



**MINUTES of  
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE  
26 SEPTEMBER 2017**

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**PRESENT**

Chairman	Councillor D M Sismey
Vice-Chairman	Councillor I E Dobson
Councillors	J P F Archer, P G L Elliott, A S Fluker and Miss M R Lewis
Ex-Officio Non-Voting Member	M F L Durham CC
Substitute Members	Councillors R G Boyce MBE and Mrs N G F Shaughnessy

**463. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES**

The Chairman drew attention to the list of notices published on the back of the agenda.

**464. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTION NOTICE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs B F Acevedo, B S Beale MBE, M S Heard and Rev. A E J Shrimpton. In accordance with notice duly given Councillor R G Boyce MBE was attending as a substitute for Councillor Shrimpton and Councillor Mrs N G F Shaughnessy as a substitute for Councillor Heard.

**465. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 July 2017 be received.

**Minute 281 – Apologies for Absence**

Councillor Miss M R Lewis advised that she had not given her apologies for this meeting and did attend the meeting. This was duly noted.

**RESOLVED**

- (ii) that subject to the above amendment the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 25 July 2017 be confirmed.

**466. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Councillor A S Fluker declared in the interest of openness and transparency that in relation to Agenda Item 16 – Market Site, he knew a person mentioned in the report.

**467. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

No requests had been received.

**468. CHAIRMAN'S GOOD NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were none.

**469. PROMENADE PARK, MALDON - INCOME SHARE FOR THE MALDON DISTRICT**

The Director of Resources reported that following the meeting of the Community Services Committee she had undertaken some research and spoken to Mr Farrington (Chairman of the Maldon Mud Race Ltd). She sought Members agreement to defer this item of business until the Maldon Mud Race Ltd had completed its return on the charities commission website and filed accounts for 2016 / 17. This was agreed.

**RESOLVED** that determination of the share of car parking income for the Maldon Mud Race 2017 be deferred to a future meeting of this Committee pending the Maldon Mud Race Ltd completing its return on the charities commission site and filing accounts for 2016 / 17.

At this time the Director of Resources reported that in relation to Agenda Item 10 - Replacement Commissioning and Procurement Strategy and Contract Procedure Rules she had been informed of further changes required and requested that Members consider deferring consideration of this item until its next meeting. This was duly agreed.

**RESOLVED** that consideration of the updated Commissioning and Procurement Strategy and Contract Procedure Rules be deferred to a future meeting of this Committee pending further update.

**470. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE - PROJECT 180**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources, requesting approval of a supplementary estimate to complete work to the recently formed St. Cedd's car park.

The report provided background information regarding the project and the total costs associated with it. It was noted that external lighting, safety barriers and road markings were still outstanding and a supplementary estimate of £9,500 was required to allow completion of this work.

In response to questions regarding the quotation costs received, the Director of Resources advised she was happy to provide Members with a breakdown of the related costs. She also confirmed that details of overtime costs would be included in the final report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to this project.

**RESOLVED** that a supplementary estimate of £9,500 to complete works to St. Cedd's Car Park (Project 180) be agreed.

#### **471. ANNUAL REVIEW OF FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources proposing revisions to the Financial Regulations following the recent annual review.

A summary of the changes were set out in the report and an updated version of the Financial Regulations was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Concerns were raised in respect to how the Financial Regulations sought to address the external arrangements relating to partnerships, with particular reference being made to the ownership and control of such funding. Members were reminded that the Section 151 Officer was ultimately responsible for how funding was spent and terms and conditions complied with, eligibility criteria or anything set out in the original partnership agreement. The Director of Resources suggested that a separate appendix could be incorporated into the Financial Regulations to address Members concerns regarding the specific and detailed requirements on working in partnership.

Members commented on the revised regulations and particular reference was made to ensuring they were complied with. Following further comments the Director of Resources explained that a set of internal procedure notes would sit alongside these Regulations to provide clear and simple instructions in respect of some of the key financial processes e.g. debtors, accounts payable etc. She suggested that these procedure notes be brought to this Committee for overall approval.

Councillor A S Fluker proposed that the Financial Regulations be further amended in light of discussions and brought back to the next meeting of this Committee. This was duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the Financial Regulations be further amended in light of the above discussions and brought back to the next meeting of this Committee.

#### **472. REPLACEMENT COMMISSIONING AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY AND CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES**

Members were reminded of their earlier decision to defer consideration of this item of business.

**RESOLVED** that consideration of the updated Commissioning and Procurement Strategy and Contract Procedure Rules be deferred to a future meeting of this Committee pending further update.

#### 473. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY - UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources seeking adoption of a number of principles for the 2018 / 19 budget setting process.

Members were advised that a review of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had taken place and savings of £976,000 were required to close the budget gap in the next three years to 2021. The Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and Finance Team were currently working on a zero based budget with no growth items. Service reviews would also be carried out to ensure that they were as cost efficient and streamlined as possible. It was noted that 2016 / 17 had seen a significant underspend to capital funding and moving forward only requests that could be delivered within the budget year would be funded.

A number of principles for the 2018 / 19 budget process were proposed and these were set out in the report. The Chairman reminded Members that they were not making any policy decision at this time but being asked to consider these principles which would be used to calculate the MTFS.

Councillor A S Fluker proposed that recommendation (ii) be amended to add the following to the principles list:

- That a balanced budget (or how the Council would achieve a balanced budget) be presented for the years 2018 / 19, 2019 / 20 and 2020 / 21 with options to consider for the Council.

