



**MINUTES of
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE
19 APRIL 2016**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor D M Sismey
Vice-Chairman	Councillor Mrs H E Elliott
Councillors	Mrs B F Acevedo, J P F Archer, A S Fluker and B E Harker
Substitute Members	Councillors I E Dobson, M F L Durham and Mrs M E Thompson
In Attendance	Councillors R G Boyce MBE, CC

IN THE CHAIR: COUNCILLOR MRS H E ELLIOTT, VICE-CHAIRMAN

1170. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

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

1171. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss M R Lewis, C A R MacKenzie, M R Pearlman and Rev. A E J Shrimpton. In accordance with notice duly given Councillor I E Dobson was attending as a substitute for Councillor Shrimpton and Councillor M F L Durham as a substitute for Councillor MacKenzie and Mrs M E Thompson as a substitute for Councillor Pearlman.

1172. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 March 2016 be approved and confirmed.

1173. ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

The meeting adjourned at 7:33pm upon arrival of the Chairman of the Committee.

1174. RESUMPTION OF BUSINESS

The meeting resumed in open session at 7:34pm.

1175. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

1176. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was none.

1177. COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN'S GOOD NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman highlighted a number of good news items which included:

- Filming in the District – Filming had recently taken place for ITV’s “Tales of the Coast” and the production team were extremely impressed and appreciative of the “can-do” attitude of Maldon District Council.
- Her Majesty’s 90th Birthday – A plaque would be unveiled at Hythe Quay and a Sunset Parade and Beacon Lighting ceremony would take place on 21 April to celebrate.
- Housing Benefit and Council Tax support – Despite an overall increase in the volume of work, performance targets had been exceeded and were significantly better than national targets.
- Collection of Council Tax and Business Rates – The collection rate for Council Tax had been sustained and the collection rate for Non-Domestic rates had increased.
- Apprenticeships – A second apprentice has been appointed and recruitment for a third apprentice was about to commence.
- European Union (EU) Referendum – Numbers of postal vote applications had increased due to the interest in the EU Referendum.

1178. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources providing an update on corporate health and safety activity from 1 January to 31 March 2016 (Quarter Four (Q4)) (attached as Appendix 1 to the report) and seeking agreement of a health and safety action plan for 2016/17 (attached as Appendix 2 to the report).

RESOLVED

- (i) that accident and incident statistics for quarter four to be noted;
- (ii) that progress with the health and safety action plan for 2015 / 16 be noted;
- (iii) that the health and safety action plan for 2016 / 17, be agreed.

1179. INTERNAL HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) INVESTIGATIONS AND PROPOSED CHANGES TO HR APPEALS PROCEDURES

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources seeking Members' approval of new arrangements for dealing with staff disciplinary / grievance investigations including the hearing of appeals, and for consequential arrangements to the Council's Constitution to be made including the discontinuance of the Appeals Sub-Committee.

The report provided background information on Workplace Investigations, Appeals and the need to adhere to the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Services (ACAS) guidance particularly in the case of dismissal. In order to comply with ACAS best practice the report suggested that the Appeals Sub-Committee be disbanded and a new process involving an Appeals Hearing Panel be agreed.

RECOMMENDED

- (i) that the need for the Members' Appeals Sub-Committee is replaced by new singular arrangements involving an Appeals Hearing Panel for the handling of appeals arising from HR Policies with the exception of those matters dealt with by the Investigating and Disciplinary Committee as set out and referred to in **APPENDICES 1, 2 and 3** to these minutes.
- (ii) that the relevant procedures referred to at **APPENDIX 2** and included in **APPENDIX 3** to these Minutes be updated accordingly.
- (iii) that the appeals processes for non-statutory roles of Director be incorporated into the existing Investigating and Disciplinary Committee procedures;
- (iv) that the Legal and Democratic Services Manager be authorised to make the necessary consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution to reflect these changes.

1180. BUSINESS PLAN 2016 / 17 - DIRECTORATE OF RESOURCES

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources seeking Members' approval of the Level 1 Business Plan 2016 / 17 for the Directorate of Resources (attached as Appendix 1 to the report).

The report reminded Members that the existing Corporate Plan for the period 2015 – 2019 was agreed in February 2015. The Plan was a strategic document that set out the vision and corporate goals that the Council had agreed to focus on over the four year period along with a suite of high level outcomes associated with each goal.

The Level 1 Business Plan contained information regarding all Directorates of the Council to avoid duplication which had occurred in previous years when reporting business plans. Members' particular attention was drawn to pages 40 – 51 which provided the priorities and targets within the Resources Directorate for the next 12 months.

