



**MINUTES of
FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES COMMITTEE
25 JULY 2017**

PRESENT

Chairman	Councillor D M Sismey
Vice-Chairman	Councillor I E Dobson
Councillors	J P F Archer, P G L Elliott, A S Fluker, M S Heard, Miss M R Lewis and Rev. A E J Shrimpton
Ex-Officio Non- Voting Member	Councillor B S Beale MBE
In Attendance	Councillors H M Bass and R G Boyce MBE

280. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

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

281. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs B F Acevedo, M F L Durham and Miss M R Lewis. In accordance with notice duly given Councillor R G Boyce was attending as a substitute for Councillor Miss Lewis.

282. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14 June 2017 be approved and confirmed.

283. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST

There were none.

284. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No requests had been received.

285. CHAIRMAN'S GOOD NEWS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to the following items:

- Maldon District's Local Development Plan approved by Secretary of State Sajid Javid.
- Work on the Essex Police base at the Council Offices had been completed and the Police will be relocating during the Summer.
- Exam success – Council Accountants have achieved success in recent Association of Chartered Certified Accountants exams.
- The Burnham-on-Crouch Neighbourhood Development Plan Referendum took place last week with 1,432 voting yes.
- External Audit have nearly completed the audit of the Council's financial statement.

286. CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY

Councillor Miss M R Lewis joined the meeting. As Councillor Miss Lewis was in attendance Councillor R G Boyce stepped down as substitute at this point.

The Committee received the report of the Director of Resources reporting corporate health and safety activity for the first quarter to 30 June 2017. A summary by directorate and a description of the reported accidents and near misses were set out in the report. Appendix 1 to the report set out progress with the Health and Safety Action Plan for 2017 / 18.

In response to a question, further information was provided in respect of the Council's procedure for dealing with unacceptable behaviour.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the accident and incident statistics for quarter one be noted;
- (ii) that progress with the Health and Safety Action Plan for 2017 / 18 be noted.

287. HUMAN RESOURCES POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources seeking Members' consideration of proposed changes to the Council's human resources policy 'Probation Policy and Procedure' (attached as Appendix 1 to the report).

The report set out a number of changes that had been made to the Policy. It was noted that agreement to the changes had been reached in consultation with the recognised union, UNISON.

RECOMMENDED that the Probation Policy and Procedure, attached at **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes, be approved.

288. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Customers and Community seeking Members' approval to vary the fees for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) in accordance with the recommendation of the Community Services Committee on 4 July 2017.

It was noted that the Council had made good progress in expanding the conventional DFG service and was now looking at how work could be linked with other complementary services to meet Government expectations. The proposed change to fees to align the Council with other Districts would help maintain capacity and subject to agreement by Essex County Council give the ability to top-slice some of the other grant to support the expansion of local services provided. A testimony at Appendix 1 to the report illustrated the positive impact that the Council can have on the lives of some of the most vulnerable local residents.

RESOLVED that in order to make the service sustainable and meeting current and future strategic demands, the increase of Disabled Facilities Grants fees to 15%, be approved.

289. 2016 / 17 BUDGETARY OUTTURN UNDERSPENDS

The Committee received the report of the Director of Resources providing information in relation to the current status of capital projects, why they may not be proceeding as planned and when it was identified that a project may not happen. The report also provided information on the reasons for the revenue outturn underspend position for 2016 / 17.

Appendix 1 to the report provided a summary of key underspends from the 2016 / 17 outturn and a table within the report identified the largest of key budget underspends, categorising the reason. Appendix 2 detailed the capital programme for 2016 / 17 and its position at year end. It was noted that only 67% of the programme had been completed and a table in the report summarised the reasons for project underspends. The report advised that work programmes and capital monitoring procedures had been reviewed to ensure that issues in delivering the capital programme were less frequent and identified at an earlier stage.

In response to a number of questions raised, the Committee was provided with the following information:

- The Corporate Management Team were looking to ensure proper internal controls were in place with regards to budgeting.
- The Council was moving towards a zero based budget for 2018 / 19;
- Supplementary estimates were being stopped where virements could take place;
- Work was ongoing to increase understanding of capital monitoring and being more stringent in what was being approved.
- In respect of capital projects over the last financial year, there had been an overspend on the St. Cedds budget but in respect of the ongoing revenue

contracts each contract had an allocated contracts manager and it was reported that these had not cause any ongoing issues in the last financial year.

Reference was made to the need for accountability from the Corporate Leadership Team as well as Group Managers, reporting to Members where delivery may not be possible.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report and proposed remedial actions, be noted.

290. BUDGETARY CONTROL (APRIL - JUNE 2017)

The Committee received the report of the Director of Resources providing Members with key financial information on the progress to date against the approved budget over the period 1 April – 30 June 2017.

The report detailed the variance analysis for the following areas:

- Revenue Budgets (as shown in Appendices 1 and 1A to the report);
- Vacancy savings (as shown in Appendix 2 to the report);
- Agency expenditure;
- Major Sources of Income;
- Capital Projects (as shown in Appendix 3 to the report);

It was noted that current financial performance was within the approved budget limits. Capital projects were progressing, with further projects to start within the Council's parks and open spaces and the Director of Customers and Community had reviewed resources to ensure estimated delivery times were achieved.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

291. SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES AND VIREMENTS

The Director of Resources reported that there were no supplementary estimates or virements to report for this period.

292. EXCLUSION OF 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 of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

293. MILLFIELDS CARAVAN PARK, BURNHAM-ON-CROUCH

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Resources updating Members on the negotiations for the lease at the Millfields Caravan Park, Burnham-on-Crouch following the meeting of this Committee on 26 April where it was requested that subject

to a directors personal guarantee for a minimum period of ten years a new lease be offered to Birch Leisure Parks Ltd.

The report provided background information regarding the lease and detailed the result of discussions between Officers, Essex Legal Services and Birch Leisure Parks (and their advisors). Members' attention was drawn to a table in the report which set out two options for consideration. It was clarified that as well as the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council other Members had attended the meeting with Birch Leisure Parks.

Councillor A S Fluker proposed that the Council agree option one as set out in the report. This proposal was duly seconded.

In response to a number of questions the Council's Legal Advisor provided the Committee with additional information which included details regarding:

- the planning application to be submitted;
- the process if planning permission was not granted;
- the proposed lease commencement dates and rent provisions;
- the process if the company were to go into administration;
- the designation of the site as a holiday park.

The Chairman then put the proposal in the name of Councillor Fluker to the Committee and upon a vote being taken this was agreed.

RESOLVED that a new lease for the Millfields Caravan Park, Burnham-on-Crouch be offered to Birch Leisure Parks Limited subject to option one as detailed in the report.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 8.05 pm.

D M SISMEY
CHAIRMAN