

Council – 16 December 2014

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **16 December 2014** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Vice-Chairman: Mrs H L A Glynn

Cllr C I Black	Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill
Cllr J C Burton	Cllr Mrs C M Mason
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr J H Gibson	Cllr T E Mountain
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr J D Griffin	Cllr Mrs C E Roe
Cllr Mrs A V Hale	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr J Hayter	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr B T Hazlewood	Cllr Mrs M H Spencer
Cllr N J Hookway	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr Mrs D Hoy	Cllr I H Ward
Cllr M Hoy	Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins
Cllr J L Lawmon	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P A Capon, Mrs TJ Capon, R R Dray, M Maddocks, Mrs J A Mockford and D J Sperring.

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Dave	-	Chief Executive
A Bugeja	-	Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
Y Woodward	-	Head of Finance
S Scrutton	-	Head of Planning and Transportation
R Evans	-	Head of Environmental Services
J Bostock	-	Member Services Manager

252 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 October 2014 and the Extraordinary Meeting held on 20 November 2014 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

253 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman had been honoured to have attended many events and functions. Highlights had included a presentation to two Council officers and two paramedics who had been involved in a life saving incident at the Council offices; a First World War commemoration event at the Cherry Orchard

Jubilee Country Park, sports and school awards and the switching on of the Rayleigh Christmas lights.

The Chairman extended particular thanks to all Members who had been in attendance at the Civic Carol Service and who had contributed to the Chairman's Charity collection.

254 MEMBER QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Pursuant to Council procedure rule 12.1, questions were received as follows:-

(a) From Councillor C I Black of the Portfolio Holder for Planning:-

"At the present time how many Planning Enforcement cases are currently open?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor I H Ward, responded as follows:-

"The number of cases on hand is 362."

By way of supplementary question Cllr C I Black referred to this as being similar to the figure of 366 reported in November 2013 and asked what steps would be taken to reduce the number of cases.

Cllr I H Ward responded that there had only been two members of staff within the enforcement team for several months. An additional officer was soon to be taken on which would, hopefully, reduce the number of open cases.

(b) From Councillor C I Black of the Portfolio Holder for Planning:-

"What steps have the District Council and County Highways taken to deal with the unauthorised highways work carried out on the A1245 at Cherry Hill Farm? What exactly is the nature of the work?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Councillor I H Ward, responded as follows:-

"The responsibility for the A1245 verge rests with Essex County Council Highways. The issue has been reported and we are waiting to hear what will be carried out to restore the verge."

By way of supplementary question Cllr C I Black observed that Members would be concerned that there had not yet been a response from Essex County Council and asked what would be a reasonable waiting time. Cllr I H Ward advised that it was anticipated that a quick response would be received from the Inspector visiting the site.

255 MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Council received the Minutes of Executive and Committee Meetings held between the period 14 October to 5 December 2014.

256 REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE

(a) Council Tax discount for Unoccupied and Unfurnished Properties

Council considered the report of the Executive containing recommendations in relation to Council Tax Discount for unoccupied and unfurnished properties.

Responding to a question the Head of Finance confirmed that any previously agreed Council tax concessions in relation to flood damage would be unaffected.

Resolved

- (1) That, with effect from 1 April 2015, the Council Tax discount for unoccupied and unfurnished properties be reduced from 100% for up to one month to 0% (Class C of the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012).
- (2) That, with effect from 1 April 2015, the Council Tax discount for unoccupied properties that either require, or are undergoing, major repair works or are under structural repairs be reduced from 50% for 12 months to 0% for 12 months (Class D of the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012). (HF)

(b) Mid Year Treasury Management Review

Council considered the report of the Executive containing a recommendation on the Mid Year Treasury Management Review.

Resolved

That the Mid Year Treasury Management Review be approved. (HF)

257 REPORT ON URGENT DECISIONS

Pursuant to Overview and Scrutiny procedure 15(f), Council received a report on decisions that had been taken as a matter of urgency and not subject to call in.

It was noted that, as a Key Decision, the time frame associated with the decision on the suspension of car park charges was such that it had been considered appropriate for it to be taken as a matter of urgency. The Portfolio

Holder for Finance, Cllr S P Smith, observed that the timing of such decisions needed to take account of prevailing financial circumstances.

258 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

Council received the following report from the leader of the Council on the work of the Executive:-

“This is the seventh Council meeting for the 2014/15 municipal year and I would like to welcome all Members.

Since the last meeting I am delighted to announce that:-

- We have held two further successful Summits for Businesses and the Town and Parish Councils.
- A third Flood Forum meeting was held yesterday.

Since my last Leader’s speech into Council, the Executive has met on two occasions. Decisions have included the implementation of a Rochford District Community Safety Hub at Rayleigh Police Station for a trial period of 6 months.

Other matters that my colleagues and I on the Executive have been dealing with include:-

- Amendment of the Rayleigh Centre Area Action Plan for submission to the Government for public examination.
- Amendments to the hackney carriage and private hire licence conditions and fees and charges.
- The suspension of car parking charges on Saturdays before Christmas.

Our 2015/16 Budget Consultation is underway, with a closing date of 16th January. Members of the public have been putting their views forward on what is most important to them and what they would like our financial priorities to be. Our next Members’ Awayday will be held on 24 January 2015.

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.”

