



**MINUTES of  
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
10 JANUARY 2018**

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**PRESENT**

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Chairman      | Councillor M W Helm   |
| Vice-Chairman | Councillor R P F Dewick   |
| Councillors   | Mrs P A Channer, CC, P G L Elliott, M S Heard, N R Pudney,<br>S J Savage and Mrs M E Thompson |

**711. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES**

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

**712. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

**713. MINUTES - 4 OCTOBER 2017**

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 October 2017 be received.

**Minute No. 494: Project Update – Procurement and Delivery of the 2016 / 17 Capital Programme**

It was noted that the additional information highlighted (in red) in paragraphs two and three of this Minute had been proposed by Councillor R P F Dewick and agreed for inclusion, by the Committee at the last meeting. In response to a comment regarding the statement "...no-one was to blame..." the Chief Executive sought to provide Members with her recollection of the discussion that took place.

**Minute 495: Any Other Items of Scrutiny Members Wish to Consider**

In response to a question raised regarding the scrutiny requested regarding internal and external communications, it was clarified that this piece of scrutiny would include the complete email system.

**RESOLVED**

- (ii) that subject to the above amendment, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 4 October 2017 be confirmed.

## **714. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

### **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 November 2017 be received.

### **Minute No. 615 – Minutes of the Last Meeting**

#### **Minute No. 494 – Project Update Procurement and Delivery of the 2016 / 17 Capital Programme**

The Chief Executive drew Members' attention to the amendment from Councillor R P F Dewick and asked that it be recorded that her view was different to that stated.

It was noted that paragraph three of this Minute should read "...these reserves soon be *spent* and then...".

### **RESOLVED**

- (ii) that subject to the above amendment the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 22 November 2017 be confirmed.

## **715. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was none.

## **716. DISCLOSURE OF INTEREST**

Councillor S J Savage disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 9 – Review of the Council Decision on the Petition to Reinstate the Marine Lake, as he had voted on the original decision and appeared to be scrutinising himself.

Councillor Mrs P A Channer disclosed a non-pecuniary interest as an Essex County Councillor for the Maldon Division, was Chairman of the Planning and Licensing Committee and sat on the South Eastern Area Planning Committee. She also advised in relation to Agenda Item 9 – Review of the Council Decision on the Petition to Reinstate the Marine Lake that she had voted on the original decision. She declared a further interest in Agenda Item 8 – Recruitment of GPs in the Maldon District, as she sat on the Maldon Health Hub and Stakeholder Project Board as a Maldon District Councillor and that the Board was constituted with Members of the Clinical Commissioning Group.

## **717. PRIMARY SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE MALDON DISTRICT**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Customers and Community updating Members on an item of scrutiny relating to primary school education in the Maldon District.

The Chairman introduced Nicola Pruden, School Effectiveness Partner from Essex County Council and Rev. Tim Elbourne from Chelmsford Diocese.

The report provided details of meetings that had taken place with representatives of the Diocese of Chelmsford and Essex County Council to explore some of the recommendations made by this Committee at its January 2017 meeting. Recruitment and retention of teachers along with lack of affordable housing were highlighted as areas of concern and the report set out some of the ongoing work by the Council to address these.

The Committee were provided, in advance of the meeting, with two summary sheets the standards of education in the Maldon District in 2017, comparing the Maldon District to other districts and its 2016 performance. Members were provided with additional information regarding education in the District which included:

- All Key Stage 1 (KS1) elements had improved in 2017 and Maldon District's ranking had risen.
- Recruitment and retention of strong teachers and leaders of schools was a priority. It was noted that the problems experienced recruiting into the Maldon District were a challenge seen across all rural areas of the country. The financial pressures linked to the recruitment and retention of good teachers were also highlighted. It was noted that housing incentives or ways of getting people to move into and teach long term in the area were required. The Director of Customers and Community advised that the Council was willing to share its recruitment packs which may be of assistance when recruiting teachers and Governors to the District.
- Governors - There were vacancies for governors across schools within the District. Ms Pruden advised that they were looking to Parish and Town Councils and whether there was opportunity to utilise their connections with local communities to recruit governors.
- Housing – The Director of Customers and Community reported that the Strategic Housing Manager was reviewing housing in the District and the Council was willing to discuss requirements with education providers regarding community led housing.
- Officers were working with colleagues to identify further ways of ensuring schools were seen as part of a community. An example of releasing vacant classrooms in a school which had spare provision was discussed.

