

Council – 27 April 2010

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **27 April 2010** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr A J Humphries

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill
Cllr C I Black	Cllr M Maddocks
Cllr P A Capon	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr Mrs T J Capon	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr J P Cottis	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs J Dillnutt	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr T E Goodwin	Cllr J Thomass
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins
Cllr T Livings	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs R Brown, Mrs L A Butcher, Mrs L M Cox, K A Gibbs, C J Lumley, Mrs J R Lumley, Mrs J A Mockford, J M Pullen, D G Stansby and Mrs C A Weston.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	-	Chief Executive
R J Honey	-	Corporate Director (Internal Services)
G Woolhouse	-	Corporate Director (External Services)
J Bostock	-	Member Services Manager

117 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

118 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had attended many engagements since the last meeting, including school prize giving, church and charity events.

119 FORMER DISTRICT COUNCILLORS MRS M S VINCE AND D C WOOD

Council paid tribute to the memory and contributions to the community of former District Councillors Mrs M S Vince and D C Wood, who had recently passed away.

120 MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Council noted the Minutes of Executive and Committee meetings held between 15 February and 16 April 2010.

121 REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

(1) Review Committee Annual Report

Council considered the Annual Report of the Review Committee.

Resolved

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

(2) Draft Corporate Plan 2010-2015

Council considered the report of the Executive on the draft Corporate Plan.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, Cllr K H Hudson, referred to the value of progressing the LDF Core Strategy, particularly in the context of assisting the Council's case at planning inquiries. Thanks were extended to the Members of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee for their contributions to Strategy development. It was anticipated that the hearing stage would be completed by the autumn of 2010.

It was noted that facilities for young persons can include teen cafes and skate board parks. The Rochford District Youth Council was one of the consultees available for the identification of needs. For some projects the Council is able to signpost interested parties to sources of grant funding. It was also noted that, in terms of planning policy, aspirations could be facilitated through the Town Centre Action Plans.

Resolved

That the revised Corporate Plan for 2010-2015 be adopted, subject to the inclusion of the points in paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 of the report of the Executive. (CE)

(3) Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 – Petitions

Council considered the report of the Executive on the adoption of a Petitions Scheme.

Resolved

- (1) That the Petitions Scheme appended at pages 8.41 to 8.45 of the report of the Executive be adopted.

- (2) That the Constitution be amended as outlined in paragraphs 4.2 to 4.4 on pages 8.38 and 8.39 of the report of the Executive.
- (3) That the Scheme is reviewed by December 2010. (CD(IS)/HLEMS)

122 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

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

“This is the last full Council meeting of the municipal year and, therefore, firstly I would like to thank all Members for their contribution, in what I believe has been an exceptional year for the Council in terms of the progress we have made in a number of key areas.

This has been the first full year of our kerbside recycling scheme and I am pleased to report that our end of year recycling rate is likely to be just over 65% which, if true, will place Rochford District as one of the highest performing authorities in the Country, if not the highest. Our success is very much down to the enthusiasm and wholehearted participation of our residents in the scheme for, without them embracing the scheme wholeheartedly, we would not be achieving such a wonderfully high rate of recycling. I know of other Authorities who are now modelling themselves on similar schemes to our own, but not achieving such a high rate of recycling; so we must give a big thank you to our residents. We have gained national recognition after winning a national recycling award in the Local Authority Target Success category on the back of the work that we have done. Cllr. Michael Starke now retires from the Council on a distinguished high, a unique position in politics, our thanks go to him and the legacy he leaves us.

Our ‘Shop at My Local’ scheme, put together with local partners, continues to develop and attract interest at the national level. The initiative encourages residents to rediscover local produce and also help to sustain local trades to safeguard local jobs. Recently, we have organised specific training for local businesses under the scheme, and that has proved to be a popular initiative.

