

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

**HELD ON 13 JULY 2015 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Steady (Chairman), Platt (Vice-Chairman), Cawthron, Chittock, Massey and Stephenson.

Also Present: Councillor Talbot (Portfolio Holder for Environment).

In Attendance: Corporate Director (Public Experience) (June Clare), Environmental Services Manager (John Fox), Finance and Procurement Manager (Richard Barrett), Human Resources and Business Manager (Anastasia Simpson), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Assets Manager (Andy White), Human Resources Operations Manager (Katie Wilkins), Street Scene Officer (Jonathan Hamlet), Research and Projects Officer (Elizabeth Ridout) and Democratic Services Officer (Michael Pingram).

Also in Attendance: Dave Cope, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) Essex Business Services Manager.

1. CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

The Chairman welcomed the new members to the Committee and provided an overview of what the Committee aimed to achieve. He said that in the last two years, it had aimed to be proactive rather than reactive and to have more influence on the budget-setting process.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Baker.

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 25 March 2015, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

5. CREDIT UNION REVIEW

There was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which provided the Committee with an update on the progress made against Tendring District Council's commitment to support and promote the provision of a credit union facility in the District and also contained responses to questions raised by Members at the meeting of the Committee in February 2015.

The Council's Research and Projects Officer explained to the Committee that at its meeting on 28 February 2014, Cabinet in its role as Community Leader, resolved to support the Colchester Credit Union by facilitating the establishment of two access points in the District in partnership with the JCP.

She informed the Committee that two access points subsequently opened in April 2014, one being at Clacton Town Hall and the other at the JCP in Harwich and that the original decision to facilitate the establishment of the Credit Union access points included the

requirement to report on progress one year later. Therefore, she said, a review had been carried out by Officers in January 2015. The findings indicated that the impact on both Tendring District Council Housing reception and Harwich JCP had been minimal and that growth of membership numbers had been steady but in line with other credit unions with 76 members to date, and that monitoring of the access points would continue.

Mrs Ridout advised that staff in the Tendring District Council Housing Reception had also benefitted from learning new skills such as book-keeping and handling money, as well as developing presentation skills when promoting the Credit Union to local groups.

Mr Cope, JCP Essex Business Services Manager, informed the Committee that he was a member of a credit union, not because he needed to be but through choice, and explained it could be used as a savings facility. The key thing of a Credit Union, he said, was that it was available to everyone and provided a safer alternative to unregulated lenders and he was also pleased that the Council had taken an active role in providing this service to residents.

During discussions the Committee asked how the Council could develop the service further, in light of there being a slow uptake of Members, and what type of credit training was involved with the service. Mr Cope answered these questions by saying that the service could be promoted within the Council and local Town and Parish Councils to try and encourage staff to sign up and that varying levels of training was provided to current members, with some requiring extensive budget training whilst others simply needed to be shown where to find additional information. In welcoming the presentation and recognising that the Credit Union was a safe alternative to other money-lending companies, the Committee also recognised the benefits of the scheme to District residents at very little cost to the Council.

Following further discussion, the Committee **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that it promote the scheme to staff, local community groups and to Town and Parish Councils to make them aware of its many benefits.

6. PERFORMANCE REPORT – OUTTURN REPORT APRIL 2014 – MARCH 2015

The Committee gave consideration to a report and appendix of the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which reported the performance of the Council for the period April 2014 to March 2015. It contained details of 16 key project areas, as well as 12 performance indicators, detailing business-critical areas of the Council's work.

The Council's Human Resources and Business Manager explained to the Committee that of the 28 indicators and projects reported, 24 (86%) were on or above their respective target for the period and said that four (14%) were currently not in line with the expected performance.

She informed the Committee that the average performance rate for 2014/15 showed that 83% of the indicators reported were on or above their respective target, whilst 17% were not in line with the expected performance.

She concluded by providing a brief summary of the reasons why four indicators of performance were behind target.

During discussions, Members queried the targets for Leisure Centre attendance given the recent success of facilities at Dovercourt Swimming Pool and the additional hard work of the staff, and asked for more information on how the targets were agreed, to which they were told that these were established as part of the annual Business Planning process.

The Chairman extended his appreciation to the Corporate Director (Public Experience) and her staff for achieving the targets in relation to the Council's Coast Protection Scheme.

