

Council – 23 April 2013

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **23 April 2013** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J A Mockford
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr C I Black	Cllr M Maddocks
Cllr P A Capon	Cllr Mrs C M Mason
Cllr Mrs T J Capon	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Cllr J P Cottis	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr T E Mountain
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr Mrs C E Roe
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr J D Griffin	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr B T Hazlewood	Cllr D J Sperring
Cllr M Hoy	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr I H Ward
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr C J Lumley	Cllr Mrs C A Weston

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs H L A Glynn, Mrs A V Hale, Mrs D Hoy and R A Oatham.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
A Bugeja	- Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
S Scrutton	- Head of Planning and Transportation
Y Woodward	- Head of Finance
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

At the commencement of the meeting Members paid tribute and stood in silence in memory of Baroness Thatcher.

81 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

82 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman had attended a variety of events on behalf of the Council since the last meeting. Highlights had included attending performances from the Essex Concert Orchestra and Essex Symphony Orchestra, the Mayor's tour of Deptford, various events relating to young people, including the Infant Music Festival at the Freight House and the Philharmonia Orchestra concert

at Fitzwimarc School. She had been impressed by the young people's good behaviour and dedication. She had presented a long service award to Colin Dulwich for 10 years leading the District's health walks, accompanied the outgoing High Sheriff of Essex on a tour of the Old House and District and attended the installation ceremony for the new High Sheriff of Essex in Chelmsford. She had attended the licensing and installation of the Rev Kenneth Havey at St Peter & Paul Church, Hockley. She thanked all Councillors who had attended the Rochford civic dinner and had received many letters of thanks, including one from Leon Thorne, the young recipient of the Citizen of the Year award. She gave particular thanks to Julia Mitchell for all her hard work during the year; it had been an honour and a privilege to serve as Chairman of this Council.

83 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

Council received the Minutes of Executive and Committee meetings held between the period 16 February and 12 April 2013.

84 REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

(1) Draft Corporate Plan 2013-2018

Council considered the report of the Executive of 6 March 2013 on the revised Corporate Plan for 2013 – 2018.

It was noted that the third bullet point of page 4 of the Plan should read:- 'Delivery of efficiency savings against the current backdrop of continuing cuts in local government funding'.

Resolved

That the revised Corporate Plan for 2013 - 2018 be approved. (CE)

(2) Proposed Changes to the Council's Governance Structure

Council considered the report of the Executive of 6 March 2013 on proposed changes to the Council's governance structure.

Officers advised, in response to a Member question relating to the sixth recommendation detailed in the officer's report that Leaders of Parish/Town Councils referred to Chairmen. The intention of this particular recommendation on liaison with Parish/Town Councils was to formalise current arrangements to ensure that any Parish/Town Council issues could be addressed by means of properly scheduled meetings with participation from a wider group of District Members. In response to a supplementary query around the number of Parish/Town Council representatives attending such meetings, officers emphasised that it was the current practice that the Chairman (or nominated substitute), plus Clerk, attended liaison meetings and this would continue.

Officers stressed, in response to a Member enquiry relating to the proposed shadowing arrangements for Portfolio Holders, that there was no intention to introduce a shadow Executive; this would, however, provide an opportunity for Member development. It was further emphasised that there should continue to be a clear separation between the role of Executive Members or any Members work shadowing such Members, and the role of Review Committee Members, given the remit of the Review Committee to scrutinise and challenge Executive decisions. Increasing the size of the Review Committee to fifteen Members, ie, the same size as the Licensing Committee, should allow sufficient capacity to undertake the programme of work planned for the next municipal year.