The Chairman thanked Ms Pruden and Rev. Elbourne for attending the meeting.

## **RESOLVED**

- (i) that the update on progress in relation to recommendations made in January 2017, be noted;
- (ii) that the performance update of primary education within the Maldon District, be noted;
- (iii) that the following recommendations to the relevant educational providers on key findings and this Council on initiatives to assist the educational providers in improving performance within the Maldon District be agreed as follows:

- a. the Council offers the Diocese of Chelmsford and Essex County Council use of district promotional materials to aid recruitment of Teachers and School Governors within the Maldon District;
  - b. that the Council provides details of local Town and Parish Councils to the Diocese of Chelmsford and Essex County Council to enable sharing of Governor recruitment issues by specific area to raise awareness and assistance in recruitment;
  - c. the Council facilitates dialogue between Town and Parish Councils with schools within their locality to encourage greater joint working.
- (iv) that future updates relating to progress on the above recommendations are made to the Locality Board and this matter is now concluded by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

## **718. RECRUITMENT OF GPS IN THE MALDON DISTRICT**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive setting out the background to its scrutiny on GP (General Practitioner) recruitment in the District.

The Chairman introduced Mr Donald McGeachey from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Dr Tiatino and Dr Julie McGeachy, local GPs and Ms Lesley Beale and Mr David Barker, practice managers at Blackwater and Longfields Doctors surgeries.

The report set out a number of potential questions to be raised with the health representatives present and in response to these and additional discussions the following information was provided:

- GP recruitment – Members were advised that there were problems recruiting GPs into the area and how very few wanted to settle permanently in practices opting instead for locum work. It was noted that recruiting GPs into rural practices was a national problem.
- Workforce diversification – The CCG were working alongside practices to identify their needs, this included upskilling staff e.g. teaching nurses how to prescribe drugs, increasing triage levels and utilising receptionists to assist in directing patients through the most appropriate channel of care. Dr McGeachy reported on a number of initiatives that her practice were implementing as a way to try and improve the service offered to patients. It was noted that Anglia Ruskin University may become a medical training centre in the future.
- Members were advised by the practice managers of work their respective practices were doing to provide a better service to patients alongside freeing up the availability of GPs. This included utilising the NHS initiative for a pharmacist in practice and a text message reminder service to try and reduce non-attendance. It was noted that if patients cancelled rather than not attend appointments this would provide a lot more availability. There was also a need to educate patients to make them aware of the other options available to them within their GP practice.
- Educating young people in the District of the benefits of being a GP was discussed. The Chief Executive advised that the Council was working on a skills strategy and this was one of the areas the Council was looking to support.

She confirmed that Officers would engage directly with GPs as part of this piece of work and look to identify any areas where assistance could be provided by the Council.

- Contributions to GPs through monies raised from planning applications and Section 106 agreement contributions was raised. In response the Chief Executive reported that the NHS had recently been reviewing this and it was noted that the allocation of such funds was the responsibility of the NHS. The Chief Executive agreed to seek confirmation from the CCG and NHS England on how allocation was prioritised.

In response to a question regarding the text message reminder service, it was noted that patients had to sign up to the service. Councillor M S Heard proposed that a leaflet be produced by the CCG and distributed with new Council Tax bill letters due to be sent out by the Council, advising the public of the service and encouraging them to sign up. This proposal was duly seconded and agreed.

The Chairman thanked those representatives for attending the meeting and the information they had provided.

**RESOLVED** that a leaflet be produced by the CCG and distributed with new Council Tax bill letters due to be sent out by the Council, advising the public of the service and encouraging them to sign up.

