

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCIL MINUTES

Committee: Council **Date:** 28 October 2008

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.30 - 9.36 pm

Members Present: Councillors J Knapman (Chairman), Mrs P Smith (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, R Barrett, R Bassett, D Bateman, A Boyce, Mrs R Brookes, Mrs P Brooks, K Chana, Mrs S Clapp, M Cohen, Miss R Cohen, J Collier, M Colling, Mrs D Collins, Mrs A Cooper, R Frankel, Mrs R Gadsby, P Gode, A Green, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs H Harding, J Hart, Ms J Hedges, D Jacobs, R Law, Mrs J Lea, J Markham, Mrs M McEwen, G Mohindra, R Morgan, S Murray, J Philip, Mrs C Pond, G Pritchard, 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, Mrs E Webster, C Whitbread, Mrs J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse, D Wixley and J Wyatt

Apologies: Councillors D Dodeja and Mrs A Haigh

Officers Present: P Haywood (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), C O'Boyle (Director of Corporate Support Services), I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), G Lunnun (Assistant Director Democratic Services), J Preston (Director of Planning and Economic Development), I White (Forward Planning Manager), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer) and R Perrin (Democratic Services Assistant)

Also in Attendance: A Lainton (Consultant engaged by the Council in relation to the preparation of a Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document)

68. 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.

Councillor Knapman welcomed the large public attendance at the meeting.

69. FORMER COUNCILLOR ROY BROWNJOHN

It was with much sadness that the Chairman informed the Council of the death of former District Councillor Roy Brownjohn. All present stood for a minute's silence in tribute to the memory of former Councillor Brownjohn.

Following the Chairman's announcement, Councillor Mrs E Webster paid tribute to former Councillor Brownjohn. Members were advised that Roy Brownjohn had represented the Waltham Abbey East Ward for 4 years between 1998 and 2002. He had also been a member of the Waltham Abbey Town Council from 1999 until 2007 and had been mayor of the Town Council in 2002/3. Councillor Mrs Webster referred to the dignified way in which former Councillor Brownjohn had performed his duties. She also referred to his work in promoting football in Waltham Abbey. The meeting

noted that Roy Brownjohn had been awarded honorary freedom of Waltham Abbey earlier in the year.

70. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 25 September 2008 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

71. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (a) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor D Stellan declared personal interests in agenda items 6(c) (Public Questions to a Portfolio Holder) by virtue of being a member of the North Weald Bassett Parish Council and 10(a) (Motion – Diabetes UK Campaign) by virtue of his daughter attending a local secondary school. The councillor had determined that his interests were not prejudicial and that he would remain in the meeting for the consideration of and voting on those items.
- (b) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor Mrs A Grigg declared a personal interest in agenda item 6(c) (Public Questions to a Portfolio Holder) by virtue of being a member of the North Weald Bassett Parish Council. 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 item.
- (c) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct, Councillor M Cohen declared a personal interest in agenda item 10(a) (Motion – Diabetes UK Campaign) by virtue of being a member of Diabetes UK. The councillor had determined that his interest was not prejudicial and that he would remain in the meeting for the consideration of and voting on the item.

72. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Announcements by the Chairman

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

- (i) Costermongers' Harvest Festival Parade and Service;
- (ii) World Mental Health Day Event in Loughton;
- (iii) King Harold Day at Waltham Abbey;
- (iv) A Guide Dog Walk through an Obstacle Course at Woodford Bridge;
- (v) Official Opening of Parsonage Court Allotment;
- (vi) Tottenham Hotspur Hope Project at Jubilee Court, Waltham Abbey.

Councillor Knapman thanked the Vice-Chairman of the Council and Councillors Mrs A Haigh and B Sandler for attending other events on his behalf.

Councillor Knapman also congratulated Councillors Mrs A Haigh and D Stallan for winning the annual petanque match against Epping Town Council.

The Chairman announced that the floral display from the meeting would be sent to Voluntary Action Epping Forest.

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

There were no announcements made under this heading.

73. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (IF ANY)

(a) Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document – Public Consultation

(i) By Sue De Luca, Clerk to the North Weald Bassett Parish Council to Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

“The report to Cabinet dated 6 October and the draft consultation clearly states that the District Council will “consult widely with residents and that they anticipate a great deal of public interest also that they want to make sure that everyone can have their say through a properly structured debate”. It also states that Town and Parish Councils will be encouraged to help provide feedback.

This can only be fulfilled if all residents are provided with copies of the consultation document and questionnaire. Obviously Parish and Town Councils have not precepted for the funds to provide these documents.

Therefore, I on behalf of the members of North Weald Bassett Parish Council am asking that the District Council provide all those Parish and Town Councils (if they so request) who have potential sites for gypsies and travellers identified as being within their parish, with sufficient numbers of copies of the consultation document and questionnaire enabling them to be delivered to all homes in their parishes.”

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

“ Public consultation on a such a development plan document is governed by Government regulations and PPS12 of national planning policy.

The regulations leaves it to the discretion of planning authorities as to how extensive a consultation should be but stipulate that a number of statutory bodies must be included. However PPS12 requires consultation to be widespread, early in the process, involve the community in the process of refining and improving the site options, transparent and mindful of legal equality requirements.

Any consultation of this kind also needs to be fair. This means that the District Council must ensure that there is an equal opportunity to respond throughout the District. Providing copies of the document to every household in North Weald Parish would distort the pattern of responses and would probably then require the same to be done throughout the District. The cost of printing for approximately 56,000 households across the whole District is approximately £50,000.

I do not feel that this order of expenditure can be justified to Council Tax payers.

I think that the Council has set out to involve the community in the consultation in every way possible. Any member of the public may ask for a paper copy of the document. Our aim is to record the names and addresses of those who ask for these so that the Council can keep them up to date on changes as the consultation proceeds. The document will also be available via the website.

Public meetings are being planned which will be coupled with exhibitions and “drop in” sessions in each of the five areas involved. All households will be notified of the document in The Forester and those residents who live within 300 metres of any potential site will receive a letter from the Council

Parish and Town Councils are important consultees in this process. A briefing will be held on 5 November and this will be followed up with a full training session on how they can assist the process and give voice to local opinion through their representative role.

The Council cannot however accede to the request of North Weald Parish Council for supply of individual copies of the document to each household because of what I consider an unreasonable level of cost, the precedent it would set for the whole district and the effect that this could have on the fairness of the process.”

Supplementary Question by Sue de Luca

“I am pleased to hear that residents will be notified of the document in The Forester, will the relevant issue be published within the consultation period?”

Reply by Councillor Mrs A Grigg

“Yes, the magazine will be published within the consultation period.”

(ii) By Mr David Jenkins to Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

“Is it not premature, and would it not cause unnecessary concern and stress to the public, and waste public money, to go to the public with a consultation document that is premature, in that many of the “potential” sites will be excluded by the Council once it has the results of its proposed site and environmental assessments?”

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

“ National planning policy PPS12 requires all reasonable alternatives to be the subject of consultation. PPS12 also requires consultation from an early stage in the process and for this to be transparent.

For a transparent process to be achieved, the rules require that the public must be aware that the process to be adopted will comprise the publication of a “long list “ of sites which are then reduced to a shortlist. Although the question argues that the publication of a long list will cause concern to residents and add to the cost, planning policy requires this approach to be taken.

If only a “final list” of sites were to be presented to the public in the consultation document, there would, I feel, be complaints from those who reside near to sites on that list that the process was unfair because other possible sites were not even listed. The Council could also fall foul of the requirement to be fair, inclusive and transparent in dealing with this issue.

The consultation document tries to achieve a difficult balance between achieving a genuine choice of sites which makes the consultation a robust one and not preparing a list which is so large that it becomes unmanageable. The Council must find 110 extra pitches and is consulting on sites which would provide 240. This is considered the most balanced way forward.

