

**MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE, HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8TH JANUARY, 2020 AT 9.30 AM IN THE
CONNAUGHT ROOM, TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA**

Present:	Councillors M Stephenson (Chairman), Scott (Vice-Chairman), Barry, Bray, Codling, Morrison (item 45 (part) only), Placey (item 45 (part) only) and Turner
Also Present:	Councillor G V Guglielmi (Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder), P Honeywood (Housing Portfolio Holder), McWilliams (Partnerships Portfolio Holder), Porter (Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder) and Talbot (Environment and Public Space Portfolio Holder) (all present for item 45 (part) only)
In Attendance:	Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Richard Barrett (Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits Services & Section 151 Officer) and Katie Sullivan (Committee Services Officer)
Also In Attendance:	Paul Price (Corporate Director (Operational Services)), Ewan Green (Corporate Director (Planning and Regeneration)) and Andy White (Head of Property Services) (all present for item 45 (part) only)

**45. SCRUTINY OF MEMBERS OF THE CABINET IN RESPECT OF SERVICE DELIVERY
OF ITEMS IN THE UPDATED FINANCIAL FORECAST / BUDGET 2020/21 AND HRA
BUDGET PROPOSALS 2020/21**

Following the adjournment of its meeting held on 6 January 2020, the Committee resumed its scrutiny of the Financial Forecast / Budget Proposals for 2020/21 and HRA Budget Proposals 2020/21 as follows:-

Following the end of the meeting on 6 January, the questions that the Committee requested answers to were circulated to the relevant Cabinet Members and Officers in order to enable responses to be provided. Those questions and written responses received were circulated to Members of this Committee at the start of this reconvened session. They are appended to these Minutes.

Members of the Cabinet, accompanied by the appropriate Management Team Member or other Senior Officer, attended the meeting in turn and points of clarification, requests for amplification and other supplementary matters in respect of the written questions and answers formed the discussion with the Committee.

Having considered all of the information that had been provided, it was **RESOLVED** that the following **RECOMMENDATIONS** to be submitted to the Cabinet:-

1. Cabinet identifies a range of seafront enhancements/cliff stabilisation/beach protection arrangements, in consultation with seaside communities in the District (including relevant Town and Parish Councils) and seeks to fund these through an associated expansion of beach huts in those communities.
2. Cabinet instigates a review of the Public Conveniences Strategy with a view to realising the full benefits of the intended investment for all of the toilets being retained.
3. Commercialism should be a specific part of an existing Portfolio Holder's responsibility or that a new Portfolio position should be created to take forward

the agenda for commercialism as part of a means of contributing positively to meeting the budgetary pressures on the Council as identified in its MTFS.

4. Cabinet, as part of the budget development to support the corporate plan, looks favourably at providing sufficient funding for meaningful interventions for 2020-21 onwards that will support economic growth for businesses and key sectors such as energy.
5. Cabinet be recommended to approve the retention of the estimated surplus of £363K in the HRA from 2019/20 for capital investment in the Council's housing stock.
6. In view of the Government's unexpected continuation of Revenue Support Grant to this Council in 2020/21, Cabinet be recommended to approve the passporting of Local Council Tax Subsidy Grant to Parish/Town Councils in the District in 2020/21 to be confirmed on the same basis as previously.
7. Cabinet be recommended not to approve the proposed adjustment to the budget to remove expenditure of £68,250 based on the Government's commitments to exempt public conveniences from NNDR liability; as there is no indication that the necessary Parliamentary processes will be undertaken to introduce this measure.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the decisions concerning this Committee's work programming and the work programming of the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as set out in the appendix to these Minutes, be approved.

The Meeting was declared closed at 1.50 pm

Chairman

APPENDIX

Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting 6&8 January 2020
Questions for Portfolio Holders on General Fund Items, the written
response and the decision of the Committee

