

Council – 18 February 2020

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **18 February 2020** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr R R Dray
Vice-Chairman: Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr Mrs D L Belton
Cllr J C Burton
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr C C Cannell
Cllr M R Carter
Cllr Mrs T L Carter
Cllr D S Efde
Cllr A H Eves
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
Cllr B T Hazlewood
Cllr N J Hookway
Cllr Mrs D Hoy
Cllr M Hoy
Cllr K H Hudson
Cllr G J Ioannou
Cllr M J Lucas-Gill
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr Mrs C M Mason

Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Cllr D Merrick
Cllr J E Newport
Cllr Mrs C A Pavelin
Cllr Mrs C E Roe
Cllr Mrs L Shaw
Cllr P J Shaw
Cllr S P Smith
Cllr D J Sperring
Cllr C M Stanley
Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr I H Ward
Cllr M J Webb
Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr M G Wilkinson
Cllr A L Williams
Cllr S A Wilson
Cllr S E Wootton

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr R Milne.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton	- Managing Director
A Hutchings	- Strategic Director
M Harwood-White	- Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial
M Hotten	- Assistant Director, Place & Environment
N Lucas	- Assistant Director, Resources
L Moss	- Assistant Director, People & Communities
S Worthington	- Democratic Services Officer

29 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2020 were approved as a correct record, subject to the fourth paragraph of minute 21 on page 5 being amended as follows:

“The amendment to the motion was lost on a show of hands (For: 15; Against: 18).”

In response to a Member question about voting numbers in minute 21 not

adding up to the total number of Members present, it was emphasised that not all Members voted.

30 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman drew Members' attention to two upcoming events – the Civic dinner on 6 March 2020 and the Chairman's Charity Quiz Night on 20 March 2020.

31 PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS PURSUANT TO PROCEDURE RULE 11

- (1) Pursuant to Council Procedure 11, Council considered a petition received from the Rochford Supporters relating to formal review of the Council's Core Strategy.

Mr David Miles, a representative of the Rochford Supporters, presented the petition. "Please register your vote of no confidence in Rochford District Council because the required formal review of the Core Strategy, the document that sets out the overall strategy for the future housing development of the District, has not been undertaken with due diligence by the Council. With insufficient investment in new infrastructure this has already resulted in unsustainable over-development and if continued will cause material economic damage to the Rochford District and many aspects of the lives of residents. For formal debate by the Council."

The Portfolio Holder for Planning responded by emphasising that the Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 and an early review took place in March 2012 in response to the Inspector's letter of August 2011, which suggested that the Council made minor changes to the plan that would acknowledge the shortfall in the Plan period, briefly explaining the circumstances and making a commitment to an early review of the Plan. The Inspector considered that such changes were minor and would not require formal consultation or a sustainability assessment. The Inspector considered that this would be a pragmatic way of ensuring the Council had a Core Strategy in place to guide development whilst undertaking a revision of the Plan in accordance with the new legislative and policy framework.

He further pointed out that the Allocations Plan was finally adopted in 2014; this Plan and the Core Strategy were publicly examined and tested by an independent Inspector and both were found to be sound. The soundness of the Plans was further tested through legal challenges, but no issues were subsequently identified regarding the way the Plans had been prepared by Council. Progress of the Core Strategy through public examination to adoption was delayed as a result of the imminent arrival of the new National Planning Policy Framework and, at the same time, the proposed revocation of regional plans. The delay meant the Core Strategy as submitted technically didn't cover a 15-year period. The Inspector felt that an early review of the Plan would ensure the Plan covered at least a 15-year period. The early review of the Core Strategy commenced in

March 2012 and its outcomes are a matter of record.

The Core Strategy and Allocations Plan, with other policy documents, form the planning framework for the District to be implemented by 2025. For the Plans to be sound every site allocation – housing, employment, etc – was tested to ensure it could be sustainably delivered and the specific infrastructure requirements for every housing site are set out in Appendix H1 of the adopted Core Strategy and in the individual site policies set out in the Allocations Plan. For planning consent to be granted for development on the allocated sites developers must agree to provide all the infrastructure requested in order to fully mitigate the impact of their development.

The Council was currently working on preparation of the new Local Plan, which effectively would comprise the contents of a Core Strategy and Allocations Plan. It should be recognised that development plans were intended to address a range of social, economic and environmental matters. The current Core Strategy and Allocations Plan also include proposals for economic development and the area action plan prepared jointly with Southend on Sea Borough Council provides for the development of the airport and a new business park. Far from creating 'material economic damage', as suggested, the Council's plans are focused on economic regeneration and development with housing as an essential part of that equation.

The Portfolio Holder moved a motion that no further action be taken, which was seconded by Cllr M J Steptoe.

Speaking against the motion, a Member expressed the view that the Core Strategy had not been reviewed in a timely manner. The Member observed that the Council regularly reported that it was unable to progress agreed dates on the new Local Plan 2017-2037 and the Council was three years past that date. Deficits in infrastructure and doubts as to the sustainability of future development were, the Councillor stated, well documented and experienced by residents on a regular basis. The matter should be reviewed urgently by the Council.

Another Member observed that the Portfolio Holder had a difficult task as a result of stringent housing targets imposed on this Council by central government. The concerns of residents should be heard by this Council and addressed. It was important that existing policies weren't just rolled over into the new Local Plan but the Council should review the spatial plan and policies in the light of up-to-date evidence and guidance. The Councillor urged County Councillors to challenge County Highways decisions. Another Member drew attention to the fact that the Local Plan Inspector had specifically stated that improvements should be made to Watery Lane prior to development of SER 8; however, this was disregarded by the Council's Development Committee.

A Member observed that the Core Strategy was failing in respect of travellers' sites; the allocated site was unlikely to come forward in the short term. As a result there had been some green field applications that had received planning permission on appeal due to the Council not having in place a travellers' site within the District.

Speaking in support of the motion, a Councillor made the point that revocation of the Core Strategy would result in developers being able to put forward applications anywhere in the District.

In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder for Planning stated that the petitioner had called for a formal debate of this issue by the Council, which has just taken place. He thanked all those who had contributed; the contributions would be noted in conjunction with the work the Council had embarked on in respect of the new Local Plan. The Issues and Options consultation on the new Plan was carried out in 2018. The requirements for future housing development in the District are calculated by a government formula and the objectively assessed housing need (OAN) for the period to 2037. This need had been calculated as being 385 dwellings per annum; the new Local Plan would need to set out a strategy to explain how delivery of these houses would be achieved. A new cross-party Planning Policy Working Group would be formed to consider options into the future.