I would draw attention to the total number of pitches now required. This has increased from the total of 98 quoted in my report under item 7 of this meeting to 110. This only became apparent at the East of England Plan Examination in Public last week at which the Council was represented.”

Supplementary Question by Mr David Jenkins

“Are officers aware of any sites included in the draft that are unsuitable for development as gypsy/traveller sites?”

Reply by Councillor Mrs A Grigg

“I believe there is mention of Bumbles Green in the document so that would be one, apart from that I am not aware of any others.”

(iii) By Mr Paul Norris to Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

“Will the Council please make available the audit trail leading to identification of the sites contained within this document as “potential” sites, the removal of some sites considered to be unsuitable, and a list of those sites?”

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

“ I would like to refer the questioner to Section 3, Appendix 4 and paragraph 14.3 of the consultation document. The audit trail referred to in the question is set out in those sections of the document. Can I refer him to paragraph 14.6 in particular which states:

‘ ... all sites with at least some potential have been included. There is no list of excluded sites.’

Further information will be published on the website as a toolkit which should assist the public in responding to the consultation questions.”

Supplementary Question by Mr Paul Norris

“Does the Council share my concerns about the delay in providing the audit trail; I requested a copy of the audit trail on 14 October 2008 and as of today it has not been forthcoming; I am particularly concerned at the delay bearing in mind the Council’s consultant’s comments on the need for openness and transparency made at a meeting on 6 October 2008.”

Reply by Councillor Mrs A Grigg

“We always aim to reply quickly but in this case the Council’s consultant has not been at the Civic Offices for the past week as he has been representing the Council

at the Examination in Public; this may be the reason for the delay and we will address your concerns as quickly as possible.”

(iv) By Parish Councillor Elaine Godwin-Brown, North Weald Bassett Parish Council

“Appendix 1, Page 10 (of the report to the Cabinet meeting on 6 October 2008) states that there has not been a single published research on whether house prices would go down or whether incidents of crime would go up.

How can the settled community be expected to give their views when there is no previous published research for them to refer to? May I ask that the Council presses the Government to initiate such research before initiating any proposals or consultations as it will only then be that residents questions can be answered.”

Reply by Councillor Mrs A Grigg

“The report to the Cabinet meeting advised that there has been one published research paper in relation to the effects of gypsy and traveller sites on house prices and crime.

The research undertaken in Scotland by Planning Exchange and the Joseph Rowntree Trust suggested that the impact on house prices could not be established. The research also concluded that initial fears about crime were not born out when planned gypsy and traveller sites were established.

I would urge you and others to respond to the consultation document despite this limited research. In order to secure the best possible outcome to this exercise it is vital that residents make their views known.

Please be aware that impact on property prices is not a material planning consideration and therefore cannot be considered by the Council in making planning decisions. In making representations the public should focus on other matters that the independent inspector can take into account.

I would also ask everyone when making responses to take account of a decision of the Court of Appeal. The Court held that fears and concerns of crime from gypsies’ and travellers’ sites not supported by evidence are not material planning considerations, and cannot be taken into account. Any such views expressed therefore will have to be disregarded by the Council unless you have that evidence.”

(v) By Mr Toby Godwin-Brown to Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

The Chairman advised that as Mr Godwin-Brown was unable to be present at this meeting he would ask the question on Mr Godwin-Brown’s behalf in accordance with paragraph 9.7 of the Council Procedure Rules. Councillor Knapman asked the following question:

“Why is there no buffer zone around the SSSI – Specific Site of Scientific Importance – (Woodside and Forest), when Government guidelines state there should be?”

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

“There is no statutory requirement to include buffer zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest or ancient woodlands. However, as you will note from paragraph 2 of Appendix 4 of the Options Paper, the Council has introduced this as an extra form of protection for sites of European importance eg. Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas as there is an additional requirement for 'appropriate assessment' of the impact on such sites, and impact would be minimal if a buffer is used.

The site at Woodside is not of European importance in terms of such protected sites.

There is no buffer in terms of national planning policy (Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) which sets out planning policies on the protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system).