In response to a question regarding the corporate risk ‘Committee structure not fit for purpose’, the Director of Resources provided the Committee with information regarding a planned internal audit review of Committee structures due to take place as part of the 2016 / 17 Internal Audit plan. Members were advised that the terms of reference of this review has not been confirmed and that views will be sought from relevant members in due course.

RESOLVED that the part of the Business Plan for the Directorate of Resources for 2016 / 17 (Appendix 1 to the report pages 40 – 51) be agreed.

1181. STAFF PAY AWARD 2016 / 17

The Committee received the report of the Director of Resources seeking approval to award a 1% pay increase to all staff with effect from April 2016. It was noted that discussions were still on-going at national level in relation to pay agreements; however it was acknowledged that the Local Government Employers representatives have offered 1%. Members were advised that should the national pay award be higher than 1%, adjustments would be made to the pay line to bring it in line with National Joint Council (NJC) proposals.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the final settlement on Chief Executive pay for 2016 and a copy of the Local Government Association press release summarising the Employers pay offer for all other Officers was attached at Appendix 2.

RESOLVED that a 1% pay increase from April 2016, as budgeted, be agreed.

1182. STRATEGIC AND FINANCIAL PLANNING PROCESS

The Committee received the report of the Director of Resources seeking agreement to the annual Strategic and Financial Planning Process (S&FPP) for 2017 / 18 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

It was noted that the Strategic and Financial Planning Process aimed to ensure available resources were effectively directed towards achievement of the Council’s agreed corporate goals.

RESOLVED that the Strategic and Financial Planning Process for 2017 / 18 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

1183. REVISED 2016 / 17 BUDGET

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources, seeking Members’ approval to revise the 2016 / 17 budget approved by the Council on 4 February 2016 to include additional income from parking and grant figures announced in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement. It was noted that best practice in financial management suggested that it was essential for the budget to reflect the latest position faced by the Council; this would also enable meaningful budgetary control reports to be produced throughout the year.

RESOLVED

- i) that the revised medium term financial position as detailed below, be noted.

	2017 / 18	2018 / 19	2019 / 20
	£000	£000	£000
Gap per Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Feb. 2016 Council	620	1,073	1,378
Additional car parking income	(124)	(124)	(124)
<i>Final Settlement</i>			
Transitional Grant	(40)		
Additional Rural Services Delivery Grant	(11)		
Removal of the tariff adjustment		(68)	
Revised gap	445	881	1,254
Increasing Council Tax by £5 per annum from 2017/18*	(53)	(106)	(158)
Revised gap	392	775	1,096

* The Secretary of State has indicated the Council Tax Referendum limit for District Councils would be set at the higher of 2% or £5 until the end of the decade. The decision on the level of council tax increase will be subject to Council's approval every year. The figures shown in the above table are the additional income over and above the 1.5% council tax increase assumed in the MTFS approved in February.

RECOMMENDED

- ii) that the revised 2016 / 17 budget as attached at **APPENDIX 4** to these Minutes, be approved.

1184. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The exclusion of the public and press was proposed by Councillor B D Harker and was duly seconded.

Councillor R G Boyce MBE, CC joined the meeting at this point in the meeting.

Councillor A S Fluker referred to some guidance he had received from the Monitoring Officer in respect of the private and confidential nature of this report. He expressed concern about considering this item of business in private session, particularly in relation to the monies being requested and felt the public should be aware of this.

The Chairman then put the proposal to exclude the public and press which was agreed.

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

1185. SUPERFAST BROADBAND IN THE MALDON DISTRICT

The Committee received the report of the Director of Planning and Regulatory Services, the purpose of which was to update Members regarding the next phase of the Superfast Essex Broadband Programme following the recommendation of the Finance and Corporate Services Committee on 22 September 2015, and the final decision of the Council on 29 October 2015.

Councillor A S Fluker proposed that an amendment to the recommendations to specify that approval was subject to Essex County Council providing 24 Megabytes per second. This proposal was not seconded.

Following a lengthy debate, the Chairman proposed that the Committee receive a report back in one year's time detailing connectivity in relation to the areas set out in the report and whether they were receiving the speeds promised. This was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the updated information (as set out in the report) and the amended contribution proposal required for funding Phase 2a of the Essex Superfast Broadband Programme (now confirmed as £45,000 paid over three years of the duration of phase 2a (i.e. Phase 2a for the whole of the Essex wide programme) be noted;
- (ii) that the Finance and Corporate Services Committee receive an annual report detailing connectivity in relation to the areas set out in the report and whether they were receiving the speeds promised.

RECOMMENDED

- (iii) that a capital contribution of £45,000 (paid over three years of the duration of phase 2a (i.e. Phase 2a for the whole of the Essex wide programme) that is required for funding Phase 2a of the Essex Superfast Broadband Programme, be agreed.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.30 pm

D M SISMEY
CHAIRMAN