

## **EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL ANNUAL COUNCIL MINUTES**

**Committee:** Council

**Date:** 17 May 2007

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping

**Time:** 7.30 - 9.05 pm

**Members Present:** Councillors Mrs A Haigh (Chairman), Mrs C Pond (Vice-Chairman), K Angold-Stephens, R Bassett, D Bateman, Mrs P Brooks, K Chana, R Church, Mrs S Clapp, M Cohen, M Colling, Mrs D Collins, Mrs A Cooper, J Demetriou, R D'Souza, T Farr, R Frankel, P Gode, A Green, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs H Harding, J Hart, Ms J Hedges, P House, D Jacobs, D Kelly, J Knapman, R Law, Mrs J Lea, A Lee, J Markham, Mrs M McEwen, P McMillan, R Morgan, S Murray, G Pritchard, Mrs P Richardson, B Rolfe, Mrs P K Rush, B Sandler, Mrs M Sartin, P Spencer, Mrs P Smith, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, P Turpin, H Ulkun, Mrs L Wagland, A Watts, Mrs E Webster, C Whitbread, Mrs J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse, M Woollard and J Wyatt

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs R Gadsby

**Officers Present:** P Haywood (Joint Chief Executive), J Scott (Joint Chief Executive), I Willett (Head of Research and Democratic Services), G Lunnun (Democratic Services Manager), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), P Seager (Chairmans Secretary) and J Boreham (Assistant Public Relations and Information Officer)

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### **COUNCILLOR MRS A HAIGH IN THE CHAIR**

#### **1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

##### **(a) Newly Elected Councillors**

Councillor Mrs Haigh welcomed those present, particularly those members re-elected on 3 May 2007, namely: Councillors Mrs P Brooks, K Chana, P Gode, Mrs R Gadsby, A Green, Mrs A Grigg, Mrs H Harding, R Morgan, Mrs M Sartin, Mrs P Smith and Ms S Stavrou. Councillor Mrs Haigh announced one by one alphabetically newly elected members and those returning after a long break and invited them to enter the Chamber. The following Councillors entered the Chamber, were met by Councillor Mrs Haigh and took their allocated seats: Councillors R Bassett, Ms J Hedges, G Pritchard, B Rolfe, H Ulkun, A Watts and Mrs E Webster.

##### **(b) Webcasting Announcement**

Councillor Mrs Haigh reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing.

##### **(c) Retiring Chairman of Council – Year of Office**

Councillor Mrs Haigh addressed the Council on her year in office.

She thanked the Council for affording her the honour of being Chairman of the Council for the last year. She said that when elected last May she had spoken of the

diversity and richness of the District and how its most valuable resource was its people. She said that her year in office had strengthened her earlier perceptions.

Councillor Mrs Haigh advised that her first duty as Chairman had been to open an exhibition at the Museum celebrating the District's agricultural heritage. Her last duty had been to attend a press launch to publicise improvements to the Museum's galleries and display cabinets. Councillor Mrs Haigh said that through attending numerous awards ceremonies she had realised how many committed people gave up their time and without whom individual lives would be poorer.

She thanked everyone for contributing so generously to her nominated charities and advised that through the money raised the Essex Ambulance Community First Responders had been able to acquire two additional sets of equipment which would enable them to extend their service into Ongar. Action in Mental Health would be using their share of the money raised to benefit their service users by providing a range of courses to promote health and wellbeing and also to acquire a much-needed projector. Homestart Epping Forest, whose grant from the County Council had been cut, would be using the money raised to continue group work to support their users. Councillor Mrs Haigh advised that through charity events, raffles, collections and generous individual donations she had been able to raise over £17,000 in the year and that money was still to come from those who had abseiled on behalf of her charities including Councillors J M Whitehouse and R Frankel. She paid special thanks to Councillor R Morgan and his wife Jean for organising a very enjoyable walk through the countryside surrounding their home last Sunday and for providing lunch for over 80. The event had raised £780 for her charities and the day would be one of her lasting memories of the year. Councillor Mrs Haigh also thanked Shirley Hawkins, Executive Assistant, who every year collected prizes and organised raffles for successive Chairman's charities.

