

## The Executive – 19 January 2023

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Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **19 January 2023** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S E Wootton  
Vice Chairman: Cllr Mrs C E Roe

Cllr Mrs D L Belton  
Cllr D S Efde  
Cllr D J Sperring

Cllr I H Ward  
Cllr A L Williams

### **NON-MEMBERS ATTENDING**

Cllrs A G Cross, A H Eves and M Hoy

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

S Summers - Strategic Director  
P Barnes - Director of Assets & Investment  
P Drane - Director of Place  
A Hunkin - Interim Director of People & Governance  
S Worthington - Principal Democratic & Corporate Services Officer  
D Goodman - Team Leader, Strategic Planning & Economic Development

### **6 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **7 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM COUNCILLORS**

Pursuant to Executive Procedure Rule 3.1, the following Member questions had been received:-

From Cllr A G Cross to the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning & Assets:-

"The Council prioritised the interventions in its Investment Plan with 60% on E4, Enhancing existing cultural, historic and heritage institutions. The Investment Plan did not need to specify individual projects. Please provide specific projects that are earmarked for these funds."

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Climate responded as follows:-

"As is set out in the report, in light of the limited time available to deliver projects in this financial year, the Council is intending to procure goods and services directly. There are a number of projects that have been identified for which quotes are being sought or specifications being drafted. Whilst a fuller list of projects will be provided to Members, the Council is currently exploring options under Intervention E4 around:-

- Commissioning community arts and cultural projects in preparation for the coronation of King Charles
- Funding cultural events and exhibitions
- Improving the District's tourism brand and promoting its cultural offer
- As well as providing opportunities for local cultural or heritage institutions to access small amounts of funding for discrete projects in advance of any fuller grant programme in future years

At this stage, it is not clear whether funding can be rolled over between funding years and therefore the Council is identifying projects on the basis of those which can deliver outcomes before the end of March. Should the ability to roll over funding be announced shortly then the Council may be able to combine some of its Year 1 funding to commission larger projects for Years 2 and 3.

In Years 2 and 3, the Council intends to distribute funding through a combination of a grant programme and directly procured services. As a result, it is expected that a significant proportion of projects will be identified and delivered by third parties, including community groups and parish councils, in future years.”

Cllr A G Cross asked a supplementary question as to whether the Mill Arts & Events Centre and Castle Hall would be considered in future years for investment.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Assets advised that investment for years 2 and 3 was not yet determined. All assets would, however, be considered to assess what might be improved and where. The Mill Arts & Events Centre was, of course, open and up and running again but an assessment of all viable options would be considered in the future for all sites.

From Cllr M Hoy to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Climate:-

“To deliver the 2022/23 UKSPF Projects the Council will need to commission third party consultants or service providers. Considering that the Council spent around 30% of the levelling up fund on consultants to produce a generic report, can it be guaranteed that considerably less will be spent on consultants and reports with this fund, and the monies will be actually spent on the ground directly benefitting the District?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Climate responded as follows:-

“The Council intends to prioritise the use of the funding towards projects that are visible within the community. This may include physical improvements, events, exhibitions or activities. A significant proportion of these projects are likely to be identified in the following two financial years through a grant programme where third parties, including community groups and parish councils, would be able to bid for monies towards such projects, in combination with services directly procured by the Council. Where the Council

does use consultants, it intends that these would only be to facilitate the delivery of tangible projects such as those described.”

From Cllr M Hoy to the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Climate:-

“Paragraph 3.13 gives a table of where money is budgeted to be spent. E1 shows £300,000 for improvements to town centres and high streets. Historically, spending on these areas have been restricted to Rochford, Rayleigh and Hockley. Can you guarantee that money from this budget will be available to the smaller centres such as Hullbridge and Great Wakering?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Climate responded as follows:-

“Across all three interventions, the Council does not intend to discriminate on the basis of location. Whilst there is a fairly limited amount of funding available towards E1 in this financial year, applications to any future grant programme from locations such as Hullbridge and Great Wakering will be welcomed subject to meeting any wider eligibility criteria. The Council will also consider proportionately funding projects in these locations directly, noting that it is likely that some degree of prioritisation towards the District’s larger centres is likely to be required to deliver positive outcomes for the greatest number of residents. More details on the process for identifying projects in Years 2 and 3 will be forthcoming to a future meeting of the Executive.”