Mr Miles, in summary, expressed disappointment in the Council's lack of action. He questioned where the promised infrastructure was, the additional doctors and roads. He stressed that the Council was allowing housing to be built beyond capacity and that this was unacceptable to residents.

On a requisition pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 17.4 a recorded vote was taken on the motion that no further action be taken, as follows:-

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| For (25) | Cllrs Mrs D L Belton; J C Burton; M R Carter; T G Cutmore; R R Dray; D S Efde; Mrs J R Gooding; B T Hazlewood; K H Hudson; G J Ioannou; M J Lucas-Gill; Mrs J R Lumley; D Merrick; Mrs C A Pavelin; Mrs C E Roe; Mrs L Shaw; P J Shaw; S P Smith; D J Sperring; M J Steptoe; I H Ward; M J Webb; Mrs C A Weston; A L Williams; S E Wootton |
| Against (11) | Cllrs C C Cannell; Mrs T L Carter; A H Eves; N J Hookway; Mrs D Hoy; M Hoy; Mrs C M Mason; J E Newport; C M Stanley; M G Wilkinson; S A Wilson |
| Abstain (2) | Cllrs Mrs L A Butcher; Mrs J E McPherson |

The motion was declared carried and it was:

Resolved

That no further action be taken. (ADLD)

- (2) Pursuant to Council Procedure 11, Council considered a petition received from Rayleigh Residents Association relating to the over-development of the Rochford District without sufficient investment made to improve current infrastructure so that it can cope with demand.

Mr Gareth James, a representative of Rayleigh Residents Association, presented the petition. "The residents of Rochford had endured issues with traffic for years but this had been made dramatically worse by the County Council allowing road improvements for large developments to start simultaneously. This had not only affected everyone's commute into and out of the District but the current Council's refusal to acknowledge the pollution issues associated with this traffic affects the health of its residents.

Residents of Rochford want to know what steps have been taken to validate and challenge the housing requirements given by central government. We request all future housing developments be put on hold until there is sufficient investment made in the infrastructure of the District to allow it to correspond with the increase in population. There has to be a cap on new development.

Residents of Rochford demand a public meeting with Rochford District Council where they can put forward their questions regarding lack of infrastructure investment, over-development and their refusal to allocate a permanent travellers' site contributing to the recent incursions into public parks. Currently many Councillors do not respond to emails and those that do fail to give sufficient answers."

The Portfolio Holder for Planning responded by emphasising that although multiple road works caused major disruption they were, nonetheless, an investment in infrastructure as a result of developers providing improvements to the road network. He advised that a Developers' Forum had been set up by Essex County Council and Rochford District Council to ensure there was a planned approach to road closures in the future. The Forum had been initiated by Mark Francois MP, who would also be bringing forward a private Members' Bill on the control of road works. The Forum would meet regularly to discuss programmes for highways works with the aim of ensuring maximum co-ordination, together with minimum disturbance to road users.

He further emphasised that the Council took the potential risks of pollution from road users and other sources seriously and was obliged under the Environment Act 1995 to monitor air quality. It monitored, reviewed and

assessed air quality in the District against the government's national air quality objectives. The Council's annual status reports were submitted to Defra and contained details of monitoring locations, data and trends. In addition, the Council continued to work to minimise the influence of local vehicle emissions across the District, including the recent introduction of vehicle charging points.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the current housing numbers for the period up to 2025 were set out in the Core Strategy and Allocations Plan and had been robustly tested through public examination prior to adoption by the Council and were also challenged by way of Judicial Review. Setting aside the Core Strategy and Allocations Plan would place the Council at risk of litigation and of having to pay substantial financial compensation to developers and landowners. In addition, a Council lacking a plan to control and manage development could be an open target for ad hoc developments. It was emphasised that every new housing scheme must contribute to the provision of new infrastructure to fully mitigate the impact of the development. The infrastructure requirements for each new housing set were set out in detail in the Core Strategy and Allocations Plan. The developers of the sites allocated in the plans had contributed in full to the infrastructure demands of the various organisations involved, including County Highways, the NHS, Education, etc.

There was a modest projected requirement for a small number of permanent sites for travellers within the District. However, the delivery of permanent sites will have no impact on the likelihood of incursions on public land in the future. The government was consulting on a possible change in the trespass legislation to allow the Police and local authorities to deal more effectively with unauthorised encampments.

He stated that he responded to emails and preferred to engage in one to one conversations with residents whilst endeavouring to always give full and frank responses to the questions asked. There would be many opportunities over the next few months for residents to discuss the details of the next Local Plan. Options would be considered for public meetings as that work progressed and residents were encouraged to register online for updates about future meetings.

The Portfolio Holder moved a motion that no further action be taken, which was seconded by Cllr M J Steptoe.

Speaking against the motion, a Member expressed the view that illegal encampments was an important issue. Rawreth Parish Council had been in correspondence with the Council's Planning Department about an expected encampment in St John's Road. He did not believe that having a permanent traveller's site would prevent illegal encampments. He was concerned about the Council's response to the ECC Consultation Changes to the Developers' Guide on Infrastructure Contributions,

particularly in respect of the comments on marginal developments which appear to imply that developers' profits from marginal developments are marginal and therefore there is no requirement for, e.g., social housing contributions. He also claimed that not all developments resulted in infrastructure contributions; developments at the former Dairy Crest site in Rayleigh and Star Lane, Great Wakering in excess of 35 new dwellings had not resulted in any affordable housing or infrastructure contributions. He expressed the view that the Council should employ an independent consultant to assess its infrastructure needs. He also believed that there should be a public meeting with residents.

He attempted to move an alternative motion that a public meeting be organised but was advised that the Council's petitions procedure only allowed for three options, namely to either take the action requested in the petition, to not take any action or to commission further investigation; a motion had already been moved to take no further action. The Portfolio Holder reiterated that there would be an opportunity for public meetings as work on the new Local Plan progressed.

The Member asked to move a motion that further action be taken but was advised that this would have the effect of negating the motion that had already been proposed and seconded and was therefore inadmissible in line with the Council's Constitution. Another Member expressed concern that there was no opportunity for Members to move any alternative motions when the Portfolio Holder had moved a motion of no further action.

