

Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 8 June 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the **Overview & Scrutiny Committee** held on **8 June 2022** when there were present:-

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

Cllr R P Constable
Cllr A H Eves
Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon
Cllr J N Gooding
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding

Cllr G W Myers
Cllr J E Newport
Cllr L J Newport
Cllr M G Wilkinson

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs J R F Mason, R Milne and D W Sharp.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr M Hoy	- for Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr I A Foster	- for Cllr R Milne
Cllr A Cross	- for Cllr D W Sharp

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs Mrs D L Belton as Portfolio Holder for Agenda Item 6, Cllrs D S Efde and A L Williams as Portfolio Holders for Agenda Item 9, Cllrs Mrs C E Roe, I H Ward, Cllr Mrs V A Wilson and S E Wootton.

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Hutchings	- Strategic Director
M Hotten	- Assistant Director, Place & Environment
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic & Corporate Services Officer
H Lock	- Democratic Services Officer

101 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman..

102 ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY 2022-2025

The Committee considered the Report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment setting out details of the Economic Growth Strategy 2022-25.

During the debate, the following points were raised:

- The funding set out in paragraph 5.1 of the Report should have more focus on investing in skills and training initiatives;
- Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be included;
- It would be desirable to keep the production of marketing and promotion materials local and to engage with local schools and businesses for this where possible;
- The Report did not mention carbon neutrality by 2030. However, the Portfolio Holder for Climate & Economy advised that this would be captured by Rochford Environmental Business Alliance (“REBA”);
- The use of Google Business as well as Rochford Local should be encouraged;
- Reporting back would take the form of an annual report on the Economic Growth Strategy 2022-25, together with a mechanism for the Portfolio Holder for Climate & Economy to report back to Members throughout the year.
- The Economic Growth Strategy 2022-25 is a high-level document and, as such, does not go into detail of how its contents will be delivered in practice.

Recommended to the Executive

- (1) That the draft Economic Development Strategy be approved, as set out in the Appendix to the Report; subject to the following:-
 - a) That, with reference to Paragraph 5.1 of the report:
 - the £10,000 budget earmarked to improve place promotion materials and branding be decreased to £5,000;
 - the £5,000 earmarked to invest in skills/training initiatives be increased to £10,000; and
 - the contingency be increased from £5,000 to give greater opportunity for emerging projects to be taken forward.
 - b) That there should be clear SMART, measurable KPIs.
 - c) That the procurement of marketing and promotion should be local and engage with local schools and businesses where possible and in accordance with the Council’s financial and procurement rules.
 - d) That businesses should be encouraged to use Google Business as well as Rochford Local.
 - e) That the Council should work with Brentwood Borough Council to develop skills and capacity around economic development to deliver the strategy.

- f) That on page 6.7 of the report the words “fantastic connections” be replaced with “encourage the development of fantastic connections”.
 - g) That innovative ways should be considered to regenerate the High Street and in particular whether we can learn any lessons from another council e.g. Chelmsford City Council which can be applied in the District.
- (2) That delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, Climate & Economy, to make any necessary minor amendments to the draft Economic Development Strategy 2022-25 in advance of publication.

(This was unanimously agreed)

103 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT

The Committee discussed and noted the contents of the Key Decisions Document.

In response to a Member question as to why the Council was seeking a contractual internal audit arrangement with Basildon Borough Council rather than Brentwood Borough Council, the Chairman advised that he would report back to all Members on this point.

A Member observed that, in relation to decision 5/22, the title implied an update report rather than a decision and that the title of decision 5/22 be amended to include the wording “...including the current financial position”.

The Chairman agreed that he would obtain clarification on decision 5/22.

104 WORK PLAN

Members considered the Committee’s Work Plan.

The Chairman encouraged Members to attend the scheduled Treasury Management training in advance of treasury management reports coming to this Committee.

The following points were raised:

- A request was made for an update on the Asset Development Programme (ADP).
- The Chairman requested an update Report on Progress relating to the Centre for Governance & Scrutiny’s recommendations on the operation of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
- There was a request that RIPA be reviewed with a focus on communication to Town/Parish Councils. The Chairman confirmed that he

would ask the Assistant Director, People & Communities to look into this.

- It was agreed that Cllr Wilkinson would look at policies around planning enforcement and a date would be included in the Work Plan for that piece of work.

The Chairman advised that better use should be made of task and finish groups and requested that Members get involved with pieces of work. A suggestion was made to include a piece of work around the planning process (e.g. distribution of S106 money).

105 LOCATION OF HMS BEAGLE ANCHOR AT PAGLESHAM

The Chairman requested that a recent article in The Echo about this be disregarded for this item and that any decision made should be based on the information and discussions at this meeting.

The decision was called-in particularly due to concern that the original funding for the Beagle Project was intended to be distributed to projects across the district and that alternatives to funding (e.g. grants) should be considered.

The Strategic Director outlined the original funding, the timeline of which had been affected by the pandemic. Paglesham Parish Council had commenced the project with their own funding/grants and the suggestion was to use reserves to support the project and the objectives originally set.

In response to a question, the Strategic Director advised that the provenance of the HMS Beagle Anchor was the subject of a report by Historic England.

Members raised concern about the level of funding and were minded that some of the funding be used across the wider District.

Resolved

That the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Health reconsider the decision and the amount of funding to be made available to Paglesham Parish Council for the Anchor Project should be less than the £13,755.18 available, with the balance redistributed to other projects around the District.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

The meeting closed at 9.08 pm.

Chairman

Date

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