Resolved

- (1) That, from the next municipal year, the membership of the Review Committee be expanded from eight Members to fifteen Members, with the Chairmanship continuing to rest with a member of the main opposition party.
- (2) That the specific functions carried out by the Review Committee be expanded to make clearer reference to its role in both the budget monitoring process and the forward planning around the budget and medium term financial strategy, including in-depth review and analysis of not just policy issues, but also service specific areas of work. Also, to include specific reference to the scope for joint reviews with adjoining Councils.
- (3) That the Executive Portfolios and responsibilities be changed as follows:-
 - Environment to become Environment, Leisure, Arts and Culture.
 - Leisure, Tourism, Heritage, Arts, Culture and Business to become Economic Development, Regeneration, Business Liaison and Tourism.
 - Planning and Transportation to become, Planning, Transport and Heritage.
- (4) That each of the Executive Portfolios allow for the possibility of a Member being nominated at any time to work shadow that Portfolio Holder, with a maximum of 7 Members work shadowing at any particular time (1 for each Portfolio Holder); these work shadowing arrangements to be facilitated by the Leader, who will make the appropriate appointments.

- (5) That, in light of the above, the current two Member Champion roles be disbanded.
- (6) That the current East and West Community Forums be disbanded and replaced by a more tailored approach, which involves:-
- The Leader and appropriate Portfolio Holders, plus the Chairman of the Review Committee, meeting with the Chairmen of the Parish and Town Councils two times a year to discuss matters of common interest across the District.
 - Working with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the local Joint Crime and Disorder Partnership to promote two public meetings per year on policing and crime in the District.
 - Working with the local Clinical Commissioning Group and local Joint Health and Wellbeing Board to promote two public meetings per year on health provision in the District.
 - Arranging other topic specific or area specific meetings as appropriate, as agreed by the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holders.
- (7) That, subject to agreement to (1) to (6) above, relevant changes be made to the Council's Constitution to reflect these decisions. (CE)

(3) Annual Report of the Review Committee

Council considered the report of the Review Committee of 16 April 2013 on its annual report.

Resolved

That the Annual Report of the Review Committee be received. (HLEMS)

(4) Allocations Development Plan Document – Site GT1/NEL2 – Michelins Farm, Rayleigh

Council considered the exempt report of the Executive on the allocations plan document – site GT1/NEL2 – Michelins Farm, Rayleigh. Council's decision on this matter is set out in the exempt Appendix to these Minutes.

85 WORK OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

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

"I would like to start by thanking all Members and officers for their contributions throughout what has been another good year for the Council,

despite the challenges we face, particularly in terms of Local Government funding. Personal highlights for me were the Olympic Torch procession through Rayleigh last July when, despite the weather, an estimated 30,000 people turned up; the continued growth of the airport and the jobs that have been created; the defeat of Cogent's challenge to our Core Strategy in the High Court; and the outcome of our Peer Review, which said some very nice things about the Council whilst at the same time highlighting areas we need to continue to work on.

We have seen many of the key public bodies we work with change their structure over the past year. The Primary Care Trust has gone and been replaced by the Clinical Commissioning Groups, and the Police Authority has been abolished and replaced by an elected Police and Crime Commissioner. The County Council is currently going through a further phase of major organisational change, and I've no doubt the partnership landscape across the county will be affected by all this activity, as new forms and functions start to bed down.

For our part, by comparison we appear a model of stability and consistency which, given the amount of change occurring around us, is no bad thing. We are continuing to make good progress on many of the planning documents and have now sent off to the Secretary of State our submissions on the Allocations Development Plan Document and the Hockley Area Action Plan.

Since my last report to Council in February, the Executive has met once in March and once in April. At the March meeting we considered an updated version of the Corporate Plan, which has been on tonight's agenda. We discussed changes to our governance structure and, again, those changes have been on tonight's agenda. We also considered the way forward in connection with the issue of air quality management in Rayleigh and Rawreth.

Our Executive meeting last week reviewed the ageing person's strategy, gave comments on a consultation on moving the election date next year to coincide with the date of the European elections, and looked at a report on refurbishing the Council's service yard in Rochford, as well as progressing the work on the new grounds maintenance contract.

Since the last Council meeting, my colleagues on the Executive have considered such matters as revisions to the bulky waste collection service, the National Planning Policy Framework compliance report, and the Great Wakering Primary School community sports project.

