

## Review Committee – 10 January 2017

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Review Committee** held on **10 January 2017** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr J C Burton

Cllr N L Cooper

Cllr Mrs J R Gooding

Cllr M J Lucas-Gill

Cllr Mrs C M Mason

Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr C M Stanley

Cllr A L Williams

Cllr M J Webb

### **VISITING MEMBER**

Cllr J E Newport

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R R Dray, B T Hazlewood, N J Hookway, R Milne and Mrs L Shaw.

### **SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Cllr M J Webb for Cllr Mrs L Shaw

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

A Law - Assistant Director, Legal Services/Monitoring Officer

P Gowers - Overview and Scrutiny Officer

M Power - Democratic Services Officer

### **1 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **2 UPDATE ON THIRD PARTY SOFTWARE**

The Committee considered the report of the Managing Director, which provided an update on the latest costs for third party software.

Members requested that the Managing Director attend the Review Committee meeting on 7 February to provide the following information. It was further requested that responses to the questions be provided prior to the meeting.

1. Which Council officer will be delegated the authority to manage the Council's Commercial IT Contracts and are they suitably qualified to do so?
2. Advice on whether there would be savings in respect of 'Good' software, should the Council move from the use of iPads to Councillors'/staff's own devices and when this would be reviewed and put to Full Council as a

change of policy.

3. What would be the extent of the savings on virus and associated software if the Council moved its IT into the 'cloud', with Members and officers using their own devices.
4. Figures showing the cost of iPads compared with paper documents for the provision of Committee papers and other documents to Members.
5. Confirmation on whether Telecoms is included in the Council's ICT contract and whose responsibility this is.
6. An update of the spreadsheet that shows detailed information on third party software providers over £4,000 per annum for the years 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18.

Following receipt of the information and discussion at the 7 February meeting, the Committee would form a task and finish group to consider the future provision of third party software.

The Committee requested that consideration of the new IT Contract be added as a suggestion for inclusion in the Committee's work plan for 2017/18.

Members wished their thanks to be recorded for the work done by the former Assistant Director in charge of IT and that his knowledge and expertise were missed.

### **Resolved**

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- (2) That the Managing Director be requested to provide the information detailed above and attend the meeting of the Committee on 7 February.
- (3) That consideration of the new IT Contract be included as a suggestion for the Committee's work plan for 2017/18.

### **3 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The Committee considered the report of the Monitoring Officer, which contained proposed changes to the Council's Constitution following meetings between the Review Committee project team and the Monitoring Officer.

An amendment to the recommendations in the report was moved by Cllr Mrs C M Mason and seconded by Cllr M J Lucas-Gill.

In response to a question, it was noted that the majority of the changes proposed were to bring the Constitution in line with current legislation and present day practice and to enable the use of plain English.

It was emphasised that all Members of the Council should take the opportunity of reading the detail of the proposed changes contained in the report.

It was recognised by the Committee that the review was a substantial and detailed task and the original timescale of April for completion would not be achievable. This was in line with similar reviews by other local authorities.

The project team at its next meeting should be in a position to complete the review of Parts 1 and 2 of the Constitution. Part 3 would be broken down into a series of milestones and the Monitoring Officer would keep Members updated on progress.

### **Recommended to Council**

- (1) That the proposed alterations to Parts 1 and 2 of the Council's Constitution and the Officers Code of Conduct, as detailed in Appendix B to the officer report, be adopted, whilst noting that further amendments may need to be made to these sections and be submitted to Council as the review progresses.
- (2) That the proposed alterations to the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure in the Constitution be adopted and that this section be removed from the Constitution and replaced by a reference to the Policy, which will be kept up to date by the Council's Human Resources department.

## **4 KEY DECISIONS DOCUMENT**

The Committee considered the Key Decisions document and noted its contents. The following was discussed:

**10/16 Fee Policy – Caravan Sites.** The delay in implementing the Policy was due to site inspections taking longer than planned and the need to deal with responses arising from the consultations.

**12/16 Street Scene Enforcement Policy.** An internal review of staffing was being undertaken, which would show if enforcement work under the Policy could be managed by existing staff: there would be budgetary implications if additional staff were needed. The Assistant Director, Environmental Services would be asked to circulate an email update to Committee Members.

**15/16 Air Quality Action Plan.** The public consultation undertaken had received a total of 41 responses over the six week period: these included responses from partners, businesses, Councillors and residents. Members felt that because of the continued poor level of response to public consultations it would be useful to include a review of policies relating to communications and consultations by the Council with the public on the Review Committee's work plan for 2017/18 and that this could usefully be scheduled to take place towards the beginning of the Municipal Year.

DEFRA has declared Rayleigh town centre an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) and, as a result, an Action Plan has been produced to reduce pollution in the AQMA to within acceptable levels. Although traffic through Rochford town centre is increasing as a result of housing development in the town and development around London Southend airport, neither area is showing levels of pollution high enough to be designated as an AQMA. There are certain areas across the District that are tested on a six monthly basis; detailed information can be found at [www.essexair.org.uk](http://www.essexair.org.uk). Minutes of the Review Committee on 4 October 2016 contain information about the ongoing monitoring programme. Although areas can be suggested for monitoring, decisions in this respect will be made by the Council's Environmental Health Team Leader, who can be contacted for further information and advice.

### 5 WORK PLAN

The Committee considered its Work Plan. The following was noted:

Meeting on 7 February: Members requested that the Sanctuary Housing and Homelessness items be limited to a maximum of 20 minutes each. The Managing Director would be requested to attend to answer questions on Third Party Software costs.

In respect of the presentation of Sanctuary Housing, it was agreed that the issue to be covered would be: 'the programme of Housing Development: what it is and how it is currently being delivered'.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer would circulate to Committee Members the report and Minutes on Homelessness/Sanctuary Housing from the Review Committee meeting on 8 November 2016. Members were requested to submit questions to the Overview and Scrutiny officer in advance of the meeting. The Portfolio Holder for Community and the Assistant Director, Community and Housing would be in attendance at the meeting.

Meeting on 14 March: An update of the Constitution review would be provided.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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