

## Council – 17 December 2013

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Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **17 December 2013** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr M Hoy
Cllr C I Black	Cllr K H Hudson
Cllr P A Capon	Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill
Cllr Mrs T J Capon	Cllr C J Lumley
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 R R Dray	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr Mrs J A Mockford
Cllr T E Goodwin	Cllr T E Mountain
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 M J Steptoe
Cllr B T Hazlewood	Cllr I H Ward
Cllr Mrs D Hoy	Cllr Mrs C A Weston

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs L A Butcher, M Maddocks, R A Oatham, D J Sperring and Mrs M J Webster.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

A Dave	–	Chief Executive
P Warren	–	Chief Executive (Retiring)
A Bugeja	–	Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
Y Woodward	–	Head of Finance
J Bourne	–	Head of Community Services
S Fowler	–	Head of Information and Customer Services
S Scrutton	–	Head of Planning and Transportation
J Bostock	–	Member Services Manager

At the commencement of the meeting Members stood in silence in memory of Mr Nelson Mandela.

### **260 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2013 and the Extraordinary meeting held on 21 November 2013 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman, subject to replacement of the word 'deletion' in the final paragraph under Minute 239 with the word 'retention'.

### 261 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman had been honoured to have attended many engagements since the last Full Council meeting. Particular reference was made to the success of a recent visit to the District by the High Sheriff of Essex and to Remembrance Sunday services. The Chairman was pleased at the positive comments made about the Council by external attendees at civic events.

### 262 MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Council received the minutes of Executive and Committee meetings held between the period 12 October to 6 December 2013.

### 263 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 before Christmas and the New Year and I would like to begin by wishing all Members and officers seasons greetings and best wishes for the New Year.

As in previous years, this year’s Remembrance Day ceremonies were very well attended throughout the District. My thanks to all the groups and individuals who organise these events to pay tribute to those who have given their lives in the line of duty.

Often at this time of year you reflect back on events over the past twelve months and, when I think back over 2013, I believe that, as an Authority, we have continued to make progress and, in ‘Peer Review terminology’, punch above our weight which, given the resources available, is no mean achievement.

We remain on course to meet the 2013/14 budget targets we have set ourselves. Our services continue to deliver, despite the fact that we have got less grant to spend, with compliments still exceeding complaints. We have regained top spot as the leading recycling Authority in England and, probably, the UK. That’s all down to our residents and their willingness to participate in our kerbside recycling scheme, so a big ‘thank you’ should go to them. We also took the opportunity to highlight this achievement by illuminating the Windmill and Rochford Lofts in green!

We have continued to make progress on the planning front, unlike some of our near neighbours. The Local Development Plan process has been a difficult and lengthy process over a number of years; but we are now closer to the end in securing our future planning framework for the period up to 2025. We have put ourselves in a strong position to ward off rogue and unwanted speculative development proposals, again unlike some of those authorities nearby.

Recently we have won a national legal award. Working with the Environment Agency, we were named Prosecution Team of the Year at the all England Annual Government Legal Services Prosecutors Conference. This related to the joint work that was done in connection with Michelin's Farm. In addition, the Rochford Arts Trail has recently picked up an award and been named the East of England's overall winner at the Towns Alive 2013 Awards. These things help demonstrate that we are making a difference.

I would like to thank all those Members who attended our first Member Budget Away day a couple of weeks ago. It was a good informative session and I thank everyone for their contribution. I believe we made good progress on the day in addressing our budget situation and determining the way forward. It would certainly be good if all Members could make the next Away day on 18 January 2014, where we would aim to finish our deliberations and determine the final shape and content of the report to be considered at the Council meeting at the end of January, when the budget will need to be formally agreed.

I am pleased to report that our new Grounds Maintenance Contract with ISS commenced on 2 December. ISS are operating from Purdeys Industrial Estate.

Since my last Leader's report into Council in October, the Executive has met on two occasions. In November, we considered:-

- The Key Performance Indicators for the Council on projects and management of the Council
- Customer feed back (we continue to receive more compliments than negative comments) and
- Reports from the Review Committee on Leisure Service provision, the Woodlands service and the Council's car parks.

I would like to thank the Members on the Review Committee for their contribution to these three significant areas of work and the additional opportunities for income that they identified.

More recently, at the December meeting, we considered:-

- The Mid year treasury management review. This shows that the economy is recovering, which is good news for all, and that we are on course to achieve the forecast capital financing.
- The Peer Review. We are making pleasing progress on the recommendations.
- A policy on scrap metal dealers – how we are to administer this new legislation.

- Participating in a Municipal Bonds Agency. Once again, we are at the forefront of new innovations and
- A Social Media Policy – we discussed the Policy and asked for more work to be done and re-submitted for approval.

