

## Review Committee – 1 December 2020

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **1 December 2020** when there were present:-

Vice-Chairman: Cllr D J Sperring

Cllr Mrs D L Belton  
Cllr C C Cannell  
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding  
Cllr B T Hazlewood  
Cllr N J Hookway  
Cllr Mrs J E McPherson

Cllr Mrs C M Mason  
Cllr R Milne  
Cllr Mrs C A Pavelin  
Cllr Mrs L Shaw  
Cllr P J Shaw  
Cllr M G Wilkinson

### **VISITING MEMBERS**

Cllrs D S Efde, S P Smith and A L Williams.

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr J C Burton.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic
N Lucas	- Assistant Director, Resources
L Athey	- Principal Street Scene Officer
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic & Corporate Services Officer
L Morris	- Democratic Services Officer

### **201 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman in due course.

### **202 2020/21 MID YEAR TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Resources providing an update on the Council's treasury management activity for the period 1 April to 30 September 2020.

The Assistant Director, Resources advised that balances were unusually high at the start of the year due to central government transferring £18million to Rochford District Council to distribute in the form of small business grants. The grants were distributed in the first two months of the year, which brought investment rates down to usual levels.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance advised Members that treasury management had been well handled by officers, particularly under the current circumstances.

### Recommended to Council

That the contents of this Treasury Management Mid Year Report be noted.

(13 Members voted for the Motion, 0 voted against and 0 abstained)

### 203 WASTE AND RECYCLING STRATEGY

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment arising from the work undertaken from the Working Group of the Review Committee to develop a waste and recycling strategy ahead of the expiry of the Council's current waste and recycling contract in March 2022.

In response to a Member questioning if Rochford District Council would eventually stop collecting green waste and start to charge £40 for collection of this, the Vice-Chairman advised that the decision would be for Council to make. The Portfolio Holder for Environment emphasised that the inclusion of an option for a chargeable garden waste service had been included in the strategy as this could assist in addressing contamination levels. An important element of the strategy was around education. Work had been in hand to look at options for educating residents about which bins should be used for which items and for replacement of degraded bin stickers; however, this work had been affected by COVID. He stressed that this would be included within the scope of the new waste contract. Officers reiterated that there would be more focus in the strategy on the quality and separation of recycling and an aspiration to reduce contamination levels.

A Member noted that one of the stated aims of the strategy is to increase recycling rates; however, objective 3 of the strategy is stated as that of maintaining the Council's recycling rate of 62%, which appears contradictory. In addition, the point was raised that the Environment Bill made reference to the possibility of optional free garden waste collections; however, the Council was referencing a £40 chargeable garden waste service within the strategy. This could appear predetermined.

A Member queried if the Committee would be recommending one of the three options to Council, or if the overall strategy was being recommended with all three options to be considered. The Principal Street Scene Officer advised that the recommendation related to the overall strategy.

A Member queried if it would be possible to combine food and garden waste by using two different colours of compostable bags. Officers advised that the national waste and resources strategy was likely to mandate separate food waste collections, which would inevitably lead to increased costs; however, this might be offset by doing things differently with other parts of the collection scheme. The use of biodegradable bags for food waste would have to be researched to establish whether these were suitable for the processors, etc and there would, in addition, need to be publicity around use of these. They could, however, be used with home composters.

Members raised concern that the cost of new waste collection vehicles had not been factored into the medium-term financial strategy when it was known that there was a need to re-procure the waste contract. A Member questioned whether the Council would consider taking advantage of low interest rates and borrowing the whole cost of replacing the fleet vehicles. Officers confirmed that the Council had noted the budget risk associated with providing appropriate waste vehicles. Provision for replacement waste vehicles had not been included in the medium-term financial strategy at this stage as there were a variety of different options for the procurement of the vehicles under consideration. It was not yet known whether the Council would procure the vehicles, which would be a capital outlay, and which could be financed in different ways, or whether there might be better value for money if the waste contractor was to procure the vehicles, which would have revenue implications. Models of procurement for waste vehicles would be looked at as part of the long-term waste strategy. The Council's current treasury management strategy did not allow borrowing. However, it could prove advantageous for the Council to review this. If it was determined in future that the most cost-effective way of procuring vehicles was by borrowing money appropriate approvals would be required to amend the treasury management strategy.

### **Recommended to Council**

That the attached Waste and Recycling Strategy be adopted.

(13 Members voted for the Motion, 0 votes against and 0 abstained)

## **204 KEY DECISION DOCUMENT**

A Member emphasised that the Key Decision on free parking on Saturdays during the run up to Christmas could have been taken earlier in order to allow time for the Review Committee to consider the decision being made. The Member suggested an alternative decision could have been made given the unusual circumstances due to Covid-19 with the possibility of extending free parking to the whole festive period. Another Councillor questioned why this decision was always made so close to Christmas and was advised by the Vice-Chairman that he could not confirm why, but the Council had lost a large amount of income usually generated by car parking due to the pandemic. Another Member also expressed regret that the decision had not been made earlier, as she felt that the Council had missed out on a key opportunity to support the residents of the Rochford District, particularly due to the high number of redundancies and number of residents furloughed. It was noted that this item was an update on the items listed on the Key Decisions Document and was for noting purposes only.

In response to a Member concern that the report relating to disposal of the former Crown Hill public conveniences had not been published yet the Vice-Chairman advised that the decision was expected to be taken early in 2021.

### 205 WORK PLAN

A Member expressed concern that the Committee meeting scheduled for November had been cancelled, despite there being a number of outstanding items on the work plan.

In response to a Member question as to why there was not an update on management companies and managing agents in new developments, officers advised that the Assistant Director, Place & Environment had been due to attend the meeting and would have been able to provide an update. The Member emphasised that she had already raised this issue with him and had been told she would receive an update in August; however, this had still not been received. The Vice-Chairman advised that he would raise this issue outside the meeting with officers. The Member asked that the issue of resources be included on the Work Plan; however, the Vice-Chairman advised that he was reluctant to do so in the absence of the Chairman. He reiterated that he would follow up on this issue outside the meeting and, if necessary, with the Leader.

The meeting closed at 8.37 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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