
CABINET3 OCTOBER 2012

Present:- Councillor N R Stock (Leader of the Council) (Chairman)!Councillor S Candy (Regeneration) (except items 31-34 part)!Councillor G V Guglielmi (Planning)!Councillor P Halliday (Finance and Asset Management)!Councillor P B Honeywood (Housing)!Councillor S S Mayzes (Tourism and Community Life)!Councillor L A McWilliams (Customer and Central Services)!Councillor P I Sambridge (Technical Services)!Councillor N W Turner (Environment)

Also Present:- Councillors J A Broderick, N W Brown, D J Casey and G L Mitchell

Group Leader present by invitation: Councillor Talbot

In Attendance:- Chief Executive (Ian Davidson), Strategic Director (David Appleby), Head of Corporate Services (Martyn Knappett), Head of Life Opportunities (Paul Price), Head of Public Experience (June Clare), Head of Resource Management (Karen Neath), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Legal Services Manager (Michael Gibson-Davies), Communications and Public Relations Manager (Nigel Brown), Senior Democratic Services Officer (Ian Ford), Democratic Services Officers (Elizabeth Ridout and Janey Nice) and Personal Assistant to the Leader of the Council and Civic and Members' Support Manager (Jennifer Eames)

(12.00 noon - 1.12 p.m.)

31.. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Shearing (who, as a Group Leader, had been invited to attend the meeting) and Councillor Watling (Portfolio Holder for Benefits and Revenues). An apology was also extended on behalf of Councillor Candy who would be late to the meeting due to the ongoing 'Meet The Buyers' event in the Princes Theatre.

32. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to:

(1) in minute 21 after the words "Councillor Candy asked" the words "and Cabinet resolved" being inserted;

(2) in minute 23(1) the words "immense pressure" being deleted and replaced by the words "difficult circumstances"; and

(3) also in minute 23(1) an extra paragraph being added to read: "He also congratulated Frinton in Bloom on their Gold Medal success."

33. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were none.

34. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

- (1) Executive Decision 2191 – Trial Use of Overnight Parking for Motor Homes on Hazlemere Road Car Park, Holland-on-Sea

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock) referred to the meeting of the Service Development and Delivery Committee held on 25 September 2012 at which the call-in of the above executive decision had been considered and confirmed that he had stated at that meeting that he would be happy for the decision to be rescinded. He further stated that the Technical Services Portfolio Holder (Councillor Sambridge) (who had made the original executive decision) would shortly be making a further executive decision to do just that. Councillor Stock also stated that he would welcome that Committee undertaking a scrutiny of parking issues generally in that area.

- (2) Microphones in use at Council and Committee meetings

The Leader referred to the recent problems of the microphones not working at Council and Committee meetings and he informed Cabinet that he had instructed Officers to rent a microphone system to trial at the next Council meeting and that the microphone system currently used at the Town Hall for Council meetings be taken to the Council Chamber at the Council Offices at Weeley and used for Committee etc meetings. The advantage of this was that the Town Hall microphones were designed to be used by people whilst they were sat down (as was the case in committee etc meetings) and had therefore proven to be problematical at Council meetings (when Members stood to address the Chairman and the meeting).

35. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CABINET MEMBERS

- (1) Land at Brighton Road, Holland-on-Sea

The Finance and Asset Management Portfolio Holder (Councillor Halliday) informed Cabinet that the village green application at Brighton Road, Holland-on-Sea had been successful. He stated that he would be requesting the Chairman of the Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee (Councillor Miles) to bring before that Committee as a matter of urgency those bodies responsible for health care provision in Holland-on-Sea to find out what their intentions and proposals were in the light of the village green decision.

- (2) East of England Ambulance Service Budget Cuts

The Finance and Asset Management Portfolio Holder announced that representatives of the East of England Ambulance Service (EEAS) had attended an informal Cabinet meeting on 26 September 2012 to discuss the implications for the District arising from the required budget cuts of £50million. He stated that whilst Cabinet had been reassured to some degree many concerns remained. As a result, the Customer and Central Services Portfolio Holder (Councillor McWilliams) would maintain an ongoing dialogue with the EEAS to follow through the changes and would give updates to Cabinet and Council.

- (3) 'Meet The Buyers' and 'Meet the Contractors' Events

The Regeneration Portfolio Holder (Councillor Candy) announced that a very successful 'Meet The Buyers' event had been held that day in the Princes Theatre at which a 'buyer' from each of John Lewis and Marks and Spencer had met with local businesses to give them their knowledge and tips on how to become suppliers to the large retailers. At her suggestion, the Leader of the Council gladly undertook to write, on behalf of the Council, to the two individuals concerned and their companies to thank them for their help and knowledge imparted.

Councillor Candy further announced that this event had followed on from another successful event held also in the Princes Theatre at which local firms and suppliers had met with Officers to discuss how they could bid for future Council contracts.

(4) Tendring Crucial Crew event for Older People

The Customer and Central Services Portfolio Holder (Councillor McWilliams) stated that Tendring Crucial Crew had held a very successful event in the Princes Theatre on 1 October 2012 for over 150 older people aimed at highlighting the potential dangers for older people and improving their safety in their everyday lives.

