

## Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 1 February 2023

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **1 February 2023** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S A Wilson  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J E McPherson

Cllr R P Constable	Cllr R Milne
Cllr A H Eves	Cllr G W Myers
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding	Cllr J E Newport
Cllr R Lambourne	Cllr L J Newport
Cllr J R F Mason	Cllr D W Sharp

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllrs Mrs D L Belton, J Cripps, M Hoy, I H Ward, Mrs V A Wilson and S E Wootton.

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J N Gooding, Mrs E P Gadsdon and M G Wilkinson.

### **SUBSTITUTES**

Cllr M J Webb - for Cllr J N Gooding

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

E Yule	- Strategic Director
P Barnes	- Director, Assets & Investments
A Hunkin	- Interim Director, People & Governance
T Willis	- Interim Director, Resources
C Mayhew	- Corporate Manager, Democratic Services – Brentwood
W Szyszka	- Democratic Services Officer
H Boyd	- Civic Officer

### **OTHERS PRESENT**

J Sawford	- MegaCentre, Rayleigh
S Williams	- MegaCentre, Rayleigh
J Edmunds	- The Design Cabin

### **18 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2023 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr J R F Mason made a declaration of whipping and advised the Chairman that Rochford District Residents have no whip.

### 20 THE MILL ARTS & EVENTS CENTRE (THE MILL HALL) – OUTCOME OF THE COMMUNITY EXPRESSION OF INTEREST PROCESS AND FUTURE OPERATING COSTS

Members considered the report of the Director of Assets & Investment setting out the outcome to date of the community expression of interest process and the required operating costs following the decision of the Executive on 13 July 2022 and to make recommendations to the Executive as the Committee saw fit.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning & Assets introduced the report.

The Chairman welcomed Julie Sawford and Scott Williams from MegaCentre, Rayleigh and James Edmunds, Voluntary Executive Director, the Design Cabin.

Officers confirmed that the Mill Hall was removed from the ADP and in the interim, would be fully supported by the Council. Officers added that the report sought to start the full business case on the Mill Hall project.

A Member expressed concern in relation to paragraph 9 on page 6.6 of the report, where the report referred to a building condition survey that was not circulated to Members of the Committee prior to the meeting for consideration.

Officers responded that the condition survey was available and would be shared with Members outside of the meeting.

A Member made reference to an email correspondence received by Members of the Committee sent by the Chairman that related to questions potentially asked by the Committee of the guests, outlining the impact of commercial sensitivity.

The Chairman confirmed that the contents of the email remained relevant.

Cllr J N Newport moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr J R F Mason that the item be deferred on the grounds that issues outlined within the email must be resolved to allow for an open process of scrutiny.

The Motion was declared carried on a show of hands.

(5 Members voted in favour, 2 Members voted against and 6 Members abstained.)

#### **Resolved**

That this item of business be deferred.

### 21 THE COMMUNITY INVESTMENT PLAN

Members considered the report of the Director of Assets & Investments, setting out the Community Investment Plan (CIP) objectives and budget allocations to make recommendations to the Executive as the Committee saw fit.

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A Member requested clarification on the amount discussed at the Budget Meeting for Rochford District Residents and queried the figure set out at paragraph 4.3 on page 7.3 of the report and whether the figure was coincidental.

Officers responded that the figure was coincidental as the figure within the report was capital.

Members noted that the purpose of the report was to draw down funding in order to fund the cost allocating to the Mill Hall, as per the deferred item 6 of the agenda. The report outlined capital and expenditure on the Mill Hall building and the Community Investment Fund, which was a ringfenced earmarked reserve that would be drawn down to fund the budget request. The report sought Members' approval for the process to commence, as outlined in item 6 of the agenda.

A Member requested clarification in relation to the figure and the releasing of the lease.

Officers clarified that the lease was varied in December 2020 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, the Mill Hall was removed from the lease, noting that the building was originally part of the ADP.

A Member queried paragraph 3 on page 1.2 of the report and requested clarification in relation to the £75,000 that had been set aside to deliver a comprehensive community and stakeholder engagement. A further query was made whether this work would be duplicating the work that had already been carried out within the last 12 months.

Officers responded that the work would not be duplicated as the process would undergo a different approach.

The Vice-Chairman questioned whether the Committee's decision making in relation to this item of business was impacted by the deferment of item 6 on the agenda. In light of this, the Chairman requested that the meeting be adjourned for a period of 5 minutes.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm and reopened at 8.00 pm.

