

The Executive – 11 October 2022

Minutes of the meeting of **The Executive** held on **11 October 2022** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr S E Wootton
Vice Chairman: Cllr Mrs C E Roe

Cllr D S Efde
Cllr D J Sperring
Cllr I H Ward

Cllr M J Webb
Cllr A L Williams

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Mrs D L Belton.

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllr S A Wilson.

OFFICERS PRESENT

P Drane	- Director of Place
T Lilley	- Director of Communities & Health
M Hotten	- Director of Environment
M Harwood White	- Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial
A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic
W Szyszka	- Democratic Services Officer

200 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 September were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

201 #ONETEAM TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH BRENTWOOD BOROUGH COUNCIL

The Executive considered the report of the Director of Policy & Delivery providing an update on the progress of the #OneTeam Transformation Programme, following scrutiny of the report by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny (O&S) Committee advised the Executive that the O&S Committee had requested a highlight report with updates to ensure that the programme was on schedule and that the Committee was satisfied that it was being delivered to the Committee's expectations. The Chairman of the O&S Committee further advised that the Committee had noted that there were risks which were being identified and managed.

The Chairman of the O&S Committee informed the Executive that the Committee expressed concerns over issues with filling outstanding posts with a

risk of hiring external staff that would cost the Council more than originally anticipated.

Officers emphasised that the programme was being handled behind the scenes and that the Council was on the right track to achieve the programme's milestones, with results being reflected in a few months' time.

The Leader, alongside the Deputy Leader, welcomed the new Strategic Director who had joined the Council earlier that week and expressed gratitude to a current Strategic Director who would be leaving the post due to personal circumstances. The Leader also welcomed the six other appointed Directors, as set out at paragraph 3.7 on page 6.1.2 of the report and added that it remained a challenge appointing to the remaining Director roles.

The Leader also commended Rochford District Council's (RDC) officers and Members who took part in the Three Peaks Challenge in early September and congratulated the participants raising c.£12,000.00 for charity.

Resolved

- (1) To investigate if existing staff can be upskilled to take on the outstanding roles.
- (2) To adopt an appropriate methodology to log and track issues that pose risks for the Council. (DPD)

(This was unanimously agreed.)

202 HEALTH CHECK REVIEW OF THE ASSET DELIVERY PROGRAMME

The Executive considered the report of the Assistant Director, Assets & Commercial following scrutiny by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman of the O&S Committee advised that it was not the Committee's intention to redefine the findings of the report. The Committee was aware that the Asset Delivery Programme (ADP) should be vision-led and that the ADP had faced significant challenges as a result of the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation and cost of living crisis. The Committee's intention, therefore, was to strengthen and amplify the report.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing, Assets & Leisure thanked the Chairman of the O&S Committee and agreed that the report was proactive and the ADP must remain vision-led, taking into account the significant challenges that were faced by the Council. The Portfolio Holder also commented that the report was balanced and highlighted that the ADP had been progressed in exemplary fashion, that 'doing nothing was not an option' and that some form of ADP was essential. It was also noted the Health Check set out 5 recommendations, as listed in Appendix A of the report.

The Portfolio Holder further added that the Council engaged with the community through various routes; however, at the time that this was done the District had faced the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic which resulted in the message being lost amongst a plethora of other messages prioritising information regarding the outbreak. The Portfolio Holder went on to add that stakeholders did not receive the communications in a manner that was successful and effective as anticipated due to attention being prioritised on the pandemic. It was also noted that as a result of the pandemic Council officers began working under new arrangements which were more agile and flexible than at the time the outline business case (OBC) was drafted and that this could not have been foreseen.

Cllr M J Webb moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr D J Sperring, that the following amendment be made to recommendation 2 on page 6.2.4 of the report, "that a risk register/issues log be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis."

Cllr M J Webb moved a Motion seconded by Cllr D J Sperring that the following amendment be made to recommendation 3 on page 6.2.4 of the report, "that the Executive ensures that the programme continues to be vision-led and forward thinking."

Cllr M J Webb moved a Motion seconded by Cllr D J Sperring that the following be added as an additional recommendation, "that the health check review of the Asset Delivery Programme and the recommendations contained therein be noted."

The Leader thanked the Portfolio Holder and officers for their hard work on the ADP.

The Leader emphasised that this report was transparent, open and public. The Leader added that it was not financially viable for the Council to maintain surplus buildings despite community attachment. It was noted that one of the Council's priorities was to be financially sustainable to maximise the Council's assets and this must be reflected in the work of the ADP.

The Leader emphasised that the report and the recommendations contained within were balanced and reasonable and that lessons had been learned regarding how engagement and consultation processes had been carried out. The Leader stated that as a Council this should had been done better and responsibility was taken by the Leader, reassuring that this was for the wider community's benefit. The Leader made reference to the effects that the pandemic had on residents' lives directly as well as various circumstances that had resulted in the Council operating in a new manner alongside adopting its partnership with Brentwood Borough Council (BBC). The Leader concluded that the health check review of what the Council had been achieving demonstrated that the health check and the progress of the ADP was positive.

The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services, Legal & IT agreed with the Leader regarding the report being balanced; however, suggested that the recommendations within the Appendix were written in simpler terms.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning commended the report for its clarity and ability to clearly present the journey of the ADP. The Portfolio Holder thanked the O&S Committee for their recommendations that aided the Council to clarify questions and queries arising from the report. This was endorsed by the Leader.

Resolved

- (1) That going forward with the ADP, consideration of the impact of our carbon footprint be given when buying in services and procuring goods.
- (2) That a risk register/issues log be presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis.
- (3) That the Executive ensures that the programme continues to be vision-led and forward thinking.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

- (4) That the health check review of the Asset Delivery Programme and the recommendations contained therein be noted. (ADAC)

203 COST OF LIVING UPDATE

The Executive considered the report of the Director of Communities & Health setting out the current version of the joint Cost of Living Action Plan for Rochford and Brentwood as agreed at the Executive on 27 September for Members' review.

The Portfolio Holder for Communities & Health thanked the Director of Health & Communities for their work on this report.

The Director advised that a working group had been set up with a meeting arranged for the latter part of October. In the future, a dashboard would be developed; however, Members were made aware that the Council would be working with voluntary sector data, therefore information would not be available on a month-to-month basis.

In response to a Member question, officers advised that the Council website contained useful information and it acted as a good landing page. Additionally, a communications plan would be developed through the working group containing various means of relaying information, i.e., videos, newspaper announcements, etc. with the aim to share key information that would be relevant to various community groups.

Resolved

The Executive – 11 October 2022

That the current version of the joint Cost of Living Action Plan for Rochford & Brentwood be noted. (DCH)

The meeting closed at 8.01 pm.

Chairman

Date

UNCONFIRMED

If you would like these minutes in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

UNCONFIRMED