The study is intended to provide an initial broad sifting of areas, rather than a means of detailed assessment of individual sites. Some work has indicated that some factors would not necessarily preclude consideration when examined on site, and indeed further site work may show some sites to be unsuitable. For clarity the document is proposed to be modified to clarify this point.”

74. REPORT OF THE CABINET - GYPSY AND TRAVELLER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

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

Councillor Mrs Grigg sought the leave of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 13.7 to amend the Cabinet recommendation in order to better reflect the position of the Council and to correct errors and clarify matters. The Council's consent to the amendments (tabled) was signified without discussion.

The Portfolio Holder reported that by virtue of a direction by the Secretary of State, the Council was required to submit a Development Plan Document on gypsy and traveller provision by 30 September 2009. All local authorities would be required to carry out this exercise and this Council had intended to include the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers in its wider consultation arising from the general targets for housing and employment provisions set out in the East of England Plan. However, the Government had issued a directive requiring the Council to deal separately with gypsy and traveller issues by publishing a stand alone plan by the end of September 2009.

Councillor Mrs Grigg advised that the proposed consultation document identified 27 potential sites across the district. The precise number of additional pitches would be set through an amendment to the East of England Plan and the draft plan established a requirement of 49 extra pitches from 2006 to 2011. The draft plan had recently been heard at an Examination in Public and the Council had appeared at that forum suggesting that the methodology of calculating the number of pitches was flawed and that the number of pitches to be provided in this district should be 35 and not 49. The outcome of the Examination in Public was awaited.

Councillor Mrs Grigg explained the criteria which had to be met for sites and advised that potential sites would be disregarded if found to be unsuitable.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the period of consultation would run from 4 November 2008 until 20 January 2009 and that for views to be taken into account they had to be expressed within that period. She advised that the consultation document would be available online and that paper copies could be requested. Councillor Mrs Grigg urged members and residents to complete and return the questionnaire accompanying the document to ensure that the Council received a good response to present to the Government.

In response to matters raised by other members, Councillor Mrs Grigg advised that account would be taken of the status of Epping Forest land in the vicinity of potential sites in Thornwood and that the Government would be asked if it had any up to date data about incidents of crime in the vicinity of gypsy and traveller sites. Councillor Mrs Grigg confirmed that all adults in a household would be entitled to submit completed questionnaires and that it would be in order for residents to join together and to submit views via an agent provided that all of their names and addresses were included in the submission. Councillor Mrs Grigg gave details of exhibitions which would be held throughout the district in the coming weeks.

Recommendation as amended ADOPTED

RESOLVED:

(1) That the proposed publication of the draft options paper for Development Plan Provision for Gypsies and Travellers in Epping Forest District document (circulated separately) for consultation purposes in accordance with the direction to that effect issued by the Secretary of State be noted, subject to:

- (a) correction of the site numbering to match question numbering in all cases;
- (b) correction of the site name in figure 25 from "Northfield Farm" to "Netherhouse Farm";
- (c) officers being authorised to (i) add an explanation of the components of the Development Plan system, a glossary of terms and index; (ii) add a statement in the consultation document (introduction) as set out in (2) below; (iii) correct minor textual errors; and (iv) any other consequential amendments arising from the changes listed below;
- (d) amend all references to "site suitability studies" to "area suitability study" throughout the document;
- (e) amend paragraph 6.7 to read "sites would be allocated broadly with regard to the area suitability study";
- (f) amend page 5 (box) to read "2004" from "1994" (first bullet point);
- (g) amend page 7 (box) by deleting reference to research in Huntingdonshire;
- (h) add new bullet point to page 9 under "Area Suitability Study" as follows:

" The study is intended to provide an initial broad sifting of areas, rather than a means of detailed assessment of individual sites. Some work has indicated that some factors would not necessarily preclude consideration

when examined on site and indeed further work may show some sites to be unsuitable.” ;

(i) change the method of calculating phasing after 2011 to reflect a composite growth requirement, not simple aggregate growth in the number of pitches of 3% per annum;

(j) amend paragraph 10.5 to clarify that this practice applies west of Harlow only;

