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Resources and Services Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

2 July 2018

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON MONDAY, 2ND JULY, 2018 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, THORPE ROAD, WEELEY,
CO16 9AJ**

Present:	Councillors Stephenson (Chairman), Alexander (Vice-Chairman), Amos, Baker, Broderick, M Brown, Chapman, Everett, Pemberton, Scott and Turner
Also Present:	Councillor Talbot
In Attendance:	Martyn Knappett (Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Services)), Anastasia Simpson (Head of People, Performance and Projects), Richard Barrett (Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits Services)(except items 13 - 15), Andy White (Head of Property Services)(except 14 - 15), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager) and Jonathan Hamlet (Street Scene Officer)

8. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Miles (with Councillor Turner substituting) and Steady (with Councillor Chapman substituting).

9. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 May 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Baker declared an interest in respect of the "Future of the Honeycroft and Spendells Sheltered Housing Sites" as detailed in Agenda Item 8 – Scrutiny of Proposed Decisions insofar as a friend of his was a resident at Honeycroft.

Councillor Pemberton declared an interest in respect of Agenda Item 7 – Review of Environmental Issues in that he hoped to start up a recycling related business in the future.

Councillors Alexander, Baker, M Brown and Everett each declared an interest in respect of Barnes House as reported under Agenda Item 6 – Transformation Update insofar as they were members of the Planning Committee and had recently determined a planning application for structural alterations to Barnes House.

11. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 37

Pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 37, Councillor Baker asked the following question of the Chairman of the Committee:-

"It was recently announced that £5,500 would be made available to 'refresh' the All Weather pitch at Dovercourt Bay Lifestyles which is coming to the end of its current life. This has been described as a 'stop gap' while long term options are explored.

While I support this in principle, surely it was known some time ago when the current life would 'expire' so why were long term options for renewal/replacement not made sooner, thus potentially saving the Council from having to spend money in the short term?"

The Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Stephenson replied as follows:-

"I would like to thank Councillor Baker for his question. I have spoken to Officers and can offer the following response:

Although long term discussions have been taking place for some time about this facility, the use of the pitch has declined in recent years and the financial case for a like for like replacement has weakened. That being said, an opportunity has come about to work with the Essex Football Association and Football Foundation on a long term strategy for artificial pitches in the District. This might include significant external funding opportunities and an upgrade from the standards currently provided for users. As such, it seems sensible to extend the life of the pitch at Dovercourt Bay, in order to pursue these options for long term sustainability and provide far higher standards for our communities, sports clubs and user groups."

12. REPORT OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE - A.1 - CORPORATE BUDGET MONITORING - FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2017/18

The Committee had before it a report of the Deputy Chief Executive (A.1) which provided it with an overview of the Council's financial outturn for the year 2017/18.

It was reported that, on 18 May 2018 the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder (Councillor G V Guglielmi) had considered the Financial Outturn 2017/18 and had made the following decision:-

"That the Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder:-

- (a) notes the financial outturn position for 2017/2018, as set out in the accompanying report and appendices;*
- (b) approves the financing of General Fund capital expenditure for 2017/1, as detailed in in Appendix D of the accompanying report;*
- (c) approves the movement in uncommitted and earmarked General Fund reserves for 2017/18, as set out in Appendix E of the accompanying report;*
- (d) agrees that carry forwards and commitments totalling £22.186m (£9.936m Revenue and £12.250m Capital) requested by services be transferred to the relevant earmarked reserve pending consideration by Cabinet at its July 2018 meeting;*
- (e) subject to the above, approves that the overall General Fund Outturn Variance for the year of £1.263m be transferred to the Revenue Commitments reserve until Cabinet formally considers the allocation of this funding at its July 2018 meeting;*

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- (f) *in respect of the HRA, approves the movement on HRA balances for 2017/18 including any commitments set out within Appendices H and I of the accompanying report along with recharges to the HRA from the General Fund of £2.145m for the year and the financing of the HRA capital expenditure, as set out in Appendix I of the accompanying report; and*
- (g) *delegates authority to the Council's Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder, to adjust the outturn position for 2017/18 along with any corresponding adjustment to earmarked reserves as a direct result of any recommendations made by the Council's External Auditor during the course of their audit activities relating to the Council's 2017/18 accounts."*

The Officer's report and appendices submitted to the Portfolio Holder and referred to above were attached as Appendix A to the Deputy Chief Executive's report for the Committee's consideration.

