

LOUGHTON TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on Wednesday 18 October 2017 at 7.45pm at Loughton Library & Town Hall.

Present:

Councillors: P Abraham (in the chair)

J Angold-Stephens	P Beales	R Brookes
T Cochrane	B Cohen	M Dalton
C Davies	T Downing	J Jennings
K Latchford	J Mahoney	S Murphy
S Murray	A Omer	T Owen
S Pewsey	C C Pond	C P Pond
M Stubbings	D Wixley	

Officers: E K Walsh (Town Clerk)
P Bryce (Administrative Assistant)

Also present:

Roger Wilson, Assistant Director (Housing Operations), Epping Forest District Council

102 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Girling.

103 Declarations of Interest

Cllr S Murray declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in Agenda item 11 (Review of Epping Forest District Council's Housing Allocations Scheme).

Cllrs C C Pond and R Brookes declared a non-pecuniary and non-prejudicial interest in any matters concerning Epping Forest District Council as dual hatted Councillors.

104 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2017 were CONFIRMED as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Council AGREED to bring forward agenda item 11 as there was a guest speaker.

Cllr Beales arrived during the next item.

105 Review of Epping Forest District Council's Housing Allocations Scheme

The Chairman invited Mr Roger Wilson to address the Council. Mr Wilson explained that the revised scheme had been drafted by the Communities Select Committee and the proposed changes considered by Cabinet members in advance of the consultation. He expounded on the key issues and answered members' questions.

The Council thanked Mr Wilson for his presentation.

The Council AGREED to make the following comments on the key changes:

- *The increase in the Residency Criteria with any new applicant who has lived in our District for less than **seven** continuous years immediately prior to their date of registration not qualifying (currently 5 continuous years)*

The Council considered that this should remain at 5 years.

- *Any person (or member of their household) who within the previous 7 years has been guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour (defined under the Scheme) will not qualify (increased from the current 3 years)*

The Council supported the penalty for those found guilty of serious unacceptable behaviour but considered that this should remain at 3 years with the exception of social housing fraud which should be increased to 5 years.

- *The penalty for refusing 2 offers of accommodation will result in an application being deferred for a period of 2 years (increased from the current 1 year)*

The Council supported this increase.

- *Any tenant of the Council who is under occupying and is wishing to move to smaller Council accommodation who refuses 3 offers of accommodation will have their application deferred for a period of 1 year (no change from the current scheme)*

The Council agreed that the deferment period should remain unchanged at 1 year.

- *Homeless applicants will be offered a 2 year Secure (fixed-term) Tenancy to give them some temporary stability in order to prepare them to make their own arrangements thereafter.*

The Council considered that this reduction from the current introductory tenancy followed by a 10-year fixed term tenancy was too severe and rather than change to a 2-year secure tenancy suggested that this should be set at 5 years.

- *Applicants living in Supported Housing Schemes (listed in the Scheme) will have a lesser Residency Criteria of 2 years (currently 3 years)*

The Council supported this proposal.

106 Public Representations

None were received

107 Questions Without Discussion

No questions were received.

108 Town Mayor's Engagements and Announcements

The Town Mayor, Cllr Philip Abraham, reported that since the last Council meeting on 19 July 2017, he had attended the following events:

The Kerala Boat Race and Carnival in Warwickshire, the re-opening of Zizzi Italian Restaurant, the Indian Orthodox Church in York, the opening of the new Pets At Home store on the Epping Forest Shopping Park, the Charity Harvest Festival at St James Marthoma Church in New Eltham, The Onam Festival Celebration at Murray

Hall, The Sree Narayana Guru Jayanthi Celebration at East Ham Town Hall, The Best Allotment Awards evening at Willingale Road Allotments, the National Jazz Archive Concert featuring Clare Teal, Love Loughton and the opening of St Mary's Hope Centre, the Onam Celebration at Ilford Town Hall, the opening of the McCarthy and Stone Poets Place Development in Roding Road, the opening of a new jewellery shop in India, the ATMG Annual Conference in Daventry, a presentation from Essex Wildlife Trust to acknowledge 10 years of Loughton Town Council's support, the Parish Day event at the Indian Orthodox Church in Sydenham, the opening of the Coffee Bar in Loughton Library and the Baha'i Faith Celebration at the Murray Hall.