A number of comments were raised regarding the Council's budget and Members were advised how zero based budgets for 2018 / 19 with no additional budget growth, save for extraordinary circumstances, would help Officers to put forward proposals which identify what is needed to achieve a balanced budget.

The proposed amendment to the recommendations in the name of Councillor Fluker was duly seconded and agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the following principles be adopted for the 2018 / 19 budget setting process, in particular that this year's process should focus to balance the corporate budget in the medium term.

- No additional budget growth (including one-offs growths) will be added save for exceptional circumstances;
- The principle of zero based budgeting will apply for the 2018 / 19 budgets onwards;
- The Council is to improve income generated through fees and charges following a review on the existing fees and charges policy;
- By September 2018 a number of service reviews will be completed with a view to identify further savings and improve efficiency;
- These service reviews will report back to the Transformation Board, appropriate Programme Committee and the Finance and Corporate Services Committee;
- Explore the Council's commercial activities to ensure that the Council's income can be maximised. This should include any new fees and charges activities and implementation of the Council's commercial strategy as it is developed;

- Explore further partnership working with other organisations, this includes sharing of our services;
- Review the Policy on Reserves and Balances to ensure that it supports the delivery of the corporate priorities;
- Capital funding will only be allocated if essential, value for money is demonstrated and the project is fully deliverable.
- That a balanced budget (or how the Council would achieve a balanced budget) be presented for the years 2018 / 19, 2019 / 20 and 2020 / 21 with options to consider for the Council.

#### **474. ASSET MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources seeking recreation of the Asset Management Working Group (AMWG).

The report provided background information regarding the AMWG and a copy of its previous terms of reference were attached at Appendix 1 to the report. Members were advised that in order to increase challenge and provide increased insight of Member views on Asset Management recreation of the AMWG was recommended.

A number of comments were raised regarding the membership of the Working Group and holding meetings in the daytime to increase availability of Officers and save costs.

It was agreed that the request to provide all Members with a copy of the report considered by this Committee on 23 June 2015 which led to the resolution to disband the Asset Management Working Group be added to the recommendations.

#### **RECOMMENDED**

- (i) that the Asset Management Working Group be reformed with immediate effect in accordance with the Terms of Reference attached at **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes;
- (ii) that subject to (i) above the Council's constitution be amended to allow meetings of the Asset Management Working Group to take place in the evening;
- (iii) that a copy of the report considered by the Finance and Corporate Services Committee on 23 June 2015 which led to the resolution to disband the Asset Management Working Group be circulated to all Members.

#### **475. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item(s) of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

#### **476. HUMAN RESOURCES STATISTICS - QUARTER ONE 2017 / 18**

The Committee received and noted the report of the Director of Resources presenting Human Resources statistics for the period 1 April to 30 June 2017.

Statistics and updates relating to the following areas were detailed in the report:

- Labour Turnover;
- Recruitment;
- Agency workers – attached as Appendix 1 to the report;
- Off payroll workers' procedure;
- Staff Sickness Levels
- Workforce Statistics – attached as Appendix 2 to the report.

The Chairman requested that in future any confidential information in relation to Human Resources Statistics should be presented as a separate report.

In response to a question regarding market supplements, the Director of Resources advised that the Group Manager - People, Performance and Policy was currently reviewing the Council's recruitment and retention policy which included a clause regarding the repayment of market supplements.

**RESOLVED** that the contents of the report be noted.

#### **477. MARKET SITE**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources summarising potential options in relation to a dispute concerning the market place car park.

Councillor A S Fluker proposed that a lease be granted to the claimant with the rights to park cars only on the land tinted blue, yellow and mauve on the EX205994 Filed Title Plan (attached as part of Appendix 1 to the report). This proposal was duly seconded.

Following further discussion it was agreed that if a counter offer was proposed by the claimant this would be brought back to the Committee for consideration.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that recommendation (i) as set out in the report, for the grant of a lease be agreed subject to modification whereby the claimant be provided with the right to park cars only on the land tinted blue, yellow and mauve on the EX205994 Filed Title Plan (attached as part of Appendix 1 to the report);
- (ii) that an update on progress with the lease be brought to the next meeting of this Committee.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.48 pm.

D M SISMEY  
CHAIRMAN

## ASSET MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

### Constitution and Terms of Reference

#### Constitution

1. The membership of the Working Group shall be constituted annually by the appointment of two Members from the Finance and Corporate Services, Community Services and Planning and Licensing Committees at their first meetings following the statutory annual meeting of the Council.

#### Terms of Reference

1. To oversee all capital assets owned by or otherwise available to the Council.
2. To oversee system requirements for recording property data.
3. To ensure that adequate processes are in place to highlight future planned maintenance requirements for all Council owned assets and those for which the Council is responsible.
4. To review recommendations for inclusion of budget provision to meet planned maintenance requirements.
5. To establish procedures for reporting mismatches between assets held and those required to secure achievement of corporate or service objectives.
6. To review options on issues affecting asset usage and suitability, including under-utilisation, identification of surplus properties, alternative use and disposal options.
7. To oversee reporting / monitoring arrangements to highlight effective use of Council assets.
8. To review, project appraisals for ongoing asset related projects.
9. To review offers received for purchase of council land or assets.
10. To review asset management progress monitoring reporting at Officer and Member level.
11. To review options for external funding to meet and develop above objectives.

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