

## The Executive – 28 January 2009

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Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **28 January 2009** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr T G Cutmore  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher  
Cllr Mrs T J Capon  
Cllr K H Hudson

Cllr M G B Starke  
Cllr P F A Webster

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Cllr K J Gordon.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren	-	Chief Executive
R J Honey	-	Corporate Director (Internal Services)
G Woolhouse	-	Corporate Director (External Services)
A J Bugeja	-	Head of Legal Services
R Evans	-	Head of Environmental Services
Y Woodward	-	Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management
J Bostock	-	Committee Services Manager

### **16 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **17 PERFORMANCE REPORT ON KEY PROJECTS FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2008**

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management on key projects for the period October to December 2008.

#### **Resolved**

That the progress against key projects for the third quarter of 2008/09, as detailed in the report, be noted. (HFAPM)

### **18 PERFORMANCE REPORT ON KEY INDICATORS FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2008**

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management on key performance indicators for the period October to December 2008.

It was observed that the layout of the graph relating to council tax collected (cumulative) gave the appearance that the target was not being met.

**Resolved**

That the progress against key performance indicators for the third quarter of 2008/09, as detailed in the report, be noted. (HFAPM)

**19 CAPITAL PROGRAMME – QUARTER 3 MONITORING REPORT**

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management on the financial progress in completing the General Fund Capital Programme for 2008/09.

It was observed that the report provide information in a comprehensive manner.

**Resolved**

That the update report on the progress in completing the General Fund Capital Programme for 2008/09 be noted. (HFAPM)

**20 BUDGET MONITORING STATEMENT**

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management on the contents of the budget monitoring statement for the period October to December 2008.

Reference was made to the value of the graphical representations within the report.

**Resolved**

That the contents of the Budget Monitoring Statement for the third quarter of 2008/09 be noted. (HFAPM)

**21 CHERRY ORCHARD JUBILEE COUNTRY PARK ADVISORY GROUP**

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services on the work of the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park Advisory Group.

It was noted that:-

- The Advisory Group had been particularly mindful of the economic climate and the cost implications of all areas discussed.
- Whilst bridleway related proposals had to be developed in collaboration with the County Council, the Group was mindful that local horse riding residents had been used to accessing Park land over a number of years.
- Access/Car park arrangements and a Visitors Centre had been part of discussions relating to the Joint Area Action Plan.

- The Forestry Authority had confirmed that it was in the process of signing off a grant of £42,000, which should be available to the Council during the forthcoming week.
- Whilst the Advisory Group had recognised that the burial of electrical power lines would have been of value and aesthetically pleasing, likely costs were restrictive and alternative sources of funding would need to be explored.
- It would be important to ensure that a service compound is well screened/landscaped and secure.

It was agreed that the news about the Forestry Commission Grant was particularly pleasing. Members concurred with the observation of the Chairman that the Advisory Group had clearly worked hard in developing recommendations. Tribute was paid to the work of the staff involved in the project to date.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That no further action be taken with regard to vehicular access from Cherry Orchard Way until the proposals emanating from the Joint Area Action Plan are finalised.
- (2) That officers investigate with Essex County Council the possibility of securing access from the western most point of New England Wood through to Connaught Road and Grove Road.
- (3) That advisory and way-mark signs be provided to all points of access in negotiation with land owners as appropriate, including Edwards Hall Park, Gusted Hall, Blatches Chase and Flemmings Farm Road.
- (4) That officers identify suitable sites and appropriate designs for seating within the Country Park. The opportunities for sponsoring seating to be promoted with local residents and businesses.
- (5) That the provision of bridleway access between Rayleigh Avenue and Flemmings Farm Road be a low priority for District Council resources. Officers to investigate the availability of funding for such a bridleway from Essex County Council.
- (6) That officers take immediate action to prevent access by horses into New England Wood and the new areas of tree planting within the Country Park.
- (7) That officers seek funding from Natural England or other bodies with a view to creating a water meadow.
- (8) That officers utilise the design proposals developed as a basis for exploring external funding opportunities for a Visitor Centre.

- (9) That, subject to available capital funding, the works programme for 2009/10 should include reshaping of stream banks; temporary signage; grass cutting; removal of earth banks; creation of meadows; weed control; the construction of a service compound and ground preparation works.
- (10) That one temporary member of staff, a Woodlands Assistant, be employed for one year only in the County Park, funded through the Capital Programme.
- (11) That officers investigate the opportunities for extending the working arrangements with the Probation Service already in operation at Hockley Woods and a potential arrangement with Writtle Agricultural College.
- (12) That the Advisory Group submit a further report on the work programme and recommended capital expenditure for future years at the appropriate time. (HES)

## **22 FINAL BRIEF FOR THE EXTENSION OF HALL ROAD CEMETERY**

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Legal Services on the final brief for the extension of the Hall Road Cemetery.

During discussion, reference was made to the value of ensuring that signage to the cemetery is as clear as possible.

It was noted that:-

- The non denominational building suggested under report paragraph 4.8 would provide an appropriate facility for both short services and contemplation.
- Whilst the detail would need to be developed, an area had been identified for woodland burials from 2012 within the new cemetery area.
- At the current time it is only possible to reserve plots within the existing cemetery. Notwithstanding this, it may be that woodland burial possibilities could be brought forward in the context of being a new provision.

### **Resolved**

That the final brief for the extension of the Hall Road Cemetery, as detailed in the report, be agreed, subject to final design decisions and planning permission. (HLS)

## **23 CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Community Services on the implementation of a Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

During discussion it was recognised that, for some, the concept of choice based lettings was not necessarily an improvement on other forms of letting arrangement, particularly from the perspective of the activity required of a housing applicant.

It was noted that, based on indications to date, a stand alone scheme that incorporated the Council's own allocations policy would meet Government requirements.

**Resolved**

- (1) That a stand alone Choice Based Lettings Scheme be implemented.
- (2) That, subject to final approval by the Department of Communities and Local Government, the purchase of a suitable IT system be approved by the Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions following receipt of all quotations. (HES)

**24 DISTRICT BOUNDARY SIGNS**

The Executive considered the report of the Chief Executive on the revised design and replacement of District Boundary signs.

Members agreed that it would be appropriate to take the opportunity to include tourism symbols at sign locations where appropriate. It was felt that, albeit that the proposed concept was distinctive, it would be useful to consider some additional possible sign designs prior to a final decision.

It was noted that the final design and location of signs would need the approval of the Highway Authority and discussions with the Parishes where appropriate.

**Resolved**

That a decision on the replacement of District boundary signs be deferred pending the consideration of additional possible designs. (CE)

The meeting closed at 8.36 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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