Initial Question	Portfolio Holder	Written Response	Decision of the Committee
What plans are in place to expand the beach hut provision across the District as a means of generating both capital receipts and revenue to be re-invested in the service?	Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder	Foundation work on this project has been undertaken and formal consideration on the proposed plans will take place in the coming months. As Members will be aware we cannot generate a profit from this activity and as such we need to develop a pipeline project for service improvements and capital programmes to absorb any additional income	Recommendation that Cabinet identifies a range of seafront enhancements/cliff stabilisation/beach protection arrangements, in consultation with seaside communities in the District (including relevant Town and Parish Councils) and seeks to fund these through an associated expansion of beach huts in those communities.
The capital programme includes the sum of £64k for New Beach Huts and the Committee wish to know what plans exist for this investment to be made.	Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder	Foundation work on this project has been undertaken and formal consideration on the proposed plans will take place in the coming months.	See above
What is happening with the delivery of the Sport England funding bid project – a general update is required and any budgetary implications.	Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder	Sport England funding for families, poor mental health and older people in deprived areas is available directly as £800k for local projects, hubs and infrastructure with an overall local budget of £2.6m when including developing social movements, communications, workforce and evaluation. Money has been spent on community projects and larger projects are being worked up around Sport for Confidence and holiday hunger.	Noted that the Sport England Pilot was the subject of an All Councillor Briefing session on 9 January 2020 and that the Community Leadership OSC was scrutinising the arrangements on 13 January 2020.
What guarantees can be given that the Town	Leisure and Tourism /Deputy	The refurbishment is part of the transformation programme scheduled for 2020/21 and so	To monitor progress of the scheme over 2020/21.

Hall/Princes Theatre Toilets are to be refurbished in 2020/21? And will the £1 ticket levy fee continue after the refurbishment	Leader and Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holders	should be completed on time. The additional fee will continue and will be sued for other theatre refurbishments/enhancements	
In relation to the Tour de Tendring, what opportunities are we taking from this annual event	Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder	<p>This event raises the profile of the District, with over 505 of participants historically living outside of Tendring. The influx of cyclists will have an impact on the local economy and improve the perception of the area as a quality place to live.</p> <p>There is an obvious extended benefit of promoting healthy and active lifestyles – together with many participants raising funds for charity.</p> <p>The cycling event is managed by an external organisation with facilitation and support from TDC. We are looking to potentially build this event into a week long cycling festival and I am working with officers to see if we can develop this opportunity for 2020 to tie in with the Mayflower celebrations and then on to following years.</p>	To note that the Cabinet was informally considering the relative cost and benefits of extending the event to a week. If proposals were to come forward they could be subject of scrutiny.
Has the “Beside the seaside” programme been reviewed (as previously indicated) – and if so what was the outcome of it? Is there going to be another event in Frinton and what is this Council doing to support it? And is there a proposal for Brightlingsea?	Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder	The events have been reviewed and changes are being proposed for 2020’s events. Details of which will be put forward within the coming months. To date, there has been no proposal from Frinton Beach Hut Association for an event this year and although it is hoped these types of events can be rolled out to the wider District in future years, there will not be an event in Brightlingsea in 2020.	No further action.

Concerning the Council's Leisure Centre Strategy, is there any financial reason why it has not been completed as programmed.	Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder	The business case is still being developed and it is anticipated that it will be brought to Cabinet in February	The Resources and Services OSC will have an opportunity to undertake post decision scrutinise the Strategy once it is published.
Acknowledging the Council's Public Conveniences Strategy and the improvements to date, when do we expect other public toilets to be refurbished and is the money allocated for these?	Environment & Public Space Portfolio Holder	<p>Having undertaken the refurbishment of Rosemary Rd, Harwich and Brightlingsea PC's I am now working with officers to consider the next phase of refurbishments. There is no specific budget for this as bids will be made via the capital budget allocation process.</p> <p>There is some existing money available for refurbishments to public toilets.</p> <p>£40,000 remains of the original capital amount set aside and some residual balance from the annual maintenance budget will allow for further works.</p> <p>The Public Realm service is required to report in more detail about a wider ranging refurbishment programme in line with aspirations contained in the public convenience strategy for Tendring and the possible means of funding before end of March 2020.</p> <p>In the meantime the service is currently upgrading the public toilets at Coronation / Bath House Meadow Walton and is improving public toilet facilities at Frinton playing fields as part of a joint initiative with the local sports club.</p>	Recommendation that Cabinet instigates a review of the Public Conveniences Strategy with a view to realising the full benefits of the intended investment for all of the toilets being retained.
What provision has been made for	Environment & Public	There is currently one electric charging point on the High Street	No further action.

