

## Review Committee – 4 February 2014

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **4 February 2014** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr C J Lumley  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr D J Sperring

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher  
Cllr R R Dray  
Cllr J D Griffin  
Cllr Mrs A V Hale  
Cllr B T Hazlewood

Cllr J R F Mason  
Cllr T E Mountain  
Cllr Mrs C E Roe  
Cllr I H Ward

### **VISITING MEMBERS**

Cllr Mrs J E McPherson (for item 6)  
Cllr S P Smith (for item 4)

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs T J Capon, C G Seagers and Mrs M J Webster

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

A Dave - Chief Executive  
M Yolland - Community Safety Manager  
M Petley - Senior Accountant  
P Gowers - Overview and Scrutiny Officer  
S Worthington - Committee Administrator

## **6 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **7 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT, ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY STATEMENT 2014/15**

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Finance on the Council's treasury strategy for borrowing and investment.

In response to Member questions the following was noted:-

- The leap in capital expenditure for 2014/15 detailed in paragraph 3.2 was primarily due to the need to purchase refuse vehicles.
- The Council was currently debt free. Although loans are currently subject to low interest rates the Council would be more secure financially if it were to self finance the purchase of the refuse vehicles, rather than borrowing.

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In addition, if something was to go wrong with the waste contract in future, the Council would still have to collect and empty residents' bins; if the vehicles were Council-owned, all that would be needed was manpower.

- Certificates of deposit have not yet been used by the Council; officers would advise Members outside the meeting whether these would be drawn against banks or other commercial organisations.
- The procurement process is due to start for the new banking services contract, which will take 2 to 3 months to complete. Current banking arrangements with the Co-operative will be honoured during this time. A Barclays bank account is in place in the event of any emergency, to which funds can be transferred.
- The Council has surplus funds invested on fixed term deposit, which could be used for the purchase of refuse vehicles.
- The Council had set aside £25,000 for 2014/15 to cover bank charges.
- Members would be provided outside the meeting with details of Public Works Loan Board interest rates.
- The Council uses Capita for treasury management advice, as well as most other Councils in Essex. We receive a good service, which also includes staff training. The cost of the service is £6,000 per annum and was last tendered in January 2013.
- The number of organisations with whom the Council can bank is shrinking and the Council has determined that it will only use approved counterparties from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA-.
- Members would be provided with information outside the meeting relating to indemnity insurance the Council has to mitigate any financial risks associated with the Council's investments.

Members requested more in depth treasury management training for Review Committee and Audit Committee Members. It was further suggested that Capita be invited to attend a meeting of the Review Committee.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the treasury management strategy statement and annual investment strategy including the investments instruments, indicators, limits and delegations contained within the report be noted.
- (2) That the capital expenditure forecasts be noted.

- (3) That the minimum revenue provision policy for 2014/15 be noted.
- (4) That the authorised limit and operational boundary or external debt, as detailed in the report, be noted. (HF)

### **8 CASTLE POINT AND ROCHFORD DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (CP & RDCSP)**

The Committee had before them a report from the Head of Community Services and further received an update from Cllr Mrs J E McPherson, Chair of the Community Safety Partnership, and M Yolland, Community Safety Manager, on the function and achievements of the CP & RDCSP since the last report to this Committee in September 2013.

The following points were noted, in response to Member questions:-

- Merging the two community safety partnerships has meant that representatives from other public bodies and District officers have had to attend fewer meetings, and resources can be pooled, when needed.
- The change in funding terms and conditions in 2014/15, with 50% of the CSP's funding being received on a commissioning basis, will not have a discernible impact on the CSP. It already operates under a process where funding isn't automatically allocated to specific projects, but rather identifies priorities for the CSP and gives organisations the opportunity to bid for funding.
- Residents should call the Police on 999 if they see someone acting suspiciously around domestic properties and think they may be about to commit a burglary. If residents aren't sure, they should telephone the Police on 101. It is important that residents did report any suspected crime, as without reported crime figures it would be hard to justify any requests for additional Police officers. The CSP has funded a partnership initiative involving the Police, RRAVS and Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) to reduce the number of dwelling burglaries.
- The C.O.P.E. event, run each year, focuses on giving out advice to the vulnerable and elderly on how to keep safe. In addition, Groundwork South Essex is undertaking a project clearing up the gardens of elderly people, to make them less vulnerable to potential burglary.
- The Police will soon be launching a community messaging scheme which will involve text messages being sent to residents drawing their attention to any crime-related incidents in their area.
- House break-ins, for the sole purpose of stealing car keys and to then steal the car, are classified as theft of a motor vehicle (millennium burglary). Members would be provided with the overall number of

millennium burglaries that had taken place over the past 12 months.

- Evidence from other districts that have part night lighting in place is that crime has dropped as criminals need light. Police are, however, monitoring the effect on crime of part night lighting but so far the initiative is a positive one. There should still be lighting on walk ways to railway stations, major road junctions and known accident spots; any known instances of there not being lighting in such areas should be notified to the CSP.
- Members would be provided with a list of PCC New Initiatives unsuccessful bids for funding this year. The CSP would not be able to apply for funding for the same projects next year so will develop new initiatives and reapply to the PCC NI Fund.
- For the period 1 April 2013 to 31 December 2013 Rochford had a 0% change in all crime; Tendring – 7.2% increase; Uttlesford – 7.9% increase; Braintree – 7.4% increase; Southend – 4.6% increase; Basildon – 0.7% increase; Castle Point, Thurrock and Brentwood all had a slight reduction in all crime.
- For the same period the number of burglaries decreased by 21% in Rochford; Uttlesford – 7.1% increase; Tendring – 7.3% increase and Southend – 11.8% increase.
- The crime figures do not include any offences that take place at railway stations.
- Cllr Mrs J E McPherson would take details of an incident relating to a young man run over on a main highway in Oxfordshire but not discovered for two hours or so due to part night lighting to the PCC panel.
- Essex County Council had confirmed that street lighting can be switched back on immediately in the event of an incident or accident, if requested by the Police.

It was noted that there would be merit in including in Rochford District Matters an item on community safety real crime statistics for the district, eg, 70% of car crimes related to vehicles that had been left unlocked.

Officers further noted a Member comment that the Neighbourhood Watch leaflets should be changed; they should be more colourful and eye catching, with fewer words displayed.

### **Resolved**

That the contents of the report be noted. (HCS)

### 9 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT

The Committee considered the Key Decisions Document and noted its contents.

### 10 WORK PLAN

The Committee discussed its work plan for the current year.

Two additional projects would be added to the work plan, one looking at the operation of the ICT contract, the other at Rochford District Matters and how it fits in with Government communication requirements.

A project team (Cllrs R R Dray, J D Griffin, C J Lumley, J R F Mason, D J Sperring and I H Ward) would undertake a review of the operation of the ICT contract.

The item on Rochford District Matters would be considered at the April meeting of this Committee.

An item would be considered at the next meeting on how the Committee should develop and what was needed to facilitate this. It would be useful for Members to communicate any views on this to the overview and scrutiny officer in advance of the meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.50 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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