

Executive Board – 26 March 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the **Executive Board** held on **26 March 2008** when there were present:-

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

Cllr K J Gordon
Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr D G Stansby

Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr P F A Webster

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren - Chief Executive
R J Honey - Corporate Director (Internal Services)
G Woolhouse - Corporate Director (External Services)
S Scrutton - Head of Planning and Transportation
J Bostock - Committee Services Manager

114 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of apologies from Cllr C G Seagers.

115 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr J M Pullen declared a personal interest in the item on Rayleigh, Rochford and District Association for Voluntary Service (RAVS) – Update on Performance by virtue of being a trustee of RAVS.

Cllr T G Cutmore declared a personal interest in the item an Planning for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the East of England: proposed draft policy by virtue of being the Council's representative on the East of England Regional Assembly.

Cllr C G Seagers declared a personal interest in the items relating to dogs by virtue of being a dog owner.

116 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

(1) The adoption of new powers under the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005.

The Board considered the report of the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Sub-Committee on the issue of draft orders that provide sensible controls over dogs in public places.

It was noted that the Sub-Committee had given detailed consideration to this subject and had been keen to ensure that proposals were capable of

encouraging responsible dog ownership and as simple to understand as possible.

During discussion it was recognised that there can be differing views on questions such as whether or not there should be a specified maximum to the number of dogs under the control of an individual and that the true effectiveness of regulations can only be known once they are in place.

Resolved

(1) That notice of the draft orders, attached at report Appendix 2, namely:-

The Fouling of Land by Dogs (Rochford) Order 2008; The Dogs Exclusion (Rochford) Order 2008; The Dogs on leads (Rochford) Order 2008 and The Dogs on a lead by Direction (Rochford) Order 2008;

be published in the Yellow Advertiser and on the Council's website, to include:-

- identification of the land to which the orders will apply;
- a summary of the orders;
- if the order will refer to a map, where the map can be inspected;
- the address to which, and the date by which, representations must be sent to the authority. The final date for representations will be at least 28 days after publication.

(2) That the Dogs (specified maximum) Order not be actioned at this time.

(3) That a further report be submitted upon the expiry of the formal consultation period following publication of the draft orders.

(4) That the level of penalty for Fixed Penalty Notices be set at £75 with no reductions for early payment. (HES)

Note: Cllr C G Seagers wished it to be recorded that he could not fully support the proposals due to a concern at the exclusion of a Dogs (Specified Maximum) Order and the need for more detail on signage/ongoing costs.

(2) Extension to the Car Park at Rawreth Recreation Ground

In considering a reference from the West Area Committee relating to extension to the car park at the Rawreth Recreation Ground it was recognised that any financial provision would need to be included as an item for consideration when the 2009/10 budget is under determination.

Resolved

That extension to the car park at Rawreth Recreation Ground be included as an item for consideration when the 2009/10 budget is under determination. (HFAPM)

(3) Community Shelter on the Clements Hall Recreation Fields

In considering a reference from the Central Area Committee for final approval to be given to the introduction of a Community Shelter located adjacent to the skate park on the Clements Hall Recreation Fields, it was noted that the success of a Hawkwell Parish Council bid for grant funding was reliant upon the immediate confirmation of any decision. In view of this it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the proposals to introduce a community shelter adjacent to the skate park on the Clements Hall Recreation Fields be approved.
- (2) That the decision to grant this approval is considered urgent and not subject to call-in as the success of a Hawkwell Parish Council bid for grant funding is reliant upon immediate confirmation of the decision.

(4) Review of Planning Appeal Procedures

The Board considered the final report and recommendations of the Review Committee following its review of Planning Appeal Procedures.

Resolved

- (1) That, in the case of Appeals, Members should only be used as third party witnesses.
- (2) That a Planning Officer should be used as an expert witness for the majority of Planning Appeals when the Head of Planning and Transportation does not feel that the use of an outside consultant would be of benefit. (HPT)

(5) Review of Implications of the Global Warming Agenda on Rochford District Council and the role the District Council and its communities might play

The Board considered the final report and recommendations of the Review Committee following its review of the implications of the global warming agenda on Rochford District Council and the role the District Council and its communities might play.

