

Executive Board – 17 October 2007

Minutes of the meeting of the **Executive Board** held on **17 October 2007** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr T G Cutmore

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

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Cllr K H Hudson.

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 Bourne	- Head of Community Services
S Logan	- Revenue and Benefits Manager
J Bostock	- Principal Committee Administrator

342 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

343 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T G Cutmore declared a personal interest in the item on Rayleigh Grange Community Centre by virtue of being responsible for bookings at a village hall.

344 PERFORMANCE REPORT TO MEMBERS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2007/08

The Board considered the report of the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management showing progress against key policies and actions for 2007/08.

Responding to questions, officers advised that:-

- The Council's external auditor, PKF, will submit a full report on the Council's use of resources score to the Audit Committee in Spring 2008.

- A revised Local Development Framework scheme was to be submitted to a meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee scheduled for 6 November 2007.
- The IT Strategy was approved at the last meeting of the Executive Board.
- With regard to the Progress on Decisions schedule, updates on gypsy and traveller sites and caravan site licence – breach of site licence conditions would be submitted to the next meeting.

It was noted that a letter from the County Council relating to the transfer of Tree Preservation Orders was imminent. It was recognised that this subject would need to be monitored closely.

Resolved

- (1) That progress made to date with the key objectives for 2007/08 be noted.
- (2) That the progress on decisions schedule be noted subject to the provision of update information of Gypsy and Traveller sites (Minute 259/07) and Caravan Site Licence – Breach of Site Licence Conditions (Minute 260/07) to the next Board meeting in November 2007.
- (3) That statistical performance data for the Second quarter of 2007/08 be reviewed at the next Board Meeting in November 2007. (HFAPM)

345 SWEYNE PARK, RAYLEIGH – EXTENSION

The Board considered the report of the Head of Community Services on the Sweyne Park extension project.

Responding to questions, the Head of Community Services advised that, whilst this year's budget of £50,000 was for establishing pitches as a main priority, it included monies for fencing and ground preparation works. The nature of the ground was such that it was unlikely that a surface would be established and ready for use prior to September 2009.

Resolved

That the layout of the site associated with the Sweyne Park Extension Project, Rayleigh, as set out in the report, be agreed. (HCS)

346 HOMES FOR THE FUTURE: MORE AFFORDABLE, MORE SUSTAINABLE – GREEN PAPER

(Note: Cllr C G Seagers declared a personal interest in this item in that, whilst he had no personal involvement, his employment group was active in remediation initiatives).

The Board considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation which sought views on the proposals set out in the Green Paper.

Observations made during discussion included a general concern that additional building activity could lead to increased ‘concreting’ of the District. It was noted that the Government had indicated that there would be ‘mini-reviews’ of Regional Spatial Strategies to ensure the objective of three million additional homes by 2020. There would be a need to be mindful of the implications of any such reviews for Rochford. It was also noted that reference to ‘brownfield’ in the fourth line of report paragraph 3.8 should have been to ‘greenfield’.

The Board agreed that some concerns should be emphasised and it was:-

Resolved

That the points raised in the report form the basis of the Council’s response on the Housing Green Paper Consultation, subject to concern about the following being emphasised:-

- That decisions on housing and infrastructure will be the responsibility of a non-democratically accountable body (the East of England Development Agency), notwithstanding any arrangements for public scrutiny.
- That, in terms of investment in infrastructure, the South East continues to suffer a financial deficit per person when compared to other areas of the Country.
- Account should be taken of the impact on the delivery of affordable homes when tariff formulas relating to infrastructure investment are developed.
- The inclusion of garden land from existing houses in the definition of brown field land is resulting in an increasingly negative impact on the amenities of residents. (HPT)

347 RAYLEIGH GRANGE COMMUNITY CENTRE – LEASE

The Board considered the report of the Corporate Director (External Services) on the different leases which the Council holds for various buildings and the future lease arrangements for the Rayleigh Grange Community Centre.

Responding to questions on the Community Centre, the Corporate Director (External Services) advised that:-

- Specialist reports on the condition of the electrical installation and an assessment of any asbestos containing materials were awaited as the appointed surveyor had not been able to attend the premises when anticipated.

- The lease had been previously extended by the former Policy Finance and Strategic Performance Committee to facilitate detailed investigation.

Members recognised the sterling work undertaken by unpaid volunteers in managing the Grange Community Centre, which was a well used local facility. The Board was mindful of the value of taking an approach that would be fair to the Centre and to other similar buildings. On a motion, moved by Cllr Mrs M J Webster and seconded by Cllr M G B Starke, it was:-

Resolved

- (1) That the Rayleigh Grange Community Centre lease be extended on the present terms and conditions for an initial six months to ensure and enable repair works of an urgent nature to be carried out and completed and appropriate safety certification with respect to fabric and services of the building to be presented to the Council.
- (2) That, on satisfactory completion of the works identified in (1) above, the lease be extended on the present terms and conditions for an additional six months to enable less urgent repair works to fabric of the building, after which time the Council will expect the building to have been brought up to such a condition as is reasonable to expect under the terms of a “full repairing lease”.
- (3) That at the end of this twelve month period of grace the Council enter into negotiations with the leaseholders in order to agree a new lease. In addition, the Council to take the opportunity presented by this period to review its entire lease arrangements with a view to bringing them in line with one another to ensure that a fair and equitable arrangement for all leases shall exist right across the District. (CD(ES))/(HLS)

It was further:-

RECOMMENDED to Full Council that Cllrs Mrs M J Webster and Mrs J A Mockford be appointed to the Rayleigh Grange Community Association Governing Body. (CD(ES))/(HLS)

348 PARTIAL REFORMATION OF CLOSING ORDER – WHITE LODGE, BEKE HALL CHASE (NORTH), RAYLEIGH

The Board considered the report of the Head of Community Services on a request for partial determination of a closing order.

Resolved

That the Closing Order in respect of White Lodge, Beke Hall Chase (North), Rayleigh be determined in respect of that part of the property which has been rendered fit for human habitation comprising the ground floor back room left; the ground floor back room middle (the kitchen); the ground floor back room

right; the ground floor back extension (the bathroom) and (Minute 344/07) the hallway. (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 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

349 PROPOSED BENEFIT/COUNCIL TAX PARTNERSHIP WITH CHELMSFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Board considered the exempt report of the Head of Community Services on the revenue and benefits shared services partnership working initiative.

Detail on the discussion is set out in the exempt appendix to these minutes.

Resolved

That Partnership discussions continue, with further reports back to the Executive Board. (HCS)

350 STAFFING MATTERS

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

Resolved

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

The meeting closed at 8.43 pm.

Chairman

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.