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

86 MOTIONS ON NOTICE

Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 13, the following motion had been received from Cllrs T G Cutmore, Mrs P Aves, P A Capon, Mrs T J Capon, M R Carter, J P Cottis, Mrs H L A Glynn, T E Goodwin, K J Gordon, J E Grey, J D Griffin, Mrs A V Hale, B T Hazlewood, K H Hudson, Mrs G A Lucas-Gill, M Maddocks, Mrs J E McPherson, D Merrick, Mrs J A Mockford, T E Mountain, Mrs C E Roe, C G Seagers, S P Smith, D J Sperring, M J Steptoe, I H Ward, Mrs M J Webster, Mrs C A Weston and Mrs B J Wilkins:-

“In the light of the recent pronouncements made by the Leader of Southend Borough Council concerning the potential merger of Southend, this Authority and Castle Point Borough Council, this Council would like to place on record its strong opposition to any such proposal. That said, this Council remains committed to examining potential options for shared services with its neighbouring authorities, and other authorities for that matter, where it makes sense to do so and where it is of benefit to Rochford District residents and businesses. Our new ICT services contract with Capita involving Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Castle Point Borough Council, as well as this authority, is an example of such working arrangements, which have brought significant financial and other benefits to all four authorities.”

In support of the motion it was emphasised that there was no evidence that Rochford residents want such a merger. This is a well-run Council, which is debt-free, as evidenced by the recent Peer Review. It was stressed that both Southend and Castle Point Councils were not, however, debt-free, and as such, any such merger would not be in the interests of Rochford residents. There were clearly challenges ahead relating to the Council's budget, however this could be managed by the Council making the right decisions and by exploring the possibility of shared working with other Authorities. In conclusion, Members emphasised that they had been democratically elected to act as a voice for the residents of the Rochford District and to protect the local interests of residents.

On a requisition pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 17.4, a recorded vote was taken on the motion as follows:-

For (32) Cllrs Mrs P Aves; C I Black; P A Capon; Mrs T J Capon; M R Carter; J P Cottis; T G Cutmore; K J Gordon; J E Grey; J D Griffin; B T Hazlewood; M Hoy; K H Hudson; Mrs G A Lucas-Gill; C J Lumley; Mrs J R Lumley; M Maddocks; Mrs J E McPherson; Mrs C M Mason; J R F Mason; D Merrick; Mrs J A Mockford; T E Mountain; Mrs C E Roe; C G Seagers; S P Smith; D J Sperring; M J Steptoe; I H Ward; Mrs M J Webster; Mrs C A Weston; Mrs B J Wilkins

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

The Motion was declared carried and it was:-

Resolved

That this Authority places on record its strong opposition to any such proposal relating to the potential merger of Southend, this Authority and Castle Point Borough Council. (CE)

87 DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – DRAFT PRE-SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

Council considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation requesting approval of the draft Development Management Pre-Submission Development Plan Document for consultation and, subsequently, submission.

During debate, a Member queried whether within policy DM1, relating to design of new developments, there should be provision within the section on accessibility for the ageing population and to add sustainable drainage to the issues to be included within the policy. It was further suggested that there would be merit, within policy DM4, relating to habitable floor space for new developments, to ensure that new dwellings should comply with the Lifetime Homes Standard criteria. Officers advised that these issues would be examined in detail and that, if appropriate, the wording within these 2 policies would be amended accordingly.

It was also noted that, in light of the earlier decision to approve the Council's Corporate Plan, the vision statement on page 6 of the document should be appropriately amended.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Pre-Submission Development Management Development Plan Document be accepted for pre-submission consultation, followed by formal submission to the Secretary of State.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, to make minor amendments to the document prior to submission to the Secretary of State, excluding those that would materially alter policy, having regard to the results of pre-submission consultation, in order to ensure soundness of the submission document. (HPT)

88 CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance on amendments to the Capital Programme and revised prudential indicators.

Officers advised that the first recommendation within the report would need to be amended to incorporate the earlier decision taken with respect to item 8(2) of the agenda.

Responding to a Member question relating to paragraph 3.5 of the report, officers confirmed that, in the event of capital receipts running out during the course of the financial year, internal or external borrowing might be necessary.

Resolved

- (1) That the amendments to the capital programme be noted including the item discussed under Item 8(2) of the agenda.
- (2) That the revised prudential indicators be noted. (HF)

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm.

Chairman

Date

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