Another Member commented that there had been a huge increase in traffic flow in the District in recent years and expressed the view that the Council should start to question County Highways and their methodology as Councillors could see in practice in terms of what was happening on the ground on the District's roads that the methodology was flawed.

In response to concern raised by a Member that a vote on the motion would be taken before debate had taken place, the Chairman advised that the 15-minute debate had started at the point that the Portfolio Holder had first spoken.

In conclusion the Portfolio Holder for Planning emphasised that the Council was preparing a new Local Plan and the working assumptions for the annual rate of housing delivery required for the new Plan period to 2037, which were based on nationally prepared housing projections and a standard methodology given to Councils by the government.

Mr James, in summary, expressed disappointment that the Council was not listening to the concerns of residents and considered that a 15-minute debate was inadequate for such an important issue.

On a requisition pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 17.4 a recorded vote was taken on the motion that no further action be taken, as follows:-

For (24) Cllrs Mrs D L Belton; M R Carter; T G Cutmore; R R Dray; D S Efde; Mrs J R Gooding; B T Hazlewood; K H Hudson; G J Ioannou; M J Lucas-Gill; Mrs J R Lumley; D Merrick; Mrs C A Pavelin; Mrs C E Roe; Mrs L Shaw; P J Shaw; S P Smith; D J Sperring; M J Steptoe; I H Ward; M J Webb; Mrs C A Weston; A L Williams; S E Wootton

Against (13) Cllrs J C Burton; C C Cannell; Mrs T L Carter; A H Eves; N J Hookway; Mrs D Hoy; M Hoy; Mrs C M Mason; Mrs J E McPherson; J E Newport; C M Stanley; M G Wilkinson; S A Wilson

Abstain (1) Cllrs Mrs L A Butcher

The motion was declared carried and it was:

Resolved

That no further action be taken. (ADLD)

32 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX 2020/21

Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Resources seeking authorisation to set the Council Tax for the year 2020/21 for the District Council and agreeing the full Council Tax for Rochford District, including Essex County Council, Essex Police Fire and Crime Commissioner, Essex County Fire and Rescue Service and Town and Parish Council precepts.

The Leader of the Council made the following statement:-

“Chairman, this is my first budget as Leader of this Conservative Administration. The budget pressures under which local government operates remain significant and this Authority continues to look closely at opportunities to make efficiency savings and generate new sources of revenue. This is not only in response to the removal of government grants but also to deal with significant cost increases arising from inflationary and demographic pressures.

Looking to the future, we have refreshed our Business Plan for the period 2020-23 in parallel with the preparation of the Medium Term Financial Strategy so that the two align. The Business Plan sets out the high level priorities that the Council will work towards over the medium term; this will incorporate the Council's plans to deliver an exciting Asset Programme which aims to maximise the value from the Council's key strategic sites and its 'Connect' cultural and transformation programme to ensure Members and staff can operate as 21st century public servants and to improve our digital interface with residents.

Our priorities as set out in the refreshed Business Plan are:-

- being financially sustainable;
- use early intervention to manage demand on our services;
- maximise our assets; and
- enable communities.

Despite the challenges faced, we have continued to deliver excellent services to our residents. Our achievements over the past year include:-

- Being placed 7th in the league for recycling out of more than 350 local authorities across England.
- A continuing reduction in the number of homeless households being placed in out of district emergency temporary accommodation.
- Maintaining an unqualified set of financial accounts and Value for Money opinion from our external auditors.
- Unveiling plans for a £125,000 revamp of three play areas.
- Undertaking CoPA (Control of Pollution Act) works during the recent railway bridge works in Hall Road.
- Installing electric vehicle chargers in 5 of the Council's car parks.
- Attaining a £10,000 lottery grant to create an online CGI tour of the HMS Beagle.
- Partnering with CHESS (Churches Homeless Emergency Support Scheme) to relieve homelessness and related hardship.
- Launching the 'Open Doors' project in Rochford town centre.
- Continuing to provide local businesses with advice and support, including hosting various business breakfasts.
- Being nominated as finalists for the Old House and Rayleigh Windmill in the Essex Wedding Awards 2020 category for 'Historic Wedding Venue of the Year'.
- Producing a free cookbook and videos to help residents cut back on food waste.
- Following a careful management plan populations of the rare Heath Fritillary butterfly are thriving in Hockley Woods.

As a responsible Council we will continue to look at areas where costs can be reduced, or income generated. However, in 2020/21 there is a need to increase Council Tax by 2.15% to help fund the financial pressures that the District is currently facing. This equates to an increase of 10p per household per week on a Band D property.

The proposal is to set Rochford District Council's Council Tax, for a Band D property, at £235.26 per year. The breakdown of annual Council Tax for a Band D property would be:-

Essex County Council	£1204.92
Essex County Council Social Care Levy	£116.19
Essex County Fire and Rescue	£73.89
Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner	£198.63
Average Town / Parish Councils	£51.74
Rochford District Council	£235.26

The total average Council Tax for a Band D property for 2020/21 would be £1,880.63 - an increase of £65.81 (approximately 3.63%).

In conclusion, although these are still difficult financial times, Rochford District Council remains committed to providing excellent services to our residents and partners. With this in mind we will be doing all we can to deliver innovative and high quality services.

Chairman, I commend the Rochford District Council Tax for Members' approval.

Thank you, Chairman."

The Leader of the Rochford District Residents Group observed that a prudent budget was a case of spending what was needed and not necessarily what was wanted. She expressed reservations about approving a budget that included a new discretionary reserve fund of £50,000 per annum for the Leader, with no details as to how this might be spent. She also questioned why this Council always went for the maximum rise in Council Tax, this year of 2.15%. The rise was not just one of 10p per week but rather of around £65.00 per annum, which for residents on limited budgets, was challenging.

Another Member questioned whether there were cheaper ways of obtaining services and whether the Council tried to get the cheapest possible contracts when contracts were up for renewal. In addition, he expressed concern that there was no provision in the Council's capital budget for the work outcomes of the carbon neutral 2030 working group.

The Assistant Director, Resources emphasised that this report related to the setting of Council Tax; the Council's budget had been considered and approved last week.

The Leader of the Green Group stressed that he could not support an increase of 2.15% in the Council Tax, given the level of Council reserves, the lack of budget provision for the current working groups and the provision for a Leader's discretionary fund.

