

Council – 15 February 2022

Minutes of the meeting of **Council** held on **15 February 2022** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr Mrs J R Gooding
Vice-Chairman: Cllr M J Steptoe

Cllr Mrs L A Butcher	Cllr R Milne
Cllr M R Carter	Cllr G W Myers
Cllr Mrs T L Carter	Cllr Mrs C A Pavelin
Cllr R R Dray	Cllr Mrs C E Roe
Cllr D S Efde	Cllr Mrs L Shaw
Cllr A H Eves	Cllr P J Shaw
Cllr I A Foster	Cllr S P Smith
Cllr Mrs E P Gadsdon	Cllr D S Sperring
Cllr J N Gooding	Cllr I H Ward
Cllr Mrs J R Gooding	Cllr M J Webb
Cllr B T Hazlewood	Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr M Hoy	Cllr M G Wilkinson
Cllr J L Lawmon	Cllr A L Williams
Cllr Mrs C M Mason	Cllr S A Wilson
Cllr Mrs J E McPherson	Cllr S E Wootton
Cllr D Merrick	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs R P Constable, T D Knight, Mrs J R Lumley, J E Newport, L J Newport and C M Stanley.

OFFICERS PRESENT

J Stephenson	- Chief Executive
A Hutchings	- Strategic Director
M Harwood-White	- Assistant Director, Assets and Commercial
M Hotten	- Assistant Director, Place and Environment
A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic
N Lucas	- Assistant Director, Resources
L Moss	- Assistant Director, People and Communities
D Tribe	- Assistant Director, Transformation and Customer
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic and Corporate Services Officer
P Shepherd	- Revenues & Benefits Manager
W Szyszka	- Democratic Services Officer

29 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 2 November 2021, 7 December 2021 and of the Extraordinary meeting held on 25 January 2022 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr M J Steptoe declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 of the agenda relating to the asset transfer of Little Wakering Open Space by virtue of being a Member of Barling Magna Parish Council.

Cllr Mrs J E McPherson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 by virtue of partner being a Member of Barling Magna Parish Council.

Cllr G W Myers declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6 by virtue of his partner being a Member of Barling Magna Parish Council.

Cllrs Mrs C E Roe, I H Ward, D J Sperring, R R Dray and R Milne each declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 of the agenda relating to the asset transfer of St John Fisher Open Space by virtue of being Members of Rayleigh Town Council.

31 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Resources seeking Council's approval of the revised Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme for 2022/23 to be implemented from 1 April 2022. The report also sought Council's approval for the updated Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax Liability Policy for 2022/23 to be implemented from 1 April 2022.

Cllr S P Smith moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr S E Wootton to include an extra recommendation at paragraph 9.1 of the Report "that the Council introduce a transition scheme for 2022/23 to ensure no resident is adversely financially impacted during 2022/23. This additional support would be applied automatically to bills, without residents needing to apply, and the Revenues & Benefits team will provide ongoing tailored advice and support to those affected to ensure they are in receipt of all income they are entitled to. The cost to RDC is estimated to be c£36k, which could be met from general underspends this year."

Members spoke in favour of the amendment, emphasising that it would be beneficial to residents within the district, particularly in light of the recent increase in nation-wide living costs.

A Member raised a concern that the level of consultation responses received was low and did not provide sufficient, well evidenced data; this could result in administrative challenges for Rochford District Council (RDC). However, Members recognised that the proposed scheme for 2022/23 would positively affect working-age applicants.

The Motion was unanimously agreed.

Resolved

- (1) That the proposed changes to the LCTS scheme be approved to come into effect from 1 April 2022 as detailed in the Section 13A policy (Appendix 1).
- (2) That the updated Discretionary Reduction in Council Tax Liability Policy be approved to come into effect from 1 April 2022 as detailed in the Section 13A (1) (c) policy (Appendix 2).
- (3) That the Council introduce a transition scheme for 2022/23 to ensure no resident is adversely financially impacted during 2022/23. This additional support would be applied automatically to bills, without residents needing to apply, and the Revenues & Benefits team will provide ongoing tailored advice and support to those affected to ensure they are in receipt of all income they are entitled to. The cost to RDC is estimated to be c£36k, which could be met from general underspends this year. (ADR)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

32 ASSET TRANSFER – LITTLE WAKERING OPEN SPACE

Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Place and Environment seeking Council's approval of the transfer of land at Little Wakering Open Space, Little Wakering, as requested by Barling Magna Parish Council.

