

## **Council – 19 July 2016**

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Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **19 July 2016** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs C A Weston  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs L A Butcher

|                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| Cllr C I Black       | Cllr Mrs J R Lumley |
| Cllr J C Burton      | Cllr Mrs C M Mason  |
| Cllr Mrs I Cassar    | Cllr E O K Mason    |
| Cllr T G Cutmore     | Cllr J R F Mason    |
| Cllr R Dray          | Cllr D Merrick      |
| Cllr D S Efde        | Cllr R Milne        |
| Cllr A H Eves        | Cllr T E Mountain   |
| Cllr Mrs J R Gooding | Cllr J E Newport    |
| Cllr J D Griffin     | Cllr Mrs C E Roe    |
| Cllr B T Hazlewood   | Cllr Mrs L Shaw     |
| Cllr N J Hookway     | Cllr D J Sperring   |
| Cllr Mrs D Hoy       | Cllr C M Stanley    |
| Cllr M Hoy           | Cllr M J Steptoe    |
| Cllr Mrs T R Hughes  | Cllr I H Ward       |
| Cllr G J Ioannou     | Cllr M J Webb       |
| Cllr M J Lucas-Gill  | Cllr S A Wilson     |

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M R Carter, N L Cooper, R A Oatham, S P Smith and A L Williams.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| S Scrutton      | - Managing Director  |
| N Khan          | - Executive Director   |
| J Bostock       | - Assistant Director, Democratic Services                    |
| M Harwood-White | - Assistant Director, Commercial Services                    |
| R Manning       | - Section 151 Officer  |
| D Tribe         | - Assistant Director, Customer, Revenues & Benefits Services |
| S Worthington   | - Committee Administrator                                    |

### **160 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 17 May 2016 and the Extraordinary Meetings held on 17 May 2016 and on 8 June 2016 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

### **161 MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Council received the Minutes of Executive and Committee meetings held between the period 9 April to 8 July 2016.

### 162 REPORT ON URGENT DECISIONS

Pursuant to Overview and Scrutiny procedure 15(f), Council received a report on decisions that had been taken as a matter of urgency and not subject to call in.

### 163 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

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

“This is the first ordinary Council meeting for the 2016/176 municipal year since Annual Council and I would like to welcome all Members.

Since Annual Council on 17 May, the Executive has met on two occasions, during which considerations have included:-

- The progress on decisions schedule.
- The financial outturn management report for 2015/16.
- Options for information communication technology provision and the associated support contract. This forms a report into this evening’s Council meeting.

Other matters that my colleagues and I on the Executive have been dealing with include:-

- Accepting the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan.
- Submitting a formal response to the Castle Point Borough Council’s Draft New Local Plan consultation.

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.”

In response to a Member request to provide an update on devolution, the Leader of the Council advised that all 15 Essex Councils met in Basildon recently and voted on the mayoral option; 8 voted against and 7 for the mayoral option. All Councils voted in favour of devolution, minus the mayoral option. He emphasised that the joint Council working on devolution had been very positive and the Essex Councils were waiting to see how the recent changes in Government might impact on devolution.

### 164 MOTION ON NOTICE

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13.1, the following motion had been received from Cllrs C I Black, J E Newport, R A Oatham and C M Stanley:-

‘In view of the closure of the front desk of Rayleigh police station and the total closure of Rochford police station and the concern expressed by some members of the public, this Council requests the appropriate Portfolio Holder to report back to Council on how these closures have affected Police response time to crime, and Police and District Council response to anti-social behaviour and also the current levels of crime and anti-social behaviour across the district in recent months.’

The motion was moved by Cllr C I Black and seconded by Cllr J E Newport. Cllr J R F Mason moved an amendment to the motion, seconded by Cllr M Hoy that a report be made to a meeting of the Review Committee on 6 September 2016, which would consider an item relating to the Community Safety Partnership and this was approved on a show of hands.

#### **Resolved**

That the appropriate Portfolio Holder reports into the Review Committee on 6 September 2016 on how the Rochford and Rayleigh police station closures have affected Police response time to crime and Police and District Council response to anti-social behaviour and on the current levels of crime and anti-social behaviour across the District in recent months. (ADC&HS)

### 165 ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16

Council considered the report of the Section 151 Officer providing details of the highlights and successes of the Council through 2015/16, including the high level financial position (pre audit).

The S151 Officer advised Members of the following correction to the report:

- Page 8 – (Key Highlights and Successes) in the blue box at the bottom of the page, the beginning of the first two statements should be amended to: ‘...86% of residents surveyed... and ...95% of residents surveyed...’

The Leader of the Council thanked officers for their hard work during this period and emphasised that financial details within the report may change slightly after the external auditors have audited the Financial Statements.

Responding to a further Member question relating to page 8 of the annual report, officers confirmed that the Council was the third local authority in the country for recycling.

In response to a Member question relating to the statement on page 8 of the report confirming that the District has the third lowest crime rate in Essex,

officers advised that Members would be provided with the details on which this statistic is based.

The Leader of the Council advised that the reference on page 8 of the annual report to 'food interventions' referred to food inspections aligned with the 'scores on the doors' ratings scheme and suggested that there would be merit in adjusting this so that it would be more easily understood by residents.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That, subject to the amendments to page 8 referred to above and changes resulting from the audit of the accounts, the annual report be agreed for publication.
- (2) That the audited Financial Statements for 2015/16 be presented to September's Audit Committee meeting for approval with the external auditor's report. (S1510)

## **166 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2016/17**

Council considered the report of the Managing Director on the pay policy statement for 2016/17.

