

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**NOTES OF A MEETING OF SAFER, CLEANER, GREENER SCRUTINY STANDING**  
**PANEL**  
**HELD ON THURSDAY, 1 JULY 2010**  
**IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING**  
**AT 7.09 - 9.12 PM**

**Members Present:** Mrs C Edwards (Councillor) (Chairman), Ms J Hedges (Vice-Chairman), W Breare-Hall, A Boyce, K Chana, Mrs T Cochrane, D Jacobs, Mrs C Pond, P Spencer and D Stallan (Housing Portfolio Holder)

**Other members present:** Mrs M Sartin

**Apologies for Absence:** Mrs S Jones, B Judd and G Mohindra

**Officers Present** J Gilbert (Director of Environment and Street Scene), L MacNeill (Assistant Director (Operations, Administration & Finance)), J Nolan (Assistant Director (Environmental Health)) and A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer)

**1. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (COUNCIL MINUTE 39 - 23.7.02)**

It was reported that Councillor D Stallan was substituting for Councillor Mrs S Jones and Councillor K Channa for Councillor G Mohindra.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

**3. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING**

The notes from 29 April 2010 were agreed as a correct record.

**4. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORK PROGRAMME**

(a) The Panel noted their Terms of Reference.

**(b) Work Programme:**

**Item 4 (b) – Waste Management – progress of recycling in flats** - Noted that the Council was making progress on the establishment of recycling facilities in blocks of flats in the District.

**Item 5 – Nottingham Declaration** – a note was tabled explaining the progress made on the climate strategy. The Panel noted that:

The Climate Change Strategy was criticised by the external auditor. It was clear that although some areas were achieving the milestones set out in the action plans, many areas have fallen behind. The Strategy was the first of its kind produced by EFDC and was always recognised as being a first step, which would require modification.

Progress updates on the Climate Change Strategy action plan had been produced. Although there had been some achievements in terms of milestones set out in the document, a large proportion of the actions had not been completed. The cause for the incomplete tasks would appear to be:

- No rigorous framework for active performance monitoring;
- Insufficient resources to complete tasks;
- Some actions/targets now recognised as being unrealistic in the timeframe set; and
- Progress was not measurable in many cases as targets were not calculated from baseline data.

A sub-group of the Green Corporate Working Party was set up to investigate progress on the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan. It was agreed that the entire strategy needed to be rewritten, to include:

- An accurate baseline from which to measure progress and decide on targets;
- Consultation with staff to ensure a realistic and detailed set of actions;
- A rigorous monitoring system with regular input from both the Green Corporate Working Party and the Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Panel; and
- A representative or 'Environmental Champion' from each directorate who will be responsible for regular reporting on progress of objectives.

**Item 6 – Bobbingworth Tip** – (a) noted that remedial work had been completed although the planting had been difficult over the autumn and winter period. The park would soon be available for public access. (b) Once open the Management Group was to be set up.

**Extra Meeting** - The Panel noted that an extra meeting was to be arranged before October to look at the SCG Strategy.

**Crime and Disorder Meetings** – these meeting are to be publicised to raise public awareness. Members were asked to think about what related crime and disorder topics they would like to be discussed at the next Crime and Disorder meeting to be held in 7<sup>th</sup> October 2010. To put a note in the Council Bulletin asking for topics.

## 5. SAFER CLEANER GREENER STRATEGY - ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Assistant Director Environment and Street Scene, Jim Nolan, updated the Panel on the enforcement activities of the council for the first six months of this year. He tabled a paper showing the number of incidents recorded. These are set out below:

### **Flytipping:**

Number of Flytipping incidents reported	672
Number referred to Environmental and Neighbourhood Officer	549
Number of investigations	303
Number of warning letters	31
Number of prosecutions	3

### **General complaints**

Number of general complaints dealt with by ENO's	771
These include 524 noise complaints (197 of which were out of hours)	

66 bonfire complaints  
43 waste duty of care complaints  
25 litter  
78 refuse nuisance  
19 licensing consultations

The team had also carried out 2 vehicle stop checks with Essex Police

Of the 303 investigations, only 3 resulted in prosecutions demonstrating how difficult it is to gather sufficient evidence to be able to mount enforcement action.

Asked if the figures were up or down from last year, Mr Nolan replied that some of these figures were not collected in the same format last year, but he could say that complaints about noise were up by 20% and that flytipping had also increased. This was the first year for the collection of these figures and that eventually there will be a year on year comparison.