Councillor Mrs Haigh said that she had been extremely lucky to have benefited from support and advice of previous Chairmen of the Council, Councillors B Sandler, R Morgan and D Kelly and she thanked those members. She also thanked Councillors and friends who had accompanied her to events.

She referred to the talents of the District's young people both on the sports field and in the arts and said that she believed the arts and sports bursaries really did make a difference to young people at the start of their careers.

Whilst at the Common Garden event at Theydon Bois Village Green in the summer, a number of residents from across the District had paid tribute to the work of the Council's Arts Officers. Councillor Mrs Haigh said that the Council was fortunate to have such committed staff in all of its services including backroom staff who were not seen in the Chamber but provided quality services to the District's residents. She thanked officers in Democratic Services for their support during the year, especially Pat Seager, Chairman's Secretary, without whom she would have been unable to carry out her duties. She referred to Pat's attention to detail and forward planning and to the high regard in which Pat was held beyond the District, often being consulted by other authorities for advice on their civic events.

Councillor Mrs Haigh thanked the Joint Chief Executives, Peter Haywood and John Scott and the Head of Research and Democratic Services, Ian Willett, for their advice during the year which had assisted her in facilitating the progress of the agenda at Council meetings. In travelling around the District and elsewhere she had realised how highly John Scott was regarded by other organisations and individuals and said that he would be leaving behind a legacy on his retirement later in the year.

In visiting junior and senior schools, she said she had been impressed with the interest engendered around the concept of democracy. She had sought to help promote this by inviting schools to the Council Chamber and organising an event for sixth form girls on International Women's Day.

Councillor Mrs Haigh said that she had followed Councillor B Sandler's lead and had held a Celebration of Faith Service and she was pleased to say that many of those faith leaders had joined together earlier this week to form a Multi-Faith Forum which would be linked to the Local Strategic Partnership and hopefully would enhance the quality of life for residents.

In conclusion, Councillor Mrs Haigh wished Councillor Mrs Pond, if elected as Chairman of the Council, every success in the coming year and thanked her for the support that she had given her during the past year. She also thanked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Mrs D Collins for her support during the year.

Group Leaders, Councillor S Murray and the Joint Chief Executive, John Scott (on behalf of the staff) expressed their appreciation for the hard work and enthusiasm shown by Councillor Mrs Haigh during her year of office.

## **2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

The nomination of Councillor Mrs C Pond for the office of the Chairman of the Council having been formally moved, it was:

### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor Mrs C Pond be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Mrs Pond thereupon made a declaration of acceptance of the office of Chairman and thanked the Council for her election.

### **COUNCILLOR MRS C POND IN THE CHAIR**

## **3. PAST CHAIRMAN'S BADGE**

The new Chairman present Councillor Mrs A Haigh with a past Chairman's badge of office.

## **4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

The nomination of Councillor J Knapman for the office of Vice-Chairman of the Council having been formally moved, it was:

### **RESOLVED:**

That Councillor J Knapman be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Knapman thereupon made a declaration of acceptance of the office of Vice-Chairman and thanked the Council for his appointment.

**5. MINUTES****RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 April 2007 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**6. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

**7. ANNOUNCEMENTS****(a) Announcements by the Chairman****(i) Year of Office**

Councillor Mrs Pond thanked the Council for electing her as Chairman for the forthcoming year. Councillor Mrs Pond praised Councillor Mrs Haigh for being a fine Chairman, controlling Council meetings and being a very good ambassador for the District as well as working full time. Councillor Mrs Pond thanked Councillor Mrs Haigh for involving her in the Chairman's activities during the past year which would make her role that much easier in the coming year. She also thanked staff in Democratic Services for their support to date.