During the discussion of this item, and in response to Members' questions, the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits (Richard Barrett) undertook to circulate to Members after the meeting an answer to the following question / request for information –

- (1) There is currently £15,000 in the Open Space Section 106 Agreements Less than One Year 'spend by date' return. Is this money allocated to specific projects?; and
- (2) A breakdown of the income received by the Council from the sale of Second Household Car Parking Permits and from the sale of Car Parking Permits to out of District households.

It was **AGREED** that the Committee **RECOMMENDS TO CABINET** that Cabinet -

- (a) review both revenue and capital budgets that have either been carried forward for more than one year or have remained within an earmarked reserve and determine if the money can 'work harder' for the Council and support the long-term financial sustainability plan rather than remain uncommitted for long periods of time. A good example being the regeneration revenue and capital budgets which total in excess of £2.4million against which a schedule of projects and initiatives should be identified;
- (b) be requested to not put the overall General Fund Variance for 2017/18 of £1.263 million in a Reserve but instead use it to support the agreed priorities of the Council and with priority given to specific, deliverable schemes in 2018/19; and
- (c) be requested to instruct Officers to bring forward proposals for the use of the additional income from the 20% increase in planning fees to carry out inspections and gather information on the quality and quantity of what is actually built following the grant of planning permissions.

13. TRANSFORMATION UPDATE

Councillors Alexander, Baker, M Brown and Everett had each earlier declared an interest in respect of Barnes House insofar as they were members of the Planning

Committee and had recently determined a planning application for structural alterations to Barnes House.

The Deputy Chief Executive (Martyn Knappett) and the Head of Property Services (Andy White) attended the meeting and gave an update of the Transformation Project.

Martyn Knappett reminded the Committee of the background to the project together with an overview of recent progress.

Andy White then gave an update on the four main strands of the project namely IT, HR, Customer Services and Buildings as follows:-

Information Technology

- (1) Cloud Migration;
- (2) Network Redesign;
- (3) Self Service Portals; and
- (4) Proposed Leisure App.

Human Resources

- (1) Policy Reviews;
- (2) E-learning Portal;
- (3) Training; and
- (4) Future Leaders Programme.

Customer Services

- (1) Backscanning;
- (2) Self Service Kiosks;
- (3) Centralised Printing; and
- (4) Centralised Post.

Buildings

- (1) Pier Avenue;
- (2) Barnes House;
- (3) Westleigh House;
- (4) Northbourne depot; and
- (5) Town Hall.

Following a question and answer session, the Committee noted the foregoing.

14. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES

Councillor Pemberton had earlier declared an interest in that he hoped to start up a recycling related business in the future.

The Street Scene Officer (Jon Hamlet) attended the meeting to assist the Committee in reviewing environmental issues in the light of the changes to the Domestic Waste

Collection and Recycling Contract and also the Council's current performance with regard to recycling rates.

Jon Hamlet gave a presentation that focused on the following matters:-

- (1) Recycling Rates (%) 2012/13 – 2017/18;
- (2) Refuse (Tonnes) 2012/13 – 2017/18;
- (3) Total Recycling Tonnage (Total Recycled/Total Dry Recycling/Total Compost) 2012/13 – 2017/18;
- (4) Plastic and Cans (Tonnes) 2013/14 – 2017/18;
- (5) Food Waste (Tonnes) 2012/13 – 2017/18;
- (6) Garden Waste Tonnes 2014/15 – 2017/18;
- (7) Paper and Card (Tonnes) 2013/14 – 2017/18;
- (8) Recycling Credits (£68 per tonne); and
- (9) New Service Provision – Alternative Weekly 180 litre bin collection; Projected 8% increase in recycling rates; and alternative provisions considered.

