

## Review Committee – 7 July 2020

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **7 July 2020** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr J C Burton  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr D J Sperring

Cllr Mrs D L Belton  
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding  
Cllr B T Hazlewood  
Cllr N J Hookway  
Cllr Mrs J E McPherson  
Cllr Mrs C M Mason

Cllr R Milne  
Cllr Mrs C A Pavelin  
Cllr Mrs L Shaw  
Cllr P J Shaw  
Cllr M G Wilkinson

### **VISITING MEMBERS**

Cllrs S P Smith and A L Williams

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C C Cannell and Mrs D Hoy.

### **SUBSTITUTES**

Cllr M Hoy for Cllr Mrs D Hoy  
Cllr C M Stanley for Cllr C C Cannell

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

N Lucas - Assistant Director, Resources  
M Hotten - Assistant Director, Place & Environment  
S Worthington - Principal Democratic and Corporate Services Officer  
M Power - Democratic Services Officer

### **77 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2020 were agreed as a correct record and would be signed in due course by the Chairman.

### **78 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REVIEW 2018/19**

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Resources seeking the views of the Committee on the information presented in the report, before being presented for approval by Full Council on 14 July 2020.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- There had been no change to the Council's investment risk appetite within the Treasury Management Strategy for the 2020/21 financial year, compared to the 2019/20 Strategy.

- The figure of £147,110 is the gross investment income earned by the Council from its treasury management activities in 2019/20; the £7,750 annual fee for Link Asset Services is separate from this.

### Resolved

That the contents of the report be recommended to Full Council. (ADR)

## 79 CARBON NEUTRAL BY 2030

The Committee considered the report of the Review Committee Working Group and its recommendations for developing a policy for the Council to make the Council carbon neutral by 2030.

In response to questions it was noted that:

- The Waste and Leisure contracts and the Asset Development Programme would be subject to their own reviews as they would all have a significant impact on the Council's carbon footprint. A Member commented that in the Carbon Neutral Action Plan there was no commitment for the Council's new buildings under the Asset Programme to be carbon neutral, but that there would be an opportunity to change the design of the buildings from that agreed during the tender process.
- In respect of recommendation 9 of the report, it was felt that although there should be a specific resource allocated to delivering the initiatives in the proposed action plan, it would provide greater flexibility if the detail was not determined at this stage. The Committee agreed an amendment to recommendation 9, proposed by the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, the wording to be changed to read:

“To investigate the potential costs of a Carbon Reduction Officer, or other possible arrangements such as partnership working, to deliver the initiatives in the proposed action plan. Once quantified, any request for additional resource will need to be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2021/22.”

- It was confirmed that the Local Plan would have to be mindful of national housing and growth targets and that national planning policy would take precedence over local policy. Local Authorities aspired to achieving carbon neutrality by 2030, 20 years prior to the Government's target of 2050.
- The Portfolio Holder for Environment would have political responsibility for overseeing the carbon neutral by 2030 process and taking it forward; this could be included in the policy document.
- There had been no expert input into drafting the policy, which is why it had not been possible to set targets relating to achieving carbon neutrality within it. Specific targets could be set as time progressed.

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- Carbon neutrality is a wide-ranging topic and housing development within the District would be guided by national policy. The carbon neutral by 2030 policy focused on the Council achieving carbon neutrality as an organisation in respect of its own estate and vehicles, not as a District. The topic could be extended and developed over time.
- The Working Group had discussed potentially continuing its meetings to monitor performance and changes. The Chairman of the Working Group invited Members of all political groups to join and contribute to its work.
- The Committee agreed to an additional recommendation that an annual update on carbon neutral by 2030 be provided to the Committee.
- The opportunities for working in partnership with Southend Borough Council and the other Essex Authorities to reduce Rochford District Council's carbon footprint would be explored; nothing had yet been concluded.
- Members felt that the Working Group had been set up under the Review Committee and, therefore, while the Committee would recommend policy, once this policy had been determined it should be referred to the Portfolio Holder. The Review Committee's role was to scrutinise. Because it was proposed that the Working Group would remain in existence for the time being, the Portfolio Holder for Environment would raise this with the Executive to ensure that the Working Group remained independent of the Review Committee and reported back to it annually.

### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

- (1) That the draft carbon neutral policy and action plan be approved.
- (2) That the draft disposable plastic policy and action plan be approved.
- (3) That an annual report of green house gas (GHG) emissions be prepared to show what the Council's carbon footprint is.
- (4) That all Council reports include a section on the effect the decision will have on the GHG emissions of the Council.
- (5) That a revised procurement strategy be prepared taking into account the issues mentioned in this report.
- (6) That the limitations around the current planning regulations be noted.
- (7) That the revised local plan takes into account the Government's Environment Bill.

- (8) That the opportunities of working in partnership with Southend Borough Council and the other Essex Authorities to reduce Rochford District Council's carbon footprint be explored.
- (9) That the potential costs of a Carbon Reduction Officer, or other possible arrangements such as partnership working, to deliver the initiatives in the proposed action plan be investigated. Once quantified, any request for additional resource to be considered as part of the budget setting process for 2021/22.
- (10) That the Review Committee receives an annual update on carbon neutral by 2030. (ADPE)

### **80 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT**

The Committee considered the Key Decisions Document and noted its contents.

### **81 WORK PLAN**

The Committee considered its work plan.

1 September 2020 - Waste and Recycling review

6 October 2020 – Review of the Constitution

3 November 2020 - Review of the Council's overview and scrutiny function, following a recommendation from the recent peer review of the Council. It was suggested that a report could be obtained from the appropriate Portfolio Holder regarding the concerns raised and a report from the Leadership Team of what they see as priorities. Members felt that because the overview and scrutiny was a fundamentally important function the review should take place before November. However, the Chairman advised that there may not be sufficient officer resource and expertise currently to drive this forward and to ensure it is given the time and consideration it would need.

5 January 2021 – Items/topics/issues nominated by members of the public for review by the Committee.

Review of the Council's response to the recent Covid-19 pandemic. This could cover what went well and what did not in terms of emergency and resilience planning; and measures that could be put in place should the Council face a situation like this in the future. This topic should be reviewed as soon as possible and should be separate from a more general emergency planning review.

Emergency Planning. A date can be agreed by the Committee at a later meeting.

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Review of the Constitution. This would be coming to the 6 October Review Committee meeting and then again to the 3 November meeting if there are revisions needed.

Details were requested of how the £900,000 funds for management of the pandemic from central government had been spent and the reasons and rationale for the allocations. The Assistant Director, Resources advised that the figures were estimates only and a more comprehensive picture would be available towards the end of the financial year when the financial implications of the pandemic were known. The grants received would be allocated in appropriate areas. This topic could be added to the work plan.

The Review Committee annual report for 2019/20 would be taken to the October 2020 meeting of Full Council.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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