Cllr D J Sperring moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr G W Myers, that the recommendations set out at paragraph 9.1 of the report be approved.

A Member queried the proposed Heads of Terms and the possibility of RDC committing to the lease for a further 125 years due to an automatic renewal of the contract. A further point was raised with regard to the maintenance scheme with a request that an inspection scheme be included in the lease.

Officers advised that the option of renewal would be considered and discussed with the Parish Council. Officers also advised that an inspection schedule could be written into the lease, rather than Heads of Terms, which would contain more specific details and standard clauses.

Resolved

- (1) To grant a long lease of amenity land at Little Wakering Open space to Barling Magna Parish Council for a term of 125 years at a peppercorn rent.
- (2) To agree the Heads of Terms as set out in Appendix 2; that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Place and Environment in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Place to finalise the lease agreement. (ADPE)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

33 ASSET TRANSFER – ST JOHN FISHER OPEN SPACE

Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Place and Environment seeking Council's approval of the transfer of land at St John Fisher Open Space, Rayleigh, as requested by Rayleigh Town Council.

Cllr D J Sperring moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr D Merrick, that the recommendations set out at paragraph 9.1 of the Report be approved.

Resolved

- (1) To grant a long lease of amenity land at St John Fisher Open Space to Rayleigh Town Council for a term of 125 years at a peppercorn rent.
- (2) To agree the Heads of Terms as set out in Appendix 2; that authority be delegated to the Assistant Director, Place and Environment, and the Assistant Director, Assets and Commercial in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Place to finalise the lease agreement. (ADPE & ADAC)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

34 RETURNING OFFICER'S FEES

Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic seeking Council's approval of the Returning Officer's scale of fees and associated expenses from 2022, as set out in the appendices to the report. The Returning Officer's fees and election expenses were last agreed by Council on 19 February 2019.

Cllr Mrs C E Roe moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr S E Wootton, that the recommendations set out at paragraph 8.1 of the report be approved.

Resolved

- (1) That it be agreed to retain the fees paid to the Returning Officer at their current level and as identified at Appendix 1, Table B.
- (2) That it be agreed to retain the fees for Clerical Allowance at their current level and as identified at Appendix 1, Table B.
- (3) That the increased Election Fees be agreed, as set out in Appendix 1, table C for financial year 2022/23. (ADLD)

(29 Members voted in favour, 0 against and 1 Member abstained.)

35 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022/23

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive seeking Council's approval of the updated Pay Policy Statement (PPS), which must be implemented for the 2022/23 financial year.

Cllr S E Wootton moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr Mrs C E Roe, that the recommendation set out at paragraph 7.1 of the Report be approved.

A Member questioned how the remuneration for the Chief Executive role would be split between the two Councils. Officers clarified that it had been agreed that the split would be 50/50.

A Member raised a question with regard to paragraph 6.1 on page 9.3 of the report as to whether female staff were paid the same amount as male staff and that all equality and diversity aspects were considered. Officers responded that RDC would ensure that all employees were paid fairly and in accordance with their job specifications.

Members expressed the view that paragraph 6.1 should include the word 'will' as opposed to 'should' and that Members would feel more comfortable with voting on a report that included the word 'will'.

Resolved

That the Pay Policy Statement at Appendix 1 be adopted.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

36 ATTENDANCE AT THE ROYAL GARDEN PARTY – 2022

Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic seeking agreement on the attendance for the Royal Garden Party in summer 2022 and to approve the use of the Civic Car and Civic Chauffeur to transport attendees.

Cllr Mrs C E Roe moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr S E Wootton, that the recommendations set out at paragraph 7.1 of the Report be approved.

Resolved

- (1) That Cllr R R Dray be nominated to attend in response to a forthcoming Royal Garden Party invitation for 2022.
- (2) That the Civic Officer submit the nomination to attend a Royal Garden Party by the 18 February deadline.
- (3) That the Civic Car and Civic Chauffeur be used to transport attendees representing Rochford District Council at a Royal Garden Party in 2022. (ADLD)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved

That under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the remaining business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 of the Act.

37 WASTE COLLECTION AND STREET CLEANSING SERVICE

Council considered the exempt report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment on the waste collection and street cleansing service.

Debate of this item is set out in the exempt appendix to the Minutes.

The meeting closed at 8.36 pm.

Chairman

Date

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