was anxious to conclude the reviews as quickly as possible but reiterated that he wished to take account of members' views. He urged members therefore to submit their views if they had not already done so. Councillor Bassett also advised that in relation to Upper Park he had made arrangements to meet local residents so that they could show him personally the problems they were experiencing.

(j) Call for Sites

By Councillor J M Whitehouse to Councillor C Whitbread, Finance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder

Councillor Whitehouse referred to the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder in relation to the call for sites and asked what steps were being taken by other Portfolio Holders with responsibility for Council-owned land.

Response by Councillor C Whitbread, Finance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder

Councillor Whitbread reported that it was a Government requirement to identify sites. He stated that steps were being taken to compile a full list. He invited Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder to add to his response.

Response by Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Grigg stated that she would not be putting forward any sites but her Portfolio Holder Advisory Group would be considering this matter at their next meeting which had been arranged provisionally for 23 October 2008. The issue was to have been discussed at the last meeting of the Advisory Group but another important topic on the agenda of that meeting had led to the call for sites issue being deferred.

(k) Council Housing Stock

By Councillor J Philip to Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder

Councillor Philip asked the Portfolio Holder if he agreed with comments made by a councillor at the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee on 12 August 2008 that the Council had sold off the best of its housing stock and was left with only accommodation of poor quality.

Response by Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder

Councillor Stallan stated that he did not agree with those comments. He said he was proud of the Council's remaining stock and of the way in which it was managed. He pointed out that tenants wished to keep the Council as their landlord. He also pointed out that the Council was improving its properties and was ahead of its targets in relation to decent homes.

(l) Loughton Station Precinct

By Councillor K Angold-Stephens to Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Angold-Stephens referred to the unacceptable condition of Loughton Station Precinct as a result of the deposit of litter and waste. He acknowledged that resolution of the matter had been delayed as a result of ownership issues but said he understood that Transport for London had now accepted ownership. In the light of this acceptance he asked when the land would be adopted and when the Council would take responsibility for cleaning the area.

Response by Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Sartin advised that she was happy the ownership issue appeared to have been resolved and she undertook to keep members informed of progress in relation to the cleaning of this area.

59. MOTIONS

(a) Credit Union Services

(Moved by Councillor Mrs J H Whitehouse and seconded by Councillor J M Whitehouse)

"That this Council:

(a) notes the financial difficulties being experienced by many people in the current economic climate, rendering those on low incomes and no savings vulnerable to exploitation by predatory lenders;

(b) notes that a “doorstep” lender may, for example, charge £160 in interest on a loan of £400 repayable over 24 weeks, all of which interest is taken as profit by the company;

(c) notes that an equivalent loan from a credit union would cost only £12 in interest with profits distributed as a dividend to the union members, thereby being recirculated within the local community;

(d) applauds the work carried out by many credit unions, including Essex Savers, in encouraging saving and providing access to responsible lending and their policy of permitting savers to borrow up to three times their savings total at a rate of interest of between 1-2% per month; and

(e) resolves to support actively the provision of credit union services in this District including the setting up of collection points at Council outlets, publicity and providing information to the public on how to gain access to funding.”

Amendment moved by Councillor C Whitbread and seconded by Councillor M Cohen

“That paragraph (e) be deleted and replaced with -

“(e) resolves to support actively the provision of credit union services in this District by way of publicity only”.

By leave of the Council, the mover and seconder revised the amendment to read:

“That paragraph (e) be deleted and replaced with –

“(e) resolves to support actively the provision of credit union services in this District by means of publicity and seeks advice from officers on what is legally possible in terms of further support for the credit union”.

Carried

Second Amendment moved by Councillor J M Whitehouse and seconded by Councillor Mrs J H Whitehouse

“That an additional paragraph (f) be added to the motion as follows:

“(f) resolves to support actively the provision of credit union services in this District including the setting up of collection points and the provision of publicity”.

Lost

Motion as amended ADOPTED

RESOLVED:

That this Council:

(a) notes the financial difficulties being experienced by many people in the current economic climate, rendering those on low incomes and no savings vulnerable to exploitation by predatory lenders;

- (b) notes that a “doorstep” lender may, for example, charge £160 in interest on a loan of £400 repayable over 24 weeks, all of which interest is taken as profit by the company;
- (c) notes that an equivalent loan from a credit union would cost only £12 in interest with profits distributed as a dividend to the union members, thereby being recirculated within the local community;
- (d) applauds the work carried out by many credit unions, including Essex Savers, in encouraging saving and providing access to responsible lending and their policy of permitting savers to borrow up to three times their savings total at a rate of interest of between 1-2% per month; and
- (e) resolves to support actively the provision of credit union services in this District by means of publicity and seeks advice from officers on what is legally possible in terms of further support for the credit union.