In response to concern raised by another Member that money had been wasted on various projects over the past years and that there were outstanding projects that had not been allocated budgets, despite there being other earmarked reserves, a Member pointed out that there had been two Member budget meetings at which Members had had the opportunity to contribute to the budget-setting process.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council Tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2020/21 (excluding Parish and Town precepts) be £7,511,175.
- (2) That the Council Tax requirement of the Council, together with the Parish and Town Councils, be £9,163,127 for the same period.
- (3) That the basic amount of Council Tax (including Parish and Town Precepts) be £287.00 for the year. This being the Council Tax requirement £9,163,127 divided by the Council Tax base of 31,927.80.
- (4) That the total of Parish and Town precepts included within the above be £1,651,952.
- (5) That the basic rate of Council Tax relating to the Council without Parish and Town precepts be £235.26, which is a 2.15% increase.

(Note: Cllrs C C Cannell, N J Hookway, Mrs D Hoy, M Hoy, Mrs C M Mason, J E Newport, C M Stanley and S A Wilson wished it to be recorded that they had voted against this decision.)

- (6) That the total tax for both the Council and the Town/Parish Councils be as set out in the schedule at Appendix B.
- (7) That the sums given above for Band D but now shown in the particular valuations bands A-H be as set out in the schedule at Appendix C.
- (8) That the precepts issued to the Council in respect of Essex County Council, Essex Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service for each valuation band A-H be as set out in the schedule at Appendix D.

- (9) That the total Council Tax for the area for each valuation band A-H be as set out in Appendix E. These are the amounts set as Council Tax for the year 2020/21.
- (10) That the total of the sums payable into the Council's General Fund in respect of redistributed business rates, New Homes Bonus and adjustments from the collection fund, be £2,847,715. (ADR)

(Note: Please see Appendix to these Minutes.)

33 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2020/21

(Note: Cllrs D S Efde and N J Hookway each declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of being self employed.)

Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Resources seeking approval for the proposed Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 to be implemented from 1 April 2020.

In moving a motion, seconded by Cllr K H Hudson, that the recommendations set out on pages 14.2 and 14.3 of the report be approved, the Portfolio Holder for Finance emphasized that there were no major changes proposed to the scheme, apart from an inflationary increase. This was, he added, a good scheme that included a hardship fund.

The Leader of the Green Group drew particular reference to paragraph 29 A.1 set out on page 14.67 of the report. This related to a minimum income floor in respect of self employed persons. There was an assumption within the report that self employed persons would be working for 35 hours per week at the minimum wage; he disagreed with this assumption, as not every self employed person would receive the minimum wage; they weren't governed by minimum wage law and could, legally, earn £1 per hour. He therefore moved an amendment to the motion, seconded by Cllr N J Hookway, that paragraph 29 A.1 be removed from the report.

A Member queried why the data in paragraph 29 A.1 was included in the report in that format and the Assistant Director, Resources advised that the scheme had been prepared in consultation with an independent specialist who had provided advice on the scheme, which was consistent with a number of schemes in Essex and nationally. The rationale behind having a minimum wage and minimum number of hours was in order to provide parity and fairness in terms of how individual applicants are assessed against those who are not self employed so it is to provide a baseline of assessment parity.

Another Member questioned whether there would be any impact if the paragraph was to be removed from the document and the Assistant Director confirmed that there would be a financial impact for the Council although it would not be possible to quantify this without running an analysis of the figures. The scheme had to be contained within the financial parameters set

by the government when the scheme was first introduced in 2013 which provided a reduction in the total funding available of 10%. The scheme was designed to be cost neutral to the Council and to provide fairness and parity to all those who may be eligible for the scheme.

Speaking in support of the amendment to the motion, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group commented that there was an increase in the number of self employed residents in the District and they should not be financially penalised.

The amendment to the motion was lost on a show of hands.

Resolved

- (1) That the LCTS scheme be approved to come into effect from 1 April 2020, as detailed in the Section 13A policy.

On a requisition pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 17.4 a recorded vote was taken on confirmation of the Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax Liability Policy, as follows:-

For (29) Cllrs Mrs D L Belton; J C Burton; Mrs L A Butcher; C C Cannell; M R Carter; T G Cutmore; R R Dray; Mrs J R Gooding; B T Hazlewood; K H Hudson; G J Ioannou; M J Lucas-Gill; Mrs J R Lumley; Mrs C M Mason; Mrs J E McPherson; D Merrick; Mrs C A Pavelin; Mrs C E Roe; Mrs L Shaw; P J Shaw; S P Smith; D J Sperring; M J Steptoe; I H Ward; M J Webb; Mrs C A Weston; M G Wilkinson; A L Williams; S E Wootton

Against (5) Mrs T L Carter; N J Hookway; Mrs D Hoy; M Hoy; C M Stanley

Abstain (4) Cllrs D S Efde; A H Eves; J E Newport; S A Wilson

The motion was declared carried and it was:

Resolved

- (2) That the Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax Liability Policy be confirmed from 1 April 2020. (ADR)

34 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2020/21

Council considered the report of the Managing Director seeking approval of the Pay Policy Statement for 2020/21.

In response to a Member question relating to paragraph 3.9 on page 15.6 of the report and whether the staff attendance award constituted a bonus, the Managing Director confirmed that the Council did not operate a scheme of

performance-related pay or bonuses. Officers further confirmed that a small payment was made in recognition of 100% attendance over a 6-month period.

Resolved

That the Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 be adopted. (MD)

35 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS AND PARISH REPRESENTATIVES TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic seeking approval of arrangements or the appointment of Independent Persons and Parish Representatives for a four-year term, commencing from the 2020/21 Municipal Year.

Resolved

- (1) That the appointment be endorsed of the three Parish Councillors, nominated by the Rochford Hundred Association of Local Councils to the Standards Committee for a four-year term commencing in the 2020/21 Municipal Year.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to appoint three Independent Persons to the Standards Committee for a four-year term commencing in the 2020/21 Municipal Year following a recruitment process, as set out in the report. (ADLD)

36 MEMBER QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 12.2, the following questions had been received:-

- (1) From Cllr M G Wilkinson to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Cllr I H Ward

“Can the Portfolio Holder for Planning explain what actions Rochford District Council is taking to challenge the views of the County Highways Department about the impact of new development on the highways network, which often seem to be at odds with those of District Councillors?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Cllr I H Ward, responded as follows:-

“I fully share Members’ frustrations whereby Highways decisions are seemingly at odds with those of District Councillors, which then asks the question: what are our options? As Essex Highways are a statutory consultee, the options become narrower. I felt the best way forward was to see if we could organise training sessions for Members regarding the role Essex Highways takes as a statutory consultee for

planning applications. Essex Highways officers will be present to field any questions that Members may have and I would strongly encourage Members to attend, to assist in gaining a better understanding of what is considered by Highways in an application and how they arrive at their conclusions. I hope this will go a long way towards addressing Members' concerns.

