

## **Council – 23 April 2009**

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Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **23 April 2009** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr J E Grey

Vice Chairman: Cllr A J Humphries

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr C I Black	Cllr M Maddocks
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr P A Capon	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr Mrs T J Capon	Cllr Mrs J A Mockford
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr J P Cottis	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs J Dillnutt	Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr K A Gibbs	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr J Thomass
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr T Livings	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr C J Lumley	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs R Brown, Mrs L M Cox, R A Oatham and P R Robinson.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren	-	Chief Executive
G Woolhouse	-	Corporate Director (External Services)
A J Bugeja	-	Head of Legal Services
J Bostock	-	Committee Services Manager

### **98 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 February 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **99 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN**

The Chairman thanked Members for all their support in relation to the recent Civic Banquet. In terms of other events, a highlight had been the swearing-in of the new High Sheriff of Essex at the Law Courts, Chelmsford.

**100 MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Council noted the minutes of Executive and Committee meetings held between 17 February 2009 and 14 April 2009.

**101 REPORTS FROM THE EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEES**

**(1) Report of the Executive – 18 March 2009**

Council considered the report of the Executive on the adoption of the Draft Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Leader of the Council referred to the successful launch of the Strategy through the Local Strategic Partnership and to the effectiveness of the Partnership in being able to address a wide range of problems. The Strategy would be a milestone for the community.

During debate a Member referred to a letter received from a resident who had returned to live in the District and had concerns about a number of crime-related matters. It was observed that the individual's concerns should be referred to the appropriate agencies. It was also observed that the District should be seen as a special place to live by all residents. Statistically, the District was one of the safest places to live and the local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership was recognised as the best performing Partnership in the East of England based on reported statistics. The figures were still falling.

**Resolved**

That the Draft Sustainable Community Strategy be approved. (CE)

**(2) Report of the Standards Committee – 2 April 2009**

Council considered the report of the Standards Committee on the implementation of mandatory training for Members of the Appeals Committee.

**Resolved**

That mandatory training for Members of the Appeals Committee be introduced on the following basis with effect from the 2009/10 Municipal Year:-

- A Member of the Appeals Committee should have received training before sitting on an Appeals hearing.
- Members of the Appeals Committee should receive appropriate training to keep abreast of new legislation.
- In any event, all Members of the Appeals Committee should receive 'refresher' training every two years.

- Arrangements should be on the same basis as for mandatory licensing training (failure to complete a designated session will result in removal from the Appeals Committee and the ability to sit on Appeals hearings unless appropriate dispensation has been given). (HICS)

**(3) Report of the Review Committee – 7 April 2009**

Council considered the Annual Report of the Review Committee.

**Resolved**

That the Annual Report of the Review Committee be received. (HICS)

**102 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE**

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

“This is our last Full Council meeting of the 2008/2009 Municipal Year and, therefore, at the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Members for their contributions throughout the year. From my viewpoint as Leader, the year has certainly contained many more positives than negatives. The new political structure, which was implemented from last May, has gone relatively smoothly. No doubt there are still issues to address. The Review Committee reported to the Executive on its findings last week but, nonetheless, given the newness of the system, things have gone relatively seamlessly which is, I believe, a credit to all Members and the organisation as whole.

We have done very well in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) and invested money, time and effort on our kerbside recycling scheme to the extent that we are now one of the top recycling authorities in the country. We have performed well across a number of Government performance measures and, to cap it all, have been assessed in a Halifax survey as the 7<sup>th</sup> best District in Great Britain in terms of quality of life. In addition, all authorities had to participate in an independently conducted ‘Place Survey’ last Autumn and, whilst the details have yet to be officially released, it appears that in comparative terms with other Essex Councils we have done relatively well in that too. So, a good year, one which we should be pleased about but certainly not be complacent in terms of the challenges we have ahead.

Since we last met in this Chamber, the Executive has met on two occasions. The March meeting focussed on concessionary fares and the transfer of responsibilities to Essex County Council for the years 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 which I am pleased to report has now gone ahead. That decision alone, whilst leaving us and the other Districts in Essex with agreed levels of our Government enforced contribution, has, however, certainly removed an area of future and possibly considerably high financial risk to the Authority as

that has now been passed to the County Council. Their scale of budget is far better suited to handle the variations around this area of expenditure. The March meeting also discussed and recommended for approval the Sustainable Communities Strategy, which has been on the agenda this evening (Item 8).

The April meeting took place last week, and at that meeting we considered the Review Committee's report on the new political decision making structure. Detail of our decisions on their 20 plus recommendations has been despatched in the Notice of Executive Decisions for the meeting in last Friday's member drop. I do applaud the work of the Review Committee and welcome its contribution. I cannot stress highly enough the importance of its role and its value as a balance to the Executive. I think all of us on the Executive recognise the Review Committee's worth and the need to continue to develop its capacity and expertise.

A key item we discussed related to the proposed Inter-Authority agreement between Rochford District Council and Essex County Council relating to refuse and recycling services. We agreed that we should enter into the 28 year agreement and approve our initial Service Delivery Plan, in line with our current contract, for the period 2009-2015, although the detailed mechanics around this are left with the Executive Portfolio Holder, Councillor Michael Starke.

We agreed our comments on the NHS South-Essex's Strategic Delivery Plan 2009-2014, which reflected the comments made by members when Mr Andrew Pike, the Health Authority's Chief Executive, presented the plan to us at the February Council meeting. We also discussed a consultation from EERA, relating to the future of Regional Local Government in the East of England. Certainly we were not very impressed with that consultation and felt that the proposals being suggested were very much less than satisfactory, particularly in respect of how District Council representation was perceived in a possible new arrangement at the Regional level. We, therefore, intend to submit a robust and critical response.

We considered a report on Volunteering and in the light of the discussions at the meeting, asked the Chief Executive to reconsider the Council's possible approach for trying to support the local voluntary and community sector. Lastly, we looked at the proposed meetings timetable for 2009/2010.

As always, I will be happy to take any questions from Members in respect of the work of the Executive since the February Council meeting. I am sure my Executive colleagues will be happy to contribute where appropriate."

During discussion particular reference was made to the February meeting of Full Council at which it had been recognised that society could stigmatise aspects of mental health and that there can be linkages between mental health and long-term physical health. It was observed that, in terms of the delivery of mental health services, Rochford Hospital was a significant facility.

Its positive reception within the community was a sign of the character of residents.

**103 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2009-2014**

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive on the draft Corporate Plan.

The Chief Executive thanked Members for recent contributions to the Plan and confirmed that the main audience would be the Council's key partners and staff.

It was noted that, where necessary, actions would be included in the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions and be part of performance monitoring across the organisation.

**Resolved**

That the draft Corporate Plan for 2009-2014 be approved, subject to:-

- Clarity on the political makeup of the Council.
- The removal of any duplicate references to the telephone/reception service under key targets for the next 12 months within the Making a Difference to our People heading.
- A developed explanation of the term 'Third Sector'.
- Inclusion of a target 'to monitor and seek to improve local air quality' under key targets for the next 12 months within the Making a Difference to our Environment heading.
- The inclusion of climate change proposals under the longer term targets for 2013 within the Making a Difference to our Environment heading. (CE)

The meeting closed at 8.15pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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