

The Executive – 6 March 2013

Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **6 March 2013** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr T G Cutmore
Vice Chairman: Cllr K H Hudson

Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr M Maddocks
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr Mrs J E McPherson	Cllr M J Steptoe

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren	- Chief Executive
A Bugeja	- Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
J Bourne	- Head of Community Services
R Evans	- Head of Environmental Services
Y Woodward	- Head of Finance
C McClellan	- People and Policy Manager
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

46 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following:-

Minute 23 – first bullet point, replace ‘referral’ with ‘deferral’.

47 AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN RAYLEIGH AND RAWRETH

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services detailing the outcome of air quality monitoring around Rawreth Industrial Estate and in Rayleigh town centre and its environs.

Officers advised that the inclusion of Rawreth Industrial Estate in the street cleaning schedule had contributed to an improvement in air quality in that area. It was further emphasised that modern buses have particulate filters fitted as standard, but that older buses did not have such filters.

In response to a Member question relating to the positioning of air quality monitoring sensors in Rayleigh town centre, officers confirmed that these were placed within the narrow section of the High Street/High Road, with diffusion tubes placed along the length of the high street.

Resolved

- (1) That the Air Quality Management Area Order for Rawreth Industrial Estate, Rayleigh be revoked.

- (2) That the decision taken by the Executive on 11 July 2012 (Minute 145/12) be amended and that no further action be taken in respect of the Air Quality Management Area for Rayleigh town centre and its environs for the time being. (HES)

48 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2013-2018

The Executive considered the report of the Chief Executive on the revised Corporate Plan for 2013-18.

Members drew particular attention to the Census 2011 information included at the beginning of the Corporate Plan. Officers confirmed that Census data relating to individual wards was currently being collated and would be circulated to Members soon.

Members concurred with the Leader that the third bullet point on page 4 of the Plan should be amended to: "Delivery of efficiency savings against the current backdrop of continuing cuts in local government."

Officers advised, in response to a Member question relating to the first item on page 6 of the Corporate Plan, relating to the Local Development Framework and specifically the timing of the review of the Core Strategy, that the latter was dependent on the finalisation of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, together with more work around environmental sustainability and the capacity of the District.

Responding to a Member observation that, with respect to the key activity of rural business being supported through local development frameworks, planning regulations could at times constrain business, officers stressed that a lot of work was being done in respect of rural businesses.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to the Rayleigh columbarium, it was noted that the Portfolio Holder for the Environment would be able to provide a copy of the risk assessment and to discuss concerns relating to use of the roundabout. It was noted that, depending on the success of the planned Rayleigh columbarium, a Rochford columbarium could follow.

Responding to a Member question around the development of Acacia House within the context of wealth creation, officers emphasised that this building was important within the context of Rochford town centre and afforded the Council a real business opportunity.

Recommended to Council

That the revised Corporate Plan for 2013-2018 be approved, subject to amending the third bullet point on page 4 of the document, as detailed above. (CE)

49 PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Executive considered the report of the Chief Executive proposing changes to the Council's governance structure largely arising from the recent Peer Review of the Council.

During debate Members expressed concern that it might be difficult to increase the size of the Review Committee, as recommended in the report, while at the same time identifying Members to work shadow Members of the Executive. Although one Member expressed the view that Members who were asked to work shadow could be asked to work on specific projects by the relevant Portfolio Holders and that this would allow them to also serve on the Review Committee, provided they did not review such projects, officers stressed that it was preferable to exercise caution in this respect, as there would clearly be no conflict of interest if Members who work shadowed Executive Members were not also Members of the Review Committee.

It was further emphasised that it was a matter for the Leader to determine who and the exact number of Members who could work shadow Executive Members; it could range from, for example, 3 to 7 Shadow Members, acknowledging the number of portfolios minus the Leader's overarching role and responsibilities. It was acknowledged that a system of work shadowing may help provide additional expertise and aid with succession planning over a period of time, although there was no guarantee that a work shadowing role would automatically qualify a Member for consideration of an Executive role. All in all, work shadowing could be seen as another aspect contributing to Member training and development.