In response to a Member question relating to the use of the term 'tax avoidance' in paragraph 8.1 of the report, the Managing Director advised that this was in the context of central Government guidance, which concerned moral issues around taxation, rather than illegal taxation issues.

### **Resolved**

That the pay policy statement for 2016/17 be adopted. (MD)

## **167 REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL**

### **(1) Report of the Planning Policy Sub-Committee**

#### **Revised Draft Statement of Community Involvement**

Council considered the report of the Planning Policy Sub-Committee on consultation in respect of the Council's draft Statement of Community Involvement.

The Chairman of the Sub-Committee commended the draft Statement of Community Involvement to Council, emphasising that an additional paragraph had been included in the document at the request of the Sub-Committee with the aim of ensuring that consultation responses to the document would be regularly reviewed and that the correct kinds of consultation methods were used to maximise public engagement. He also stressed that the Sub-Committee wanted regular meetings to take place to monitor the consultation

process.

In response to Member questions relating to paragraph 1.5 of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Planning confirmed that he would be working on the detailed arrangements for public consultation with officers over the coming weeks; the intention was to hold a variety of different consultation exercises, ranging from daytime workshops of up to 50 attendees, to engagement with local schools and evening events. The daytime workshops would comprise a maximum of 50 community leaders sitting at tables discussing what specific issues were important to them about their community and would also feature walks around the locality to help focus these discussions; they would be run on a similar basis to workshops already held in Rochford and Canewdon.

There was some debate around how attendees of such workshops would be identified; with concern expressed that many residents could be disappointed if the impression was given that anyone could attend the workshops. The Portfolio Holder advised that the intention was to send invitations out to the Parish Councils and to work with the Parishes to select potential attendees. One Member observed that there would also be merit in sending invitations to local businesses. Members observed that any advertising for such workshops should be carefully targeted so that residents did not attend believing them to be about specific planning applications.

In response to concern expressed about there being the potential for large volumes of residents to turn up to a workshop in a particular parish and then being turned away, given the maximum number of 50 persons per session, the Portfolio Holder for Planning emphasised that the workshops were one element of the consultation process and were in the first stage; there would be other consultation engagement opportunities for the duration of the consultation process.

The Portfolio Holder agreed that a Member suggestion to invite any residents who had previously expressed objections to planning applications to attend the workshops on a first come, first served basis could be a suitable method of selecting attendees at some of the daytime engagement workshops.

In response to concern expressed that daytime workshops of a maximum of 50 attendees would not be representative of the views of all parts of the community, as it would exclude working residents, and would not be suitable for larger parishes or for Rayleigh, the Leader of the Council emphasised that the engagement workshops were new and additional to other forms of public engagement; the Council would be offering other consultation engagement opportunities designed to capture the views of other members of the community. The Managing Director stressed that the purpose of the report was to seek formal adoption of the draft Statement of Community Involvement; pages 3 to 5 of the document set out a variety of different engagement methods, designed to reach all parts of the various communities within the District, with the daytime workshops being only one element of the

engagement strategy.

### **Resolved**

That the draft Statement of Community Involvement 2016 be formally adopted. (MD)

### **(2) Report of the Review Committee**

#### **Treasury Management Annual Review 2015/16**

Council considered the report of the Review Committee relating to the Council's treasury management activity for the year 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016.

It was noted that, with respect to paragraph 1.2 of the report, the Bank of England base rate had not dropped, but it was, however, anticipated that this would drop to 0.25% over the coming weeks. It was suggested that the Council's treasury management strategy should include provision for the Council to invest in UK counterparties with a minimum sovereign rating of AA, given the recent reduction in the country's credit rating.

It was also noted that, with reference to the final bullet point in paragraph 2.3 on page 8.1.3 of the report, it would not be practicable for the S151 Officer to consult with the Portfolio Holder for Finance as this would lead to delays.

Members concurred that the Council's strategy should include provision to invest in UK AA rated counterparties to support the UK economy, which would stabilise after the initial backlash caused by the UK's decision to leave the EU. Members observed that investing in UK counterparties had the advantage of there being no currency exchange issues and an AA rating was still perceived as a relatively low risk.

In response to a Member question relating to confidence in the treasury management advice given to the Council, the S151 Officer confirmed that he was confident in the accuracy and robustness of the financial advice received by Capita colour coding, as well as expert advice from ECC and the Council's own financial expertise.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the treasury management annual review report 2015/16 be approved.
- (2) That it be agreed that Rochford District Council continue to invest in UK institutions despite the sovereign rating downgrade from AAA to AA.
- (3) That the change in the Bank of England base rate forecast be noted. (S151O)

### **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

#### **Resolved**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

#### **(3) Report of the Executive**

##### **Information Communication Technology Provision and Support Contract**

Council considered the exempt report of the Executive containing recommendations on the information communication technology provision and support contract.

It was noted that the final figure in paragraph 7.1 on page 8.2.8 of the report should be amended to £49,012, the same figure listed in the final row of the table in paragraph 7.3 before the two total figures listed.

The Leader of the Council observed that this would increase the efficiency and robustness of the Council's I.T. system.

Officers confirmed, in response to a Member question relating to how this would be project managed, that this would be done by the Council's Programme Office and that a project plan had already been drafted and also advised, in response to a supplementary question on timescales, that this would be in place by the end of the current financial year.

In response to a Member query relating to termination of the current contract, officers advised that there were no problems anticipated. Responding to a Member question about business continuity, officers confirmed that 3 months' resilience, with overlapping of services, had been built into the new contract; it was not easy to assess whether there would be any change in business continuity costs with the new contract.

#### **Resolved**

That recommendations (1) to (5) inclusive, as set out on page 8.2.2 of the exempt report be agreed. (ADTS)

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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