Responding to a question on part night time street lighting, the Portfolio Holder for Community, Cllr Mrs J E McPherson, indicated that this subject had been raised at the recent Parish/Town Council Summit and had also been the subject of monitoring by the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Local Strategic Partnership. Schemes trialled in 2007 at Maldon and Uttlesford District Councils had pointed to no increase in crime levels. This had also proved to be the case as schemes had rolled out across the Country. There had, however, been a notable increase in the fear of crime which could be

appropriately considered along with possible scheme adjustments/options, such as changing the times when lights are switched on and off. This subject could be given further consideration through a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group.

Resolved

That the Portfolio Holder for Community convene an advisory Group to consider the issues and options in relation to part night time street lighting. (HES)

259 ADOPTION OF THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Council considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation on adopting the Development Management Plan as a Development Plan Document forming part of the Development Plan for Rochford District.

The Leader of the UKIP Group, Cllr J Hayter, indicated that he was opposed to the Development Management Plan on the basis of being opposed to the Rochford Core Strategy and Allocations Plan given concern at a lack of infrastructure and services provision. The Leader of the Green and Rochford District Residents Group, Cllr J R F Mason, referred to previous concerns that both his Group and the Liberal Democrat Group had raised in relation to the Core Strategy and Allocations Plan, including in relation to accommodation dimensions and building density.

It was recognised that the Development Management Plan was about the setting of standards for individual dwellings rather than broader quantity and infrastructure considerations.

A motion on Plan adoption was moved by Cllr I H Ward and seconded by Cllr T G Cutmore. On a show of hands it was:-

Resolved

That the Development Management Plan be adopted as a Development Plan Document. (HPT)

260 ADOPTION OF THE LONDON SOUTHEND AIRPORT AND ENVIRONS JOINT AREA ACTION PLAN

Council considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation on adopting the London Southend Airport and Environs Area Action Plan as a Development Plan Document forming part of the Development Plan for Rochford District.

The Deputy Leader, Cllr K H Hudson, confirmed that the Plan had been approved by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council. A notable feature would be the creation of seven thousand jobs.

During discussion reference was made to the possibility that, whilst the Plan referred to a Saxon Business Park, there was nothing to preclude future planning applications suggesting renaming to the Cherry Orchard Business Park.

The Leader of the Council expressed thanks to all involved in bringing the Plan to fruition.

Responding to questions, the Deputy Leader confirmed that improvements were being made to arterial roads and that, with additional jobs being available to local residents, there should be a reduction in outward bound commuter traffic. It was noted that recent improvements had been made to the retail park road surface adjoining the airport access roundabout.

A motion that the Plan be agreed was moved by Cllr K H Hudson and seconded by Cllr I H Ward. On a show of hands it was:-

Resolved

That the London Southend Airport and Environs Joint Area Action Plan be adopted. (HPT)

261 REVISED BUDGETARY ESTIMATES FOR 2014/15

(Note: Cllr Mrs J R Lumley declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of being a member of RRAVS, SCAFT and Wyvern Community Transport.)

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance on approval of the revised budgetary estimates for the current financial year 2014/15 and the 2015/16 Budget for Grants to Voluntary Organisations.

It was agreed that it was good to see improvements to the Council's financial position, which had enabled re-instatement of the budget for sewers and drainage works. A Member observed that the position could point to there having been no need to have increased car parking charges.

A motion that the revised estimates be agreed was moved by Cllr Mrs J E McPherson and seconded by Cllr S P Smith and it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the revised estimates for 2014/15 as set out in the Appendix to the report, be agreed.
- (2) That the 2015/16 Budget for Grants to Voluntary Organisations be set at £90,000 revenue, £15,000 capital. (HF)

262 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015/16

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance on the proposed Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16.

Responding to questions, the Head of Finance advised that:-

- The Scheme would not preclude the Council from considering whether properties should be grouped for the purpose of applying discount where there is a crisis.
- Monies available in relation to providing Local Council Tax Support is no longer earmarked separately within the Government's overall grant.

Resolved

- (1) That the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be approved to come into affect from 1 April 2015, as detailed in the Section 13a policy deposited in the Members' Library.
- (2) That the discretionary reduction in Council Tax liability policy, as set out in Appendix B of the report, be adopted.

263 CHIEF OFFICER APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive on constituting a Chief Officer Appointments Committee in relation to the Council's leadership and organisational redesign 2014.

On a motion, moved by Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill and seconded by Cllr J R F Mason, it was:-

Resolved

That a Chief Officer Appointments Committee be constituted to appoint to the tier two (Director) and tier three (Assistant Director) posts resulting from the leadership and organisational redesign 2014. The Committee to comprise nine Members (six Conservative, one Green and Rochford District Residents, one Liberal Democrat and one UKIP (names to be confirmed)) and to be assisted by representatives from the Organisational Redesign Advisory Group (Cllrs J H Gibson, J L Lawmon and D Merrick), the Chief Executive and officers of the East of England Local Government Association as considered appropriate by the Committee. (CE)

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 paragraph 3 of

Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

264 COUNCIL DEPOT, ROCHFORD

Council considered the exempt report of the Portfolio Holder for Enterprise in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment on the provision of capital funding to replace accommodation at the Council Depot, Rochford.

The Portfolio Holder for Enterprise and the Leader of the Council gave recognition to the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Cllr K J Gordon, for all the work and contributions he had put into this project.

Resolved

- (1) That capital funding of up to £400,000 to replace office and staff accommodation at the Council depot in South Street, Rochford be approved.
- (2) That tenders be invited for each of the options identified within the exempt report.
- (3) That authority be delegated to officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Enterprise and Environment, to select the final option. This to be determined on the basis of best value. (HES)

The meeting closed at 8.39 pm.

Chairman

Date

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