

Council – 27 April 2006

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **27 April 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr P F A Webster
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr R A Amner	Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr C I Black	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr Mrs R Brown	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr Mrs J A Mockford
Cllr R G S Choppen	Cllr R A Oatham
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr K A Gibbs	Cllr P R Robinson
Cllr T E Goodwin	Cllr P K Savill
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs S A Harper	Cllr D G Stansby
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr Mrs M A Starke
Cllr A J Humphries	Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr C A Hungate	Cllr J Thomass
Cllr Mrs L Hungate	Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr T Livings	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs P A Capon, Mrs T J Capon, Mrs H L A Glynn, C J Lumley and Mrs M S Vince

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren - Chief Executive
R J Honey - Corporate Director (Internal Services)
R Crofts - Corporate Director (External Services)
G Woolhouse - Head of Housing, Health and Community Care
J Bostock - Principal Committee Administrator

156 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to it being noted that Great Wakering Parish Council had not increased its precept for the last 10 years. The 2006/07 rise related to a resolution to seek a 20% increase in precept on a one-off basis for the specific purposes of a youth facilities project that the Parish want to implement.

157 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

The Chairman extended warm thanks to Members for their help and co-operation during his year of office. In learning about other authorities it was clear that Rochford should be proud of its inter-Member working relationships.

Members joined with the Chairman in extending grateful thanks to two retiring officers, Mr R Crofts (Corporate Director (Finance and External Services)) and Mr D Deeks (Head of Financial Services), for exemplary service to the Authority. The Chairman also extended thanks to Councillor R G S Choppen, who was retiring at the end of the Municipal Year, for his substantial contributions to the work of the Council.

On behalf of all Members, the Group Leaders extended thanks to the Chairman for working so hard and being so effective. Particular reference was made to the high level of publicity that the Chairman had achieved for the Council.

It was noted that polling for the District Council elections on 4 May 2006 would close at 10.00pm. It was also noted that proposals to refurbish Committee Room 4 at the Civic Suite, Rayleigh were progressing, with sample furniture currently under review.

158 COMMITTEE MINUTES AND REPORTS

Council received the minutes and considered the reports of Committees as follows:-

Committee	Date	Minute No.
(1) Standards	28 February 2006	72-76
(2) Environment Overview & Scrutiny	1 March 2006	77-78
(3) Community Services	2 March 2006	79-89
(4) Policy & Finance	9 March 2006	90-98

134 **Review of Rochford District Council Constitution**

Members considered the report of the Policy and Finance Committee on the review of the Council's Constitution.

Resolved

That the draft Constitution, as submitted, be adopted. (CD(IS))

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	Committee	Date	Minute No.
(5)	Community Overview & Scrutiny	14 March 2006	99-101
(6)	Environment Overview & Scrutiny	16 March 2006	102-104
(7)	Finance & Procedures, Overview & Scrutiny	23 March 2006	105-106
(8)	Environment Overview & Scrutiny	28 March 2006	107-108
(9)	Policy and Finance	30 March 2006	109-110
(10)	Planning Services	30 March 2006	111-113
(11)	Community Services	4 April 2006	114-119
(12)	Environmental Services	5 April 2006	120-126
(13)	Policy & Finance	6 April 2006	127-133

(a) Timetable of Meetings 2006/07

Council considered the report of the Policy and Finance Committee on the timetable of meetings for the 2006/07 Municipal Year.

Resolved

That, subject to the 21 February 2007 being reserved for the purpose of Council Tax setting, the revised timetable of meetings for the 2006/07 Municipal Year, as attached to the report, be adopted. (HAMS)

	Committee	Date	Minute No.
(14)	Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny	13 April 2006	134-139
(15)	Standards	18 April 2006	140-143

(a) Appointment of Independent Members and Parish Members from 2006/07

Council considered the report of the Standards Committee on the appointment of Independent Members and Parish Members to the Standards Committee from the next Municipal Year.

Resolved

- (1) That the current Independent Members be appointed for a further term of four years.
- (2) That the composition of the Standards Committee be changed to provide that membership comprises two Members of a Parish Council wholly or mainly in the Council's area (a Parish Member). The Rochford Hundred Association of local Councils to be asked to determine the appointees. (CD(IS))

Committee	Date	Minute No.
(16) Environment Overview and Scrutiny	19 April 2006	144-147
(a) Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the Rochford District		

Council considered the report of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Statement of Community Involvement for the Rochford District.

