

## **Council – 14 December 2010**

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Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **14 December 2010** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr D G Stansby  
Vice-Chairman: Cllr S P Smith

Cllr C I Black	Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr M Maddocks
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr J P Cottis	Cllr Mrs J E McPherson
Cllr T G Cutmore	Cllr D Merrick
Cllr Mrs H L A Glynn	Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr K J Gordon	Cllr M J Steptoe
Cllr J E Grey	Cllr J Thomass
Cllr M Hoy	Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr K H Hudson	Cllr P F A Webster
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill	Cllr Mrs B J Wilkins

### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Mrs P Aves, P A Capon, Mrs T J Capon, Mrs J Dillnutt, A J Humphries, T Livings, C J Lumley, Mrs J A Mockford, R A Oatham, A C Priest, P R Robinson and Mrs C A Weston.

### **OFFICERS PRESENT**

P Warren	- Chief Executive
G Woolhouse	- Deputy Chief Executive
A Bugeja	- Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
R Evans	- Head of Environmental Services
C Watkins	- Financial Services Manager
J Bostock	- Member Services Manager

### **313 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 October 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **314 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN/PRESENTATIONS**

The Chairman and Vice-Chairman had attended 105 engagements since May.

The Chairman was pleased to welcome Cllr Robert Gordon, the Chairman of the East of England Local Government Association, who was in attendance to award the Charter for Elected Member Development to the Council.

During the presentation, Cllr Gordon confirmed that the Award was a considerable achievement, reflecting the high degree of innovation and commitment by the Council to Member training and development. The Council was the first authority in Essex to achieve Charter status.

The Chairman and the Leader of the Council expressed thanks to Members and officers for the work undertaken to achieve the Award.

### **315 MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

Council received the minutes of all Executive and Committee meetings held between the period 16 October to 3 December 2010.

### **316 REPORT ON URGENT DECISIONS**

Pursuant to Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15(f), Council noted a report on decisions that had been taken as a matter of urgency and not subject to call-in/referral.

### **317 REPORT OF THE LEADER ON THE WORK OF THE EXECUTIVE**

Council received the following report from the Leader on the work of the Executive:-

“This, our last Full Council meeting before Christmas, has certainly proved timely. Yesterday, after weeks of waiting in anticipation, we heard what our grant settlement for next year would be. In fact, the Government announced not only our provisional settlement for next year but also for the subsequent year, so we are now in a position to work out the detail in terms of our budget for 2011/12 and 2012/13, and the impact on our 5 year Medium Term Financial Strategy.

I am sad to report that, overall, the settlement was worse than anticipated. In summary, for us it means a grant of £3.6 million for 2011/12 and £3.3 million for 2012/13, a reduction of £1.5 million for 2011/12, when compared with last year's grant, and a further reduction of £380,000 in 2012/13, as opposed to an anticipated reduction of £1.3 million for 2011/12 and £300,000 for 2012/13. This includes the transfer of funding of £735,000 for concessionary fares to County, compared to our actual costs of £690,000. Thus, we face a real challenge in terms of balancing our budget and some difficult choices ahead.

At this point I feel I should make a plug for the Member session being held tomorrow evening at 7pm here in the Council Chamber when, along with the Head of Finance and the Chief Executive, we can examine yesterday's grant announcement and its implications for the Council in more detail.

Yesterday also saw the publication of the Localism Bill. This too will have major implications for this Authority, not least in the planning arena. The Localism Bill includes proposals covering the following:-

- Community empowerment
- Strengthening local democracy
- Reform of the planning system
- Social housing reform

I have to say that, from my brief reading of the details to date, there is much that will need to be clarified and fleshed out during the passage of the Bill.

Since my last report to the Council in October, the Executive has met on three occasions. At the first of these we decided to proceed with our contract with UPM for the Materials Recovery Facility and they are now taking all of our dry recycling material.

The other two meetings have received performance updates to ensure that we remain on track, in terms of delivering the key elements of the Council's agreed programme. We have looked at the work we do in connection with Disabled Facilities Grants and considered and amended our policy on discretionary Council Tax discount for long-term empty residential properties. We have looked at our Reception facility at Rochford and taken a decision to renew the temporary planning consent. We have again reviewed our organisational structure in anticipation of some of the changes to come and have looked at the way forward in terms of ICT procurement and how we should go about securing our next ICT Services contract. We've looked at customer complaints and compliments over a period and it is pleasing to see that, as an Authority, we are still receiving a lot of positive comments from our residents. However, one area of concern is the ever rising volume of Freedom of Information requests, a total of 178 in two quarters for this year compared to 213 in total in 2009/2010 and 119 in 2008/2009. This probably reflects the growing interest in Local Government as a whole and also increasing awareness of the Freedom of Information Legislation. It is certainly an area of growth in work terms which we will need to keep under review.

Since the last Council meeting, my colleagues on the Executive have considered such matters as the commencement of the consultation exercise on the Hockley Area Action Plan and the implementation of specific environmental projects arising from the Capital Programme.

As always, I will be happy to take any questions from Members in respect of the work of the Executive. I am sure my Executive colleagues will be happy to contribute where appropriate.

Lastly, given that this is our last meeting before Christmas, may I wish all Members and officers a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year."

It was confirmed that the previous year's grant settlement had been £5.1M. It was also confirmed that, whilst calculations had yet to be made in terms of how Rochford District had fared against all other Authorities on a per head of population basis, it was the case that most District Authorities in Essex had seen a grant reduction of 12-16%.

**318 REVISED BUDGETARY ESTIMATES FOR 2010-11**

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance on the revised budgetary estimates for the current financial year.

Members concurred with the observation of the Leader that the Council had done well in achieving significant savings over the last year. Future years would clearly be a challenge.

**Resolved**

That the revised estimates for 2010/11, as detailed in the report, be agreed. (HF)

**319 REVIEW OF STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY**

Council considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services on the Statement of Licensing Policy for the period 7 January 2011 to 6 January 2014.

**Resolved**

That the Statement of Licensing Policy for the period 7 January 2011 to 6 January 2014, as appended to the report, be approved. (HES)

**320 REVISED ARRANGEMENT FOR DEALING WITH HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES, DRIVER'S AND OPERATOR'S LICENCE APPEALS**

Council considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation on the introduction of a new arrangement for dealing with the more straight forward infringements of licence conditions relating to hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, driver's and operator's licences.

**Resolved**

That a new report and referral procedure for dealing with infringements to hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, driver's and operator's and licences, as outlined in the report, be introduced. (HPT)

**321 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX BASE 2011-12**

Council considered the report of the Head of Finance on determining the Tax Base for each individual Parish or Town Council area within the District.

Thanks were extended to the Head of Finance and her team for the production of comprehensive financial reports.

### Resolved

- (1) That the method of calculation of the Tax Base for 2011/12 be noted.
- (2) That pursuant to the report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992 (as amended) the amount calculated by Rochford District Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2011/2012 shall be in the following parts:-

ASHINGDON	1,231.28
BARLING MAGNA	627.64
CANEWDON	546.57
FOULNESS ISLAND	61.21
GREAT WAKERING	1,991.13
HAWKWELL	4,572.12
HOCKLEY	3,835.62
HULLBRIDGE	2,389.19
PAGLESHAM	102.90
RAWRETH	436.00
RAYLEIGH	12,321.66
ROCHFORD	2,982.85
STAMBRIDGE	233.52
SUTTON	54.02
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	31,385.71
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The meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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