(b) Mobility Benefits for Blind Residents

Moved by Councillor Mrs D Collins and seconded by Councillor C Whitbread

- “(1) This Council notes:
- (a) that blind people experience significant barriers to independent mobility;
 - (b) that blind people are often isolated and find it difficult to access basic services without mobility assistance;
 - (c) that many blind residents in this authority area find it difficult to access shops, supermarkets, doctors, dentists and community facilities and centres;
 - (d) that our blind residents find it difficult to access many Council services ranging from housing to voting without mobility support and face additional costs as a result, such as using taxis or private hire vehicles;
- (2) This Council further notes:
- (a) that blind people are not entitled to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance;
 - (b) that loss of usable sight clearly causes significant independent mobility problems and incurs significant additional and unmet costs;
 - (c) that blind people are in many parts of England excluded from social care support because their needs are not considered “critical” or “substantial”; and
- (3) This Council resolves:
- (a) to ask the Chief Executive and the Leader of Council to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, The Right Hon James Purnell, MP, expressing these concerns;
 - (b) to ask the Chief Executive and the Leader of Council to write to our local MPs asking that they sign up to the Early Day Motion No 1982 and write to the Secretary of State expressing those concerns; and

(c) to support the Royal National Institute of Blind People's (RNIB) campaign on securing of the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance for blind people."

Amendment moved by Councillor Mrs J H Whitehouse and seconded by Councillor Mrs P Brooks

"That the words "including the needs of people who are deaf/blind" be added to the end of paragraph (3)(a)".

Carried

Motion as amended ADOPTED

RESOLVED:

(1) This Council notes:

(a) that blind people experience significant barriers to independent mobility;

(b) that blind people are often isolated and find it difficult to access basic services without mobility assistance;

(c) that many blind residents in this authority area find it difficult to access shops, supermarkets, doctors, dentists and community facilities and centres;

(d) that our blind residents find it difficult to access many Council services ranging from housing to voting without mobility support and face additional costs as a result, such as using taxis or private hire vehicles;

(2) This Council further notes:

(a) that blind people are not entitled to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance;

(b) that loss of usable sight clearly causes significant independent mobility problems and incurs significant additional and unmet costs;

(c) that blind people are in many parts of England excluded from social care support because their needs are not considered "critical" or "substantial"; and

(3) This Council resolves:

(a) to ask the Chief Executive and the Leader of Council to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, The Right Hon James Purnell, MP, expressing these concerns including the needs of people who are deaf/blind;

(b) to ask the Chief Executive and the Leader of Council to write to our local MPs asking that they sign up to the early day motion No 19982 and write to the Secretary of State expressing those concerns; and

(c) to support the Royal National Institute of Blind People's (RNIB) campaign on securing of the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance for blind people.

60. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE

There were no questions asked by members under this item.

61. REPORT OF THE CABINET - ESSEX JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - ADOPTION

(Mover: Councillor Mrs M Sartin – Environment Portfolio Holder)

The Portfolio Holder submitted a report recommending adoption of the Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

By leave of the Council, the Portfolio Holder requested that Ms N Beach, Waste and Recycling Manager of Essex County Council, should clarify the purpose of the strategy.

Ms Beach explained the purpose of the strategy.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy be adopted.

62. REPORT OF THE CABINET - LOUGHTON BROADWAY DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN BRIEF

(Mover: Councillor Mrs A Grigg – Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder)

The Portfolio Holder submitted a report recommending adoption of the Development and Design Brief.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the final Development and Design Brief (Debden Town Centre and Broadway Development Options – Final Report – August 2008) be adopted.

63. REPORT OF THE CABINET - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE - BOBBINGWORTH TIP

(Mover: Councillor C Whitbread – Finance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder)

The Portfolio Holder submitted a request for a supplementary estimate.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That a supplementary capital estimate in the sum of £112,000 be approved to enable the completion of the scheme to the original enhanced level including additional security.

64. REPORT OF THE CABINET - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE - NORTH WEALD AIRFIELD - FUTURE OPTIONS

(Mover: Councillor C Whitbread – Finance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder)

The Portfolio Holder submitted a request for a supplementary estimate.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That a supplementary DDF estimate in the sum of £50,000 be approved to cover the costs of engaging a consultant to undertake further strategic feasibility work and develop with officers a scoping report and brief examining the intensification of aviation use with limited business or other uses including leisure as required to make it economically viable.

65. STATUTORY STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS - 2007/08

(Mover: Councillor J Knapman – Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee)

Councillor Knapman reported that the Council had approved the Statutory Statement of Accounts 2007/2008 at its meeting on 26 June 2008. He advised that the audit of the Annual Statutory Statement of Accounts had revealed some errors in the accounts. The errors revealed were not material but best practice suggested that non-trivial errors should be subject to further consideration by the Council. He advised that the errors did not affect the Council's income, expenditure or the amount of Council Tax.

Councillor Knapman reported that the Audit and Governance Committee had considered the amended Statutory Statement of Accounts at its meeting on 18 September 2008 and had recommended reapproval.

Councillor Knapman advised that since the matter had been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee, further non-material errors had come to light in respect of pages 11 and 35 and amended pages had been tabled at this meeting.

Report as first moved **ADOPTED**

RESOLVED:

That the Statutory Statement of Accounts 2007/2008 be reapproved including the amended tabled pages 11 and 35.

66. PRINCESS ALEXANDRA HOSPITAL - APPOINTMENT OF PARTNERSHIP GOVERNOR

The Council considered an invitation to appoint to one of the 12 Partnership Governor positions on this Trust. Members noted that the nominated person was required to report back on Trust activities and to be of sufficient seniority to be able to influence the Council.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Mrs M Sartin be nominated as a Partnership Governor on the Governing Body of the Princess Alexandra Trust.

67. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

There were no reports from members under this item.

CHAIRMAN