With the imminent closure of E-on at Rayleigh now confirmed and the subsequent tragic loss of so many jobs, we are now involved in arranging two job fairs as supporting events, targeted specifically for redundant E-on workers, in May and June, as we continue to reinforce the unique and important local role that the Council can play in terms of economic development and our good relationship with partner agencies within the District.

The year has also seen us retain our Chartermark for Housing Benefits and Council Tax. At a time when the number of claimants has increased considerably, we have been able to work on further improvements to this key service area.

We have made significant steps on the planning front, with the Hearing into our Local Development Framework Core Strategy scheduled to start on 11 May. In fact, this last month seems to have been dominated by planning! There was the inquiry into Coombes Farm a few weeks ago, the inquiry into Rectory Road/Main Road, Hawkwell is taking place this week and, of course this month has seen a number of public meetings taking place around the District on the Allocations Discussion and Consultation document. I would personally like to thank the Portfolio Holder, Cllr. Keith Hudson, and the Council's planning team for all their efforts during this period. I know for a fact that some of the public meetings around the Allocations consultation have been very lively indeed. Consultation is still open for reply until 30th April.

Since I last reported back to the February Council meeting, the Executive has met on two occasions, once last month and again last week. At the March meeting we considered the report of the Member Charter Implementation Group and endorsed the suggested Member role profiles. We considered the recommendations of the Review Committee in connection with Area Committee budgets and, whilst appreciating the thorough work that had been undertaken, felt that the proposals should be held in abeyance at this stage. The March meeting also saw us agreeing to the contract for carrying out the Hall Road Cemetery extension works.

At our Executive meeting last week we considered and agreed reports in connection with the Workforce Development Plan, the Air Quality Management Area at Rawreth Industrial Estate and our community halls and associated assets. We also looked at two items which are before you this evening, the Corporate Plan and how we deal with petitions from June of this year given that the legislation, such as it is, is now in place.

Since the last Council meeting, my colleagues on the Executive have considered such matters as the granting of a Fishing Licence at Rochford Reservoir, the Council's Emergency Plan, various consultations on matters such as hypnotism and travelling circuses, grants to voluntary organisations, Rochford District Matters, Community Health, and Essex's Children's Trust.

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, Cllr M G B Starke, expressed thanks to the Leader and all Council Members and officers for the recognition of and assistance with his work. It was pleasing that the Council's recycling rate over the previous twelve month period was around 65%. This success was something that could not have been achieved without residents.

Responding to questions the Leader of the Council, Cllr T G Cutmore, and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, Cllr K H Hudson, referred to how the effectiveness of consultations on planning related matters can be a matter of perception. Notwithstanding that consultation mechanisms should

be kept under review, individuals do not always choose to attend events that are well publicised.

In responding to an observation on the Council's low tax rate, the Leader referred to the value of sound financial policies/investment arrangements, with savings being made where possible without compromising the provision of good services.

In discussing concerns at the nature the job losses at E-on it was noted that, in terms of its own electricity supply arrangements, the Council was part of a public sector consortium.

Council endorsed the observation of the Deputy Leader, Cllr Mrs M J Webster, that the support provided to Members by the officers of the Council deserved recognition. It was agreed that the Council's thanks and appreciation for the work officers undertake in assisting both individual Members and the Council as a whole should be placed on record.

123 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE FROM 2010/11

Council considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services on the appointment of two independent Members to the Standards Committee with effect from the 2010/11 Municipal Year.

Resolved

That Mr D J Cottis and Mr S Shadbolt be appointed as Independent Members on the Standards Committee for a four year term commencing the 2010/11 Municipal Year. (HLEMS)

Prior to the close of the meeting Members concurred with the Leader that the Council's thanks should be extended to Cllr Mrs R Brown, who was retiring from office, for all her contributions. Thanks were also extended to the Chairman for all his work over the last Municipal Year. The Chairman thanked Members for their assistance, particularly in relation to fund raising for Havens Hospices, his chosen charity. Thanks were also extended to the Chief Executive and the Civic Team.

The meeting closed at 8.38 pm.

Chairman

Date

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