

# **Report to Council**

**Date of meeting: 22 December 2009**

**Subject: Overview and Scrutiny report to Council – December 2009**

**Chairman: Councillor R Morgan**



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## **Recommendation:**

**That the Overview and Scrutiny progress report from November 2009 to the present be noted.**

## **Report.**

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting – 12 November 2009.**

1. At the meeting on 12 November, the Committee welcomed the Epping Forest Youth Council. They gave examples of the work that they had carried out during their second term in office, such as lobbying for improvements to the way in which clubs and activities for young people were publicised; making a DVD focusing on raising awareness of the dangers to young people of taking alcohol and drugs; and taking part in a consultation exercise on the development of a skate park. October 2009 had seen the election for new youth councillors. There are now 33 members with an age range of 13-17. To ensure the continuation of the Council a request was made for £12,000 DDF for funding transport, training and general costs over the next 12 months. This was endorsed by the Committee to the Cabinet for approval.

2. The Committee received a report on the East of England Regional Assembly consultation on scenarios for Housing and economic growth; carrying out a review of the East of England Plan (EEP) to address development needs for the period 2011 to 2031.

3. The meeting also received a report from Mrs V Loftis, Market Research Consultation Officer, regarding the Key Findings Place Survey Report. The Government's Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper contained National Indicator measures about improving quality of life and providing better public services.

4. The Committee received a report from the Debt Management Review Sub-Group. At the request of Council on 16 December 2008 and Overview and Scrutiny on 29 January 2009, a Sub-Committee had been created reviewing current debt/money advice provision and support given to the Epping Forest Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) by the District Council. The Committee noted the following action undertaken:

(a) The District Council became a signatory to the Small Business Engagement Accord on 3 November 2009.

(b) Local banks and building societies were asked to ascertain their current arrangements when customers had their property repossessed or there was a threat of repossession. However, no responses were received.

(c) A Direct Link on the District Council website to Benefits Information was established and set up.

Members supported the Sub-Group's report, and endorsed the recommendations being put to the Cabinet.

5. The Assistant Director of Planning Services, Ms K Polyzoides, presented a report to the Committee regarding the Essex County Council Consultation – Minerals Development document. Essex County Council had published a consultation document as part of the process of considering sites for mineral extraction across the county. Two potential sites in Epping Forest had been identified. Members agreed with the officers' report about the vagueness and the unsustainability of the Essex County Council consultation. There was a great deal of concern regarding the road haulage problems these excavations would generate on local roads. It was advised that there was no indication of where the local industry demand was for these excavations, the material presumably would be taken elsewhere. They concluded that the sites identified were considered unsuitable.

6. The Assistant Director of Planning and Economic Development, Ms K Polyzoides, presented a report to the Committee regarding changes to Staffing in the Planning Directorate. The proposals sought to make changes to staffing within Planning Services in particular enhancing the Enforcement Team. The Committee endorsed the recommendation to cabinet.

7. Finally the Committee reviewed their work programme for the last six months.