

Council – 13 December 2011

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **13 December 2011** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S P Smith
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs J A Mockford

Cllr Mrs P Aves	Cllr Mrs C M Mason
Cllr C I Black	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Cllr J P Cottis	Cllr T E Mountain
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr R D Pointer
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr Mrs C E Roe
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr Mrs A V Hale	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr Mrs D Hoy	Cllr J Thomass
Cllr M Hoy	Cllr I H Ward
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr C J Lumley	Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins
Cllr M Maddocks	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P A Capon, Mrs T J Capon, Mrs H L A Glynn, D Merrick, R A Oatham and A C Priest.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
A Bugeja	- Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
Y Woodward	- Head of Finance
S Scrutton	- Head of Planning and Transportation
S Hollingworth	- Planning Policy Team Leader
M Petley	- Senior Accountant
J Bostock	- Member Services Manager

276 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

277 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J P Cottis declared a prejudicial interest in the item on Rochford Core Strategy adoption by virtue of family land interests and left the meeting whilst the item was considered.

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley declared a personal interest in the item on revised budgetary estimates for 2011/12 by virtue of involvement with the Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Services and other local voluntary organisations.

278 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN

At this point in the meeting the Chairman was pleased to receive a Gideon Bible presented by Roger Oxenham of Gideons International, South Essex Branch.

The Chairman had attended a variety of events on behalf of the Council since the last meeting.

279 MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Council received the Minutes of Executive and Committee meetings held between the period 26 October and 2 December 2011.

280 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE

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

“As this is our last Full Council meeting before Christmas, I will begin by wishing all Members and officers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

In many ways it has been quite a tough year, both in terms of the budget and in key areas such as planning, where the process and the legislative context have seemed ever changing; but in what I believe is typical of this District Council, we've dealt with any problems and issues in a very professional manner and continued to provide services at the standard our residents expect.

We regularly receive reports on the level of comments, complaints and compliments across the various Divisions of the Council and, even in these challenging times, I think it is a real credit to the Authority that the level of compliments exceeds our level of complaints.

Tonight we have key reports on the Core Strategy and items of our budget to consider and I look forward to Members views on those items.

I would formally like to welcome our newest Member, Cllr Cheryl Roe, who was elected as Councillor for the Rayleigh Central Ward at the beginning of this month. I note that you were handed the new Member 'Bundle of paperwork' on the night, which seems to be getting ever larger, and may I wish you many long and happy hours of reading!! Welcome, Cheryl.

Since the last Council meeting in November, I am pleased to report that Castle Point, Braintree, Colchester and ourselves have all now signed up with the same ICT service provider, Capita SIS, who happen to be this Council's

existing service provider. It is one of the first such contracts in the region and nationally between Districts and, as such, has received some good coverage in the Local Government press. The Municipal Journal ran a feature on the initiative last week under the strap line 'The Only Way is Essex'. Perhaps we should have seen that coming!!

I am also pleased to report that, officially, we are the top recycling authority in England and, probably, in the UK. That's all down to our residents and their willingness to participate in our kerbside recycling scheme, so a big 'thank you' to them. Nevertheless, our journey from worst recycling authority in Essex some 4 to 5 years ago to top recycling authority across the country today is certainly an achievement and one of which both Members and officers can be extremely proud. I'm also pleased to say that we've received much positive coverage in the various journals on that topic as well.

I would like to thank all those Members who attended our first Member budget away day a few weeks ago. I certainly found it both informative and enjoyable. I believe we made good progress on the day in addressing our budget gap. Clearly, it would be good if all Members could make the next budget away day on 14 January 2012 when, hopefully, we can finish our deliberations and determine the final shape and content of the report which will be considered at the Extraordinary Council meeting at the end of January, when the budget will need to be formally agreed.

Since my last Leader's report into the Council in November, the Executive has met just once and considered such matters as the future provision of our public conveniences, our telephone service in respect of Revenues and Benefits, our performance over a period including customer feedback, and the mid year review of our finances. As I am sure you are all aware, the future of our public toilets has generated a lot of interest. However, I do wish our press wouldn't continue to report matters as though decisions have already been taken by Members, when in fact the opposite is true. Since I've been a Councillor this has always been an issue with the press; one which regularly has been taken up; and one which results in short term improvement before it lapses back again.

Since the last Council meeting, my colleagues on the Executive have considered such matters as a review of the ICT Strategy, the usage of an area of the car park at Clements Hall Leisure Centre, our Business Continuity Strategy update, Retirement and Flexible Retirement, and the Development Management Development Plan document consultation.

Finally, last week we received the announcement of our provisional grant settlement for 2012/13 from Government. I'm pleased to report that it was as anticipated at £3.249m, so no last minute nasty surprises on that score. However, it does represent a further decrease on this year's settlement of £3.6m and a long way short of the £5.2m settlement we received for 2010/11.

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 the future of public conveniences, the Leader, confirmed that decisions had yet to be taken. The budget arrangement associated with public conveniences was something that had been previously agreed by the whole Council.

It was noted that the Council was already involved in the sharing of services with other Authorities, such as the provision of a payroll service for Castle Point Borough Council and arrangements through the South Essex Parking Partnership.