During discussion the Board recognised that, in the context of other Council projects and the need for detailed consideration, it may not be possible for the Council to achieve a finalised Sustainable Energy (Climate Change) Strategy by as early as September 2008. It was also observed that it would be appropriate to align the timing of work with the business community on this with other aspects of the Strategy.

Resolved

- (1) That the Council develops a Sustainable Energy (Climate Change) Strategy in order that resource implications can be considered by the Council as part of the 2009/10 budget process subject to recognition that, in the context of other Council projects and the need for detailed consideration, it may not be possible to have finalised a strategy by as early as September 2008.
- (2) That detailed action plans are developed to ensure that the Sustainable Energy Strategy is delivered. If practicable, these to be developed by September 2008 in order that resource implications can be considered by the Council as part of the 2009/10 budget process.
- (3) That the Council becomes a signatory to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change at the earliest opportunity.
- (4) That the Council engages with Local Area Agreement partners to reduce the carbon footprint of domestic properties, business and public sector activities.
- (5) That, subject to recognition that the timing needs to align with other aspects of the Council's Waste Strategy, further action be taken to encourage recycling in respect of the business sector.
- (6) That officers explore the implementation of the action plan produced by Carbon Trust. (HES)

It was further:-

Recommended to Full Council

That the following specific targets are established in the Corporate Plan:-

'Over the next five years, we will

Work on reducing the Council's own carbon dioxide emissions by 30% (based upon 2005 baseline).

Achieve a recycling target of 50% within the 5-year period.

Through the Council's Local Development Framework, ensure that the future development of the District up to 2021 is planned and carried out in a sustainable fashion.

By 2017

Implement an Adapting to Climate Change Action Plan for action, monitoring and review.

Work on reducing the Council's own carbon dioxide emissions by 60%

Secure a recycling rate of 60% per year' (HES)

117 COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT – DRAFT SELF ASSESSMENT

The Board considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) which introduced an initial draft of the Council's Corporate Self-Assessment.

It was noted that the finalised self-assessment had to be submitted 30 April 2008.

During discussion it was agreed that there would be merit in providing four showcase examples of each of the corporate objectives. Reference was made to the effectiveness of partnership work with the local health trust in developing the new Rochford Hospital site and to the value of reference to the reclassification of the Council's website to a higher level by the Society of Information Technology Managers.

Resolved

That, subject to the inclusion of four showcase examples under the corporate objectives and reference to the new Rochford Hospital and the reclassification of the Council's website, the draft self-assessment be approved for further development. (CD(ES))

118 NEW ESSEX COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND THE NEW ESSEX LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

The Board considered the report of the Chief Executive on the latest drafts emerging from the County Council in connection with a new Community Strategy for the County and a new Local Area Agreement for Essex.

Resolved

That the officer views outlined in the report be supported and that it be indicated to the County Council that, in terms of the new Local Area Agreement, the targets included under priorities 2, 6, 7, 9 and 10 are those most likely to be supported and actioned by this Authority. (CE)

119 TRANSFER OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR STRAY DOGS FROM THE POLICE TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Board considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services on the transfer of responsibility for stray dogs from the Police to local authorities from April 2008.

Responding to questions, the Corporate Director (External Services) confirmed that the service would be cross-referenced with other authorities wherever possible.

In recognising that the welfare of animals is paramount, the Board agreed that it would be appropriate to include an item in the Members' Bulletin on the arrangements in place if a dog is not claimed within seven days or retained by the finder. It was also agreed that consideration should be given to introducing a service whereby re-homed dogs are provided with 'identity chips' to minimise the likelihood of future issues and that a page on the Council's website providing a service that helps reunite stray and lost dogs with their owners should include a facility for individuals with good homes to come forward.

