

Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **14 April 2021** when there were present:-

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

Cllr Mrs D L Belton	Cllr I H Ward
Cllr D S Efde	Cllr M J Webb
Cllr S P Smith	Cllr A L Williams

NON-MEMBERS ATTENDING

Cllrs Mrs J R Gooding, Mrs L Shaw and D J Sperring.

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Hutchings	- Acting Managing Director
M Harwood-White	- Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial
Marcus Hotten	- Assistant Director, Place & Environment
A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic
N Lucas	- Assistant Director, Resources
D Tribe	- Assistant Director, Transformation & Customer
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic & Corporate Services Officer
L Morris	- Democratic Services Officer
K Smith	- Democratic Services Officer

62 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2021 were approved as a correct record and would be signed in due course by the Chairman.

63 'PARKS FOR NATURE' INITIATIVE

The Portfolio Holder for Environment and Place introduced the report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment outlining the proposed approach to be taken in the delivery of open spaces services in adapting parks and green spaces for the effects of climate change and to contribute to corporate targets to make Rochford District Council carbon neutral by 2030, as set out in the Council's Carbon Neutral Action Plan.

He emphasised that the proposed approach would, at the same time, improve parks and open spaces for the benefit of wildlife and local residents. He advised that the 'Parks for Nature' paper appended to the report had been reviewed by the Carbon Neutral Working Group and set out the principles of incorporating the principles of environmentally friendly improvements into the parks and open spaces. Paragraph 3.6 summarised the principles, the most significant of which focused on increasing tree cover and relaxing of mowing. Any proposed changes to the parks would be explored and consulted on through a series of site visits which the Portfolio Holder would attend and to which the relevant Ward Members would be invited. Further consultation

would also be undertaken with the Parish Councils and residents. It was anticipated that a further report would be presented to the Executive in July setting out the feedback to the consultation and presenting finalised plans for the 'Parks for Nature' initiative. He extended thanks to the Working Group and the Assistant Director, Place & Environment for their work in this area.

On a Motion moved by Cllr S E Wootton and seconded by Cllr Mrs C E Roe, it was:-

Resolved

That the approach outlined in the report to adapt and improve parks and green spaces and contribute to the Council commitment to make Rochford District Council carbon neutral by 2030 be approved. (ADPE)

(8 Members voted for the recommendation, 0 against and 0 abstained).

64 ESSEX BUSINESS GRANT FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT

The Portfolio Holder for Commercial, Business, Local Economy and Leisure introduced the report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment providing details of a Framework Agreement that would allow for grant funding made available by Essex County Council to be transferred to Rochford businesses under defined policies.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that, as set out in paragraph 3.4 of the report, approximately £230,000 would be made available in additional grant funding to Rochford District businesses and was in addition to £22 million in grants already delivered to businesses in the District and could be administered by Basildon Borough Council at no cost to Rochford District Council. It was, she concluded, a low risk opportunity for businesses in the District to access additional support at this difficult time.

In response to a question as to whether, despite Basildon Borough Council administering this grant fund, the funds for Rochford businesses would go through Rochford District Council and would be for the sole benefit of Rochford businesses, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that this was indeed the case.

In response to a Member request for clarification as to how much grant funding had been paid out to businesses in the District and to how many businesses, the Portfolio Holder advised that around £22 million had been paid out in more than 2,000 grants to multiple businesses across the District. The Leader emphasised the tremendous effort that had taken place over the past year supporting local businesses and paid tribute to the hard work of officers ensuring that grants were distributed rapidly to businesses.

On a Motion moved by Cllr S E Wootton and seconded by Cllr Mrs C E Roe it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the Council enters into a Framework Agreement with Essex County Council and agrees to support the distribution of specific business grants to Rochford businesses.
- (2) That the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Commercial, Business, Local Economy & Leisure, be given delegated authority to agree minor additions or amendments to these agreements in the interests of facilitating a quick and effective grant programme for local businesses. (ADPE)

(8 Members voted for the recommendation, 0 against and 0 abstained).

(Note: The above decision is urgent and not subject to call-in because of the clear need to administer this funding with expediency to maximise the benefit to businesses.)

The meeting closed at 7.43 pm.

Chairman

Date

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