electric car charging points in the District and how far have we progressed this initiative?	Space Portfolio Holder	<p>car park Clacton and a rapid charging point on Harwich Quay. The latter funded from a Highway England grant initiative.</p> <p>The service is working with the climate change committee / working party to develop further options for electric vehicles both purchase of them and provision for charging them inside the Council and for services to the public.</p>	
The income from the brown bin green waste service is £700K per year and the PFH is asked to look at increasing that to £1m per year through either marketing of the service or increasing the fees for the service (or both).	Environment & Public Space Portfolio Holder	<p>The service is currently marketed via the radio, our website, the collection calendars which are delivered to households every year along with advertising on the side of the collection vehicles. The service continues to grow year on year to an extent that this spring Veolia will be introducing a 3rd Garden waste collection vehicle to meet the growing customer demand which is now heading towards 10,000 customers. The current annual customer fee remains above the operational costs associated with providing the service and to increase the fee could be counterproductive in the planned organic growth of the service.</p>	To include as part of the work programmed review of waste collection/recycling by the Committee as part of its February 2020 meeting. The written report should include the numbers subscribing, how has that compared over time, what is the tonnages of waste collected, what is the cost-income assessment for the service and how do charges compare with similar schemes?
Why are we still selling compostable bags that are not actually biodegradable?	Environment & Public Space Portfolio Holder	<p>The use of non-compostable bags is supported by both ECC and the processing plant. Polyethylene bags are more robust, providing a better experience to households with them not ripping as the bags breakdown. All packaging is removed at the front end of the digestion process by the processors and with the bags being more robust this process becomes more efficient. The compostable bags were not liked by the farmers as they did not break down as quickly as they wanted so land where the</p>	To include as part of the work programmed review of waste collection/recycling by the Committee as part of its February 2020 meeting.

		material was being ploughed in was also strewn with what looked to be plastic when in fact it was the non broken down compostable bags	
What measures have been taken to increase recycling where wheelie bins have not replaced black sack collections	Environment & Public Space Portfolio Holder	The authority continues, where applicable to move properties which originally remained on a weekly collection, over to a fortnightly wheeled bin collection. Recycling containers remain free and readily available to all residents to recycle. In addition we will be looking to step up our recycling information campaign	To include as part of the work programmed review of waste collection/recycling by the Committee as part of its February 2020 meeting. The written report should include an assessment of the numbers of properties on black sack collections and the extent to which they are utilising red/green recycling boxes compared with those using wheelie bins and the measures taken/planned to increase recycling amongst this group.
Clacton cemetery – £170K has been set aside to prepare the anticipated expansion site for the cemetery – where are we with the delivery of this project/use of that budget?	Environment & Public Space Portfolio Holder	The project is ongoing and is due for completion in 2020/2021. The size of the extension has been revised to meet new expectations and budget available. The project work is anticipated to be out for tender before March 2020 with work commencing in summer 2020.	To monitor progress of the scheme over 2020/21.
What short term plans are in place for Clacton Town centre to improve its image – and specifically the anti-social behaviour officer and street cleaning? And where are we on the high street funding bid?	Partnerships /Environment & Public Space /Business & Economic Growth Portfolio Holders	A new street steam cleaner has been purchased and a crew trained in its use. This was initially put into use before Xmas and will be seen both in Clacton and other major towns going forward. This machine is very effective at pavement cleaning without damaging the surface material. The Anti- Social Behaviour Officer between Sept-Dec 2019 has undertaken 77 knife sweeps, engaged with local businesses (171 engagements), issued 12 warnings and undertaken 278 hours of foot patrol.	No further action.

		Government grant of £150,000 has been received and this is being used to develop projects for the High Street Futures fund Stage 2 submission in line with the report agreed by Cabinet.	
An explanation is requested as to why only certain fees and charges are rising and many others are not. The general principle of using fees and charges to be commercial was also discussed.	Deputy Leader and Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder (and other Portfolio Holders as identified)	<p>The budget report considered by Cabinet on 20 December 2019 set out a number of overriding principles that services need to take into account when setting fees and charges. This also needs to take into consideration the requirement of only being able to charge the reasonable cost of providing the relevant service.</p> <p>The Council cannot generate a profit from its activities and so we are only able to increase fees and charges where they do not lead to the creation of a profit, particularly where it is to cover a defined service cost such as energy used.</p> <p>Car park fees and charges and Crematorium / Cemetery charges were substantially increased for year 2019 /2020.</p> <p>It was considered prudent to not increase fees and charges again for 2020/2021 in order to ensure a balance is retained with fees charged by other local authorities, or competitors.</p> <p>A more significant review will take place when exploring and developing commercial ideas such as crematorium expansion / car park improvements.</p>	<p>To monitor intended changes to the approval arrangements, presentation (simplification) and justifications for changes/no increases over 2020/21.</p> <p>Recommended to Cabinet that Commercialism should be a specific part of an existing Portfolio Holder's Responsibility or that a new Portfolio Position should be created to take forward the agenda for commercialism as part of means of contributing positively to meeting the budgetary pressures on the Council as identified in its MTFS.</p>
Office Transformation – Are we on budget? When is the project expected to be complete? How	Deputy Leader and Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio	The overall expenditure against budget is overseen by way of the monthly budget monitoring report. The latest report at the time of writing (November 2019) shows expenditure in year of	To monitor progress of the scheme over 2020/21.