(k) amend paragraph 11.1 (third bullet point) by substituting “2021” to “2023”;

(l) amend site labelling throughout to reflect question numbering;

(m) amend question 13 by deleting “3 tolerated sites” and substituting “4 tolerated sites”;

(n) amend paragraphs 14.31 – 14.33 to reflect recent injunction and by adding new final sentence as follows:

“The Council remains firmly of the view that the site is unsuitable and has served an injunction to stop its unauthorised occupancy.”;

(o) amend page 8 (The Site Suitability Study) (Box – 4th bullet point) – by deleting the word “excluded” and substituting “mapped” and the following additional sentence as follows:

“Other areas, with other constraints, were also mapped and assessed.” ;

(p) delete the first sentence of bullet point 5 in the same box (The Site Suitability Study) and add the following new sentence as follows:

“Factors which might make areas suitable were also mapped.” ;

and add the following new sentence at the end of the same bullet point as follows:

“This was done both for the whole District and also the unconstrained areas.” ;

(q) amend page 80 (Appendix 4 – The Site Suitability Study) (5th paragraph) delete “excluded” in the first line and substitute “mapped”;

(2) That the following be noted:

(a) at this very early stage of the DPD process, the options set out in the consultation document are of very limited weight as a material planning consideration because no sites or strategy have yet been judged as sound by an independent inspector; and

(b) inclusion of any site in this document should not be taken to indicate that they will receive planning permission such applications will be judged on planning merits against current development plan policy in the light of all the evidence before the Council as planning authority, taking account of

detailed site assessments and the requirements of current national planning policy on site provision.

75. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The Chairman thanked the public for their exemplary behaviour during the debate on the previous item. He said that it was clear to him that many residents were very angry and upset about the consultation and he advised that many of the concerns which had been expressed were shared by members of the Council. However, with a Government direction, the Council had little choice but to proceed with the process.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting at 8.35 pm to enable members of the public to leave if they wished.

The meeting resumed at 8.45 pm.

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

The Council received written reports from the Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder (tabled), the Corporate Support and ICT Services Portfolio Holder, the Housing Portfolio Holder, the Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder, and the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder.

The Chairman invited the Leader, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Members of the Cabinet to provide an oral report or an oral update of their written reports.

(a) Leader of the Council

Councillor Mrs Collins reported that she had recently met with District Commander Jonathan Baldwin. She reported that there had been a decline in crime figures and that the Council had established a good partnership with the Police. Councillor Mrs Collins thanked Jonathan Baldwin and his officers for their support at this Council meeting.

The Leader reported on a meeting between members of the Cabinet, local Members of Parliament and several local County Councillors.

Councillor Mrs Collins also reported on her visit with other members to North London Waste at Edmonton.

(b) Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Councillor R Morgan encouraged members to attend the next meeting of the Committee on 6 November 2008.

(c) Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder

Councillor Ms Stavrou reported that the reduction in crime figures for the district had been above the average in the County.

The Portfolio Holder reported on a meeting held with Loughton Town Council and the Harlow Youth Offending Team as part of the restorative justice programme regarding litter picking, foliage cleaning and graffiti cleaning.

Members noted that the “Not in my Neighbourhood” week had been a success. Initiatives had included Police Community Support Officers calling door to door in certain areas to advise residents about crime reduction. 1,000 leaflets had been delivered to households about “beating the burglar”. The townlink radio system had been launched to Epping High Street traders. In addition graffiti cleaning had been prioritised and an additional 150 locations had been cleaned. The Police had targeted prolific offenders in the district and had made a number of arrests. The Portfolio Holder reported that new working practices with Harlow Youth Offending Team had been introduced regarding the monitoring of young people having received final warnings. The week had also seen the introduction of the Essex Watch Co-ordinator who would be overseeing and managing all Watch Schemes in the district.

Councillor Ms Stavrou reported that part of the role of Emergency Planning Officers in Essex was to continue to educate the public on how to be more resilient in times of crisis. This coming Friday a youth awareness campaign “What If” would be launched. This had been developed by Essex County Council and was aimed at providing a greater understanding for young people between the ages of 5 and 16 on how to react in emergency situations.

