

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 15 FEBRUARY 2016 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Steady (Chairman), Platt (Vice-Chairman), Baker, Chittock, Massey, Scott, Stephenson and Whitmore

In Attendance: Finance and Procurement Manager (Richard Barrett), Organisational Development Manager (Carol Magnus), Human Resources Operations Manager (Katie Wilkins), Senior Democratic Services Officer (Ian Ford) and Democratic Services Officer (Katie Sullivan).

40. CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Whitmore to this his first meeting since his recent appointment to serve on the Committee.

The Chairman introduced Katie Sullivan who had recently joined the Council as a Democratic Services Officer.

The Chairman also welcomed Carol Magnus, Organisational Development Manager to this her first meeting of the Committee.

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no apologies for absence.

42. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 4 JANUARY (AND CONTINUED ON 6 JANUARY) 2016

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee, held on 4 January and continued on 6 January 2016, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received from Members.

44. ANNUAL TREASURY STRATEGY 2016/17 (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 2016/17 (including the Prudential and Treasury Indicators).

The Council's Finance and Procurement Manager informed the Committee that the Strategy was based on CIPFA's latest Code of Practice and that no significant changes were proposed with limited amendments in areas such as the general economic outlook and interest rate forecasts, with the Council maintaining a very low risk approach to its treasury activities. He also stated that, although not specified within the Treasury Strategy, the need to borrow money might arise during 2016/17 in relation to the Garden Village Settlement project being explored in partnership with Colchester Borough Council. Although this project would be subject to separate decision making processes over the coming months, any borrowing requirements would need to be considered within the overall Treasury Strategy framework.

The Finance and Procurement Manager reported that the draft Prudential Indicators had been subject to a comprehensive review during the year in consultation with the Council's treasury advisors. Their format had been changed along with the addition of brief

introductions to each indicator with the aim of making them more understandable and useful to Members and officers when undertaking borrowing / investment decisions.

At the request of Members, the Finance and Procurement Manager undertook to provide to the Committee:

- (1) A list of the Council's current loans and debts; and
- (2) A list of the Council's ring-fenced reserves together with an update on what they are for and the likelihood of that decision/project coming to fruition.

After discussion of the report it was **AGREED** that the Committee **COMMENTS TO CABINET** that the Committee:

- (a) Notes the prudent approach to towards borrowing and investments which has been successful in recent years; and
- (b) Will be scrutinising the period of the Council's loans; its ring-fenced reserves; and the level of risk with regard to investments..

45. PERFORMANCE REPORT – QUARTER THREE (OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015)

The Committee had before it a report of the Corporate Director (Corporate Services) which presented the Performance Report for Quarter Three (October to December 2015). Appendix A to that report contained details of 18 key project areas, as well as 12 performance indicators, detailing business critical areas of the Council's work. The report also contained details of levels of staff sickness, complaints handling and the number of approved surveillances.

Members were made aware that, of the 30 indicators and projects reported, 26 (87%) were on, or above, their expected target. There were four (13%) that were currently not in line with the expected performance. Explanations of the performance and the supporting data were included under each topic.

Officers responded to questions raised by Members on various topics and where an answer was not immediately available, the Officers undertook to respond to Members as soon as possible after the meeting. Questions raised by Members included those on various issues submitted by Councillor Stephenson in a paper. Those issues included:

- (1) Building New Homes – Urban Design Layout;
- (2) Coastal Protection – Geomorphologic Assessment;
- (3) Coastal Protection – Compare and implement a seafront feasibility study action plan;
- (4) Local Plan – Issues and Options Consultation
- (5) Local Plan – Preferred Options for Consultation;
- (6) Transforming Tendring – Full Business Case Detail and Proposals;
- (7) Transforming Tendring – Produce a Delivery Strategy;
- (8) Transforming Tendring - Disposal of Clay Hall;
- (9) Transforming Tendring – Develop Delivery Plan;
- (10) Tourism and Events – Content of Targets;
- (11) Viability of Leisure Centres – Monthly Update Meetings;
- (12) Financial Self-Sufficiency – Draft report on Property Investment Strategy;
- (13) Elections – Publication of first full IER Register;
- (14) Community Leadership and Influencing – Public Health Specialist Post; and
- (15) Community Leadership and Influencing – Development Sites.

After discussion of the report it was **AGREED** that the Committee **COMMENTS TO CABINET** that the Committee:

- (a) Notes the Council's performance report for the period October to December 2015;

- (b) Recommends that Affordable Excellence Indicator of Performance No.8 (New Homes Completions - Planning) should either make clear that the Council has no direct control over new homes being built; be amended to focus on the Council's performance in approving or refusing planning applications; or be entirely deleted;
- (c) Recommends Affordable Excellence Indicator of Performance No.3 (Rent Arrears – Life Opportunities) should include a cumulative total of all outstanding rent arrears both current and historical;
- (d) Will be requesting that the Corporate Director (Corporate Services) attends the next ordinary meeting of the Committee on 21 March 2016 with a view to that Officer, in respect of the Transforming Tending project, explaining the current situation; the problems encountered in the project; and the way forward.

46. THE COUNCIL'S EMERGING CORPORATE PLAN

The Committee received a presentation on the Council's emerging Corporate Plan which explained the main drivers and 'building blocks' of the Plan under the following headings:

- (i) Our Values;
- (ii) Our Challenges;
- (iii) Our Priorities; and
- (iv) Our Opportunities.

After discussion of the Plan it was **AGREED** that the Committee makes the following **COMMENTS TO CABINET** on the emerging Corporate Plan:

- (a) Appropriate references to the importance of rural Bus routes should be included;
- (b) The layout and presentation on the front page of the separate sections is poor;
- (c) The comparisons on the back page of the separate sections portray a too negative image of the District; and
- (d) References to community leadership initiatives such as a 'Gang Worker' will produce negative connotations for the District.

47. BUDGET SETTING PROCESS FOR 2017/18 AND BEYOND

At the Chairman's request, the Committee discussed the role of the Committee in the budget setting process and to learn lessons to take forward into the budget setting meetings for 2017/18 and beyond.

The Chairman suggested that informal meetings of the Committee be held between its formal meetings in order to keep abreast of on-going changes in the Council's budgetary position. The Committee would focus as well on scrutinising Portfolio Holders' progress towards the Council's goal of being self-sufficient financially by 2020. Members agreed to this suggestion subject to sufficient notice of the meetings being given.

It was also **AGREED** that the Council's Parking and Seafronts Manager (Ian Taylor) be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to give an update on the Householder Parking Permit Scheme.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.35 p.m.

Chairman