



DRAFT MINUTES

Meeting: COUNCIL

Date: 3rd October 2016

Time: 7.30PM

Venue: NORTH WEALD LIBRARY, 138 HIGH ROAD, NORTH WEALD

PRESENT:

Councillors (11) C Hawkins, A Buckley, B Eldridge, A Tyler, D Spearman, G Mulliner, B Clegg, Mrs S Jackman MBE, T Blanks, B Bartram, N Bedford*

Officers in Attendance (2)

** for part of meeting*

Susan De Luca, Clerk

Adriana Jones – Principal Finance Officer

Members of the Public (1)

Members of the Press (1)

C16.072 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (3)

NOTED that apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Stallan, Mrs A Grigg and Mrs E Godwin-Brown.

C16.073 OTHER ABSENCES (0)

None.

C16.074 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Parish Council meeting held on 5th September 2016 were **AGREED** and duly signed as a correct record. The Minutes of the Environmental Committee meeting held on 21st September 2016 were **NOTED**. The Clerk confirmed the notes of the Remembrance Sunday meeting held on 21st September were yet to be typed.

C16.075 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were given:

- Cllr Spearman - Pecuniary interest in items referring to the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan.

C16.076 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

C16.077 CLERKS UPDATE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

Members noted that a full Clerks Report for this month would be held over due to the importance of the Local Plan (as agreed at the last Meeting – details will be included in next months Report). However Members noted that there was one matter that needed to be addressed from last month's meeting due to a deadline of 7th October being set - as follows:

a) STREET NAMING & NUMBERING

Members recalled that the two names suggested by this Council were:

- **Queens Court** (for the 12 new houses off Queens Road) -
- **Centenary Court** - (for the 4 new homes off Bluemans End)

Following email correspondence between this Council and Alan Hall, EFDC Director of Communities, regarding the naming of the proposed new developments in North Weald under Phase 3 of the Council's Housebuilding Programme, Alan Hall has now received the comments of the Council's Neighbourhoods Team (who are responsible for administering the naming of all new developments in the District) on the Parish Council suggested names. This has apparently thrown up a couple of issues, in that they are unable to agree the two names that were put forward since it would be contrary to the District Council's Street Naming and Numbering Policy and national standards, stating that the Neighbourhoods Team have pointed out that the Council's Policy does not include the suffix "Court" in the list of suffixes, listed in Section 13 of the Policy, that can be used for "new streets" (i.e. new addresses that do not comprise, say, a block of flats). This is an EFDC error, since "Court" was included in the list of suggested suffixes that EFDC included in their email to me, for which the Clerk has received an apologised.

Alan Hall has gone back to the Neighbourhoods Team, suggesting that this would only be a "minor infringement" of the policy and asking if "Court" can be used, but they have advised that this is not possible, since they have to comply with national gazetteer requirements. Therefore, the Parish Council has been asked to proposed a different Suffix for both of the proposed street names. After discussion, the following altered suggested street names were **AGREED**:

- **Queen Elizabeth Close** (for the 12 new houses off Queens Road)
- **Centenary Close** - (for the 4 new homes off Bluemans End)

C16.078 MEMBERS REPORTS

The following reports were **RECEIVED**:

- a) **Chairman's Report** – No Report
- b) **Vice-Chairman's Report** – The Vice-Chairman stated that as the Environmental Committee had confirmed they would not be supporting the Burns evening this year, an alternative event, for example a Sunday meal for staff and Councillors, could take place in January 2017.
- c) **District Councillors Report** – No reports
- d) **County Councillor Report** - No reports
- e) **Councillors Reports** – No reports
- f) **Environmental Issues** – Cllr Mulliner reported that the new bus shelter opposite Upland Road in Thornwood would be installed mid November, that there had been some obscene graffiti in the Weald Common Play Area which had now been removed, and that bulb planting would be taking place in October.

C16.079 FINANCIAL REPORTS

Members **NOTED** that the Financial Report for this month had been held over due to the importance of the Local Plan (as Agreed at the last Meeting – full details will be included in next months Report).

C16.080 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL – NOTIFICATION IN CHANGES TO LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT

At their meeting on 14 July the EFDC Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee considered the amount of Revenue Support Grant that EFDC is likely to receive over the next three years and the effect these reductions would have on the grant passed on to local councils.

