

The Executive – 26 November 2008

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

Chairman: Cllr T G Cutmore
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Mrs M J Webster

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher
Cllr Mrs T J Capon
Cllr K J Gordon

Cllr M G B Starke
Cllr P F A Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

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

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren - Chief Executive
R J Honey - Corporate Director (Internal Services)
G Woolhouse - Corporate Director (External Services)
R Evans - Head of Environmental Services
J Bostock - Committee Services Manager

337 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

338 PERFORMANCE REPORT ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE PERIOD JULY TO SEPTEMBER 2008

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Finance, Audit and Performance Management on progress against key performance indicators for the second quarter of 2008/09.

It was noted that:-

- The indications are that the review work being undertaken on arrangements for processing new benefits claims and changes in circumstances will lead to an improvement in performance.
- Notwithstanding that the indicator relating to planning appeals was somewhat volatile due to a relatively small number, an eye was being kept on the percentage of appeals allowed against the Authority's decisions to refuse planning permission. Similar volatility could be associated with the fly tip removal indicator given the numbers involved, which was also under detailed review.
- National economic circumstances may have an influence on crime statistics. Locally, the police are currently targeting burglary. Crime

levels have reduced notably when seen from a year on year perspective.

- Officers are in consultation with Springboard Housing Association with a view to addressing the situation whereby local staff sickness issues can adversely impact provision of the handyperson service. Springboard should be of a size whereby alternative staff resources can be utilised. Whilst it would be appropriate to advertise the handyperson service in the Council's newspaper, *Rochford District Matters*, the timing of advertisements needs to be allied to service capacity.

Resolved

That progress against key performance indicators for the second quarter of 2008/09 be noted. (HFAPM)

339 CHERRY ORCHARD JUBILEE COUNTRY PARK – PHASE 2 DEVELOPMENT

The Executive heard from the Portfolio Holder for the Environment on the initial stages of Phase 2 on the proposed development of the Cherry Orchard Jubilee Country Park and considered the associated report.

Members recognised that timing and financial factors were such that it would be appropriate to endorse the initial preparation work to safeguard the site, tree planting and ground work activity directly related to forestry grants and the associated supplementary capital budget of £36,300 for 2008/09. The Executive also felt that it would be appropriate for the Portfolio Holder for the Environment to appoint an Advisory Group (including a local Ward Member) for the purpose of reviewing the proposals relating to other aspects of the Country Park in the context of the current financial climate and questions that have been raised on matters such as site access, bridle path arrangements and tenancy arrangements.

Resolved

- (1) That, given timing and financial factors, the tree planting and ground work activity directly related to forestry grants from the Essex Community Foundation and the Forestry Commission be continued and the supplementary capital budget of £36,300 for 2008/09 be approved.
- (2) That the Portfolio Holder for the Environment appoint an Advisory Group (including a local Ward Member) for the purpose of reviewing the proposals relating to other aspects of the Country Park in the context of the current financial climate and questions that have been raised on matters such as site access, bridle path arrangements and tenancy arrangements. The Group to report back to the Executive with recommendations as soon as practicable. (HES)

340 APPROVAL OF THE ROCHFORD DISTRICT COUNCIL HOUSING STRATEGY 2008/2011

The Executive heard from the Portfolio Holder for Council Tax Collection, Benefits and Strategic Housing Functions on the draft Housing Strategy 2008-2011 and considered the associated report.

It was noted that the Portfolio Holder had presented the main provisions of the draft strategy document to the Council's Review Committee. It was also noted that officers were in discussion with Rochford Housing Association on the aim of providing at least fifty affordable new homes each year.

Resolved

That the content of the draft Rochford District Council Housing Strategy 2008/2011, as appended to the report, be agreed for the purposes of final consultation. (HCS)

341 TOWN TWINNING – 25th ANNIVERSARY

The Executive considered the report of the Chief Executive on the 25th Anniversary of Town Twinning.

A motion was moved by Councillor Mrs M J Webster and seconded by Councillor K J Gordon that no action be taken with regard to incorporating themes relating to the 25th Anniversary of Town Twinning into planned District Council activities/events next year.

It was noted that the Council had withdrawn from direct involvement with the Twinning Association two years ago and that there had been previous occasions of involvement with celebrations. It was observed that any future approaches on matters that may be twinning related could be considered on their merits, with cognisance of the role of the Twinning Association.

On a show of hands it was:-

Resolved

That no action be taken with regard to incorporating themes relating to the 25th Anniversary of Town Twinning in District Council activities/events. Any future approaches on matters that may be twinning related to be considered on their merits, with cognisance of the role of the Twinning Association. (CE)

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.

342 CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S APPRAISAL

Members received the exempt note of the Chief Executive's appraisal.

The meeting closed at 8.33 pm.

Chairman

Date

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