Since the last Council meeting, my colleagues and I on the Executive have dealt with such matters as:-

- Joining the Essex Procurement Hub
- Fees and Charges for Scrap Metal Dealers
- Re-profiling of the lake at Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park
- The Annual Open Spaces Programme
- Vital work with the Community Safety Partnership and
- Equally vital partnership work with the Clinical Commissioning Group

As always, I will be happy to take any questions from Members in respect of the work of the Executive and I am sure my Executive colleagues will be happy to contribute where appropriate.”

During discussion the achievement of the Council in being able to regain the top spot as the leading recycling authority in England was acknowledged. It was also acknowledged that this could only have been achieved by the efforts of residents.

It was noted that the distribution reach of the Council’s newspaper, Rochford District Matters, continued to improve and that Members should advise officers if they become aware of any distribution issues.

Thanks were extended to Cllr C J Lumley for his work as Chairman of the Review Committee in leading reviews on leisure service provision, the woodlands service and the Council’s car parks.

### **264 REVISED BUDGETARY ESTIMATES FOR 2013/14**

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance on the revised budgetary estimates for the current financial year 2013/14 and the 2014/15 budget for grants to voluntary organisations.

In clarifying the position with regard to the estimates associated with verge maintenance the Head of Finance confirmed that internal recharges could be included in the budget book produced for the budget setting Council meeting in January. The potential availability of further capital monies for grants to voluntary organisations would be checked.

### Resolved

- (1) That the revised estimates for 2013/14, as set out in the appendix to the report, be agreed.
- (2) That the 2014/15 budget for grants to voluntary organisations be set at £90,000 revenue, £15,000 capital. (HF)

### 265 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2014/15

Council considered the report of the Head of Community Services on the proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2014/15.

Members concurred with the observation of the Leader that, given the high number of residents falling under the scheme, its effective introduction was a credit to the preparatory work undertaken by officers.

### Resolved

- (1) That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be approved to come into effect from 1 April 2014, as detailed in the Section 13A policy.
- (2) That the provision of £100,000 in the 2014/15 Budget be agreed to cover the financial risks associated with the Scheme. This amount will include the carry forward of any money left over from the 2013/14 scheme. (HCS)

### 266 ADOPTION OF LOCAL LIST SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Council considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation on adopting the Local List as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Responding to questions the Head of Planning and Transportation advised that:-

- The Local List formed part of the Local Development Framework. Perspective property purchasers would become aware if a property they are interested in is within the List.
- Officers would undertake a final review of the document to ensure all photographs are appropriate and that the current status of identified buildings is correct.
- The intention was that document content would be kept under review.
- The inclusion of Timber Wharf Cottage, Battlesbridge on the List had been considered by the Council's advisers. This could be further considered.

- Whilst all owners should be aware of inclusion of their property within the List, there would be further communication to ensure this is the case.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Local List be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Heritage and, following compliance with any necessary regulations, to make future amendments to the Local List Supplementary Planning Document in response to any relevant new information or material change in circumstances. (HPT)

### **267 RAYLEIGH AREA ACTION PLAN – DRAFT SUBMISSION DOCUMENT**

Council considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation on approval of the draft Rayleigh Area Action Plan Submission Document for pre-submission consultation and, subsequently, for submission.

It was observed that the estimated cost of improvements to the central area of Rayleigh High Street (Boots Lagoon and Crown Hill junction) was such that it may be appropriate to consider whether European funding could be available. In any event, given the high amounts involved with such projects, careful consideration would need to be given to expenditure prioritisation.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Draft Rayleigh Area Action Submission Document be accepted for pre-submission consultation to take place in early 2014, followed by formal submission to the Secretary of State.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transport and Heritage, to make minor amendments to the document prior to submission to the Secretary of State, excluding those that would materially alter policy, having regard to the results of pre-submission consultation, in order to ensure soundness of the submission document. (HPT)

### **268 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Council received the report of the Head of Information and Customer Services on the timeline for the Electoral Review of Rochford District Council and the key elements that comprise of the review.

It was noted that the Boundary Commission had appointed a Commission Member and a link officer to work with the Council.

Council concurred with the observation of a Member that it would be appropriate to extend invites to a representative from each of the town\parish

councils within the District to attend appropriate Boundary Commission briefing/s.

### **Resolved**

That the report be noted, a representative from each of the town/parish councils within the District to be invited to attend appropriate Boundary Commission briefing/s. (HICS)

Prior to the close of the meeting tribute was paid to Mr Paul Warren who was retiring as the Council's Chief Executive. Each Group Leader and other Members spoke in turn on Mr Warren's significant contributions to both the work of the District and the wider County. Members and residents had benefited from Mr Warren's diligent and professional approach.

The Chairman extended best wishes to all for a Happy Christmas and New Year.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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