

The Executive – 12 June 2013

Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **12 June 2013** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr T G Cutmore
Vice Chairman: Cllr K H Hudson

Cllr K J Gordon
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill

Cllr M Maddocks
Cllr S P Smith

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs J E McPherson and M J Steptoe

VISITING

Cllr C J Lumley

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren - Chief Executive
A Bugeja - Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
R Evans - Head of Environmental Services
S Fowler - Head of Information and Customer Services
C Cocks - Financial Services Manager/Chief Accountant
J Bostock - Member Services Manager

The Chairman welcomed Cllr S P Smith, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, to the first meeting of the Executive since his appointment.

108 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 17 April 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

109 PERFORMANCE REPORT ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Executive reviewed the Performance Report on Key Performance Indicators for the period January to March 2013.

It was confirmed that BV009 (percentage of Council Tax collected) remained under review.

Concern was expressed about the increases in the average time from the receipt of a recommendation that disabled facility works be undertaken to works completion (LP1717). The Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions, Cllr M Maddocks, confirmed that this subject remained under review and that, if appropriate, full detail could be reported to the next meeting. Observations made during discussion on this subject included that:-

- The arrangements whereby the Authority funded 40% of disabled facility works was historic.
- The nature and condition of housing stock was a factor.
- A number of stages were associated with the disabled facility grants process.
- Compared with other authorities the number of grants awarded was relatively low. There only needed to be issues with a few cases for there to be impact on associated statistics.
- Some authorities may treat delays and time limitations associated with the grants process in different ways statistically.

It was recognised that the demand for disabled facilities was likely to increase in line with increased life expectancy. It was also recognised that the subject of disabled facility grants could usefully feature within any future discussions with partners on the subject of combined budgets.

Resolved

That the progress against key performance indicators for the fourth quarter of 2013, as set out in the report, be received subject to:-

- Noting that the percentage of Council tax collected remains under review.
- The Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions reporting to the next meeting on the factors associated with increases in the average time from the receipt of a recommendation that disabled facility works be undertaken to works completion, together with any other associated issues. (HCS)

110 PERFORMANCE REPORT ON KEY PROJECTS

The Executive reviewed the Performance Report on Key Projects for the period January to March 2013.

Resolved

That the progress against key projects for the fourth quarter of 2013, as set out in the report, be received.

111 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS MADE BY FULL COUNCIL/THE EXECUTIVE

The Executive reviewed the Progress on Decisions schedule.

It was noted that an update report on the situation with regard to the open spaces refurbishment programme would be submitted to the next meeting of the Executive.

Observations were made on a number of items within the schedule following which it was:-

Resolved

That the progress on decisions made by Full Council/The Executive, as set out in the schedule, be received subject to noting that:-

- There had been no formal expressions of interest associated with the Community Right to Challenge.
- The total cost of introducing the columbarium at Rayleigh Cemetery would be within the capital budget of £30,000 and appropriate regulations would be introduced with regard to the alternative facility for the scattering of ashes.
- The length of the term for the lease of the playing field/car park surrounding the Hockley Community Centre was an agreed exception to policy due to associated funding requirements.
- The rent levels set for the Citizens Advice Bureaux and the Old People's Welfare Centre operating from Back Lane, Rochford reflected the market value. The organisations received subsidies for these amounts.
- The temporary day charge associated with the Approach Car Park, Rayleigh had been extended for a further three months.

112 CUSTOMER FEEDBACK UPDATE AND FREEDOM OF INFORMATION STATISTICS 2012/13

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Information and Customer Services on customer feedback and freedom of information statistics for 2012/13.

Members concurred with the observation of the Leader that it was good to see that compliments received continued to significantly outnumber complaints.

Resolved

That the customer feedback and Freedom of Information statistics for 2012/13, as set out in the report, be received subject to noting that, with regard to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests :-

- As individuals Members should not be the subject of FOI requests.
- The introduction of a page on the Council's website setting out all FOI requests received and responses given would be inappropriate given the associated time/resource implications. The website already includes all the types of information that is readily available to residents and how this can be sourced.

- Approximately half of all FOI requests are generic. A number emanate from students undertaking research. All requests have to be treated equally. A request can be rejected if it is considered frivolous or unreasonable.
- An internal log is maintained of responses given to requests which can be accessed if repeat or similar requests arise.
- Non compliance would bring issues of reputation risk. The Information Commissioner can issue a public notice highlighting where an organisation has failed to meet FOI requirements. Continued failure could result in the issuing of an enforcement notice with a legally binding timetable. The Commissioner can also submit a report to Parliament.

113 POLICY ON MEMORIALS IN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

Resolved

That consideration of the policy on memorials in parks and open spaces (agenda item 10) be deferred to the next meeting. (HES)

114 THE MANAGEMENT OF PAVILIONS AND FOOTBALL PITCHES

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services on changes to the management of pavilions and football pitches.

It was noted that, should it prove to be the case that the playgroup utilising the Fairview Pavilion was discontinuing, that pavilion may not need all of the works to be undertaken as originally planned.

Resolved

- (1) That, from the 2014/15 football season, clubs be required to make their own setting up arrangements on match days and that staffing resources provided by the Council be reduced to emergency call-out cover.
- (2) That a savings target of £25,000 be identified for the service for 2014/15 within the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- (3) That stock condition surveys and pitch surveys be undertaken where appropriate in order that a strategy for improvements can be determined. The outcome to be reported for consideration as part of the 2014/15 budget process.
- (4) That approval be given to capital expenditure of £56,700 for the subdivision of the pavilions at Fairview and Ashingdon to enable the play groups and sports users to operate independently. Subsequently, leases or market rental arrangements to be agreed in accordance with the Council's normal policy.

- (5) That no further action be taken at the current time on offers made by the Town and Parish Councils to take over the management of facilities.
(HES)

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information as defined in paragraphs 1 of 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

115 CONTRACT FOR THE SALE OF RECYCABLE MATERIALS

The Executive considered the exempt report of the Head of Environmental Services on a contract for the sale of recyclable materials.

Responding to a question from the Leader, the Head of Environmental Services confirmed the advice received from Counsel on the acceptability of the proposals from a legal perspective.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council enters into a contract with UPM for the sale of recyclable materials for a term of seven years at the fixed price identified in the exempt report commencing on 15 May 2015.
- (2) That the decision in (1) above be taken as a matter of urgency and not subject to call in/referral because there is only a limited time period within which to accept the offer. The offer would be of significant benefit to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.

116 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S APPRAISAL

Members received the exempt note of the Chief Executive's Appraisal.

The meeting closed at 8.39pm.

Chairman

Date

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