

Council – 26 February 2013

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **26 February 2013** when there were present:-

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

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr C J Lumley
Cllr C I Black	Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr P A Capon	Cllr M Maddocks
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr Mrs C M Mason
Cllr J P Cottis	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Cllr T E Goodwin	Cllr R A Oatham
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 Mrs A V Hale	Cllr D J Sperring
Cllr B T Hazlewood	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr Mrs D Hoy	Cllr I H Ward
Cllr M Hoy	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs T J Capon, Mrs H L A Glynn, D Merrick, T E Mountain and P F A Webster.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
A Bugeja	- Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
Y Woodward	- Head of Finance
C Cox	- Financial Services Manager/Chief Accountant
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Extraordinary meetings held on 29 January and 14 February 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman had attended a variety of events on behalf of the Council since the last meeting. Highlights had included the family sports festival at Clements Hall leisure centre, the Girl Guiding Jack Petchey Foundation Awards ceremony in Basildon, the Holocaust Memorial Service in Rayleigh, a memorial service for the 1953 floods in the presence of the Princess Royal at Chelmsford Cathedral, afternoon tea and tour of the House of Lords, a

presentation evening in Chelmsford for the Essex Wing Air Training Corps, a mini Art Trail presentation to a 7-year old pupil at Westerings Primary School, and a Charity Symphony Concert in Waltham Forest. The recent Charity Burns Night fundraising dinner raised approximately £3,000 for the Chairman's Charity.

The Chairman welcomed Canon John Brown, Vice-President of the Essex Association of Local Councils, who was in attendance for the award to Ashingdon and Canewdon Parish Councils for achieving accreditation of Quality Parish Status. The awards were received by Cllr Debbie Constable, Chairman of Ashingdon Parish Council, Cllr Nigel Wallace, Chairman of Canewdon Parish Council, and Kelly Holland, Clerk to Ashingdon Parish Council and Canewdon Parish Council.

At this point in the meeting the Chairman was pleased to receive a Gideon Bible presented by Roger Oxenham of Gideons International, South Essex Branch.

33 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

Council received the Minutes of Executive and Committee meetings held between the period 8 December 2012 to 15 February 2013.

34 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

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

“Earlier this month we met to set the Council Tax for 2013/14 and, in doing so, effectively concluded our work in relation to the 2013/14 budget process. As I said on the night, the major changes being introduced to the way we are funded and in terms of Council Tax relief and the welfare and benefits system have presented us with real challenges and I again thank all Members and officers for their contributions to date.

Despite the challenges around the budget, the Key Policies and Actions report on tonight's agenda provides a useful insight into next year's work programme and the business of the Council. We will continue to make progress on a number of fronts.

Since my last report to Full Council in December, the Executive has met on two occasions. In January, we determined the way forward for a further year in connection with the Revenues and Benefits telephone calls contract and took various decisions in connection with the grounds maintenance contract. At our February meeting we considered the recommendations of the Review Committee following the work that they had done in relation to voluntary and community groups. We discussed the findings of the Peer Review report and agreed on a number of actions. We also determined the way forward in relation to Acacia House and that the grounds maintenance services within

our cemeteries should be delivered in-house.

Over the period, colleagues on the Executive took decisions including those relating to voluntary sector grants, a response to the Sweyne Park School's proposals to increase the age range and add a sixth form, the provision of a columbarium in Rayleigh Cemetery, and adjustments to the daily car park charge at the Approach Car Park in Rayleigh.

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 be happy to contribute, where appropriate.”

The Portfolio Holder for the Environment, in response to a Member question relating to publicity for the Rayleigh Columbarium, advised that this would be publicised in due course; the project was still in the planning stage.

Responding to a question on the proposed move of GP blood testing facilities from Basildon and Southend to Bedford, the Leader advised that the Council's position had not changed since this question was raised at the last scheduled Council meeting. While it was clearly vital the residents continued to have access to the correct blood tests in a timely manner, it was also the case that all public bodies had to make savings. The decision on the future of blood testing was one that would be made by the Clinical Commissioning Groups who were better placed to take an informed decision.

35 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT, ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT 2013/14

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance on the Council's treasury strategy for borrowing and investment.

Officers advised, in response to a Member question relating to current uncertainty in the financial markets, that daily bulletins were received from Sector; this, along with general awareness of the market, provided sufficient warning, if necessary, for investments to be withdrawn, if appropriate, although there could occasionally be penalties incurred.

Resolved

- (1) That the treasury management strategy statement and annual investment strategy, including the investments instruments, indicators, limits and delegations contained within the report, be agreed.
- (2) That the capital expenditure forecasts be agreed.
- (3) That the minimum revenue provision policy for 2013/14 be agreed.

- (4) That the authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt, as set out in the report, be agreed. (HF)

36 KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2013/2014

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive formally setting out the main areas of policy development for 2013/2014.

The Leader emphasised, with respect to paragraph 3.5 of the report, that the proposed change to the Council's corporate objectives was aimed at rationalising them and making them less cumbersome. He also drew particular attention to the Council's proactive approach in implementing the changes to the Council Tax/Benefits system in terms of forward notification of the changes to residents likely to be affected by the changes.

Resolved

- (1) That the work programme for 2013/2014, as set out in appendices A, B and C and the public notification of its content, as outlined in the report, be agreed.
- (2) That those areas of work, for consideration by the Review Committee, as outlined in appendix D, be agreed.
- (3) That the programme for the monitoring of the 2013/14 budget and the development of the 2014/15 budget, as outlined in appendix E, be noted.
- (4) That the main events timetable, as outlined in appendix F, be noted. (CE)

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm.

Chairman

Date

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