Officers were asked if the figures for flytipping could be broken down by wards. The Panel noted that it may be possible, but the figures were presently collected for the government. Officers would try to do so for the next time and also try to break the figures down by rural and urban areas.

It was noted that EFDC was embarking on a joint venture with Essex County Council, which would enable Epping to access a regional database, which would enable officers to identify vehicle registration numbers and get background information on that vehicle. Members were asked to report any instances of flytipping that they came across, especially if they could supply a vehicle registration number.

## **6. SAFER CLEANER GREENER ACTION PLAN**

The Assistant Director Environment and Street Scene, Jim Nolan, updated the Panel on the Safer Cleaner Greener Action Plan.

They noted that:

- there were four hotspots for litter in the District, that were being monitored twice a week;
- that the Neighbourhood Team had been launched last year and that a response line was now available (01992 564500);
- the Crucial Crew and the Reality Road shows had just taken place in June. The Crucial Crew shows were aimed at year six children; and the Reality Road show was aimed at year nines;
- the CCTV policy was to go to the next Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting;
- the council was achieving 100% of its target for removing offensive and racist graffiti within 48 hours of notification;
- the council was working with their various partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the district;
- officers had received training and approval had been given by Cabinet to introduce fixed penalty notices as an enforcement tool;
- officers would implement and monitor the actions in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Officers were asked how the percentages of the crime reduction figures were arrived at. They replied that it was collated on the Home Office database and the targets were set by Essex Police.

**AGREED:** In order to ensure that the Panel receive up to date figures next year it was agreed that the July meeting of the Panel be put back by two weeks.

The Panel were concerned by the rumours of reduction in the budgets, as Essex County Council had already had some of its government partnership funding halved and so in turn were asking for 50% reductions in some of the District's partnerships expenditure.

## **7. REVIEW OF SAFER CLEANER GREENER STRATEGY**

This item to be brought back to the next meeting.

## **8. CCTV ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Panel noted the report on the CCTV Service Delivery Plan. The Plan was broken down into the following key sections;

- (i) some background and historical context;
- (ii) national and local policies;
- (iii) aims and objectives;
- (iv) the current position in Epping Forest District;
- (v) the delivery plan and resource implications; and
- (vi) a number of detailed appendices.

The Panel noted that:

- The Council has a standardised buying policy for equipment;
- The CCTV system was operated by Council officers only;
- The CCTV systems were substantially funded from grants and by partnerships;
- The task column of the delivery plan needed "to do by" dates inserted ;
- The Police in the district thought the system was very effective, as it has HD quality images so the Police could identify persons and use as evidence;
- CCTV on Housing land are funded from the HRA budget.

Councillor Chana queried the CCTV camera by the shops in Manor Road, Grange Hill. He said that there was a dispute between the Parish Council and the shop owners about the costs and so it was taken away, why was this? Mr Nolan did not know specifically about this situation but promised to look into it.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Panel noted the six monthly progress report on the CCTV Service Delivery Plan.

## **9. SPORTS HALL PROVISION AT WALTHAM ABBEY SWIMMING POOL**

The Assistant Director Environment and Street Scene, Laura Macneill, introduced a report updating the Panel on the provision of a sports hall at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool. In July 2009 the Cabinet agreed to the proposal to build a sports hall at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool. It was recommended that Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) undertake the work to planning pre-application stage. SLM had

appointed Hadfield Cawkwell and Davidson to undertake this work. The Cabinet also stated that the revenue consequences of the new facility must not increase costs to the Council.

The project is therefore reliant on the planning permission, the agreement by Cabinet on the future SLM contract and also, once fuller details of the scheme are known, the allocation of the capital funding which at present has been agreed in principle at £1.72 million.

**RESOLVED:**

That the progress of the project for the provision of a Sports Hall at Waltham Abbey Swimming Pool was noted.

**10. NEW TREE STRATEGY**

The Assistant Director Environment and Street Scene, Laura Macneill introduced a report on the new tree strategy. At the SCG Panel meeting in September 2009 members discussed the content of the tree strategy document and asked that it was also reviewed by the Green Infrastructure Working Party and asked them to report back to this Panel. They considered the strategy at their meetings in November and March and the outcome and recommendations were set out in the report.

The Panel noted that the document was on the Council's website and paper copies were in libraries and Parish and Town Offices. An article was also put in the Forrester explaining where the document could be viewed.