There was some debate around the need to define the different aspects relating to heritage; Members concurred that there would be merit in including more detail on this in the report to full Council. There was also a general consensus that there should be more detail provided on the financial implications of the proposals, and particularly around confirmation that any role of work shadowing did not qualify for additional payment.

Officers drew attention to the fact that the proposals as outlined were largely cost neutral, although there would be some small savings associated with the deletion of the two Member Champion roles. There was a general consensus that individual Portfolio Holders should be consulted with by the Leader in terms of identifying potential Members who may work shadow them.

In response to a Member observation about the need for appropriate forums for residents to be able to hear presentations from, eg, the Police, on local issues and to have an opportunity to ask questions, officers advised that this was the intention of the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner public meetings, the first of which was scheduled for 28 March. Two such meetings would be scheduled per annum, in addition to the local neighbourhood police panels. It was also probable that the emerging clinical commissioning group would also require public meetings within the District as it would need to

engage with residents. There were also local highways panels held within the District, which included a regular public question time slot. In addition, ad hoc public meetings or consultation forums could still be scheduled to respond to any specific local issues, such as already occurred around the planning process.

Recommended to Council

- (1) That from the next municipal year the membership of the Review Committee be expanded from eight Members to fifteen Members, with the Chairmanship continuing to rest with a Member of the main opposition party.
- (2) That the specific functions carried out by the Review Committee be expanded to make clearer reference to its role in both the budget monitoring process and the forward planning around the budget and medium term financial strategy, including in-depth review and analysis of not just policy issues, but also service specific areas of work. Also, to include specific reference to the scope for joint reviews with adjoining Councils.
- (3) That the Executive Portfolios and responsibilities be changed as follows:-
 - Environment to become Environment, Leisure, Arts and Culture.
 - Leisure, Tourism, Heritage, Arts, Culture and Business to become Economic Development, Regeneration, Business Liaison and Tourism.
 - Planning and Transportation to become Planning, Transport and Heritage.
- (4) That each of the Executive Portfolios allow for the possibility of a Member being nominated at any time to work shadow that Portfolio Holder, with a maximum of 7 Members work shadowing at any particular time (1 for each Portfolio Holder); these work shadowing arrangements to be facilitated by the Leader who will make the appropriate appointments.
- (5) In light of the above, the current two Member Champion roles be disbanded.
- (6) That the current East and West Community Forums be disbanded and replaced by a more tailored approach, which involves:-
 - The Leader and appropriate Portfolio Holders, plus the Chairman of the Review Committee, meeting with the Leaders of the Parish and Town Councils two times a year to discuss matters of common interest across the District.

- Working with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the local Joint Crime and Disorder Partnership to promote two public meetings per year on policing and crime in the District.
 - Working with the local Clinical Commissioning Group and local Joint Health and Wellbeing Board to promote two public meetings per year on health provision in the District.
 - Arranging other topic specific or area specific meetings as appropriate, as agreed by the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holders.
- (7) Subject to agreement to (1) to (6) above, that relevant changes be made to the Council's Constitution to reflect these decisions. (CE)

50 TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS 2013/14

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services on the timetable of meetings for the 2013/14 Municipal Year.

Resolved

That the timetable of meetings for the 2013/14 Municipal Year, as set out in the appendix to this report, be agreed, subject to noting that some adjustments may be required following Council in April. (HLEMS)

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that exempt information, as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, would be disclosed.

51 BUSINESS RATES WRITE-OFF

The Executive considered the exempt report of the Head of Community Services seeking Members' approval for the write-off of business rates.

Particular reference was drawn to a new post in place from January 2013, which was dedicated to dealing with NNDR. The Council was now dealing with NNDR in house and thus able to control it more closely.

Resolved

That the outstanding business rates, as set out in paragraphs 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4 of the report, be written off. (HCS)

The meeting closed at 8.32 pm.

Chairman

Date

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