

The Executive – 7 February 2023

Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **7 February 2023** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S E Wootton
Vice Chairman: Cllr Mrs C E Roe

Cllr Mrs D L Belton
Cllr D S Efde
Cllr D J Sperring

Cllr I H Ward
Cllr A L Williams

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Stephenson	- Chief Executive
E Yule	- Strategic Director
S Summers	- Strategic Director
P Barnes	- Director, Assets & Investments
A Hunkin	- Interim Director, People & Governance
M Hotten	- Director, Environment
T Lilley	- Director, Communities & Health
K Redston	- Strategic Partnership Officer
H Boyd	- Civic Officer

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllr M Hoy

A minute's silence was held to pay respects to a former Rochford District Council Officer, Michelle Power and victims of the recent earthquake across Turkey and Syria.

25 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

Members considered the pre-scrutinised report of the Director of Environment, presenting an updated version of the draft Sustainability Strategy previously presented at the June 2022 Executive at which it was agreed to approve the strategy for consultation.

Members considered Recommendation 3 at paragraph 2 on page 6.1.1 and queried whether the make up of the Committee would ensure an all-party representation. A further query was raised whether the membership number could be decreased from eleven to nine Members.

Officers confirmed that the change in membership from eleven to nine would not affect the efficiency of the Committee. Members also noted that should any

political group not wish to sit on the Committee, the vacant spot would be offered out to another group as the makeup of the Committee was not obliged to rely upon a pro-rata agreement but be politically representative instead.

Cllr Mrs D L Belton moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr D S Efde, “that a Climate & Sustainability Committee of 9 Members be established on a politically representative basis.”

It was noted that the provisional Committee composition would be as follows:-

Conservative Party	- 5 Members
Independent/Green	- 1 Member
Liberal Democrats	- 1 Member
Rochford District Residents	- 1 Member
Independent	- 1 Member

Resolved

- (1) That the Sustainability Strategy be approved and adopted.
- (2) That the Climate & Sustainability Officer post be made permanent.
- (3) That a Climate & Sustainability Committee of 9 Members be established on a politically representative basis.
- (4) That the Climate & Sustainability Committee meets on a quarterly basis.
(DE)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

27 THE MILL ARTS & EVENTS CENTRE – OUTCOME OF THE COMMUNITY EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS AND FUTURE OPERATING COSTS

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning & Assets expressed disappointment that the item was deferred by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and highlighted that it ran in conjunction with the next item of business.

The Leader expressed further disappointment in the Committee deferring the item of business, particularly in light of the fact two outside organisations were invited to attend that meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Leader therefore extended apologies to MegaCentre and the Design Cabin.

The Leader welcomed the scrutiny process of this report that would return to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 23 February 2023 and the Executive on 7 March 2023 for decision-making.

It was noted that the Executive felt obliged to adjust its decision-making ability at this time but would not continue to do so.

Resolved

That this item of business be deferred.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

28 THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PLAN (CIP)

Members considered the pre-scrutinised report of the Director of Assets & Investments, setting out the Community Investment Plan (CIP) objectives and budget allocations.

Members noted that the plan's objective was to invest throughout the District and that the allocation for funding for the CIP would be a priority for Sanctuary Housing to fulfil.

Resolved

- (1) The Community Engagement exercise should include meaningful market research to achieve the best outcome for the Mill Hall.
- (2) Page 7.4 paragraph 4 – that the regeneration strategy is aligned with the new Local Plan.
- (3) That we look to work in partnership with charitable organisations and others that can access grants.
- (4) That the delegated spending authority is limited to £100,000; and any decisions more than this value are referred to the full Executive for decision.
- (5) That the Community Investment Plan objectives set out within section 3 of this report be approved. (u)
- (6) Following approval of the objectives, that the proposals set out within section 4 be approved. (u)
- (7) That delegated authority be given to the Interim Director of Resources and the Director for Assets and Investment, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Climate, to drawdown funds from the CIP ringfenced reserve to support the following:-
 - Up to a total of £255,000 to support expected works of £185,000 at the Mill Arts & Events Centre to enhance the offering for events there plus up to £25,000 to support the external resource to deliver the future plans and business case for the Mill Arts & Events Centre.

- Up to a total of £350,000 to support the objectives of regeneration outlined within the CIP proposal. This money will support the technical work to bring forward regeneration sites in the district to RIBA stage 2 supporting the Regeneration Strategy approved by the Executive on 9 November.
- Up to a total of £75,000 to deliver a comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement process to support and align with the technical delivery of the regeneration sites.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

29 COST OF LIVING UPDATE

Members considered the report of the Director of Communities & Health providing an update on the cost of living response and work of the Cost of Living Working Group.

Members noted that the dashboard, which was based on December's data, was still in its early stages and relied on partners which came with its own difficulties. Officers further advised that future reports of the dashboard would compare data on a month-to-month basis.

Officers advised that certain areas within the District faced lower uptakes due to resident resilience within communities. It was also noted that foodbanks across the District were struggling with the increase in usage, with the utility rate being at its highest since 2020, at 13% since December 2022.

Members noted that energy debts were not as challenging as initially anticipated due to appropriate preparations; however, household grants would continue to be provided that included prepayment vouchers for energy meters and food vouchers.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing & Health chaired the Health & Wellbeing Board which currently worked alongside 50 partners and assisted in putting together an open market event that would focus on supporting the residents with budget sessions, recipe cards and meal giveaways. The event would also collaborate with the MegaCentre to offer savings for travel, offering refunds for bus/train tickets for those who attend the event. The event offered child areas to ensure that it was accessible to all.

Members noted that the event would take place on 29 March 2023 at the Mega Centre between 2.00 pm and 6.00 pm.

Officers advised that data would be circulated to Members of the Executive when received on 21st of each month. It was agreed that future reports would be brought back to the Executive on a bimonthly basis to provide a more comprehensive overview.

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The Leader commended the officers for their presentation and thanked them for their hard work.

Resolved

(1) That the cost of living update be presented bimonthly.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

(2) That the update on the cost of living response and work of the Cost of Living Working Group be noted.

The meeting closed at 8:17 pm

Chairman

Date

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