Following further discussion, the Committee **AGREED** that:

- a) Corporate Directors be prompted to provide additional comments on each indicator in the exceptions area of the report; and
- b) The performance timeline, as highlighted on Page 32 of the agenda, be distributed to all Members

7. WASTE AND RECYCLING

The Committee received a presentation from the Council's Street Scene Officer with regard to the Council's waste and recycling processes.

He explained that the Council currently had a seven-year contract with Veolia, which had begun in 2012 and including an option for the Council to extend it for a further seven years. The cost per household, he said, was £19 per annum and the service included a weekly residual waste collection, a weekly collection of food waste and an alternate weekly collection of dry recyclables. There was also an option for a garden waste collection service, which had an initial cost of £75 per year and then £50 each year after. This, he said, had attracted 3,000 customers since its launch in 2014.

He then informed the Committee that recycling figures had decreased in the District since 2012/13 but that Tendring had produced the least waste overall than any other District in Essex in 2013/14. He added that, aside from the Council's kerb collection service, there was the option of bring banks (with more than 80 across the District), Tetrapak and charitable banks, such as the British Heart Foundation.

Mr Hamlet confirmed that since 2012, the Council decided to focus upon recycling higher value plastics, such as bottles, as the Council would receive a fee from Veolia for this rather than having to pay, which helped keep costs reduced. It was reported that if the Council was to collect all plastics, it would result in a cost to taxpayers.

He concluded by saying that the main aim was to reduce the amount of waste that got sent to landfill sites, that waste reduction and recycling went hand-in-hand and that the Council should consider ways to reduce the amount of waste produced, which could mean considering different approaches than they had done so previously.

During discussions, the Committee asked how much was saved following the negotiation of the current contract with Veolia compared to the previous contract; would there be a saving if the Council adopted fortnightly collections; and was the Council looking to recycle glass.

In answer to the Committee's questions, it was reported that a saving of over £500,000 was made via the current contract, compared to the previous one; a saving would be made if the Council adopted fortnightly collections but would be difficult to provide figures now due to hidden costs; and the Council was looking to recycle glass and was currently involved in discussions with Veolia regarded this.

8. EFFICIENCY SAVINGS AND INCOME GENERATION – OUTCOMES FROM INFORMAL WORKSHOPS

The Council's Finance and Procurement Manager provided the Committee with a presentation that sought to explain the financial position of the Council, whilst looking at ways to make future savings.

He advised the Committee that, since 2011/12, the Council had reduced the budget by £10,000,000 and that the current net budget for the Council was £14,835,000, of which £3,600,000 was funded by a Government grant. This figure, he said, was likely to be further reduced in future years and the Council therefore needed to look at how it delivered the services it provided in order to find the necessary savings.

He said that six ideas had been discussed to help the Council in achieving its savings targets, all of which had been identified from the member workshops, facilitated by the Committee during 2014/15. They were Transformation Agenda, Office Rationalisation, bringing contracts in-house, Channel Shift, Shared Services and to grow the beach economy. He hoped that the Committee would consider these and look at how much saving or income could potentially be generated.

The Council's Assets Manager then provided the Committee with a presentation on the potential to use one-off Council funding to increase its commercial property, whereby the Council could purchase commercial property and lease to a tenant.

Mr White explained that whilst there was no such thing as a completely safe investment, the Council could be active and diligent in order to minimise risk. He said that the Council would first need to establish the key criteria for any purchases and suggested that the Council look at a variety of smaller properties in order to spread the risk.

During discussion, Members asked what types of property would the Council seek to purchase and whether it would have the necessary resources; would the Council get better returns if it invested outside of the District; and would the scheme use all of the Council's one-off money.

In answer to the Committees questions, Mr White said that the Council could initially look to purchase uncomplicated commercial properties such as shops and offices and that internal resources were in place within the Asset Management team; the Council could get best returns if it invested outside of the District; and significant amount of reserves that did not arise from capital receipts would not be included in the project.

Following discussion, it was **RESOLVED** that the Committee **COMMENT TO CABINET** that following the presentations provided, the Committee wished to proactively take the following ideas forward on behalf of the Council and via the Democratic Services Manager identify a lead Committee Member for each of the projects:

- Transformation Agenda
- Office Rationalisation
- Bringing contracts in-house
- Channel Shift
- Shared Services
- Growing the beach economy
- Investing in Commercial Property

8. FORWARD PLAN

The Committee noted the new items relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee, as contained in Forward Plan No.165.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.55 p.m.

Chairman