In previous years the support given to the parishes has been reduced by the same percentage as the grant has reduced. By 2019/20 EFDC will no longer receive any grant and so needs to reduce parish support to zero by this time as well. The level of support in 2016/17 is £201,249 and it is was decided to reduce the support in equal amounts so £134,166 is paid in 2017/18 and £67,083 in 2018/19 followed by no support in 2019/20. An alternative approach was to continue with reductions reflecting the annual percentage change in grant but this created much steeper cuts with support falling to £97,405 in 2017/18 and £50,651 in 2018/19.

This decision was endorsed by the EFDC Cabinet on 1 September and decisions from that meeting are now being actioned.

A document was attached to the agenda which showed what each parish is receiving in 2016/17 and what they would be receiving in 2017/18 and 2018/19. As stated above to reflect the complete removal of Revenue Support Grant in 2019/20 there will be no support grants to parishes in 2019/20. Details of how the above information relates to this Parish Council was attached to the agenda and any Member who finds these details unclear are asked to contact the Parish Office if you require any additional explanation. The clerk confirmed that this issue will be addressed at the Budget/Precept meeting for Councillors to consider how to make up this shortfall.

C16.081 FINANCIAL CAPPING OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS – GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

Members **NOTED** that a consultation had just been launched by DCLG entitled “The 2017/18 Local Government Finance Settlement – Technical Consultation Paper”. This is an important consultation as it includes questions about extending the referendum requirement for increasing Town and Parish Council’s precept by more than 2% to local councils for the first time.

In broad terms if the capping was introduced a Council would only be allowed to increase the precept by approximately £200 for every £10,000. This will severely hamper the sector taking on additional services and projects. If this proposal goes ahead it will inhibit the amount of new work parishes can undertake without a referendum. A Referendum costs approximately the same as an election so for the smallest councils this will be a very large amount of money and for the larger ones it will mean many thousands of pounds.

At the Essex Association of Local Councils AGM, discussion took place as detailed below:

Local parish and town councils are an important part of communities and local democracy, and should be able to get on with the job of improving quality of life and well being without central government interference.

It is vital local councils continue to have the freedom and flexibility to raise the resources they need to invest in local services, especially at a time when they are taking on services and assets from principal councils, often much valued services which would otherwise cease completely and which communities want to see continue. This meeting is therefore extremely concerned about a consultation published by the government on 22 September which includes proposals to extend council tax referendums to some or all local councils. Local councils in Essex are doing a brilliant job improving their areas; whether it's by building community resilience, increasing house building through neighbourhood planning, providing local transport solutions, supporting the local economy and businesses, organising community events and festivals, helping meet social care needs and making places dementia friendly or giving grants to help local groups and organisations – all this and more for an average cost to residents of just over a pound a week. This meeting also notes that local councils account for just 1.7% of the £26 billion raised through council tax in England and have demonstrated fiscal responsibility in recent years with overall increases in precepts going down, rising this year by just 6 pence per week as a result of local councils taking on services from principal councils and funding not being passed on to them. Given their important and growing role, local councils should be celebrated and supported, not hindered by central government.

**“This meeting is resolutely opposed to proposals by the government to extend council tax referendum principles to some or all local councils; and calls upon all local councils in Essex to respond to the government consultation stating their opposition to the proposals. I therefore duly submit this motion to the AGM that the Government do not introduce a capping to the Parish Sector. “
Cllr Peter Davey.**

Members present at that Meeting were asked to take this statement back to their own Councils with immediate effect, with the suggestion that each Council responds to the consultation stating that that the Government should not introduce Capping to the Parish Sector, given their important and growing role, and that local councils should be celebrated and supported, not hindered by central government

Members of this Council **CONSIDERED** if they were in agreement with this statement. After discussion, Cllr Mrs Jackman **PROPOSED** that the Council supported this statement, and this was **SECONDED** by Cllr Tyler. This proposal was **AGREED** unanimously, and the Clerk was asked to respond to this consultation as such.

C16.082 BOUNDARY COMMISSION BOUNDARY REVIEW

On the 13th September 2016, the independent Boundary Commission for England (BCE) published its initial proposals for new Parliamentary constituencies. The publication marked the start of 12 weeks of consultation, during which the Commission has asked for comments to help shape the proposed new constituency boundaries.

