

The Executive – 19 January 2011

Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **19 January 2011** 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 K H Hudson
Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr M J Steptoe

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Warren – Chief Executive
G Woolhouse – Deputy Chief Executive
A Bugeja – Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services
Y Woodward – Head of Finance
R Evans – Head of Environmental Services
S Scutton – Head of Planning and Transportation
J Bostock – Member Services Manager

14 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15 REPORT OF THE REVIEW COMMITTEE ON AREA COMMITTEES

The Executive considered the report of the Review Committee on Area Committees.

The Executive agreed that the Review Committee should be thanked for its report and recommendations. The Committee's findings were illuminating and, whilst some of the recommendations could not be supported, the Executive understood the sentiments that had been projected.

It was disappointing that the Area Committees were not living up to the expectations the Council had of them when first introduced. It had been hoped that meetings would allow the public to ask questions of representatives, not only of the District Council but of other public organisations, and receive appropriate answers to those questions.

With the exception of a very few meetings, public attendance has been woefully light and clearly does not represent good value for money. The Executive, therefore, concurred with the Review Committee's recommendation that Area Committee meetings should cease at the end of this particular Municipal Year.

The Executive concurred with the Review Committee that there is still a need for a meeting of Council Members at which the public can ask questions of their elected representatives and receive immediate answers if it is at all possible to provide them.

The Executive noted the Review Committee's commitment to saving Council Taxpayers' money and agreed that the Committee was to be commended for this.

It was recognised that, at this stage, it would be appropriate to set parameters for change. Specific detail on matters such as the geographical boundaries of forums and any procedures associated with the asking of questions could be considered in detail at a later stage. It was also recognised that, at times, it could be appropriate for third sector deliverers to be asked if they would attend.

In order to conform with the two goals of saving taxpayers' money and ensuring more transparent and accessible democratic process, and on a motion moved by Councillor K H Hudson and seconded by Councillor K J Gordon, it was:-

Recommended to Council:-

- (1) That there be four regular community forum meetings held annually, two in the West and two in the East of the District. Ward Members to be expected to attend the appropriate meetings so that their electorate may have this additional opportunity to converse with them. Representatives of the Police, Fire and Health Services to be asked to attend, as well as Essex County Council Members and Officers. There will be an open invitation to Parish/Town Councillors.
- (2) That meetings will be chaired by the Leader of the Council who will request the attendance of one or more Portfolio Holder, as deemed appropriate by the Leader. The Chief Executive, or exceptionally his representative, will also attend all meetings.
- (3) That the dates of meetings will be included in the Council calendar and published accordingly.
- (4) That it is accepted that there may be times when public attention is drawn to a specific subject but timing does not correspond with scheduled meetings. Should this occur, an additional meeting/s will be arranged in the format utilised for scheduled meetings.
- (5) That none of these arrangements will affect the present system of public consultation and the presentations given by the Council, which in the recent past have included subjects such as recycling and The Local Development Framework. (HLEMS)

16 PERFORMANCE REPORT ON KEY PROJECTS FOR THE PERIOD OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2010

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Finance on key projects for the period October to December 2010.

It was noted that, whilst the RAG status associated with improving Council Tax and Benefit services reflected the position in the context of objectives within the Council's corporate plan, any delays were due to anticipated changes in Government policy. It was also noted that the projects identified for 2011/12 in respect of the Cherry Orchard Country Park were in the Capital Programme to commence that year. Thanks were extended to staff for their work in progressing the country park project.

Resolved

That the progress against key projects for the third quarter of 2010/11 be noted. (HF)

17 MAJOR CONTRACT REVIEW

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services on amendments to the Contract Procedure Rules.

