

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 SEPTEMBER 2015 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL  
CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

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

**In Attendance:** Finance and Procurement Manager (Richard Barrett), Human Resources and Business Manager (Anastasia Simpson), Democratic Services Manager (Colin Sweeney), Democratic Services Officer (Janey Nice) and Administration Officer (Sam Harding).

**14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no apologies for absence received from Members.

**15. MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2015**

The Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Committee, held on 14 September 2015, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

Matters Arising

Minute No.13 – Grant of a Lease of 14A Waddesdon Road, Harwich

There was submitted a report (tabled), which advised Members of the reconsideration of decision 2582, which had been referred back to the Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Corporate Services, by the Corporate Management Committee, following the original decision being called-in. The substance of that decision was, in principle, to grant a lease of the Council's redundant cash office at 14a Waddesdon Road in Dovercourt.

The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management and Corporate Services, having considered the views of the Committee and another representations received, decided to confirm his earlier decision, in principle, to grant a lease of the site. The decision by the Portfolio Holder to lease the site to a commercial user, as set out in the Part B report, which accompanied the original decision, also remained unchanged.

Accordingly, it was **RESOLVED** that the Portfolio Holder's decision, be noted.

**16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

**REPORTS OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CORPORATE SERVICES)**

**17. CORPORATE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2015 – 2016 (Report A.1)**

With reference to Minute No.45 of the Cabinet meeting, held on 4 September 2015, there was submitted a report by the Corporate Director (Corporate Services), which provided the Committee with an overview of the Council's actual financial position against the Budget, as at the end of June 2015.

It was reported that, on 4 September 2015, Cabinet considered the Corporate Budget Monitoring Report for the first quarter of 2015/16 and resolved that:

- (a) *The financial position as at the end of June 2015 be noted;*
- (b) *The 2015/16 Budget be amended to reflect favourable variances emerging so far to date, as follows:*
- *£0.075m reduction in salary budgets*
  - *£0.100m increase in Planning Fees*
  - *£0.251m receivable in Government Grants*
  - *£0.426m Contribution to Reserves (being the total of the above transferred to the Austerity Reserve); and*
- (c) *In respect of the 2015/16 Budget, it be agreed that:*
- *Delegation be given to the Corporate Director (Life Opportunities), in consultation with the Leisure Portfolio Holder, to amend the Leisure Facilities' budgets to better reflect the actual operational position, with no overall impact on the net financial position of the Council;*
  - *Various budgets relating to regeneration be transferred into the Business Investment and Growth Budget, as set out in that report; and*
  - *Delegation be given to the Finance and Procurement Manager to amend budgets during the year to reflect organisational restructures with no change in the purpose of the originally agreed budgets.*

The Cabinet report referred to above was attached as Appendix A for the Committee's consideration.

Officers responded to questions by Members in relation to:

- Recycling and efforts to improve the Council's target-related statistics
- Salaries and Employee Costs
- Budget Adjustments (Leisure)
- Housing Revenue Account
- Section 106 Monies and their allocation
- Business Investment and Growth

Accordingly, it was **AGREED** that the contents of the report be noted.

**18. PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER ONE 2015 (APRIL TO JUNE 2015) (Report A.2)**

There was submitted a report, which presented to the Committee, the Performance Report for Quarter One (April to June 2015).

It was reported that Appendix A to the report contained details of 18 key project areas, as well as 12 performance indicators and which gave details of business-critical areas of the Council's work. The report also contained details of sickness levels, complaints handling and a number of approved surveillances.

It was noted that, of the 30 indicators and projects reported, 27 (90%) were on, or above, their expected target, with three (10%) not in line with the expected performance.

The report had previously been presented to Cabinet at its meeting held on 4 September 2015.

Officers responded to questions by Members in relation to:

- The Council's recycling targets
- The Committee's role in delivering the Essex Rally Stage
- Membership of the Rural Infrastructure Working Party (RIWP)

With regard to the RIWP, Members requested details as to its membership and whether this was subject to the rules of proportionality as required by Widdicombe. It was reported that whilst working parties were not required to be "Widdicombed", the Leader of the Council, in announcing the establishment of it, and other Portfolio Holder Working Parties, instructed that they be so.

Whilst recognising that the appointment of Members to the Working Parties rested with respective Group Leaders, given that there was no formal requirement for Working Parties to comply with the Widdicombe Rules and that all such Working Parties were being led by specific Members of the Cabinet, the Committee wished to comment on the make-up of the RIWP.

Accordingly, The Committee **COMMENTED TO CABINET** that the membership be reviewed to reflect rural Members on bodies discussing rural matters.

#### REFERENCE FROM CABINET

#### 19. **FINANCIAL STRATEGY – INITIAL FINANCIAL BASELINE 2016-2017 (Report A.3)**

With reference to Minute No.24 of the Cabinet meeting, held on 24 July 2015, there was submitted a report, which consulted the Committee on the Initial Financial Baseline for 2016-2017.

It was reported that, on 24 July 2015, Cabinet considered the Initial Financial Baseline for 2016/17 and resolved that:

- The initial financial baseline for 2016/17 be approved and that Officers be requested to continue their work, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, to identify the necessary savings to deliver a balanced budget for presenting to Cabinet in December 2015;*
- The Corporate Management Committee be consulted on the initial financial baseline for 2016/17;*
- The Local Council Tax Support Scheme grant to Town and Parish Councils be reduced by 5% in 2016/17 and;*
- The decision to remain in the Essex-wide pool for non-domestic rates in 2016/17 be delegated to the Finance and Transformation Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the Corporate Director (Corporate Services).*

This report and the copy of the report considered by Cabinet referred to above, provided the Committee with the opportunity to comment on the Initial Financial Baseline for 2016-2017 as part of developing the Budget in accordance with the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

At its meeting on 4 September 2015, Cabinet considered a reference report from the Committee, which set out the following efficiency savings and income opportunities that the Committee had identified as being the items they wished to focus on and support the Council in taking forward:

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

Accordingly, Cabinet resolved that:

- (a) *The enthusiasm and support of the Corporate Management Committee in reviewing the Council's financial position be welcomed; and*
- (b) *The lead Committee Member for each of the seven identified areas be requested to work with the relevant Portfolio Holder to take forward these projects.*

Officers responded to questions by Members in relation to:

- The Women's Tour – associated costs
- Retaining Business rates
- Their role as overview and scrutiny committee Members

Accordingly, it was **AGREED** that Members of the Committee meet again before its next scheduled meeting to agree the role of Members and to consider as a basis for discussion at the next formal meeting (14 December 2015), ways in which to progress any of the efficiency savings and income opportunities identified above.

## 8. **FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee noted the new items relevant to the terms of reference of the Committee, as contained in Forward Plan No.168.

The meeting was declared closed at 10.05pm.

Chairman