

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**HELD ON 16 JUNE 2014 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Steady (Chairman), Bucke, Caines, Challinor, Heaney, Mitchell and Nicholls.

Also Present: Councillors Page (Leader of the Council), McWilliams, Patten and Turner (Deputy Leader of the Council).

In Attendance: Chief Executive (Ian Davidson), Finance and Procurement Manager (Richard Barrett), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Deputy Management and Members' Support Manager (Sally Cornish) and Democratic Services Officer (Michael Pingram).

Also In Attendance: Gary Hughes (Programme Manager, Local Government Association).

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor V E Guglielmi (Vice-Chairman) (with Councillor Heaney substituting) and Councillor Wood (with Councillor Mitchell substituting).

10. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 7 May 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to, in resolution (a) to Minute 6, the reference to the Finance and Procurement Manager being deleted and the name of Councillor Bucke inserted.

11. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

12. WORKING WITH THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which provided the Committee with the benefits of Local Government Association (LGA) membership to the Council and to invite discussion from Members on how, through working better with the LGA, it could have a more effective impact on the Council's budget-setting for 2015/2016.

The Council's Chief Executive explained that he wanted the Council to be proactive and look at how it could make best use of its facilities and opportunities in times of austerity. He said that the Council benefited from the LGA in a variety of ways, including representing the Council when lobbying the Government and hosting events and conferences. Furthermore, he said that the District Councils Network (DCN) had been useful in providing an opportunity to share practices and learn from other District and Borough Councils and that the East of England Local Government Association (EELGA) had also been helpful in providing an independent view of the Council's procurement

process in respect of the Clacton-on-Sea to Holland Haven Coastal Protection Project as well as providing valuable support in respect of the review of the Council's recycling work.

Gary Hughes, Programme Manager for the LGA, provided the Committee with a summary of what the LGA could provide for the Council. He explained that the main work of the LGA was to lobby on behalf of and defend the reputation of local government, provide a range of support and resources to not only Councils but Councillors and Officers as well and to help improve by sharing best practices across Local Government. He further commented that the LGA worked closely with the EELGA and that they aimed to complement the work undertaken by both.

Mr Hughes then provided the Committee with examples of where the LGA had successfully lobbied on behalf of Local Government, explained how the LGA could provide communication support, citing social media use as a good example, and how they could provide practical support with the use of on-the-day briefings which covered all major Government announcements. He then showed how the LGA could help improve local government, making particular reference to corporate peer challenges, a productivity expert programme, the one public estate programme and providing support to all Councillors and those who had a desire to become a Councillor. He concluded the presentation by sharing with the Committee 'LG Inform', a benchmarking tool that allowed the Council to better scrutinise what it did and how it could be improved.

During discussions, numerous questions were put to Mr Hughes and the Council's Chief Executive to which they responded. The questions covered issues including:

- How much lobbying was being worked on for rural areas as it was felt there was a discrepancy between that and urban areas;
- A request for additional information on the 'Turning the Tide' report;
- What programme the LGA had for energy sharing;
- Information on how Councillors could deal with every day issues;
- How the LGA could help with regards to social media guidance;
- The LGA's role in lobbying for health services; and
- Possible ways in which the LGA could work with the Council to make savings, using examples of where other Councils had made savings.

Following further discussions the Committee **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- (a) A summary of the LGA Members support offer, which encapsulated what opportunities were available, be developed and circulated;
- (b) A link to the LGA website be circulated;
- (c) A topic be identified for an All Member briefing session; and
- (d) The Council continue to use the LGA and the DCN as professional support networks.

13. RURAL PROJECTS PANEL – SOLAR FARMS

The Committee had before it, an extract from the notes of the meeting of the Rural Projects Panel held on 13 May 2014, at which, the Panel had discussed solar farms in the context of the emerging Tendring District Local Plan. The Panel had decided to request this Committee comment to Cabinet and the Local Plan Committee that this Council should be taking a robust and comprehensive approach to renewable energy within the emerging Local Plan.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** that this Committee **RECOMMENDS** to **CABINET** and the **LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE** that this Council take a robust and comprehensive approach to renewable energy within the emerging Local Plan and, in particular, in pursuit of the following principles in relation to solar farms:

- (1) That solar farms always be preferred on 'brownfield' or poor quality land and only be permitted on 'best value' (i.e. Grade 1, 2 or 3a) land if the Applicant had clearly demonstrated that a sequential test had been followed;
- (2) That the Council and Essex County Council encourage applications for solar farms on their own estates, on industrial areas and on public utility owned land; and
- (3) That there be guidance on preventing 'clustering' of solar farms in rural parishes or in close proximity to private property not part of the application and that such developments be at least a minimum of 250m from any dwelling or property.

14. SHARED SERVICES AND WORKING WITH TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

The Chairman addressed the Committee on his wish for Committee Members to consider how the Council could work better with its Town and Parish Councils in delivering shared services and stated that this would be a standing item on the agenda for regular updates.

The Chairman made reference to grass-cutting responsibilities within Brightlingsea and where this appeared to be carried out by the Town Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council and that, perhaps, this could be one area which would be addressed to streamline the process and avoid any unnecessary sub-contractor costs.

15. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee noted the new items relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee contained in Forward Plan No.152.

16. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

There were none.

17. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Chairman invited the Leader of the Council to provide his view on the role of the Committee, to which he expressed his delight with how it was being run. He also praised Council's Finance and Procurement Manager and his team and stated without them the budget would not be in the healthy position that it currently was.

18. SPECIAL MEETING

The Chairman spoke of his wish to have a special meeting of the Committee in July to focus on particular areas where financial successes could be identified and that the Democratic Services Manager would arrange that in the near future.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.34 p.m.

Chairman