Members noted that this item of business was not dependent on the deferred item 6 of the agenda and the consideration of this item could be continued.

A Member referred to paragraph 4.7 on page 7.4 of the report and questioned whether there would be a full marketing exercise carried out in terms of market research, taking into account professional expertise.

Officers clarified that there would be market research and Members noted that the Community Investment Plan was not solely focused on the Mill Arts & Events Centre, but also took into account the overall improvement of leisure, economic growth, housing and place aspects of the District for the future.

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Cllr A H Eves moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs J E McPherson, “that the Community Engagement exercise should include meaningful market research to achieve the best outcome for Mill Hall.”, and was carried on a show of hands.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

A question was asked in relation to paragraph 4.12 on page 7.4 of the report, as to what the relationship between this proposal and the emerging Local Plan was.

Cllr Mrs J E McPherson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr S A Wilson, “that time regeneration strategy is aligned with the new Local Plan.”, and was carried on a show of hands.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

Cllr Mrs J E McPherson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr S A Wilson, “to look for partnership work with charitable organisations and others that are able to access grants.”, and was carried on a show of hands.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

A Member queried what the current governance arrangements were at paragraph 4.15 on page 7.5 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Climate, Change & Economy confirmed that the report outlined the breakdown of necessary funds. The number of Members and officers detailed at paragraph 4.15 would provide a robust decision-making process.

Officers further clarified that this would fall under the function of the Executive in terms of delegation.

Cllr M J Webb moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr A H Eves, “that the delegated authority is limited to £100,000; any other decision in the value excess of this amount be referred to the full Executive for decision.”, and was carried on a show of hands.

(12 Members voted in favour, 1 Member voted against, and 0 Members abstained.)

Members queried the inclusion of park and open spaces within the plan, seeking confirmation on a timeline going forward and noted that parks and open spaces would be included, and that the timeline would be aligned with the programme plan and the Regeneration Strategy. This would likely commence in the Summer/Autumn 2023.

**Resolved**

- (1) The Community Engagement exercise should include meaningful market research to achieve the best outcome for the Mill Hall.
- (2) Page 7.4 paragraph 4 – that the regeneration strategy is aligned with the new Local Plan.
- (3) That we look to work in partnership with charitable organisations and others that can access grants.
- (4) That the delegated spending authority is limited to £100,000; and any decisions more than this value are referred to the full Executive for decision.
- (5) That the contents of the report be noted. (DAI)

## **22 CAPITAL AND TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR 2023/2024**

Members considered the report of the Interim Director of Resources setting out the Council's Capital and Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24, seeking the views of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the approach proposed in the Strategy prior to its approval by Full Council.

A Member queried the Capital Expenditure within the table listed at paragraph 5.2 on page 8.8 of the report and noted that the capital programme had undergone changes and would likely vary before it is presented to Full Council.

Cllr S A Wilson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs J E McPherson, "that the Capital and Treasury Management Strategy Statement including the investment instruments. Indicators, limits and delegations contained within the report be noted." and was carried on a show of hands.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

Cllr S A Wilson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs J E McPherson, "that the Capital Expenditure Forecasts be noted.", and was carried on a show of hands.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

Cllr S A Wilson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr D Sharp, "that the Operational and Authorised Limits for external debt as laid down in the report be noted.", and was carried on a show of hands.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

Cllr S A Wilson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr R Milne, "that the Capital and Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24, as set out in this report be approved.", and was carried on a show of hands.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the Capital and Treasury Management Strategy Statement including the investment instruments. Indicators, limits and delegations contained within the report be noted.
- (2) That the Capital Expenditure Forecasts be noted.
- (3) That the Operational and Authorised Limits for external debt as laid down in the report be noted.
- (4) That the Capital and Treasury Management Strategy for 2023/24, as set out in this report be approved. (IDR)

### **23 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT**

The Committee noted the contents of the Key Decisions Document.

### **24 WORK PLAN**

The Committee discussed and noted the Work Plan.

Members noted that SEPP would attend the next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and that an update on Gypsy and Traveller as well as Planning Processes and Procedures would also be considered at the next meeting.

The Chairman suggested that with the deferment of item 6 of the agenda, the item considering Gypsy and Traveller sites should be moved to the meeting scheduled for 1 March 2023, alongside the Community Safety Partnership report. This was noted and agreed by the Committee.

The meeting closed at 9:07 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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