The Deputy Town Mayor, Cllr Stephen Murray, reported that since the last Council meeting on the 19 July 2017, on behalf of the Town Mayor, he had attended the Restore Community Centre Volunteers Vision Day, Loughton Abbeyfield Society AGM and afternoon tea, and the re-opening of the St Clare Shop in the High Road.

109 Matters for Report

109.1 Essex Association of Local Councils – Min no 99

Members NOTED that the Council's motion regarding poor air quality had been adopted by the County Association at its AGM on 19 September 2017.

109.2 Council of the Year Award

The Council welcomed the news of the 2017 Council of the Year Award presented by the Essex Association of Local Councils in September.

Cllrs C C Pond and Wixley, accompanied by the Town Clerk, had accepted the award from the Chairman of Essex County Council, Cllr John Aldridge, on behalf of the Town Council. The presentation had included an engraved silver salver, a framed certificate and a £150 training voucher.

The award recognised the Town Council's work in the community and in particular the provision of:

- a range of low cost / free activities and events to help low income families;
- a generous grant budget to help local organisations and charities to further their vital work;
- a lead on the fight to counter proposals in the draft Local Plan for the development of many of the town's green spaces; and with the recent office move to the Library:
- improved access to the Town Council for our residents; and
- helping safeguard the future of the library by creating a thriving community hub.

110 Reports from Members on Outside Organisations

110.1 Written reports on the following meetings were NOTED.

- i. Citizens Advice Epping Forest District – 3 October 2017 – Cllr Angold-Stephens. Cllr Angold-Stephens reported that the proposed quiz has been postponed until early in 2018.
- ii. Campaign to Protect Rural Essex (CPREssex) – 7 October 2017 – Cllr Abraham

110.2 The following reports were tabled by Cllr Wixley:

- i) Essex Association of Local Councils Annual Conference and 72nd AGM – 19 September 2017 - attended by Cllrs Chris Pond and David Wixley together with the Town Clerk.
- ii) Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve Consultative Group – meeting on 20 September 2017
- iii) Tree Wardens Meeting held on 11 October 2017
- iv) Larger Local Councils Forum Meeting held on 12 October 2017 in Springfield, Chelmsford
- v) Debden Tenants Panel Meeting held on 16 October 2017
- vi) Epping Forest Branch of the Association of Local Councils – 20 July 2017 – Cllr Wixley and the Town Clerk
- vii) Local Councils' Liaison Committee – 11 September 2017 – Cllrs C C Pond and Wixley with the Town Clerk

Members with any question on these reports were asked to contact Cllr Wixley.

111 Reports from Committees

111.1 Planning and Licensing

The reports from the meetings held on 17 and 31 July, 21 August, 11 and 25 September 2017 were NOTED.

111.2 Recreation

The report from the meeting held on 6 September 2017 was NOTED.

111.3 Environment and Heritage

The report from the meeting held on 20 September 2017 was NOTED.

111.4 Resources and General Services

The report from the meeting held on 11 October 2017 was NOTED.

112 Accounts and Audit 2016/17

The Council NOTED:

- i. the external audit report and certificate received from PKF Littlejohn, the Council's external auditors, confirming that they had completed the audit of the Annual Return for Loughton Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2017;
- ii. that on the basis of their review of the annual return, in their opinion the information in the annual return was in accordance with proper practices and no other matters had come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislative and regulatory requirements had not been met.
- iii. that the Notice of Conclusion of Audit had been published on 8 September 2017 on the noticeboards around the town and may be viewed on the Council's website.

The Council thanked the officers for their work in this regard.

Signed.....
Date: **13 December 2017**