

Council – 28 February 2012

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **28 February 2012** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S P Smith

Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J A Mockford

Cllr Mrs P Aves

Cllr C I Black

Cllr M R Carter

Cllr T G Cutmore

Cllr T E Goodwin

Cllr K J Gordon

Cllr J E Grey

Cllr Mrs A V Hale

Cllr Mrs D Hoy

Cllr M Hoy

Cllr K H Hudson

Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill

Cllr C J Lumley

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr M Maddocks

Cllr Mrs C M Mason

Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr Mrs J E McPherson

Cllr D Merrick

Cllr T E Mountain

Cllr R A Oatham

Cllr R D Pointer

Cllr A C Priest

Cllr Mrs C E Roe

Cllr C G Seagers

Cllr M J Steptoe

Cllr I H Ward

Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr Mrs C A Weston

Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P A Capon, Mrs T J Capon, Mrs H L A Glynn, J Thomass 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
J Bostock - Member Services Manager

33 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2011 and the Extraordinary Meetings held on 31 January and 21 February 2012 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

34 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman had attended a variety of events on the behalf of the Council since the last meeting. Preparations were in hand for the Citizen of the Year Award.

35 MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Council received the Minutes of Executive and Committee meetings held between the period 3 December 2011 and 17 February 2012.

36 REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

(1) Essex Wide Police and Crime Panel

Council considered the report of the Executive containing a recommendation relating to the appointment of a representative to the Police and Crime Panel.

Resolved

That the representative on the Police and Crime Panel be the Portfolio Holder for Young Persons, Adult Services, Community Care and Well-being, Health and Community Safety. (CE/HLEMS)

37 REPORT ON URGENT DECISIONS

Pursuant to Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15(f) Council noted a report on decisions that had been taken as a matter of urgency and not subject to call-in/referral.

38 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

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

“Last week we met to set the Council Tax for 2012/13 and, in doing so, effectively concluded our work in relation to the 2012/13 budget. As I said last week, this year’s budget process has again seen us having to make difficult choices and I thank all Members and officers for their contributions.

We continue to face interesting and uncertain times and I have no doubt that, over the next twelve months, the business of the Council will be dominated by planning related issues, although I anticipate that matters such as Universal Credit, changes to Council Tax relief and the Benefits system will grow in importance as these come to the fore.

Important too will be the changes to Local Government Finance as a whole. We need to keep a close eye on the Local Government Bill as it goes through its various stages in Parliament so that we are as prepared as we can be in terms of its implications for the 2013/14 budget.

Last week, along with other Members here tonight, I had the pleasure of attending the opening of the new terminal at London Southend Airport. I was told that, by June, the airport expects to have created some 500 jobs over a twelve month period. Very good news at a time when the economy in general is suffering and further evidence, if it was needed, that the Council has been right to work with the airport on developing its future as a regional airport and realising its potential as a focus for job creation.

Last week we made a submission to the Municipal Journal under their ‘Best Achieving Council’ award. Hopefully, all Members have had the opportunity to

look through the submission. One thing that struck me, regardless of whether we are shortlisted or not, is the range of activities we have undertaken over a period, of which I think all Members and officers can be proud. I don't think anyone could accuse us of not trying to do our best for our local residents in what are very challenging times.

Since my last report to Full Council in December, the Executive has met on two occasions. In January, we determined the way forward in relation to the Revenues and Benefits telephone calls contract; agreed actions around Homelessness prevention and recharging; considered the draft air quality action plan for Rawreth Industrial Estate, took decisions in respect of the Eco-Enterprise Feasibility Study, and approved a future strategy in respect of public toilet provision. We also considered possible options in respect of the future use of Acacia House, so that we can release the full potential of that asset to the Council's benefit.

At our February meeting, the Executive discussed in some detail the Disabled Facilities Grants process and the changes now being made following work done by the Review Committee. There was a report on elected Police and Crime Commissioners and Police and Crime Panels, both of which effectively come into being from November. A recommendation in relation to the Police and Crime Panel was considered earlier on tonight's agenda. There was also a report on the planned closure of Rochford Police station.

We agreed the way forward in connection with our grounds maintenance services following Fountains going into administration. I know that Cllr Steptoe has written to all Members on this. A Member Advisory Group is now being established under his chairmanship to take the project forward over the longer term. From my perspective, I hope we can seize the opportunity now presented to look afresh at our service delivery in this key area in a positive fashion.”

39 KEY POLICIES AND ACTIONS FOR 2012/13

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive on Key Policies and Actions for 2012/13.

Responding to observations in relation to Town Centre Area Action Plans and the regeneration opportunities that they could provide, the Chief Executive advised that, given the intensive work now needed to be undertaken by the Council's Planning Policy team in relation to the Core Strategy legal challenge, it would be appropriate to consider utilising monies from reserves to buy in resources if Members wished to bring forward the preparation timeframes in connection with the Area Action Plans. The bringing forward of these Plans could fit in well with the proposed changes to Government funding policy, aspects of which would be dependent on business growth.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to consideration being given to bringing forward the proposed preparation dates associated with the Town Centre Area

Action Plans, the work programme for 2012/13, as set out in Appendices A, B and C of the report and the public notification of its content, as outlined in the report, be agreed.

- (2) That those areas of work suggested for consideration by the Review Committee, as outlined in Appendix D of the report, be agreed.
- (3) That the programme for the monitoring of the 2012/13 budget and the development of the 2013/14 budget, as outlined in Appendix E of the report, be noted.
- (4) That the main events timetable, as outlined in Appendix F of the report, be noted. (CE)

40 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2012/13

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance presenting the Pay Policy Statement for approval.

It was noted that other Essex authorities were considering their own policies during this cycle.

Resolved

That the Pay Policy Statement for 2012/13 be adopted and that page 4.75 of the Constitution be adjusted to reflect that the appointment of officers below Chief Officer level and associated matters are the responsibility of the Head of Paid Service or his nominee. (HF/HLEMS)

The meeting closed at 7.58 pm.

Chairman

Date

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