As an additional thought, should Members have specific issues that they wish to raise about any specific planning application, I would encourage them to contact the case officer who will be able to raise those matters at the recently established weekly meetings between the local Essex Highways Officer and our Planning Officers where any such concerns can, where possible, be resolved.

To conclude, myself as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Cllr M J Steptoe, the Leader, have been working in conjunction with the Essex County Highways Portfolio Holder for Infrastructure, Cllr Kevin Bentley, together with help initiated by Mark Francois MP, which has resulted in Essex County Council establishing the Developers' Forum. Now established, this is intended to co-ordinate the activities of putting new infrastructure in place in the course of planned developments, as well as the updating of existing infrastructure, excluding emergency repairs. There is no doubt that any roadworks will be disruptive but we are trying to establish good co-operative working practices to minimise the disruption to residents. I hope that helps."

Cllr M G Wilkinson asked a supplementary question as to why Rochford District Council could not also challenge County Highways around the impact of new development on the local road networks.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Planning stated that he had asked officers to go back to County Highways and to challenge them on any decisions that came back from County Highways whenever they consider that there is an issue. Nevertheless, he emphasised the importance of understanding how County Highways arrive at their decisions; the training sessions would assist with this and give an opportunity to challenge County Highways then and there.

(2) From Cllr M Hoy to the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Cllr I H Ward

"Can the Portfolio Holder for Planning please confirm that they have full confidence in this Council's planning policies and that it should be at the discretion of Councillors whether those policies should not be applied to certain planning applications?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Cllr I H Ward, responded as follows:-

"What an excellent question! Councillors, I believe, should always use their discretion when determining planning applications, as long as they

base their decisions on our current planning policies, recognizing that the weight and interpretation given to a specific policy will vary when considering the merits of an individual application. However, further to the Council's own policies, particular consideration should be given to the National Planning Policy Framework and any emerging case law from recent planning applications. Therefore I not only have full confidence in the Council's planning policies; more importantly, I have full confidence in our Members who adjudicate on applications, together with their ability to resolve a reasoned, balanced judgment on the merits of each case."

Cllr M Hoy asked a supplementary question as to why there was such a difference between what Members believe and what officers believe to be an acceptable discrepancy?

The Portfolio Holder for Planning stated that the issue related to the weight accorded to a particular policy. There were different interpretations around this area. The final adjudication was down to the Inspector, who was the final arbiter when cases went to appeal.

- (3) From Cllr M Hoy to the Leader of the Council, Cllr M J Steptoe

"Would the Leader of the Council please confirm to Members how the workings of the Review Working Group 2030 are feeding back into the Council Leadership on progress they are making and how the Executive are planning for the future whilst keeping in mind the possible results of the Working Group 2030 and how that may affect future plans?"

The Leader of the Council, Cllr M J Steptoe, responded as follows:-

"The Working Group have the support of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment and the Overview and Scrutiny Officer. The officers have had a two-way dialogue with the relevant members of staff within the Council and at other authorities to gather information to be provided to the Working Group. This information has come either in the form of briefing notes or, as was the case with the Council's assets, the Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial and the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise have attended a meeting of the Working Group to discuss and answer questions on the issues. The Portfolio Holder for Environment has attended the meetings of the Working Group as an observer so he is kept up to date with the thoughts of the Group.

In addition, the Assistant Director, Place & Environment has been briefing the Leadership Team on the developments from the Working Group to ensure that the outcomes from the Working Group are understood.

The findings of the Working Group are to be brought back to Review in March and should recommendations be resolved, to be then taken forward to the March Council meeting for approval.”

Cllr M Hoy asked a supplementary question as to whether the Leader was satisfied that all the information from the Working Group was fed back to the Leadership Team and that it was helping the Executive make decisions now, e.g., in respect of the Connect Freight House transformation project that were compliant with the Working Group’s suggestions and the Leader confirmed that he was satisfied that this was indeed happening.

37 BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

In response to a Member question as to whether the Leader had an update on the issue of improving public engagement in the budget process, which had been raised at last week’s Council budget meeting, the Leader advised that he would report back to Members on this in future.

38 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS HELD BETWEEN THE PERIOD 4 DECEMBER 2019 TO 4 FEBRUARY 2020

Council received the Minutes of the Executive and Committee meetings held between the period 4 December 2019 to 4 February 2020.

39 REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

(1) Report of the Standards Committee

Member training Working Group

Council considered the report of the Standards Committee on the Member Training Working Group.

Resolved

That the composition of the Member Training Working Group be decided and constituted by the Standards Committee starting from the next Municipal Year onwards. (ADLD)

40 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

Council received the following report from the Leader on the work of the Executive:-

“This is the fourth Ordinary Council meeting of the 2019/20 Municipal Year and I would like to welcome all Members.

Since the meeting on 17 December, the Executive has met once during which considerations included:

- Noting the Quarter 3 2019/20 revenue budget and capital position.
- Approving the Outline Business Case for the 'Connect' Cultural and Transformation Programme including agreement that the Programme be designated a Gold Project and funding of £293,000 be created from 2019/20 underspends.
- Agreement to lease Council-owned land to Rayleigh Town Sports and Social Club for use as a sports ground and social use for a period of 28 years.
- Agreement to the disposal of the freehold interest of land at Cagefield Road, Stambridge.

Other matters that my Executive colleagues and I have dealt with include:-

- Agreeing to lease the Council owned asset known as Clements Hall Pavilion to East Essex Hackspace Community Interest Company for a period of 7 years.
- Agreeing to submit a formal response to Castle Point Borough Council's 2019 Pre-Submission Local Plan consultation within the prescribed time period.

As always, I will be happy to take any questions from Members in respect of the work of the Executive and I am sure my Executive colleagues will be happy to contribute where appropriate."