Members were informed that in preparation for the winter months the Council's Emergency Planning Officers had been reviewing the Council's response to possible flooding in the district. The Council had invested in new cleaner/lighter flood bags which expanded on being immersed in water and would provide a valuable addition to the traditional sandbags.

The Portfolio Holder advised that a special Emergency Planning Supplement would be included in the winter edition of The Forester magazine.

(c) Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Sartin reported that the consultation exercise on the waste service had now been concluded. Approximately 3,000 returns were currently being analysed. However, it had already been established that 1,056 responses had listed Option 1 as their preferred option; 813 had listed Option 2; 679 had listed Option 3 and 436 had not identified a preferred option.

Councillor Mrs Sartin referred to the visit to North London Waste and confirmed that a visit to a second facility had been cancelled pending the outcome of a health and safety investigation.

(d) Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder

Councillor Bassett thanked members for their input to the meetings regarding the Epping, Buckhurst Hill and Loughton Broadway parking reviews. He also thanked members for their comments on the alterations for Traffic Regulation Order (Amendment No 14). Comments had now been forwarded to Essex County Council Highways for their consideration and signing off. Councillor Bassett assured members that he would be following up on these matters.

(e) Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Harding drew attention to the Jack Petchey Achievement Award event held on 2 October 2008. She advised that this event had been a great success and had provided a real opportunity to highlight the positive contribution being made by young people in schools, youth clubs and communities across the district.

(f) Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Grigg reported that partial technical approval had now been received from Essex County Council and that work was due to commence on the Loughton Broadway Town Centre Enhancement Scheme.

77. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE**(a) Call for Sites – Call-in****By Councillor S Murray to Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Murray asked if the Portfolio Holder was aware there was still considerable anger being expressed by residents in Loughton about the identification of the five sites on the Debden Estate, Loughton as being suitable for residential development in the future and that they would continue to oppose any future proposed development on those sites.

Response by Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder

Councillor Stallan advised that he was not aware of the current feelings of residents but he understood why they would still be concerned and would want to continue to oppose any future development. He advised that he expected the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder to take these views into account in due course.

(b) Call for Sites – Local Development Framework**By Councillor S Murray to Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Murray asked the Portfolio Holder if she had yet given any thought to the criteria for assessing sites and if she had yet taken a view on whether she would approve the proposed criteria as Portfolio Holder or recommend criteria for approval by the Cabinet.

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

Councillor Mrs Grigg advised that the proposed criteria would be discussed by the Local Development Framework Portfolio Holder Advisory Group. She stated that she had not yet made a final decision on the approval of the criteria but was tending towards making a recommendation to the Cabinet.

78. MR D JACKMAN

By leave of the Council, the Chairman advised that Mr D Jackman, editor of the Epping Forest Guardian was about to leave the meeting and that this would be the last Council meeting that he would be attending in that capacity. Councillor Knapman thanked David Jackman for his work in producing the local newspaper, for the publicity he had given to the Chairman's charities and for the campaigns which he had run throughout the years.

The Council showed their appreciation for the work of Mr Jackman .

79. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS WITHOUT NOTICE (CONTINUED)**(c) Recycling Sacks**

By Councillor P Spencer to Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Spencer referred to the recent Green Festival in Buckhurst Hill at which it had been established that there appeared to be a shortage of recycling sacks. He asked the Portfolio Holder if there was currently a problem with the ordering or delivery of the sacks. He also asked the Portfolio Holder if she was aware of the tendency for the green waste sacks to split.

Response by Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Sartin advised that she was aware of problems with the strength of some of the sacks. She stated that she would liaise with officers about the apparent lack of sacks and would reply to the questioner on this aspect in writing with a copy of the reply being placed in the Council Bulletin.