Members were of the opinion that hard copies should not be so widely distributed as they would be just filed away and not looked at. They were of the opinion that an email notification pointing out the availability of the document on the web would be just as effective and save paper. Also if a Town or Parish Council requests a paper copy, one could be supplied.

It was also noted that the Veteran Tree Project was not included in the document, this would be added.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the content and outline of the document, subject to the addition of the Veteran Tree Project, was agreed;
- (2) That subject to the minimum print run, the existing printing paper specifications and distribution outlets be retained; and
- (3) That a draft of the new Tree Strategy be brought back to this Panel for agreement prior to its publication.

**11. REVIEW OF WASTE AND RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICES DURING CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR 2009/10**

The Director of Environment and Street Scene, John Gilbert, introduced the report on waste and recycling collection services during Christmas and New Year 2009/10. This report covered the period of disruption during the period of bad weather (snow fall and icy conditions), coupled with the bank holidays closures. Because of the severe weather in January our contractor could not catch up with the delayed Christmas collections. As it turned out as a district we did very well compared with

other authorities, only suspending services for just one day. The steps taken to bring services back to normal were highlighted in the report. The main actions undertaken to get collection services back to normal were:

- a) Suspend Special Collections (bulky waste item collection) to divert resources to help catch up refuse and recycling collections.
- b) Suspend street cleansing service, divert some crews to grit high streets/main roads and pavements to assist residents.
- c) Divert remaining street cleansing crews to work alongside refuse and recycling crews.
- d) Suspend normal 'side waste' policy and collect any waste placed next to normal collection container until service back to normal.
- e) Street cleansing crews to pile up recycling and residual sacks at easy to access road junctions or the nearest point that a freighter could safely access.
- f) Hire additional refuse freighters and crews in January 2010 to help clear the backlog.

During this time updating information was put on the Council's website to keep the public informed. Although the primary responsibility rested with SITA, Council officers also went out to check up on them. During this time there were also problems with the landfill sites and recycling processors which were either closed or inaccessible at various times. This meant that the refuse trucks could not drop off their loads. The Civic Offices were also closed over Christmas which caused a lot of customer frustration over this period. This also meant that no staff were able to update the pre-recorded telephone message that the Council used and members were asked to provide some guidance on staffing over the Christmas period.

Councillor Stallan noted that officers or SITA could not be criticised for the bad weather, the entire country came to a halt during this period. People would understand about the delays if only they were informed as to what these problems were. There was now a case into looking at not closing the offices down completely over the Christmas period. It may be that a skeleton staff was kept on for all major services, which would solve the updating problem.

Councillor Breare-Hall said this was the wrong time to open the offices at Christmas due to budgetary cuts. If there were problems with updating the Council's telephone messages could not a member of staff, who lived in Epping, come in and update it.

Councillor Pond agreed with Councillor Stallan, that there should be a skeleton staff manning the Council over the Christmas period and not just because of the bad weather; or could the staff at Langston Road answer the phones. Mr Gilbert replied that they were not there to answer the phones but to monitor the service.

Councillor Jacobs commented that if the Council was to seriously consider opening over the Christmas period then Councillors would need to know the costs involved and how it would operate. They needed to explore if the website could be updated remotely from home. Feedback was also needed from other Councils as to what they were doing.

Councillor Mrs Sartin added that answer phones and web pages were just technical

problems that could be overcome, and staff coming in should not prove too much of a problem.

Councillor Chana commented that other authorities have people who stay at home but are contactable for emergencies.

Councillor Mrs Edwards said these were all good ideas but it all came down to costs. The Panel needed to consider costs before they made any recommendations.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the initial report on the on the service disruption over the Christmas and New Year period was noted.
- (2) That the Panel requested detailed information on:
  - a) the manning of the Civic Offices over the Christmas and New Year break;
  - b) the ability to update the website and the answer phone messages remotely;
  - c) what other councils do over the Christmas and New Year break; and
  - d) amending the various collection streams during adverse weather conditions.

**12. MINUTES OF THE WASTE MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP BOARD FROM 18 MAY 2010**

The Panel noted the minutes of the Waste Management Partnership Board from 18 May 2010.

**13. REPORT TO BE MADE TO THE NEXT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEETING**

To report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the CCTV Delivery Plan and the code of practice and the review of the Christmas waste services

**14. FUTURE MEETINGS**

The future meeting dates of the Panel were noted. An extra meeting was to be considered for September 2010.

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