

The Executive – 24 March 2022

Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **24 March 2022** when there were present:-

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

Cllr D S Efde
Cllr S P Smith
Cllr D J Sperring

Cllr I H Ward
Cllr M J Webb
Cllr A L Williams

NON-MEMBERS PRESENT

Cllr S A Wilson

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Stephenson	- Chief Executive
A Hutchings	- Strategic Director
M Harwood-White	- Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial
M Hotten	- Assistant Director, Place & Environment
A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic
L Moss	- Assistant Director, People & Communities
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic & Corporate Services Officer

61 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

62 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE AND REPORTS FROM OTHER COMMITTEES

REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE – 1 MARCH 2022

DISPOSAL FRAMEWORK

The Executive considered the report of the Review Committee with recommendations relating to the implementation of the Council's Disposal Framework.

The Chairman of the Review Committee advised that the recommendations set out on page 6.1 of the report were simply amplifications on details contained within the report.

In response to a query from the Portfolio Holder for Financial Services as to how the Council could do its utmost to market small value assets without it being financially unviable, the Chairman of Review Committee observed that in reality the Council would make minimal effort for smaller value assets.

The Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial made reference to East Essex

Hackspace which had made use of a low value former teen shelter and which yielded high community and social value. Expressions of interest would be advertised on the Council website for low value assets; local community groups interested in such assets would need to provide details of how use of such assets would benefit the community, and bids would be scored.

During debate there was a general consensus that the wording of the third recommendation should be amended to remove reference to a Working Group, as this would be best dealt with on a case by case basis as part of the disposal process.

Resolved

- (1) That consideration of environmental and community/social value issues be included in the Disposal Framework.
- (2) That community groups should not be disadvantaged in their ability to bid for assets during disposal of Council assets.
- (3) That consideration of risk and use of risk assessments be included in the Disposal Framework. (ADAC)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

63 NEW DEED OF VARIATION WITH SANCTUARY HOUSING ASSOCIATION

The Executive considered the report of the Chief Executive providing details of a new Deed of Variation with Sanctuary Housing Association.

Members observed that it was pleasing to see an ongoing positive working relationship with Sanctuary Housing; this was a useful contribution that could be well utilised within the district.

Resolved

To enter into a new Deed of Variation (the “New Deed of Variation”) with Sanctuary Housing Association (“Sanctuary”). (CE)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

64 ADVICE SERVICES CONTRACT 2022-24

The Executive considered the report of the Assistant Director, People & Communities seeking approval of the award of the Advice Services Contract 2022-24 to Citizens Advice South Essex (CASE).

Resolved

To agree the outcome of the Advice Services tender and award the Advice Services Contract 2022-24 to Citizens Advice South Essex (CASE). (ADPC)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

65 SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY CONSULTATION

The Executive considered the report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment seeking approval for undertaking public consultation on the draft sustainability strategy establishing the Rochford Environmental Business Alliance (REBA) and the Rochford Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (RCCSP) and to approve allocation of £20,000 from General Balances to support consultation and engagement on the strategy.

Members observed that the report gave structure to the sustainability process via the establishment of the Rochford Environmental Business Alliance and the Rochford Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership and allocated funds to enable consultation on this important strategy which had not hitherto been well articulated.

Resolved

- (1) To approve undertaking public consultation on the draft sustainability strategy, as appended.
- (2) To establish the Rochford Environmental Business Alliance (REBA) working in consultation with the Carbon Neutral Working Group.
- (3) To establish the Rochford Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (RCCSP) working in consultation with the Carbon Neutral Working Group.
- (4) To approve the allocation of £20,000 from General Balances to provide support for consultation and engagement on the strategy. (ADPE)

66 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE BUSINESS PLAN

The Executive considered the report of the Chief Executive seeking approval of the draft Annual Review of the Business Plan 2020-2023.

Members commended the clarity of the report.

In response to a Member question relating to the text on the front page: 'Working to help you shape your future, and whether this could be changed to, for example, 'our future', officers advised that this was the original strapline for the Council's Business Plan; however, there would be an opportunity for revision towards the end of the review period. From page 10.10 onwards the

report included statistics in infographic form that clearly showed the good work that had been undertaken within the district.

It was also observed that the 2-page headlines summary used by Brentwood Council would be adapted for Rochford which would further emphasise in a more visual way the Council's achievements.

Officers noted a Member observation that there should be improved proof reading for the review report.

Resolved

- (1) To approve the form of the draft Annual Review as set out in Appendix A subject to any further minor and typographical amendments required by the Executive.
- (2) That the final version of the Annual Review document be completed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader. (CE)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

67 LEADER'S UPDATE ON THE CRISIS IN UKRAINE

The Leader gave the following verbal update on the crisis in Ukraine:-

"Members of Rochford District Council are saddened and disturbed by the unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, a sovereign state, which has caused horrific devastation and created an escalating humanitarian crisis with millions displaced or affected. No words can properly describe our feelings. As a way of expressing support for the people of Ukraine and members of our communities who are from Ukraine or who have ties with Ukraine we unreservedly condemn the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine and stand in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and their families and friends, including those that are local to the Rochford District. We stand ready to provide support to innocent people displaced and affected by this unprovoked Russian aggression. We will work with and support the efforts of our local communities to provide help, support and comfort to those in need. In such exceptional circumstances Rochford District Council is making a special provision by setting aside a sum of £25,000 to support the work aiding the Ukrainian people here in Rochford. This is the maximum permitted within the Leader's spending authority and reflects the significance of how we feel. An immediate donation of £5,000 will be made to our community partner, the Community Hub at the Megacentre, Rayleigh, to assist with their work. Already 60 tonnes, and I suspect by now, many more, of essential supplies have been transported to those in need. The Hub has stopped taking in donations – that's material donations at this time – but continues to raise money to help families and people affected by war. The Council is also part of the Essex wide partner planning discussions on how best to support the

government's homes for Ukraine scheme locally. Thousands of people - many hundreds of thousands, actually - in the UK have so far signed up the scheme where the government will provide £350 per month to those selected to house refugees. The Council will support local people who join the scheme helping ensure the welfare and safety of refugees within our community and work closely with Essex County Council on the provision of education and health services. From the capital sum this Council is setting aside £20,000 and examining plans to provide a financial support scheme for local households who take in families; the aim being to provide a top up of £100 per household for a 3-month period. When further details about the national sponsorship scheme become clear more information will be made available. I am proud of the generosity and support our residents have shown to the Ukrainian people in their hour of need. The Council is now looking at what we can do to ensure that local people who open their homes to a Ukrainian family are supported in their efforts."

The Leader also acknowledged that over £10,000 was raised by the Chairman of the Council at her recent Civic Dinner through an auction and a raffle where people gave generously. Just over £5,000 was raised; however, that would be match funded by the government's DEC appeal. Over £35,000 would be coming from this Authority therefore to assist the Ukrainian crisis. He further announced that there were Russian families within the local communities who the Council also stood by. Although there was a Russian invasion of Ukraine, under no circumstances should any hate crime or inappropriate behaviour towards Russian families within the local community be tolerated.

The meeting closed at 8.09 pm.

Chairman

Date

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