The Leader emphasised that he always encouraged Members from all Parties to attend a variety of meetings, including budget meetings, Working Groups, meetings of Executive and had also introduced a mechanism for Members to ask questions at Executive meetings; however, none had been forthcoming to date.

In response to an observation from the Leader of the Green Group that he could not recall this being included in the Council's Constitution, it was confirmed that such provision in the Constitution had been agreed at Council on 22 October 2019 and was set out on pages 4.52 and 4.53 of the Constitution.

41 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13, the following motions had been received.

From Cllrs M J Webb and M J Steptoe

“Further to the Secretary of State’s letter of 15 October 2019 to Council Leaders, this Council is asked to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism as set out below:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred towards Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, towards Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

The motion was moved by Cllr M J Webb and seconded by Cllr M J Steptoe and was carried on a show of hands.

Resolved

That the Council adopts International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) definition of antisemitism. (ADPC)

From Cllrs Mrs C M Mason, M Hoy and J E Newport

“That this Council, having received the observations of the Corporate Peer Challenge and the identified need to strengthen the scrutiny function and the inclusion in the report that the minority political groups do not feel sufficiently engaged, address both these points by altering the Constitution as follows:

To alter the Constitution prior to Annual Council so that the Chair of the overview and scrutiny committee, Review Committee, be nominated by the minority political groups and independent Members only. If no Member of the minority political groups accepts a nomination then, and only then, will nominations be accepted from any other Member.

This would encourage minority political groups and Independent Member engagement and facilitate greater scrutiny if minority political groups and Independent Members felt that their views had some impact rather than the current impression that their views are being ignored by the majority political group.”

The motion was moved by Cllr Mrs C M Mason and seconded by Cllr M Hoy.

The Leader of the Rochford District Residents Group observed that the minority Groups were finding it difficult to work with the Administration; however, they wanted the best results for this Council and felt that it was important that they had a voice and particularly so on the Council’s overview and scrutiny committee, which policed the Authority’s decisions.

The Deputy Leader, speaking against the motion emphasised that the rules around the Chairmanship of the Review Committee were previously approved by this Council and set down in the Constitution that it should be a Member

from the opposition and this was lawful. The motion would be undemocratic in that it excludes Conservative Members, ie, 27 Members of the Council. Following the Peer Review feedback report there is a wider piece of work to be carried out in respect of the Council's scrutiny function which the Monitoring Officer was currently investigating. She would report back in due course with her findings and recommendations. Although she noted the comments made about encouraging and engaging minority Groups and Independent Members, she did not consider that revising the method of selecting a Chairman would achieve this. Agreeing this motion would pre-empt the outcome of the wider work around the Corporate Peer Review, which was yet to be completed.

The current Chairman of the Review Committee commented that he was an independent Member and politically neutral but was not invited to participate in the Peer Review challenge relating to overview and scrutiny, neither was the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Officer or the Conservatives. He did not believe that the ability to choose who chaired the Committee would improve the scrutiny function.

Another Member urged that people listen to the audio recordings of the Review Committee meetings; they were very inclusive. The Leader of the Rochford District Residents Group, for example, chaired a task and finish group on housing. Engagement and inclusion was two way. Minority Members had opportunities to engage, but chose not to.

Speaking in favour of the motion another independent Member commented that he did feel engaged and had been contacted by the Leader and invited to participate in Working Groups. He did, however, feel that when there was one dominant Party on the Council often minority Members did not feel that their views were listened to.

The Leader of the Green Group observed that he was interviewed during the previous Peer Review but was not a Member of the Review Committee at that time. He advised that he chaired the Review Committee for about 10 months when the Chairmanship was given to a Member of the largest opposition Group. Currently the Chairmanship can be drawn from any non-Administration Groups. He felt that the proposal outlined in the motion was more democratic.

Another Independent Member said that the minority Groups were looking to be able to nominate someone to chair the Committee for Council to consider and therefore felt that this was democratic.

Concluding the debate, the Leader of the Rochford District Residents Group emphasised that this was in no way intended as a criticism of the current chairmanship of the Committee. The last change in how the chairmanship of the Committee was determined had resulted in making the minority Group Members feel excluded and disempowered. They wanted to be able to nominate a Chairman.

The motion was lost on a show of hands.

(Note: Cllrs Mrs D Hoy, M Hoy, Mrs C M Mason and J E Newport wished it to be recorded that they had voted against the above decision.)

From Cllrs Mrs C M Mason and M Hoy

“That this Council notes the concern expressed by the delay in acknowledging its error and find the further delay proposed in rectification unacceptable.

We are concerned that the Council, having repeatedly been questioned over the correct status of the Planning Policy Sub-Committee, repeatedly failed to investigate this matter.

- Prior to last Annual Council, officers were advised that they had incorrectly shown Planning Policy Sub-Committee as different to the other full Committees of Council.
- Despite its name Planning Policy Sub-Committee is not a sub-committee but a Full Committee of Council and reports direct to Full Council.
- Last May when this situation could have easily been rectified it was not.
- This was again raised as a matter of concern in October and eventually the administration agreed to investigate the situation.
- One officer has advised it is a sub-committee of Council, another that there cannot be a sub-committee of Council.
- Eventually, after further requests for clarity, it was conceded that the Council had made an error dating back some years.
- The latest officer suggestion is that this is resolved at Annual Council in May, yet this could have been done at the last Annual Council and was not.

The reason for this Motion is not just one of concern for the error and the failure of officers to take Members concerns seriously, but the failure to correct such an error at the earliest opportunity.

The lack of transparency and willingness to correct is concerning. All people and organisations make mistakes; it is their willingness to hold their hands up and admit to such a situation and ensure a prompt resolution that shows the mettle of the organisation.

This motion calls for the Monitoring Officer to resolve this situation immediately and confirm the correct Status of Planning Policy with any necessary amendments to the Constitution as needed, at the next Council meeting on 21st April 2020.”

The motion was moved by Cllr Mrs C M Mason and seconded by Cllr M G Wilkinson.

The Deputy Leader observed that these concerns had been raised by the Leader of the Rochford District Residents Group with officers and this was looked into fully to understand the concerns and issues raised. The Deputy Leader expressed thanks for this matter being brought to Council's attention. She stressed that the Sub-Committee was constituted by Annual Council in May 2019 according to the pro rata rules, it makes not decisions reserved to either Council or the Executive and reports directly to Council on matters that are reserved to Council. The issue was a technical one. It had been confirmed to the Leader of the Rochford District Residents Group that the Council's Monitoring Officers would include this issue within her Annual Monitoring Officer Report to Members; this would be done in April.