<p>much of the reserve have we used to date?</p>	<p>Holder</p>	<p>£455,277.45 set against a budget for the year of 1,006,680. Significant further payments are likely prior to end of financial year but an amount will be requested for carry forward because payment progress by year end will not reach the profiled amount.</p> <p>Detailed monitoring of the cost of elements within the project is carried out within the project team. So far internal work at Pier Avenue has been completed in line with budget, Works at the former Westleigh House site were more costly than expected and costs for the external and extension works at Pier Avenue were increased by the delay caused by nesting birds. At present the overall project contingency has not been exceeded and the team will be undertaking some value engineering exercises on remaining phases to ensure that works are carried out effectively but also within the budget.</p>	
<p>IT transformation – is it on budget as it was stated it would save money but it looks like there are some expensive costs (including licence fees)?</p>	<p>Deputy Leader and Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder</p>	<p>The latest detailed position was set out in a report considered by Cabinet on 13 September 2019. It was recognised that there were a number of areas where costs had increased and a cost pressure has been included within the proposed 2020/21 budget based on the most up to date forecast. It is acknowledged that the IT environment is always subject to on-going change and there may be additional requirements over the period that the digital transformation programme is being rolled out, which would be subject to further reports where necessary.</p>	<p>To monitor progress of the scheme over 2020/21.</p>

In respect of the emerging Local Plan, what, if any, are the financial decisions to be taken in 2020/21?	Deputy Leader and Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder	The Local Plan Section 1 is going through public examination. Information to support Section 2 is being prepared. No financial decisions for 2020/21 can be considered until the outcome of the Section 1 examination is known.	No further action.
In respect of the Manningtree underpass project, what are the officer time / cost implications of the project TDC is leading on?	Deputy Leader and Corporate Finance & Governance/ Business & Economic Growth Portfolio Holders	<p>This project is based on seeking to develop short, medium and long term improvements to the access and roads infrastructure in and around the station. It is predominantly led by ECC. The Council's role at present is based on lobbying / facilitating rather than leading projects.</p> <p>There are no specific officer time / cost implications as it is a project within the Council's agreed priorities (i.e. core business).</p>	No further action.
When are the delivery dates for the Starlings / Milton road sites and are we on target and budget for them?	Business & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder	The project is progressing on time and budget as per the report which was approved by Cabinet.	No further action.
How much money has been set aside for responding to issues arising from Brexit such as lorries being stuck at ports or en route.	Business & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder	Government has provided £321,000 to the Council in respect of ongoing Brexit activity. See below.	No further action,
What funds have been set aside to take advantages of Brexit? Have we spent all of the Government Grant available to us for Brexit preparations? Has the Felixstowe-	Business & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder	Government has provided £321,000 to the Council in respect of ongoing Brexit activity. To date £13,751 has been spent on preparatory activities. This is because the focus pre- election was on resilience in case of a 'no deal'. Allocation of the remaining funding will be considered as Brexit plans become clearer - this	No further action.

Harwich ports requirements been examined?		<p>will likely focus on both resilience and economic opportunities.</p> <p>Felixstowe – Harwich port requirements have been considered as part of Brexit planning to date although the primary responsibility for this lies with the port operators.</p>	
Support for businesses – will there be any further funding for the SME growth fund. If not what plans does the PFH have for the coming financial year to grow our economy? Can we have a list of the projects in the pipeline and those linked to Offshore renewables in Harwich, the A120 Corridor and the University of Essex – and Knowledge Gateway	Business & Economic Growth Portfolio Holder	<p>The SME Growth Fund programme has fully allocated the approved budget. A review of the programme is being undertaken and this will include consideration of future funding.</p> <p>Currently officers are developing a series of interventions for 2020-21 onwards that will support economic growth for businesses and key sectors such as energy. Central to this will be further development of Tendring4Growth and business support.</p>	Recommendation that Cabinet, as part of the budget development to support the corporate plan, looks favourably at providing sufficient funding for meaningful interventions for 2020-21 onwards that will support economic growth for businesses and key sectors such as energy.
Jaywick Sands – where is the budget to lay out 100 new homes? What is the future plans after the 10 Council homes being built? Will the 10 Council homes be completed in 2020?	Housing Portfolio Holder	<p>The new homes will either be financed from borrowing or via capital funding from a Pension provider. This is still in discussion.</p> <p>After the 10 homes are completed we will work with the CCT to evaluate the emerging spatial plan and decide where the next phase of development will commence.</p> <p>Yes they will be completed in 2020 – they are already at first floor level</p>	To monitor progress of the scheme over 2020/21.