#### **719. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL DECISION ON THE PETITION TO REINSTATE THE MARINE LAKE, PROMENADE PARK, MALDON**

The Committee considered the report of the Director of Customers and Community seeking Members' review of the decision made by the Council on 2 November 2017 on the petition calling for the reinstatement of the former Marine Lake at Promenade Park.

The report provided background information regarding the petition, its submission and consideration by the Council. A copy of the decision issued was attached as Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that a complaint had been raised in relation to this decision and a number of reasons for the complaint detailed (as set out in Appendix 2 to the report). The Director of Customers and Community outlined the criteria for review of a petition in accordance with the Council's Petitions Scheme.

The report provided a response to each of the seven points raised as part of the complaint. These were considered and agreed by all Members with the exception of Councillor M S Heard who did not agree with any of the seven points raised.

Councillor Heard advised he felt that public perception was that they had not been given a fair hearing. He proposed that the Council set up a Working Party comprising of both sides to look at the viability of the proposal of resuming the swimming at Promenade Park. This proposal was discussed but not seconded.

Councillor Mrs P A Channer proposed that the Committee accept the Officers recommendation. The Director of Customers and Community clarified that should Members be content that the petition had been dealt with correctly there would just be one recommendation. This was duly agreed.

**RESOLVED** that the Council's response and consideration of the petition to reinstate the Marine Lake, Promenade Park, Maldon was carried out in line with its petition scheme.

**720. FINAL REPORT - PROCUREMENT AND DELIVERY OF THE 2016 / 17 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The Committee received the report of the Director of Resources presenting conclusive findings on the procurement and delivery of the 2016 / 17 Capital Programme.

Seven recommendations arising from this conclusion were set out in the report for Members' consideration and in response to discussions the following information was provided:

- In response to a question regarding budget assurance, the Director of Resources provided an update on changes to reporting and a number of controls recently implemented to ensure delivery of the Capital Programme. The Director of Customers and Community gave further information regarding the controls in place and reported that all contracts would be let and procured within this financial year. Information regarding specific capital projects was provided at this time.
- Project 180 – St Cedds was discussed and in response to a query regarding Members receiving a copy of the project brief the Director of Resources advised she would check to ensure this had been emailed to Members. In response to further questions raised in relation to this project the Director of Resources provided the Committee with additional information.
- In response to a question regarding recommendation six, the Director of Resources provided Members with some detail as to how this would be achieved and advised that it could also be linked to the performance management framework for Directors.

The Director of Resources provided some detail regarding how the recommendations would be carried forward if agreed by the Committee.

In response to some debate, it was proposed that recommendation two be amended as detailed below and that an additional recommendation two (b) be added to provide additional assurances for Members. These amendments were agreed.

Recommendation two:

All capital schemes follow the required project management framework and report risks, performance and updates on budget to the *Finance and Corporate Services Committee*.

Recommendation two (b):

That surplus audit days in the internal audit plan be used to carry out a review to provide assurances to Members that recommendation two (as set out above) had been carried out.

**RESOLVED**

- (i) that the contents of the report and implementation of the recommendations (as detailed in sections 3.3 – 3.11 of the report and amended above) by 31 March 2018, be noted;
- (ii) that Officers report on the implementation of these recommendations to a future meeting of this Committee.

**721. 2017 / 18 PROGRAMME OF WORK**

The Committee received the report of the Director of Resources confirming the Committee's Work Programme for 2017 / 18, attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Director of Resources provided Members with an update on the scrutiny items detailed on the 2017 / 18 programme of work. In respect of Staff Sickness, Members were advised that an agreed brief had been prepared and work started on it immediately with a date for reporting back to this Committee to be confirmed.

In response to a question regarding the Provision of Healthcare Services it was confirmed that the Outline Business Case was due to be completed by March 2018.

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

**722. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF SCRUTINY MEMBERS WISH TO CONSIDER**

There were none.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 9.51 pm.

M W HELM  
CHAIRMAN