(d) Plain English

By Councillor R Frankel to Councillor M Cohen, Corporate Support and ICT Services Portfolio Holder

Councillor Frankel asked the Portfolio Holder if he proposed to follow the lead being set by the London Borough of Harrow to promote the use of plain English and to reduce jargon in Council publications.

Response by Councillor M Cohen, Corporate Support and ICT Services Portfolio Holder

Councillor Cohen advised that he had discussed this matter with officers and that the issue was receiving careful consideration.

(e) Town and Village Plans

By Councillor Mrs C Pond to Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Pond asked if any steps were being taken to assist local councils in preparing town and village plans.

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

Councillor Mrs Grigg stated that she was aware that the Ongar Town Council had produced such a plan and she was also aware of the expected lead to be taken by the District Council in this matter. She advised that she would liaise with officers and would reply in writing with a copy of the response being included in the Council Bulletin.

(f) Parking Dispensation Notices**By Councillor Mrs J Sutcliffe to Councillor R Bassett, Civil Engineering and Maintenance Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Mrs Sutcliffe drew attention to the need for residents seeking parking dispensation notices to apply to the Parking Office in Epping and asked if it would be possible for these to be obtained at Town and Parish Council Offices.

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

Councillor Bassett advised that this issue had been raised previously and he agreed to publish information in the Council Bulletin.

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

Councillor Jacobs referred to the question which he had asked at the previous Council meeting and advised that the considerable increase in the number of street cleansing complaints was continuing. He stated that at this time last year approximately 50 complaints were being received each month whereas in September and October 2008 approximately 300 complaints had been received for each of those months. He asked the Portfolio Holder if it was necessary to await a meeting of the Contract Partnership Board to discuss this matter or whether more urgent action could be taken.

Response by Councillor Mrs M Sartin, Environment Portfolio Holder

Councillor Mrs Sartin advised that there appeared to be localised problems in certain areas. She advised that she was in the process of arranging an extra meeting of the Board and that this matter would be considered at that meeting.

(h) Car Boot Sales**By Councillor Mrs L Wagland to Councillor Mrs A Grigg, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Mrs Wagland advised that local residents were concerned about the intention of a landowner in Chigwell Row to hold another or a larger version of a car boot sale which would cause problems for residents. Councillor Mrs Wagland advised that the Director of Planning and Economic Development had informed the residents that such events could not be controlled in view of the fact that they had the benefit of deemed planning permission provided that certain conditions were met. She advised that she had researched the legislation and had established that there were exceptions to the deemed planning permission. For example, where a proposal involved the laying of material to provide an access or where the proposal would lead to the obstruction of a highway for vehicular traffic, it appeared that the deemed planning permission was not available. Councillor Mrs Wagland asked the Portfolio Holder if she would investigate this matter with the Director of Planning and Economic Development with a view to appropriate action being taken.

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

Councillor Mrs Grigg advised that she was aware of some of the provisions relating to car boot sales but would take up this matter with Planning officers and would publish the outcome of those considerations in the Council Bulletin.

(i) Provision of Council Accommodation**By Councillor Mrs P Richardson to Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Mrs Richardson referred to the lack of three bedroom accommodation in the Council's stock and the difficulties facing families currently in two bedroom accommodation but needing three bedrooms. She asked the Portfolio Holder if consideration had been given to extending two bedroom properties by providing a third bedroom in the roof area.

Response by Councillor D Stallan, Housing Portfolio Holder

Councillor Stallan advised this suggestion had not been considered but he would raise the matter with Housing officers.

80. MOTIONS**(a) Diabetes UK Campaign****Moved by Councillor D Stallan and seconded by Councillor B Rolfe**

By leave of the Council, Councillor Stallan amended the motion to include reference to the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, the Rt Hon Ed Balls MP as well as local Members of Parliament.

"That this Council:

supports Diabetes UK in its campaign to highlight the need for high quality support for children with diabetes at school;

and calls upon our local Members of Parliament and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, the Rt Hon Ed Balls MP to support Diabetes UK in its campaign when they lobby Parliament on 18 November 2008".