Members agreed an amendment to the content of the paragraphs proposed for inclusion in the Constitution, moved by Councillor K H Hudson and seconded by Councillor M J Steptoe, and it was:-

Recommended to Council that the Contract Procedure Rules, which commence on page 4.63 of the Constitution, be amended with the insertion of the following paragraphs:-

'1.2 Contract Principles to be Applied

1.2.7 Each quarter Members of the Council will be provided with the estimated values and a brief description of contracts that are proposed to be subject to competitive tendering. Such detail to be published in the Members' Bulletin and, more formally, through a report into the Executive for noting.

1.2.8 The competitive dialogue approach will not be utilised in procurement arrangements unless it is expressly sanctioned by the Executive.' (HLEMS)

18 BIN ALLOCATION CRITERIA

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Environmental Services on the criteria to be adopted with regard to the provision of bins for waste and recycling.

Members concurred with the observation of the Chairman that it was good that the Council continued to develop its service to residents.

It was noted that it was not the intention to introduce criteria that was overly prescriptive/inflexible. Each case where there are indications that a larger recycling bin would be appropriate would be considered on its merits. References to nappies related to the disposable variety.

Resolved

- (1) That progress being made with the Maximise Recycling Scheme and providing a Waste Management Service that meets the changing needs of the residents of the District by providing suitable containers for different types of properties and for residents with disabilities be noted.
- (2) That, subject to officers striving to maximise recycling and the number of properties on the three bins scheme, the bin provision criteria set out in report paragraphs 1.3 to 1.7 be adopted. (HES)

19 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL REPORT

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services deferred at the last meeting on the Remuneration Scheme for 2011/12 proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel and the approach in future years.

Recommended to Council:-

- (1) That the Remuneration Scheme for 2011/12 proposed by the Independent Remuneration Panel be adopted.
- (2) That, for the future, the Independent Remuneration Panel is convened every four years unless there is a need to implement a new or amended Members' Allowance Scheme in relation to a change to the structure of the Council.
- (3) That the level of the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances be adjusted each Municipal Year in line with the local government staff annual pay award.
- (4) That Childcare and Carer's Allowances and Travelling Expenses be increased annually in line with the increase in the Retail Price Index as advised by the Council's Head of Finance.
- (5) That Subsistence/Meals on Trains Allowances remain linked to the rates payable to District Council officers, which reflect national arrangements.

- (6) That the Independent Remuneration Panel reviews the Parish/Town Council remuneration schemes every four years in tandem with the District Council review, on the basis that Parish/Town Councils could continue to base their basic allowance and other aspects on a percentage of the Rochford District Council basic allowance, pending the next review. (HLEMS)

20 REPAIRS TO THE REAR ACCESS STEPS AT THE CIVIC SUITE, RAYLEIGH AND THE CREATION OF AN ACCESS RAMP

The Executive considered the report of the Head of Legal, Estates and Member Services on refurbishment of the steps at the rear of the Civic Suite, Rayleigh and the creation of an access ramp to provide both disabled access and the loading of stores.

During discussion it was observed that it would be appropriate for considerations to include aspects such as the suitability of the pathway/kerbing leading to the access ramp for wheelchair users. Any necessary work associated with these considerations should be included and the project progressed, provided the total cost falls within budget.

Resolved

That refurbishment of the steps at the rear of the Civic Suite and the creation of an access ramp to provide both disabled access and the loading of stores, as detailed in the report, be agreed. Any further associated work to be undertaken provided the total project cost falls within budget. (HLEMS)

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 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed.

21 PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The Executive considered the exempt report of the Head of Planning and Transportation on proposals in relation to the civil enforcement programme for on-street parking.

It was felt that a number of fundamental concerns could be associated with risk/financial liability and governance aspects of the proposals as they stood.

Resolved

That the Council does not agree to enter into the Civil Enforcement Parking Partnership South on the basis of the potential terms and conditions outlined in the exempt report. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation, together with relevant officers, to enter into negotiations with Essex County Council and the District/Borough Councils involved in an attempt to address the Council's fundamental concerns in relation to risk, financial liability and governance aspects of any new arrangement. (HPT)

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.

Chairman

Date

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