Councillor Mrs Pond stated that although she was associated with Loughton, she knew the whole District quite well and had lived in the area most of her life. She had lived in Loughton for 26 years, close to Epping Forest and was proud of the District. She hoped that during her year of office she would be invited to many events and functions throughout the District.

**(ii) Chairman's Charities for the Year**

The Chairman announced that her main charity would be the League of Friends of St Margaret's Hospital. She advised that she would provide further details at the next Council meeting.

In addition, if sufficient money was raised it would be her intention to support other charities, especially those working with young people.

She also intended to support the many volunteers throughout the District and would be working with Countrycare on some of their environmental tasks.

**(iii) Former Members**

The Chairman acknowledged the contributions made to the Council by

- former Councillor Don Spinks who had not sought re-election after serving the District Council in two spells totalling 13 years;
- former Councillor Keith Wright who had not been re-elected after 16 years service;
- former Councillor Daphne Borton who had not been re-elected after 5 years service;
- former Councillor Sue Perry who had not been re-elected after 3 years service;

- former Councillor Richard Haines who had not sought re-election after 5 years service;
- former Councillor Bob Goold who had not sought re-election after 7 years service;
- former Councillor Stephen Metcalfe who had not sought re-election after 5 years service.

The Chairman advised that engraved glassware would be sent to former Councillor K Wright who was unable to be present at this meeting.

Councillors Mrs D Collins, D Jacobs and R Morgan spoke in appreciation of the work undertaken by the former Councillors.

**(iv) Flowers**

The Chairman announced that the floral display from tonight's meeting would be sent to the League of Friends at St Margaret's Hospital.

**(v) Adrian Scott, Head of ICT**

The Chairman announced that together with the Leader of the Council and the immediate past Chairman of the Council she would be sending a letter to Adrian Scott, currently on long-term sick leave.

**(vi) Charity Golf Match**

The Chairman encouraged members to attend the Members and Officers Golf Day being held at Chigwell Golf Course on 19 June 2007. She advised that those members wishing to play should contact Simon Hill in Democratic Services.

The Chairman advised that she would be providing further details of her charity events at future meetings.

**8. DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS - 3 MAY 2007**

The Council noted details of those Councillors elected on 3 May 2007.

**9. LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING ACT 1989 - NOTICE OF CONSTITUTION OF POLITICAL GROUPS, GROUP LEADERS AND DEPUTIES**

**(a) Notice of Constitution of Political Groups**

The Council noted, in accordance with Regulation 8 of the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990, the constitution of political groups on the Council as set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

**(b) Notification of Group Leaders and Deputies**

The Council noted the names of members who had signed notices as indicated above and who would act as Group Leaders and Deputy Group Leaders.

**10. LEADER, DEPUTY LEADER, CABINET, COMMITTEES, SUB-COMMITTEES AND PANELS**

**Motion moved by Councillor Mrs D Collins and seconded by Councillor C Whitbread**

By leave of the Council, Councillor Mrs Collins amended the motion which had been tabled to include the transfer of responsibility for Local Land Charges including Home Information Packs.

“That this Council resolves:

(a) to reduce the number of Cabinet seats from 9 to 8 with effect from the Council Year 2007/08 in order to facilitate a closer alignment of portfolios with the new Top Management structure;

(b) to discontinue the Customer Services, Media, Communications and ICT Portfolio and transfer its responsibilities to other Portfolios as follows:

Information Technology and IEG Programme (including telephones) – transfer to Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio;

Customer Services (including Waste Management contract) – transfer to Environmental Protection Portfolio;

Public Relations, Media and Information Services – transfer to Leader’s Portfolio; and

(c) to transfer responsibility for Local Land Charges including Home Information Packs from the Leader’s Portfolio to the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio”.