The Head of Finance confirmed that, for 2011/12, the Council's grant settlement had been the second lowest in Essex. The precise position for 2012/13 would be included in the documentation being submitted to the next Member Budget Away Day on 14 January 2012. The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources observed that lobbying activity on the fairness of the Formula Grant Settlement was ongoing.

281 ROCHFORD CORE STRATEGY ADOPTION

Council considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation on adoption of the Rochford Core Strategy.

In presenting the Strategy, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation referred to the broad nature of the document. In addition to housing provision, it was intended to facilitate significant numbers of new jobs through the regeneration or replacement of industrial estates. A new business park related to the Airport will be facilitated through the Joint Area Action Plan and three Action Plans for the main shopping areas would soon be coming forward. The developable land requirements associated with planning and compulsory purchase legislation was emphasised, together with the requirements of PPS3 in relation to the provision of affordable housing. Reference was made to earlier decisions made by the Council leading up to the point when the Strategy could be adopted and to the opportunity provided to protect the environment of the District from predatory development. The Strategy was both manageable and sustainable, releasing less than 1% of the Green Belt. Review would take place within the protective framework provided by the document and failure to adopt would have significant adverse environmental implications.

It was noted that reference to 'HP21' in the table on Page 174 of the Strategy should be amended to 'HP14'.

A motion that, subject to the above amendment, the Council adopts the Core Strategy incorporating the changes set out in the Appendices of the Inspector's report was moved by Cllr K H Hudson and seconded by Cllr T G Cutmore.

During discussion reference was made to facilities that had been previously achieved by the Authority through planning obligation arrangements. It was noted that the key issues in relation to planning obligation were set out in the Strategy. With regard to primary education facilities it may be that developer contributions can come forward in relation to either existing or new school provision.

A Member expressed concern at a possibility that, during future review of the Strategy, the Authority may find that there is a necessity to comply with new Government policies that concentrate on economic considerations. It was observed that it may be appropriate for Wards affected environmentally through changes associated with the New Homes Bonus facility to be able to benefit from planning obligation arrangements. A Member referred to a potential traffic issue in their Ward.

Responding to a question on the nature of consultation, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation advised that consideration had been given to the fit of suggestions with the Council's Sustainability Appraisal. The Portfolio Holder also confirmed that, by virtue of its strategic nature, the Strategy was not suited to a piecemeal approach.

It was noted that Strategy review was likely to commence in early Spring 2012. Whilst sustainability would need to be maintained, possibilities with regard to any brown field sites where circumstances had changed since initial Strategy formulation would be part of considerations.

On a requisition pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 17.4, a recorded vote was taken on the motion as follows:-

For (24) Cllrs Mrs P Aves; M R Carter; T G Cutmore; K J Gordon; J E Grey; Mrs A V Hale; K H Hudson; Mrs G A Lucas-Gill; Mrs J R Lumley; M Maddocks; Mrs J E McPherson; Mrs J A Mockford; T E Mountain; R D Pointer; Mrs C E Roe; C G Seagers; S P Smith; M J Steptoe; J Thomass; I H Ward; Mrs M J Webster; P F A Webster; Mrs C A Weston; Mrs B J Wilkins

Against (2) Cllrs Mrs D Hoy; M Hoy

Abstentions (4) Cllrs C I Black; C J Lumley; Mrs C M Mason; J R F Mason

The Motion was declared carried and it was:-

Resolved

That, subject to reference to 'HP21' in the table on page 174 being amended to 'HP14', the Rochford Core Strategy incorporating the changes set out in Appendices A, B and C of the Inspector's Report of 27 October 2011 be adopted. (HPS)

282 REVISED BUDGETARY ESTIMATES FOR 2011/1

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance on the revised budgetary estimates for 2011/12 and the 2012/13 budget for grants to voluntary organisations.

With regard to grants to voluntary organisations it was pleasing to see that additional monies could be made available for capital provision.

The Head of Finance was thanked for the readable and understandable nature of the report, which covered a complicated area of the Council's activity.

Resolved

- (1) That the revised estimates for 2011/12, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be agreed.
- (2) That the revenue budget for Grants to Voluntary Organisations be set at £90,000 for 2012/13, together with a capital provision of £15,000.
(HF)

283 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2012/13

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance on determining the Tax Base for each individual Parish or Town Council area within the District.

Resolved

- (1) That the method of calculation of the Tax Base for 2012/13 be noted.
- (2) That pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by Rochford District Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2012/2013 shall be in the following parts:-

ASHINGDON	1228.84
BARLING MAGNA	627.17
CANEWDON	549.03
FOULNESS ISLAND	66.98
GREAT WAKERING	1994.76
HAWKWELL	4585.29
HOCKLEY	3861.78
HULLBRIDGE	2404.63
PAGLESHAM	103.57
RAWRETH	442.07
RAYLEIGH	12467.83
ROCHFORD	3004.95
STAMBRIDGE	240.25

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SUTTON

54.83

31631.98

Prior to the close of the meeting the Chairman extended best wishes to all for a Happy Christmas.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm

Chairman

Date

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