

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2015 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Steady (Chairman), Wood (Vice-Chairman), Bucke, R Callender, Challinor, Coley and Griffiths.

Also Present: John Wolton (Independent Person, Standards Committee).

In Attendance: Finance and Procurement Manager (Richard Barrett), Human Resources and Business Manager (Anastasia Simpson), Business Support Manager (Katie Wilkins), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney) and Democratic Services Officer (Michael Pingram).

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies of absence were received from Councillor Caines and Councillor Nicholls (with Councillor Griffiths substituting).

47. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 5 January 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

49. CREDIT UNION REVIEW

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which provided the Committee with an update since the opening of the Credit Union access points and subsequent six-month review.

At the meeting, a briefing note was provided for Members, which outlined further work carried out since the Credit Union Review had been undertaken in December 2014, including an Officer presentation to Harwich Town Council; meetings with Jobcentre Plus; and the Director of the Colchester Credit Union (CCU) to raise awareness in Harwich; scope for development of a third access point in Frinton (with support from CVS Tendring); and that an Officer would deliver a presentation to a local community group to introduce the CCU and the benefits of being a member.

Members of the Committee questioned the level of take-up from Tendring residents (only 25); whether those that ran the Credit Union had a financial background and whether there was a guarantee that the scheme would not be discontinued at a later date. Members also felt that the 2% interest rate per month, although cheaper than a loan acquired elsewhere, was still expensive and asked for details of the initial consultation process which took place prior to the scheme being introduced.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** that this matter be included on the agenda for the next meeting of the Corporate Management Committee, to be held on 25 March 2015, along with a note providing answers to those questions raised.

50. PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER 3 2014-15 (OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2014)

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which informed the Committee of the performance of the Council during the period October to December 2014.

The Council's Human Resources and Business Manager (Anastasia Simpson) informed the Committee that, of the 28 indicators and projects reported, 24 (86%) were on, or above, their respective target whilst four (14%), were not currently in line with expected performance. She said that, in comparison with quarter one (April to June 2014), the Council was in a stronger position, as then it had had only 76% of the indicators and projects on, or above, the expected targets. Since then, four items that had been behind target were now on, or above, target. Those were; Weeley Crematorium; non-domestic rates collection; fly-tipping and Planning Applications. She then gave an explanation and update on each of the four remaining under-performing indicators and projects.

With regards to Financial Self-Sufficiency, she explained that this was behind target because of the refurbishment at the Dovercourt Sports Centre. However, the sports centre was now operational and income had increased, so it was expected to be on target by the following quarter.

She further informed Members that with regards to recycling rates, the figures, nationally, were down for the first time in 30 years and that a project commissioned jointly between Essex County Council and Suffolk County Council was currently being undertaken to find out the reasons for this. She hoped to have more information following that review, to bring to a future meeting of the Committee and, in the meantime, confirmed that one of the Council's Officers responsible for Waste Management had been invited to attend the June meeting to provide further information for Members, with special focus on the recycling of plastic, following previous Member concerns in this regard.

The Council's Human Resources and Business Manager then explained that, although the Waste Tonnage Collected figure was behind target, there had been an overall increase throughout Essex and that this could be linked to an upturn in the economy and consumer spending. She also informed Members that the Council's Waste Management Team and Veolia were currently investigating the potential of collecting more plastic and that there were issues to be considered as to how much extra cost this could potentially bring to the Council.

She then explained that having spoken with the Council's Head of Planning, the New Homes Completions was behind target due to a difficulty in identifying sites that would meet the requirement.

The Committee sought clarity on the Council's plans with regards to the purchase of land for development of new homes in Jaywick, following a recently published Officer Decision. The Council's Finance and Procurement Manager said he would ensure the report which accompanied that Decision was sent to Members of the Committee.

During discussions, the Committee requested additional information on the current rent arrears figure, details of all stage-three complaints and suggested revisiting the potential for establishing a leisure trust.

It was **AGREED** that:

- (a) The attendance by one of the Council's Waste Management Officers, at the June meeting, be noted;
- (b) The potential for establishing a leisure trust be revisited; and
- (c) The purchase of land for development of new homes in Jaywick be discussed at a future meeting of the Committee following a report on this matter which was to be considered by the Audit Committee at its meeting due to be held in June 2015.

51. ANNUAL TREASURY STRATEGY FOR 2015/16 (INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL AND TREASURY INDICATORS)

There was submitted a reference report by the Cabinet, which enabled the Committee to review the Annual Treasury Strategy for 2015/16 (including the Prudential and Treasury Indicators).

The Council's Finance and Procurement Manager informed the Committee that it had been a routine year, with little change and that the Code and Guidance it was based on had not changed. He added that the Council had no plans to borrow at this time.

The Committee thanked the Council's Finance and Procurement Manager, and his team, for their continued hard work

It was **AGREED** that the Committee **COMMENT TO CABINET** that it noted the comprehensive report and endorsed its progress onto Cabinet.

52. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee noted the new item relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee contained in Forward Plan No.160.

The meeting was declared closed at 8.38 p.m.

Chairman