**Motion as amended Carried**

**RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

(1) That this Council resolves:

(a) to reduce the number of Cabinet seats from 9 to 8 with effect from the Council Year 2007/8 in order to facilitate a closer alignment of portfolios with the new Top Management structure;

(b) to discontinue the Customer Services, Media, Communications and ICT Portfolio and transfer its responsibilities to other Portfolios as follows:

Information Technology and IEG Programme (including telephones) – transfer to Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio;

Customer Services (including Waste Management contract) – transfer to Environmental Protection Portfolio;

Public Relations, Media and Information Services – transfer to Leader’s Portfolio; and

- (c) to transfer responsibility for Local Land Charges including Home Information Packs from the Leader's Portfolio to the Finance, Performance Management and Corporate Support Services Portfolio; and
- (2) That the Leader, Deputy Leader, Portfolio Holders and members of the Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Groups be as set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes;
- (3) That the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Cabinet, Committees, Sub-Committees, Panels and Groups be as set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes; and
- (4) That nominations for the membership, Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Top Management Appointments Panel be considered at the June Council meeting.

## 11. STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Council considered a nomination for one of the two Councillors to form a Committee together with three Independent Members and a local council representative.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Councillor Mrs P Smith be appointed to the Standards Committee for 2007/08; and
- (2) That a second Councillor be appointed to the Committee on the nomination of the Liberal Democrats Group.

## 12. AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Council considered nominations for the three Councillors to form a Committee together with two co-opted persons appointed by the Council.

Councillor C Whitbread, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee Selection Panel, presented a report on the recruitment of independent persons to serve as co-optees on the new Committee.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Councillors J Knapman, Mrs A Haigh and A Watts be appointed to the Audit and Governance Committee for 2007/08;
- (2) That Mr N J Purkis be appointed to one of the two seats for co-opted members of the Committee with effect from 18 May 2007;
- (3) That arrangements be made for Mr Purkis to receive appropriate training before he takes up his appointment; and
- (4) That the second co-optee place on the Committee be filled following a further recruitment exercise carried out by the Committee itself after its first meeting.

**13. SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

The Council noted that the Constitution required that the Scheme of Delegation be agreed at the Annual Meeting. Members were advised that the current scheme was set out in Part 3 of the Council's Constitution.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Scheme of Delegation as set out in the Constitution be agreed.

**14. COUNCIL MEETINGS - 2007/08**

The Council was informed that at its meeting on 24 April 2007, it had adopted a calendar of meetings for the period from May 2007 – May 2008 which had included ordinary meetings of the Council for the year. It was noted that it was a requirement of the Constitution that a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council be approved at the Annual Meeting of the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

That during 2007/08 ordinary meetings of the Council be held on the following dates:

28 June 2007 (Thursday)  
24 July 2007  
30 October 2007  
18 December 2007  
19 February 2008  
21 February 2008 (Thursday) (reserved date for budget meeting)  
22 April 2008  
15 May 2008 (Thursday) (Annual Meeting)

**15. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Council considered a schedule of nominations by the political groups for Council representation on outside organisations. Voting took place in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules where nominations exceeded available places.

**RESOLVED:**

(1) That representation on outside organisations for 2007/08 be determined as set out in Appendix 3 to these minutes;

(2) That the schedule of representatives on outside organisations with terms of office expiring after the current year as set out in Appendix 4 to these minutes be noted;

(3) That the officer appointments to outside organisations listed in Appendix 5 to these minutes be noted; and

(4) That consideration of the appointment of representatives to the Police and Community Consultative Group – Epping and Loughton Sections – be deferred to the June Council meeting pending receipt of clarification from the Secretariat of that Group about its current status.



**16. WORK PROGRAMMES**

The Committee noted that the Constitution required that the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny should both submit an annual work programme each year, on their strategies for the coming year. It was noted that work programmes were being prepared and would be circulated to all members of the Council when completed.

**RESOLVED:**

That work programmes for both the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny be circulated to members shortly.

**CHAIRMAN**