Resolved

- (1) That authority be delegated to the Head of Environmental Services to enter into a contract with Medivet and/or an appropriate kennelling contractor in order to provide an acceptance point and kennelling facility for stray dogs received outside office hours.
- (2) That, in association with (1) above:-
 - An item be included in the Members' Bulletin on the arrangements in place if a dog is not claimed within seven days or retained by the finder.
 - Consideration be given to the possibility of introducing a service whereby re-homed dogs are provided with "identity chips" to minimise the likelihood of future issues.
 - A page on the Council's website providing a service that helps reunite stray and lost dogs with their owners should include a facility for individuals with good homes to come forward. (HES)

120 PLANNING FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION IN THE EAST OF ENGLAND: PROPOSED DRAFT POLICY

The Board considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation on the East of England Regional Assembly's proposed draft policy on the provision of pitches for gypsy and traveller caravans in each District in the region.

Reference was made to the fact that, notwithstanding that the Council had not supported the concept of additional pitches, the Authority was required to consider the provision of gypsy and traveller accommodation. It was noted that, where a need is identified for the provision of gypsy and traveller accommodation, local planning authorities will find it increasingly difficult to defend planning and enforcement appeals in situations where there are no authorised sites available.

It was agreed that any reference to pitch provision should include a specific definition of the size and nature of any building associated with a pitch.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed provision of 15 pitches for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation to 2011 included in the draft policy H4 prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly for inclusion in due course in the East of England Plan be accepted.
- (2) That the post 2011 provision be informed by an updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
- (3) That work be progressed and a report prepared on the acceptability or otherwise of any currently unauthorised sites to become authorised to make a contribution to the required pitch provision.
- (4) That details be included in the next version of the Rochford Core Strategy to explain the arrangements for further pitch provision to ensure the total number of authorised pitches in the district reaches 18 by 2011, with references to pitch provision to include a specific definition of the size and nature of any building associated with a pitch. (HPT)

121 RAYLEIGH, ROCHFORD AND DISTRICT ASSOCIATION FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE (RAVS) – UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE

The Board considered the report of the Chief Executive on progress made by RAVS against its business plan.

It was observed that it was good to see additional funding streams coming forward and that the volunteer centre had achieved accredited status.

Resolved

That the progress and achievements to date be noted. (CE)

122 ROCHFORD CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION PARTNERSHIP – THE NEW STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT AND PARTNERSHIP PLAN

The Board considered the report of the Chief Executive which introduced the new Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan for endorsement prior to approval by the Rochford Crime and Disorder Partnership and submission to the Government Office.

Resolved

That the emerging Strategic Assessment and Partnership Plan being presented to the Rochford Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership be endorsed. (CE)

123 ESSEX YEOMANRY AND ESSEX REGIMENT MUSEUM APPEAL

The Board considered the report of the Head of Community Services on whether or not a contribution should be made to the Essex Yeomanry and Essex Regiment Museum Appeal.

On a motion, moved by Cllr T G Cutmore and seconded by Cllr Mrs M J Webster, it was:-

Resolved

That a financial donation of £1,000 from the 2008/09 Heritage Fund be made towards the Essex Yeomanry and Essex Regiment Museum Appeal. (HCS)

124 CHOICE BASE LETTINGS – PROGRESS REPORT

The Board received the report of the Head of Community Services which provided an update on the progress being made on the implementation of a Choice Based Lettings Scheme in the District.

Resolved

That the content of the report on the implementation of a Choice Based Lettings Scheme be noted and that a further report be submitted in September/October detailing final scheme proposals. (HCS)

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

125 STAFFING MATTERS

The Board received the exempt report of the Chief Executive on vacancies, long-term sickness absence and maternity absence within the Authority.

It was confirmed that Members would be advised of the latest position on appointment to the post of Fraud Intelligence and Support Officer.

Resolved

That the current level of vacancies, long-term sickness and maternity absences, as set out in exempt report, be noted. (CE)

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The meeting closed at 9.00 pm.

Chairman

Date

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