The following observations were made on the document setting out the results of the stakeholder consultation:-

- It would be useful to clarify whether the reference to Highways Agency under the list of consultees related to the County Council or the Government.
- It would be disappointing if it is the case that some emails can be lost, as identified in the consultation response from the Essex Wildlife Trust Southend and Rochford branch on page 7 of the document.
- Some of the suggestions relating to signage and the extent of neighbour notification commencing on page 19 of the document could be useful.
- Given its remit, there could be merit in including the Crouch Harbour Authority in the list of consultees.

A Member commented that it was possible to understand why a member of the public may feel that a Statement of Community Involvement seems to favour developers over the general public and that the maintenance of local heritage can benefit some locations at the expense of others.

The Chief Executive advised that, in terms of maximising community input, it would be appropriate to include the Crouch Harbour Authority in the list of consultees. The other observations made would be forwarded to the Head of

Planning and Transportation for a response in writing. In terms of approach, there would be value in considering how the consultation mechanism associated with the Local Development Framework could be allied to consultation needs associated with documents such as the community strategy. Such linkages could help reduce the potential impact of high levels of consultation on the community.

Resolved

- (1) That, subject to account being taken of the above observations, the proposed modifications be made to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the Rochford District and that the modified version of the SCI be adopted as the deposit version for submission to GO-East and formal public consultation, to enable the Council to comply with the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as set out more particularly in Regulations 28 and 29 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations 2004.
- (2) That the Council carries out the relevant requirements to prepare for the Public Inquiry, including the appointment of a programme officer and arranging the appointment of a Planning Inspector.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Head of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to carry out minor adjustments to the SCI to ensure consistency and correctness.

(b) Minor Amendments to the Rochford District Local Development Scheme

Council considered the report of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on minor amendments to the Rochford District Local Development Scheme.

Resolved

That the changes made to the Rochford District Local Development Scheme be agreed and that the document be published and distributed in due course. (HP&T)

Committee	Date	Minute No.
(17) Finance & Procedures Overview & Scrutiny (Audit)	20 April 2006	148-152
(18) Planning Services	25 April 2006	153-155

159 DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2006/07

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive on the draft Corporate Plan 2006/07.

It was noted that the Plan should be seen as a working document capable of reflecting the budget process and decisions as they are made by the Council. The Chief Executive confirmed that final proofing would be done following Member consideration, comment and agreement at this meeting.

Responding to questions, the Chief Executive advised that:-

- The following could be included:-
 - Reference to the word ‘culture’ in the final line of the first paragraph on page 7.
 - Reference to targets being ‘frequently reviewed’ on page 15.
 - Reference to the Authority being able to learn best practice approaches from other organisations and help other organisations (on page 17).
 - Information on the Council’s Budget Monitoring Process and associated ‘traffic light’ mechanism.
- Consultation with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (being undertaken in connection with tourism considerations) will help the Council to identify potential sources of funding that may be available, including European funding associated with nature protection.

Members concurred with the observation of the Leader of the Council that the document read very well, utilising an easily understandable plain English approach.

Resolved

That, subject to inclusion of the above aspects, the draft Plan, as submitted, be approved as the Council’s Corporate Plan for 2006/07. (CE)

160 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Council considered the report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care on proposed amendments to the Council’s Statement of Licensing Policy.

Responding to questions, the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care advised that document wording had been developed to reflect the outcome of

a recent judicial review associated with the model previously adopted by the Council and other Essex authorities. That review had established that policies should not be overly prescriptive in regard to the requirements made of applicants in submitting their applications for premises licences and club premises certificates. Changes to the Statement would not prevent officers from reviewing each application with a view to being satisfied that control measures are satisfactory.

Resolved

That the proposed amendments to the Statement of Licensing Policy be approved. (HHHCC)

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 Paragraphs 1 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

161 EXTERNAL SERVICES – PROPOSED ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

Council considered the exempt report of the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care on proposed organisational arrangements within External Services.

Members noted the need for an adjustment relating to one of the posts associated with housing stock transfer.

Officers responded to questions relating to professional agency services, the post of Overview and Scrutiny Officer and post titles.

The recommendations set out in the exempt report were agreed, subject to the delegated authority associated with vacant Head of Service posts resting with the Corporate Director (External Services) pending the filling of these posts and adjustment with regard to the position of one of the posts associated with housing stock transfer.

Detail on the discussion and the final resolutions are set out in the exempt appendix to these Minutes.

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The meeting closed at 8.28pm.

Chairman

Date