In addition to the above, the Committee agreed:

- (1) That, in view of the Government's unexpected continuation of revenue Support grant to this Council in 2020/21, Cabinet be recommended to approve the passporting of Local Council Tax Subsidy Grant to Parish/Town Councils in the District in 2020/21 be confirmed on the same basis as previously.
- (2) That Cabinet be recommended not to approve the proposed adjustment to the budget to remove expenditure of £68,250 based on the Government's commitments to exempt public conveniences from NNDR liability; as there is no indication that the necessary Parliamentary processes will be undertaken to introduce this measure.
- (3) That the Community Leadership OSC be requested to consider adding to its work programme:
 - a. The funding and outcomes of the Mental Health Hub;
 - b. A review of the Spendells proposed capital scheme and the contribution the scheme is intended to make to address homelessness.
- (4) That the possibility of including a visit to recycling facilities locally be put forward for inclusion as part of the annual visits to be organised as part of the commitments in the Councillor Development Statement for the Council.

Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting 6
January 2020

Questions for Portfolio Holders on Housing Revenue Fund Items, the
written response and the decision of the Committee

Question	Portfolio Holder	Written Response	Decision of the Committee
Can we use General Fund Disabilities Facilities Grant to fund HRA disabled adaptations?	Housing Portfolio Holder	No	To include as part of the Committee's work programme a review of Disabilities Facilities Grant arrangements; looking at numbers of requests over time, targets for completing assessments of requests, commissioning the works, undertaking of the works and payment for those works.
Why had direct expenditure on communal cleaning increased from £58.5k to £85.2k?	Housing Portfolio Holder	A combination of increased costs and increased service provision.	No further action.

Are we proposing to spend money on climate emergency items such as LED lighting and solar panels in our council houses?	Housing Portfolio Holder	Energy efficiency improvements are already undertaken as part of the capital maintenance programme. Further works will be identified through the Climate Change Action Plan currently being developed. Currently we are replacing kitchen and Bathroom lights with LED lights. Street lights as they fail are also being replaced with LEDs. Communal lighting in sheltered blocks and flats are also being replaced with LEDs.	No further action.
How are we treating tenants on universal credit as evidence to suggest tenants are being faced with eviction even though there is a problem with their universal credit claim or delay in them receiving their money?	Housing Portfolio Holder	UC claimants are treated in the same way as HB. Eviction action will not be taken in cases where arrears are due to the UC system.	No further action.
Why has annual direct expenditure on repairs and maintenance budget not increased?	Housing Portfolio Holder	Until April 2020 the Council, like all social housing providers has had an imposed rent reduction of 1% annually imposed on its income stream. This has meant that budgets could not be increased	No further action.
What cost pressures are we likely to incur from honouring the works undertaken by ROALCO now that we cannot claim against them under warranties for	Housing Portfolio Holder	These are completely unknown but so far there appear to have been few and in any event most warranties expire after 6 months. Currently the work is being undertaken internally	No further action

their work.			
What is the detailed annual Capital Repairs programme for the HRA – what is next up in terms of major schemes / works?	Housing Portfolio Holder	This is set out in the HRA capital report Currently preparing the programme for next financial year. Due to go to Tenants Panel in Feb 2020. Looking to focus on Environmental Improvements Schemes. Generally the Capital programme follows a similar path each year focusing on roof repairs, replacement windows, kitchens, bathrooms, lifts, asbestos removal etc.	That Cabinet be recommended to approve the retention of the estimated surplus of £363K in the HRA from 2019/20 for capital investment in the Council's housing stock.
For information, what are likely outcomes from the cross sector concerns regarding the Grenfell inquiry?	Housing Portfolio Holder	The Grenfell enquiry has only concluded phase one and it is likely that phase two will have more impacts for landlords. However, we are expecting an increased requirement in terms of fire safety, evacuation plans, inspections on a more frequent basis	No further action.
What is the plan regarding the £100k we have just received for Housing Survey in Jaywick Sands?	Housing Portfolio Holder	The plan is to survey all privately rented properties in Brooklands and wider if budget allows. The information gathered will inform future actions including lobbying Govt. for changes to LHA rate and additional staffing to tackle poor housing conditions identified.	No further action.