She stated that she could support the motion in part and therefore moved an amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Cllr M J Steptoe that the Monitoring Officer will ensure that the current Planning Policy Sub-Committee will be constituted as a full Committee at the next Annual Council meeting.

The motion was agreed on a show of hands.

Resolved

That the Monitoring Officer will ensure that the current Planning Policy Sub-Committee will be constituted as a full Committee at the next Annual Council meeting. (ADLD)

From Cllrs Mrs C M Mason, Mrs T L Carter and A H Eves

“To instruct officers to Investigate the Billy Chip scheme as a matter of urgency with the view to implementation before the end of April 2020.”

‘Background and Brief Description of the Scheme

The B A Hope Foundation was set up in 2018 to continue the legacy of Billy Abernethy-Hope a twenty year old ambulance driver from Bristol who was the inspiration and idea behind the Billy Chip.

After helping support the homeless at Christmas, Billy, felt disheartened at how little support the general public gave to local homeless people. Many people donate to charity on a regular basis but Billy was surprised what a small percentage of donations were given directly to people living rough on our streets.

Turns out most people are apprehensive to give money directly to homeless people, because it's not possible to know how a donation is spent. Unfortunately, the common perception is the money will be used for alcohol,

drugs or cigarettes. Even if a donation of food or drink is given to safeguard your donation it is very awkward as people have to make assumptions of what the person wants and when they want it. The alternative is to engage with that person, ask the question and then purchase what's required which many feel uncomfortable doing.

Billy recognised that the likelihood of someone having the time, inclination, courage, and kindness to engage with a homeless person to buy them food or drink was too big a challenge. That was the eureka moment when Billy first thought up the concept of the Billy Chip. Sadly Billy never got to launch the Billy Chip as he had planned due to his untimely death whilst backpacking in Thailand.

The Billy Chip is a token that can be purchased for a £2 donation via a retail outlet which supplies take away beverages like Tea & Coffee. The purchaser receives the Billy Chip which can be given to any homeless person instead of money. The homeless person can redeem the Billy Chip in any participating outlet displaying the Billy Chip sign for a Tea or Coffee (hopefully in the future there will be more options like cold drinks or food available).

Each time a donation for a Billy Chip is received some of your money goes towards supporting the B A Hope Foundation to carry on working to support the people in the local area and other causes close to Billy's Heart. A proportion of the donation goes to the retailer to cover their costs and the costs of supporting the foundation's function.

The brilliant and unique way the Billy Chip scheme works allows people to donate to the homeless without the worry of their donation being spent in an inappropriate manner. It also encourages retail outlets to do their bit for corporate social responsibility.

Summary and Conclusion

1. The Billy chip has received national publicity for the way it supports the homeless, and local businesses.
 - It provides a degree of security to the giver by removing any uncertainty about the use the donation may be put to.
 - It also alleviates the risk of people receiving donations being able to use contributions for dependency issues.
2. Although Rochford District does not have as many homeless people as some nearby areas the fact that the problem is a relatively small one should not prevent this Council in being proactive in assisting people in need.
 - The scheme sought to provide tea/coffee and the chip has a set value of £2.00. There is no reason why outlets could not extend this to food & soft drinks and different value chips be made available for this.

- Every blue token, similar to a poker chip, has Billy’s smiling face on it along with the message: “You’re fabulous, and don’t you ever forget it.”
3. Having contacted the organisation, they are willing to support Rochford District Council in extending this scheme to our area.
 - As the scheme is already up and running any costs involved should be minimal as the £2.00 token covers retailers expenses.
 4. This Motion directs that officers investigate this scheme as a matter of urgency with the view to implementation through Council before the end of April 2020.

This Council Notes:

The simplicity and speed of using an existing scheme to assist our homeless population.

This Council Resolves to:

Undertake the necessary steps to ensure that Rochford District is included in the scheme.

Promote the scheme with local traders.

Look to extend the scheme to cover food and different value tokens.”

The motion was moved by Cllr Mrs C M Mason and seconded by Cllr A H Eves.

The Portfolio Holder for Community advised that he considered the motion to be commendable. He felt that it should, however, be slightly amended, as follows:

“This Motion directs that officers investigate and explore this scheme and other similar schemes with the view to reporting back to Council before the end of June 2020.

This Council Notes:

The simplicity and speed of using an existing scheme to assist our homeless population.

This Council Resolves to:

Undertake the necessary steps to ensure that Rochford District Council investigates this scheme and others like it.

Promote the scheme with local traders.

Look to extend the scheme to cover food and different value tokens.”

Cllr Mrs C M Mason indicated that she was willing to support this amendment provided that there was reference to reporting back to Council by the end of June 2020.

Cllr Mrs C M Mason moved an amended motion that the Council should investigate the Billy chip scheme and other schemes like it and report back to Council by June 2020, promote a chosen scheme with local traders and look to extend a chosen scheme to cover food and different value tokens, and this was seconded by Cllr A H Eves.

Resolved

That the Council investigate the Billy Chip scheme and others like it and report back to Council by June 2020, promote a chosen scheme with local traders and look to extend a chosen scheme to cover food and different value tokens. (ADPC)

From Cllrs C C Cannell and J E Newport

“The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland left the European Union at 2300 on January 31st, 2020.

In July 2017 the then Prime Minister, Theresa May, announced the outline for a ‘EU Settled Status’ scheme that would enable EU nationals the right to continue living, working, and studying in the UK after we leave.

In January 2019 the same Prime Minister announced that, following a pilot, the EU Settlement Scheme, as it had become formally known, was to launch in March 2019 and that a £65 fee that was charged in that pilot would be removed.

The current Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, has continued the scheme, and used Prime Minister’s Questions as recently as January 2020 to vocalise his support for it.

The scheme outlined two forms of status:

‘Settled status’ is for those that have lived in the UK for five years or more and means that they can reside in the UK forever without re-applying, unless they leave the UK for a period of five consecutive years.

‘Pre-settled status’ for those citizens who started living in the UK by 31st December 2020 but will not have five years’ continuous residence at this point. It will allow people to reside in the UK for five years, at which point they can apply for settled status.