Following a decision by Parliament to reduce the number of constituencies in the UK to 600 from 650, and to ensure that the number of electors in each constituency is more equal, the BCE has been asked to make independent recommendations about where the boundaries of English constituencies should be. The BCE must report to Parliament in 2018 and, if agreed by Parliament, the new constituencies will be in use at the next scheduled General Election in 2020.

Publication of the initial proposals is the first time people get to see what the map of new constituencies might look like. The rules that the Commission works to are such that wide scale change is inevitable. Under the proposals only 68 of the existing 533 English constituencies remain unchanged. People can comment on anything from where the proposed new boundary lines are to the names of the constituencies.

The consultation closes on 5 December 2016. There will be a further two rounds of consultation in 2017. Following the conclusion of all three consultation periods, the BCE will look at all the evidence received and make final recommendations to Parliament in September 2018.

There are changes planned for the Harlow Constituency. Members **NOTED** that the proposed Harlow constituency includes within the District of Epping Forest the wards of North Weald Village, Moreton and Fyfield, coming from the existing Brentwood and Ongar constituency, which brings it within 5% of the electoral quota. Due to the importance of a Boundary Change, full copies of the documents and maps were attached to the agenda.

Cllr Mrs Jackman suggested that following any boundary change, any new MP for this area should be invited to meet with the Council.

C16.083 EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL DRAFT LOCAL PLAN

On 27th September, the agenda for the EFDC Cabinet meeting on 6th October was published. Attached to the agenda was a copy of the Draft Local Plan, and Cabinet members were asked within the agenda to:

- endorse the Draft Local Plan and the non technical summary of the Sustainability Appraisal to Full Council that consultation on the Draft Local Plan should commence for a 6 week statutory period from 31 October to 12 December 2016.
- recommend to Full Council that the Draft Local Plan be endorsed as a material consideration to be used in the determination of planning applications and enforcement decisions in accordance with paragraph 216 of the National Planning Policy Framework; and
- recommend to Full Council that the Director of Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Planning Policy Portfolio Holder be granted delegated authority to make any necessary minor non-material amendments to the Draft Local Plan prior to the commencement of public consultation on 31 October 2016.

The full Council meeting at which the final decision on the Draft Local Plan will be made is on 18th October, meaning until this time the Draft Plan as published is subject to change. However, the Draft Plan does give an indication of the planned future for the District until 2033, details of which were scheduled to be discussed at the

Extraordinary meeting of the Parish Council on 29th September. Due to the size of the consultation document (382 pages), and the level of detail included within it, time will be needed for both Councillors and Office Staff to digest the information and consider how this will impact on the Parish before Council agree a formal response to the consultation.

As stated above, the public consultation on the Draft Local Plan is expected to take place between 31st October and 12th December 2016. Members were asked to **CONSIDER:**

1. If, and how, the Parish Council should raise awareness of this consultation with local residents and businesses (taking into account it is the responsibility of EFDC to do this);
2. If a working group should be set up to consider the content of the Draft Local Plan, who should sit on this working group, and whether or not this working group should:
 - Provide feedback on its findings for the November Parish Council meeting
 - Formulate a draft response for consideration by Full Council at its December meeting;

Cllr Bartram expressed his concern that EFDC were not running any public events in the Hastingwood Area, stating that if EFDC did not change their mind, would the Parish Council consider holding something in Hastingwood instead - perhaps linking it with the Hastingwood Village Hall event on 20th November. The Clerk confirmed she was away on this date, however would endeavour to arrange for another member of staff to be present. Cllr Bedford suggested the static library event could be borrowed for the day, however the Clerk stated that this would not be logistically possible. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would write to Cllr Whitbread formally asking him if an event could be arranged for Hastingwood.

Cllr Blanks tabled a document that contained various figures which suggested that the distribution of homes across the District were far from proportionate, and that this was contrary to the statements made by both EFDC and Cllr Whitbread at the Local Plan meetings he had attended over recent months. The figures completed suggested that North Weald Bassett (as a Parish) would be receiving 28% of the total allocation, followed by Epping who would be getting 15%, then Loughton with 11%. Cllr Blanks stated he felt this was totally unfair, and that the document did not distinguish between North Weald Village and North Weald Bassett, which would cause confusion. In addition, it seems that Hastingwood were being treated completely differently to the rest of the Parish.