Following a question session, the Chairman stated that due to the lateness of the hour any Member who had a question that they had been unable to submit should email that question to the Head of People, Performance and Projects by the end of the week in order that a response(s) could be collated and then sent to Members of the Committee.

The Chairman also stated that consideration of whether to set up a Task and Finish Working Group to look at waste and recycling matters would be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee noted the foregoing.

15. SCRUTINY OF PROPOSED DECISIONS

Councillor Baker had earlier declared an interest insofar as a friend of his was a resident at Honeycroft.

Pursuant to the provisions of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13, the Committee reviewed any new and/or amended published forthcoming decisions relevant to its terms of reference with a view to deciding whether to enquire into any such decision before it was taken. The relevant forthcoming decisions were before the Committee.

Further to the provisions of Rule 13 Councillor Baker raised the following matters:-

- “(A) When is a report likely to come forward, with reference to Honeycroft and Spendells Sheltered Housing Scheme, to Cabinet as both were agreed to be closed in January/February this year and given that on this Committee's Work Plan this matter is not shown for further scrutiny?”*
- “(B) Underwater CCTV Dovercourt Bay Lifestyles - Why is this proposed and what is the potential cost? Also what are the implications for clients/visitors privacy? And finally, why only at this particular site?”*
- “(C) What exactly are TDC intending to do with regard to Beacon Hill Fort, Harwich. Could the Committee be advised in detail of any future plans?”*

Answers to those questions were submitted to the Committee as follows:-

“(A) formal report on this matter will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting due to be held on Friday 13 July. The report will be published by no later than Thursday 5 July.”

“(B) The report produced by Officers in order to assist the Portfolio Holder in making his decision is tabled at this meeting.”

“(C) Beacon Hill Fort is a Scheduled Ancient Monument described in its Listing as a ‘Late 19th and 20th Century Coastal Artillery Fortification’ and the extent of the area subject to the Listing is edged in purple on the plan attached.

The Council purchased its parts of the Fort, which are shown hatched red on the Plan from The Secretary of State for Defence in stages between 1974 and 1984.

Over the last five years TDC has tried to purchase the privately owned parts of the Fort which are hatched blue on the Plan and the former Pumping Station which is hatched green. Neither of these negotiations proved successful and both properties were sold separately to new private owners.

Access to the privately owned part of the Fort is by way of the land coloured brown on the Plan. A right of way exists to the former pumping station over the same brown coloured land, however this is exclusively for the purposes of a pumping station and does not extend to a private dwelling or for any other purpose.

The radar tower on the site has been looked after and opened to the public by the Harwich Society for some years.

For many years the Council has held a desire to acquire the remainder of the fort and to conserve it in accordance with the management plan created many years ago. However, in reality the Fort has lain unused since it was purchased 45 years ago and the potential to acquire the balance now seems remote. Additionally the realisation of the management plan would require substantial investment which has not yet been identified.

The new owner of the central part of the site has made enthusiastic process with clearing the site and buildings and has proposals for a number of potential uses that were not envisaged in the management plan.

If the Fort is held under one-ownership, it will be easier to put into practice a plan for the site that is achievable and acceptable to Historic England. It may be the time to step back and sell the Council’s part of the site in order to facilitate a viable future for the fort.

No firm proposals are in place for a disposal at present. At the time of writing a report is being prepared for the Portfolio Holder to initiate the disposals process. That process will include valuations detailed consideration and negotiation with interested parties prior to future decision(s) on actual proposals.”

The meeting was declared closed at 10.15 pm

Chairman

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