This Council notes:

- The invaluable contribution of EU citizens, living and/or working in Rochford District, to the local economy and public service provision

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Advertise the government's EU Settlement Scheme and support any resident with their application for 'settled status' or 'pre-settled status' under the scheme.
- Support any resident who applied to the EU Settlement Scheme before March 2019 receive a refund.
- Confirm that it believes that all EU citizens in the District should retain their right to vote in and be candidates in local elections.

Pledge to support and protect all EU citizens who live or work in the District, throughout the transition period."

The Leader of the Council moved an amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Cllr G J Ioannou, and responded as follows:-

"Cllr Cannell is correct that following the UK's departure from the EU, (except in a few cases) those who are an EU, EEA or Swiss citizen and their families can apply to the EU Settlement Scheme to continue living in the UK after 30 June 2021. The EU Settlement Scheme is administered by the Government via the GOV.UK website.

Cllr Cannell asks the Council to note the "invaluable contribution of EU citizens, living and/or working in Rochford District, to the local economy and public service provision".

But Cllr Cannell goes further in that he asks this Council to make resolutions relating to the EU Settlement Scheme, some of which I cannot accept in the form in which he has proposed them. I have circulated to all Members a copy of an amendment to the motion, which I shall move at the conclusion of this speech.

Cllr Cannell proposes that this Council resolves to advertise the government's EU Settlement Scheme **and** (my emphasis) support any resident with their application for 'settled status' or 'pre-settled status' under the scheme.

With regard to advertisement of the EU Settlement Scheme, this Council already does and will continue to follow all Government requirements to communicate and promote the scheme and I am happy to support this element of his motion.

But Cllr Cannell also asks the Council to resolve to **support** (my emphasis) any resident with their application for 'settled status' or 'pre-settled status' under the scheme. As a local authority, we are a major provider of information affecting people's everyday lives and we are often the first point of contact for

a diverse range of people on many important issues. We also have responsibilities for some vulnerable groups.

This Council will support vulnerable or at-risk EU citizens who are residents of this District by raising awareness and providing information, as well as signposting them to the appropriate support services to meet their needs using the toolkit provided by Government on GOV.UK. We will also work with grant funded organisations in our area to explore how we can work together to support EU citizens.

I believe this type of support is invaluable and is the sort of support that this Council can and should provide. But I want to be clear that this support stops short of actually completing applications on behalf of EU citizens or assisting them to complete applications as that is something which I believe should be undertaken by those organisations who are appropriately qualified, and details of those organisations can be found on GOV.UK.

That is the reason behind my proposed amendment to that part of Cllr Cannell's motion.

Cllr Cannell also proposes that this Council resolves to **support** (my emphasis) any resident who applied to the EU Settlement Scheme before March 2019 to receive a refund of any fee which they may have paid. The process for receiving refunds is set out on GOV.UK and is personal to the applicant who must show that they are eligible.

It would not therefore, be appropriate for this Council to interfere in that process although I agree that we do have a role to signpost applicants to the GOV.UK process.

This is the reason for my proposed amendment to that part of Cllr Cannell's motion.

Cllr Cannell proposes that this Council confirms that it believes that all EU citizens in the District should retain their right to vote in and be candidates in local elections. This is a clearly a political point and he will not be surprised that I cannot agree to support this element of his motion. The law is clear about who is or is not eligible to vote or be a candidate. This Council will always follow the requirements of the law.

Finally, Cllr Cannell proposes that this Council pledges to support and protect all EU citizens who live or work in the District, throughout the transition period. This is also a political point and whilst I agree with the sentiment behind the motion, I cannot agree with the wording of it and that is why I have proposed my amendment.

This Council will administer the law of the land; comply with the requirements and communications from Government relating to EU Exit and working with partners will signpost EU citizens within the District to all the relevant information that they will need throughout the transition period.

Accordingly Members, I now move the amendments to the motion as set out in the paper in front of you. Chair, if you would like me to read it aloud?

Proposed amended motion

This Council notes:

- The invaluable contribution of EU citizens, living and/or working in Rochford District, to the local economy and public service provision.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Advertise the EU Settlement Scheme and, working with partners, provide support to any vulnerable or at-risk EU citizen residents by raising awareness and providing information, as well as signposting them to the appropriate support services to meet their needs.
- Provide information to any resident who applied to the EU Settlement Scheme before March 2019 on how to receive a refund.
- Work with partners to provide support to EU citizens who live or work in the District, throughout the transition period.”

A Member queried the first bullet point in the amended motion and it was confirmed by officers that there were support services for any vulnerable EU citizen residents.

Cllr Cannell indicated that he would support the amended motion; however, he emphasised that his intention in respect of the third bullet point of the resolution to his original motion was not to make any political point; rather to stress that EU citizen residents are all our equals.

The motion was agreed on a show of hands.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council advertises the EU Settlement Scheme and, working with partners, provides support to any vulnerable or at-risk EU citizen residents by raising awareness and providing information, as well as signposting them to the appropriate support services to meet their needs.
- (2) That this Council provides information to any resident who applied to the EU Settlement Scheme before March 2019 on how to receive a refund.
- (3) That this Council works with partners to provide support to EU citizens who live or work in the District, throughout the transition period. (SD)

Note: The outstanding two Motions on Notice would be deferred to a future meeting of Council.

The meeting closed at 11.05 pm.

Chairman

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

MINUTE NO. 26 – SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX 2020/21

Please note that there was a typo in the table at paragraph 3.1 of the Council Tax Setting Report agreed at Council on 18 February 2020. This does not affect any of the recommendations that were agreed.

The % increases for the Essex County Council elements of the Council Tax were shown as 2.99% for the core element and 1% for the Social Care levy element; this should have been attributed as 1.99% for the core element and 2% for the Social Care levy element. The overall % increase across both elements for ECC remains the same at 3.99%

Please note the actual £ amounts for each element of ECC's Band D council tax were shown correctly in the original table, it is just the % split between the elements which was misstated.

For clarity the corrected table is shown below.

	2019/20 £	2020/21 £	Increase £	Increase %
Essex County Council	1179.63	1,204.92	25.29	1.99%
Essex County Council Social Care Levy	90.81	116.19	25.38	2.00%
Essex County Fire and Rescue	72.45	73.89	1.44	1.99%
Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner	192.96	198.63	5.67	2.94%
Town/Parish Councils	48.66	51.74	3.08	6.33%
Rochford District Council	230.31	235.26	4.95	2.15%
Total	1814.82	1880.63		