Carried

Motion as amended ADOPTED**RESOLVED:**

That this Council:

supports Diabetes UK in its campaign to highlight the need for high quality support for children with diabetes at school;

and calls upon our local Members of Parliament and the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families, the Rt Hon Ed Balls MP to support Diabetes UK in its campaign when they support Parliament on 18 November 2008.

(b) Local Businesses**Moved by Councillor Mrs D Collins and seconded by Councillor C Whitbread**

In introducing this motion Councillor Mrs Collins advised that the Council's Director of Finance and ICT had informed her that it would be possible to comply with the suggestion for payment of appropriate invoices within 20 days of receipt.

"In order to assist local small businesses during the current difficult economic times, this Council:

- (i) resolves that any business in the Epping Forest District which provides goods or services to the Council be paid within 20 days of receipt of the invoice instead of the usual 30 day period in order to help the businesses' cashflows; and
- (ii) instructs officers to review and recommend proposals for amending Contract Standing Orders with a view to preference being given when ordering goods and services to using wherever possible businesses within the Epping Forest District and making contracts of sizes that are accessible to small businesses, whilst continuing to demonstrate value for money".

First Amendment moved by Councillor J M Whitehouse and seconded by Councillor R Frankel

" (1) That a new paragraph (ii) be inserted as follows:

"(ii) Encourages large businesses, particular those who supply services to the Council, to pay invoices from their suppliers and subcontractors promptly; and instructs officers to consider and make recommendations about what steps the Council can take when procuring goods and services from main contractors to ensure that subcontractors are paid without delay"; and

(2) That the former paragraph (ii) be renumbered (iii)".

Carried

Second Amendment moved by Councillor K Angold-Stephens and seconded by Councillor R Barrett

"That this policy remains in place until the Council decides that there is no longer a recession".

Following a discussion Councillors Angold-Stephens and Barrett agreed to withdraw this amendment.

Motion as amended ADOPTED**RESOLVED:**

That in order to assist local businesses during the current difficult economic times, this Council:

- (i) resolves that any business in the Epping Forest District which provides goods or services to the Council be paid within 20 days of receipt of

the invoice instead of the usual 30 day period in order to help the businesses' cashflows;

(ii) encourages large businesses, particularly those who supply services to the Council, to pay invoices from their suppliers and sub-contractors promptly; and instructs officers to consider and make recommendations about what steps the Council can take when procuring goods and services from main contractors to ensure that sub-contractors are paid without delay; and

(iii) instructs officers to review and recommend proposals for amending Contract Standing Orders with a view to preference being given when ordering goods and services to using wherever possible businesses within the Epping Forest District and making contracts of sizes that are accessible to small businesses, whilst continuing to demonstrate value for money.

81. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS UNDER NOTICE

There were no questions asked by members under this item.

82. REPORT OF THE CABINET - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE - AWARD OF COSTS IN PLANNING APPEALS - 1 CONNAUGHT AVENUE, LOUGHTON

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:

(1) That a supplementary DDF estimate in the sum of £50,000 be approved to cover the costs awarded against the Council following planning appeals in relation to proposed development at 1 Connaught Avenue, Loughton; and

(2) That the agreement of the Chairman of the Council that the decision regarding the temporary virement of £50,000 from the Local Development Framework budget was urgent and should not be subject to call-in be noted.

83. REPORT OF THE CABINET - COUNCIL'S INVESTMENTS

Mover Councillor C Whitbread, Finance and Performance Management Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder submitted a report on the Council's current investments. In relation to the £2.5 million invested with Heritable Bank he advised that there had been no further information from the Local Government Association in relation to their lobbying of both Central Government in this country and the administration in Iceland to try to safeguard investments that were at stake.

Councillor Whitbread advised that together with officers he would be maintaining a close watch over the Council's remaining investments.

Report as first moved ADOPTED

RESOLVED:

That the Council's current investments be noted.

84. INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANELS

The Council noted that Mr R F Thompson of Epping had been appointed to the vacant seat on the District and Parish/Town Member Remuneration Panels.

85. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

There were no reports from members under this item.

CHAIRMAN