Cllr Bedford stated that when you drill down into numbers, it's around 4,500 homes that are actually needed, and not the 11,290 as stated. Cllr Blanks stated that he had used the figures included in the Draft Local Plan, and that at the Extraordinary meeting held the previous week, Cllr Whitbread had suggested that this area is likely to get more homes as farm and land owners have put their land forward - this argument does not stand up as the Latton Priory development was originally for 2,500 homes, and this has now been reduced to 1,000. Cllr Bedford suggested that the reason for this is that the Parish Council objected due to the ridge line, and that EFDC

has taken notice of this. Cllr Blanks suggested that Latton Priory should take 2,500 homes and the remainder allocated proportionately within the Epping Forest District. This way, the impact of North Weald Village would not be such that it changed the village to a town.

Cllr Clegg expressed his concern that EFDC seem to be suggesting that the allocations are based on the fact that people have put forward their land for development around North Weald and not so much in other areas. In addition, he had a number of queries including why Thornwood's figures were identified outside of the Parish Boundary. The PFO stated that it should be remembered growth does not follow Parish Boundaries.

Cllr Tyler expressed his deep concern that the infrastructure simply could not cope with the proposed amount of development. Cllr Clegg stated that at the Extraordinary meeting it was confirmed that work on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan was still ongoing, which confirms that you cannot make plans for the infrastructure until you know where the houses are going to be located. Cllr Tyler stated that this is why the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is so important, to ensure the right infrastructure is secured in the right locations.

The Chairman suggested that all the District Councillors for the Parish should be formally invited to meet with Councillors to discuss the content of the Draft Local Plan, so they are aware of Councillors concerns.

After discussion, it was **AGREED** that further meetings on this issue would need to take place, and that these should take the form of workshops, so that the full details of the Draft Local Plan could be considered in full.

The Chairman invited David Jackman to address the Council as he had attended the recent Media briefings on this issue. David stated that EFDC had confirmed there was scope for the District Council to make amendments to the draft plan before the consultation, and suggested the Parish Council does this before 18th October. The PFO advised members that this would not be for issues such as 'site removal' or 'changes in the figures' but would be for factual errors or inaccuracies. It was **AGREED** that the Clerk would write to the District Council asking that the factual inaccuracies reference the wording 'North Weald Bassett' were addressed prior to the consultation so that members of the public were not confused.

It was **AGREED** that a meeting would take place on Sunday 16th October for Councillors to go through the content of the Draft Local Plan in more detail.

Councillors then discussed to what extent the Parish Council should get involved with advising local residents of the Draft Local Plan, its content and what it means for the Parish. It was noted that publicising the local plan was the responsibility of the District Council. It was stated that it was often the case that residents do not differentiate between the different tiers of local government, and if the Parish Council did run any public events it was likely the Parish Council would come under fire, despite the fact that the Draft Local Plan and its content is no of their making. Cllr Clegg expressed concern that the Parish Council would be stepping on the toes of the

District Council, and that if it is their responsibility it should be left to EFDC. Cllr Bedford stated that the reason for completing an article 18 consultation was to encourage responses. The Clerk stated that the level of involvement the Parish Council has in this consultation makes the difference between a pro-active and not so pro-active parish council, and that the office staff had already started to raise awareness with local residents by way of twitter and leaflets in the Library.

It was **AGREED** that this issue would be discussed further at the next meeting, once agreement had been reached by EFDC in terms of the consultation dates.

C16.084 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENTS

Members **NOTED** that invites had been sent out today, and that GreenAcres Burial Park had agreed to sponsor the event for £100. Lunch tickets this year are £18.00, and there is no change to the menu. Cllr Bedford stated that he had arranged for a collection of shrapnel to be given to the British Legion that could be on display at the event. The Clerk confirmed there would be no police presence to stop the traffic at the event this year.

C16.085 HASTINGWOOD ALLOTMENTS

This report is not available for public inspection as it contains, or relates to, exempt information within the meaning of the Paragraphs indicated of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, by virtue of which the public is likely to be excluded.

Meeting closed 20.38

Date

Sign:.....