In response to a supplementary question from Cllr M Hoy as to how Ward Councillors would be engaged with as part of the process, the Portfolio Holder advised that she wanted ideas to come forward from all Councillors, as well as from parish councils, Essex County Council and community groups.

### **8 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND 2022/23 ALLOCATION**

The Executive considered the report of the Strategic Director and the Director of Place seeking delegated authority to commit and spend the Council’s allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 2022/23 in accordance with the approved Investment Plan.

In response to a question from the Leader as to whether there were any plans to set up a Working Group to do this work, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Economy & Climate confirmed that she wanted Member engagement and would support the option of a Working Group being set up. She confirmed that Ward Members would be invited to key meetings.

In response to a further Member question about the criteria for community projects that might be eligible for funding, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the necessary criteria would be communicated to community stakeholders.

It was noted that the bid to the UKSPF had not been publicly circulated; this was an oversight but would be uploaded to the Council website as soon as practicable.

### Resolved

That authority be delegated to the Strategic Director and the Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance Economy & Climate, to allocate and spend funding for 2022/23 in accordance with the Council's approved UKSPF Investment Plan. (SD/DP)

### 9 LEASE OF PART OF FAIRVIEW PAVILION AND FENCED OPEN AREA, FAIRVIEW PLAYING FIELD, VICTORIA ROAD, RAYLEIGH

The Executive considered the report of the Director of Assets & Investment relating to the lease of a Council owned asset located at Fairview Playing Field, Rayleigh.

In response to a Member observation that there were other pavilions within the District that were looking to undertake similar projects and that engaging with relevant Ward Councillors would be useful, the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning & Assets responded that he would speak to Ward Councillors in respect of the Hullbridge and Great Wakering pavilions.

The Portfolio Holder agreed with the Deputy Leader's view that monitoring should take place to ensure that tenants carried out essential maintenance and repairs.

- (1) That a new lease be signed for the Council owned asset, part of a sports pavilion and open area, located at Fairview Playing Field, Victoria Road, Rayleigh (edged red on the map at Appendix 1) to Trudge Fitness Limited for gymnasium and fitness centre use.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Assets & Investment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning & Assets, to finalise the terms of the lease with Trudge Fitness Limited. (DAI)

### 10 COST OF LIVING UPDATE

The Executive considered the report of the Director of Communities & Health providing an update on the current cost of living crisis.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities, Housing & Health advised that all the necessary cost of living signposting was now in place for residents; accordingly, the Council was shifting towards communicating details of what had been achieved around the cost of living crisis. He circulated an update to the Executive and advised that a number of organisations had applied for grants for warm hubs and the £5,000 grant had been allocated across and paid to a number of organisations, including Holy Trinity Church, Rayleigh, Hawkwell & Hockley Methodist Church, Rochford Parish Council, Megacentre, Rayleigh, Bramerton Community Church, Hockley, Hullbridge Free Church, Hawkwell Parish Council, Rochford Day Centre, Rayleigh United Reform Church and Rayleigh Methodist Church.

It was also noted that RRAVS had received funding from Essex County Council to deliver a Winter Pressures Community Hub for Rochford District. Working in partnership with the Megacentre, Rayleigh RRAVS would use the funding to support the discharge from hospitals within the Mid and South Essex footprint and specifically for residents in Rochford. This would support residents discharged from hospital with food, medicine collection and befriending support with the aim of reducing readmissions to hospital.

In response to a question as to whether the update report could be uploaded to the Council website, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he would circulate the report to all Members and the report would go on the website.

The Portfolio confirmed, in response to a question as to whether there was a system in place for Councillors to be able to refer residents for the Winter Pressures Hub, that this was not possible; all referrals were done via the NHS/RRAVS and the Megacentre.

The Portfolio Holder thanked officers, and in particular, the Director of Communities and Health, and the Council's Partnership Officer, for all their hard work on the cost of living crisis. The Director had been invited to speak at a recent cost of living conference based on what had been achieved across the two councils.

### **Resolved**

That the update on the cost of living response and work of the Cost of Living Working Group be noted. (DCH)

The meeting closed at 8.02 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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