(5) Kerbside Recycling

The Environment Portfolio Holder (Councillor Turner) stated that for the previous week as compared to the same week in 2011 an extra 40 tonnes of recyclate had been collected, 115 tonnes less of rubbish had gone to landfill and the recycling rate had increased from 19% to 26%.

36. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE BY THE COUNCIL

There were none on this occasion.

37. ASSET STOCKTAKE AND ASSET STRATEGY

A.1 - Asset Stocktake and Asset Strategy

The Cabinet was informed that the Corporate Management Committee, at its meeting held on 30 July 2012, had considered the completed asset stocktake alongside proposals for the form and content of the asset strategy (minute 16 referred).

In respect of the asset stocktake, the Corporate Management Committee had resolved that:

“the Committee acknowledged the work that Officers had done to prepare this document and recommends to Cabinet to publish the document in draft form to Ward Members to make comments on the stocktake, including comments on the suitability of each asset in order to enhance the document.”

In respect of the asset strategy, the Corporate Management Committee had resolved that:

“the Committee recommends to Cabinet that the Asset Strategy contains information on current pertinent legislation and that other delivery plans, objectives and projects that linked to the Strategy be identified within it. In doing so, Members agreed the Asset Strategy be a flexible, organic document that identified acquisitions and disposals and suitable partnership working to support and reflect the long-term aims and ambitions of the Council.”

Having considered the recommendations made by the Corporate Management Committee:-

It was moved by Councillor Halliday, seconded by Councillor G V Guglielmi and:

RESOLVED that

(a) Officers disseminate the asset stock to all Members for comment on those assets located within their own individual wards, including comments on the suitability of each

asset (allowing a two week response time from the date of dissemination) and that Members be also requested to make Officers aware of any asset in their ward that they thought was owned by the Council in order that these could be investigated;

(b) immediately after the comments from Ward Members are received, Officers amend the stocktake accordingly and make its contents publicly available;

(c) following this, the Asset Strategy be progressed as a matter of urgency to ensure that all Council owned assets were used to deliver the Council's aspirations; and

(d) the Corporate Management Committee be thanked for its comments.

38. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEMS

There were none on this occasion.

39. EMPTY HOMES FUNDING - JAYWICK

A.2 - Empty Homes Funding - Jaywick

The Cabinet gave consideration to a detailed report of the Housing Portfolio Holder which advised it of the award of a grant to bring back empty homes into use in the Jaywick area and proposed a strategic approach to the use of the grant funding in order to run in parallel with, and complement, other regeneration initiatives in the Jaywick area. In addition, the report proposed to put in place appropriate delegations to utilise the grant funding and secure resources to develop the empty homes initiative and work in tandem with other work streams so as to ensure the maximum benefit for the residents of Jaywick.

Following a successful bid to the Homes and Communities Agency, Tendring District Council had secured £1.3m of funding to bring empty homes back into use at Jaywick. This resource provided an opportunity to kick start initiatives which were already at a very early stage with potential investors into the area whilst, via co-ordination with other work streams, making further visible improvements to Jaywick and the housing market.

Cabinet was made aware that this was not a 'normal' grant scheme to owners. The Homes and Communities Agency expected flexibility and innovation and had stipulated in its guidance that it could be used for:

- Converting empty commercial property into residential units; or
- Homesteading; or
- First time buyer schemes; or
- As part of wider regeneration plans; or
- To grant fund landlords and developers; or
- To assist incoming owner occupiers

The grant could be used to meet up to 50% of the costs of eligible works to bring empty homes back into use, through owner-occupation or letting with a requirement of at least two years of occupation after award. All monies were payable to contractors who would undertake works to return the property to use, or for materials (homesteaders) paid on production of valid receipts. This would help to ensure that there was little scope for monies to be siphoned off without works being undertaken.

This opportunity was seen as a significant possible contribution to the range of positive initiatives beginning to take shape in Jaywick and led by the Council in partnership with Essex County Council but what was significant was that there was now engagement with the private sector to explore long term regeneration of the area rather than merely commission another piecemeal initiative. The Council was looking to the private sector to

take forward development initiatives and opportunities in the area but it had become clear from discussions with that sector that it was in turn looking to the Council to ease planning restrictions, provide some pump priming initiatives and was understandably cautious about taking the first step without evidenced support from the public sector.

This empty homes funding was therefore a key component to realising the way forward as was other funding which would go into the area to deal with the thermal deficiencies inherent in the poor quality of the homes.

Having considered the information submitted:-

It was moved by Councillor P B Honeywood, seconded by Councillor Halliday and:-

RESOLVED that

(a) Officers bring forward a further report forthwith examining the innovative approaches detailed in this report and during examination hold discussions with the relevant ward Members to feed into future recommendations. This future report would also give detailed proposals of the measures to be put in place to ensure probity and transparency on all expenditure against the £1.3million grant; and

(b) resources released through the Life Opportunities Fundamental Service Review be used to recruit an officer on a two-year basis (the details of which to be agreed by the Head of Resource Management, the Head of Life Opportunities and the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Finance and Asset Management Portfolio Holder) but backfilled via the new homes bonus generated through bringing homes back into use.

40. EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

As there was to be no discussion and consequently no need to exclude the press and public the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

41. PERSONAL STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

"I inherited a Cabinet structure from the previous administration, which had themselves retained that of the Cabinet before them.

I feel that we are now long overdue a refresh of the Portfolios to ensure that they reflect both the priorities of the administration and the economic situation that we now face.

I have deliberately put off such a decision whilst we undertook the challenging process of restructuring the staffing establishment, but before that process is even complete it is clear that we are going to have to do it all over again – this time even harder, in order to meet the latest Government imposed cutbacks.

As such I believe that a reorganisation of the Cabinet should no longer be delayed and in order to progress that the first course of action should be for me to take myself out of the equation and make way for a new Leader who can carry the Council forward towards a new dawn.

I am, if you like, going to "re-shuffle" myself out of office!

I am today announcing that I have decided to step down as the Leader of Tendring District Council (TDC) - a post I have held for more than three years.

I have led the authority since 2009 and it is now the right time to make way for a new

Leader.

There are so many achievements that I can be truly proud of during my time as Leader. However, there are none that I could claim sole credit for as it has always very much been a team effort.

I am at least in the rare position of being able to quit while I am ahead rather than 'doing a Blair' and still hanging around when my sell-by date has long since expired!!

I step down on the back of the unprecedented success of our free parking permit initiative and the countless letters, cards and emails I have received from so many residents.

We have had to face up to the reality of massive cuts to our funding – and have already brought about savings of £4.4 million without affecting our frontline services to residents. This has been achieved whilst still trying to tackle the many social problems that we face in our District.

It is clear that more savage cuts are on the way and I think that this is an appropriate time for me to handover.

Other significant achievements include starting to build new Council homes as well as identifying a way forward for Jaywick.

Over the period I have held the post the Council has enhanced its reputation by staging a successful international conference, engaging Ministers in challenges and opportunities facing Tendring. We have worked closely with Essex County Council by using national Community Budgets to tackle the issues facing families in our District.

I fell into politics rather by accident and ended up leading the group following a series of unfortunate events.

It has never been my ambition to be a professional politician so I am keen to get out while I still have most of my sanity!!

I will initially stand down as leader of the Conservative Group in order to facilitate a democratic change-over and then step down formally as Council Leader as soon after that as practicable.

My job as Leader for the past three and a half years has been made all the easier by having a loyal and dedicated team around me.

I should particularly like to thank Councillor Peter Halliday for his unswerving loyalty, commitment and passion as my Deputy throughout that time. We have shared all the highs and the lows together and I quite simply could not have done it without him.

I will be extremely proud to be able to propose Peter to take over as Group Leader at the next Group meeting, not just because it is important to ensure a smooth and seamless transition of power, but also because I know he will do a damn fine job.

I am sure that the Council will now press on and build for a stronger future – despite the difficult financial constraints it faces over the coming years.”

Councillors and Officers gave a round of applause.

Councillors Halliday, Turner, G V Guglielmi, McWilliams, Talbot and Sambridge each paid their own personal tribute to Councillor Stock's time as Leader of the Council.

42. HARWICH BARRACK LANE SUITE - POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE SITE

Further to the minute above Cabinet was aware that once the lease had been surrendered the property and the immediate responsibility for rates, repairs and insurance etc. would revert to the Council. This was a significant liability. In reacting to the situation the Council had seven main options, namely:-

1. The Council could opt to do nothing. In practice, this would be to mothball the building: disconnect services, securely board it up and periodically inspect for damage or break-ins.
2. Let the building on a short term basis on the proviso that the Council would not spend any money on the structure but close the building when necessary.
3. Let the building on condition that the new tenant addressed all of the repairing issues.
4. Carry out immediate structural repairs and let the building with the tenant picking up other refurbishment issues.
5. Fully refurbish the building before letting it to a new tenant.
6. Renew the building before letting it to a new tenant.
7. Demolish the building and provide additional parking on the site.

Having appraised the options available:-

It was moved by Councillor Halliday, seconded by Councillor McWilliams and:

RESOLVED – that the Cabinet allow a six week period to give opportunities to interested organisations to come up with business plans for the way forward for the building. As smaller organisations may not have the knowledge to prepare business plans Officer support be made available, where possible to assist in their preparation.

43. VARIATION OF LEASE: FRINTON AND WALTON SCOUTS, PARK PLAYING FIELDS, OFF ROYDON WAY, FRINTON-ON-SEA

The Cabinet's approval was sought to vary the size of the demised premises of the existing lease with Frinton and Walton Scouts in order to allow the Scouts to extend their building by 18m². Frinton and Walton Scouts currently held a 21 year lease which had commenced in April 2006 and they had obtained planning consent to extend the building to provide extra storage.

Having considered the proposal:

It was moved by Councillor Halliday, seconded by Councillor Candy and:

RESOLVED – that the variation of the existing lease be approved, in principle.

44. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor Halliday, seconded by Councillor G V Guglielmi and:-

RESOLVED – That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds

that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 and 6 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Chairman