
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE MANAGEMENT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2016 AT 7.30 P.M. IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

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

In Attendance: Corporate Director (Corporate Services) (Martyn Knappett), Head of Finance, Revenues & Benefits Services (Richard Barrett), Head of Property Services (Andy White), Head of People, Performance and Projects (Anastasia Simpson) and Committee Services Officer (Janey Nice)

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There were none.

34. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2016

The Committee Services Officer (Janey Nice) read out an email from Councillor Everett who had declared a pecuniary interest at the meeting held on 26 September 2016 (minute no. 29) and which had not been recorded in the minutes.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee, held on 26 September 2016, were then approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Everett's declaration of pecuniary interest.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

36. REQUEST FROM THE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT AND DELIVERY COMMITTEE

The Committee were asked to consider a request from the Service Development and Delivery Committee for this Committee to investigate and confirm that there were robust procedures in place to ensure that the contractual terms of all future contracts entered into by the Council were sound and fully protected the Council's interests.

The Head of Finance, Revenues & Benefits Services (Richard Barrett) informed the Committee that this was a piece of work that is being undertaken by the Audit Committee and that there would be a report available early in 2017 for the Committee to scrutinise.

The Committee noted the foregoing.

37. FINANCIAL STRATEGY BUDGET REDUCTIONS – OUTCOMES FROM PORTFOLIO HOLDER WORKING PARTIES – A.1

The Council's Head of Finance, Revenues & Benefits Services (Richard Barrett) presented a report which sought the Committee's comments on the outcomes of the Portfolio Holder working parties which was part of the overall development of the 2017/18 budget.

Mr Barrett informed the Committee that Cabinet, at its meeting held on 25 November 2016, had considered a report which had set out the outcomes from the Portfolio Holder

working parties that had been established to identify the necessary budget reductions from 2017/18 and beyond. The decision made by Cabinet was:

“That Cabinet:

- (a) Notes the outcome from the Portfolio Holder Working Parties and other savings proposals identified and requests comments from the Corporate Management Committee; and
- (b) requests the relevant Corporate Director to undertake the necessary actions to take forward the proposed budget reductions to be considered for inclusion in the detailed estimates for recommending to Council in February 2016 and/or to present further reports to Cabinet in due course.”

Mr Barrett informed the Committee that four working parties had met on a number of occasions during September and October where ideas had been put forward along with supporting information to inform the discussions. He informed Members that the relevant Portfolio Holders had put forward budget reduction proposals which totalled £0.268m in 2017/18 rising to £0.528m on an on-going basis from 2019/20.

Mr Barrett then informed Members that the budget reductions identified to date did not meet the required savings target of £1.565m in 2017/18, however, Officers were continuing to work in consultation with Portfolio Holders to identify further savings. He stated that at this stage of the budget process the one-off use of reserves to balance budget could not be ruled out which would add further budget cost pressures in 2018/19.

The Corporate Director (Corporate Services) (Martyn Knappett) informed Members that it was disappointing that further progress had not been made on a number of issues and that savings still needed to be found in 2017/18.

Also as the figure of the Local Government Support Grant had not yet been notified by Central Government Mr Barrett stated that it was difficult to calculate what the level of Business Rates for the next year would be. However, he was hoping that the Council would be notified of the Grant before Christmas.

Members of the Committee discussed various items and gave a number of suggestions that could be taken up for the necessary savings. These included:

- involving Town and Parish Councils in taking over the running of facilities in their areas;
- residents' parking scheme;
- whether bringing contracts back in-house would make savings;
- charging to use public conveniences and prioritising the closure of some public conveniences where there is significant vandalism;
- the reduction of the Council's maintenance budget; and
- the cost of re-charging the new beaches over the next ten years;

Mr Barrett and Mr Knappett responded to all of the comments made by Members and Mr Barrett said that all of the Portfolio Holder Working Parties were still working and were not yet finished..

Having considered the reports, it was **RESOLVED** that the Committee noted the report from the Portfolio Holders Working Parties; and noted the report from the Portfolio Holders Working Parties; and

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET that:

- (a) the Council should consider introducing charging for the use of public conveniences where it can be achieved; and
- (b) the Council should work with Town and Parish Councils to see whether Town and Parish Councils could take over some assets within their parishes.

38. OFFICE TRANSFORMATION – A.2

Mr Knappett informed the Committee that the recommended option in the report of the Portfolio Holder for Enforcement and Community Safety (Councillor G V Guglielmi) with a potential saving of £100,000 was a good saving to make without affecting any ongoing services and was deliverable.

The Council's Head of Property Services (Andy White) presented a report which asked the Committee to consider the potential selection by Cabinet of an option for office transformation and to make recommendations in respect of that proposed decision. He informed the Committee that the Portfolio Holder for Enforcement and Community Safety (Councillor G V Guglielmi) had considered the options for transforming office accommodation and proposed to put his attached report and appendices to Cabinet on 16 December 2016.

Mr White informed the Committee of the options that had been made available to the Working Party for Transformation and Assets which were:

Option 1 – do nothing – this was provided as a baseline against which to measure other options.

Option 2 – stick with current actions which had included the sale of Clay Hall and letting of the Waddesdon Road, Harwich site. This had also included the disposal of Westleigh House, Clacton-on-Sea;

Option 3 – Basic Rationalisation – condensing into existing Clacton sites and selling other sites which would give a significant level of savings and would avoid major construction as far as possible;

Option 4 – Refocus at Weeley – selling the bulk of the Clacton sites and construct a new build at Weeley, this would require a major capital investment and would mean the sale of the Town Hall and was likely to require the closure of the Princes Theatre;

Option 5 (a) – Officer/Member split (Retaining Weeley Main Building) – the bulk of staff would be based at Clacton with Weeley being retained for Members, meetings and Member facing staff such as Regeneration, Democratic functions and Support;

Option 5 (b) - as Option 5 (a) – this would involve a prestigious new building which would include a Council Chamber big enough for full Council and ground floor space as option 5 (a) and potentially a business foyer;

Option 6 (a) – Clacton Civic Quarter (Retaining the Town Hall plus a new building on Carnarvon Road) – this offered a landmark building and regeneration and looked towards the Civic Quarter vision in the Clacton area action plan and would include the replacement of Carnarvon House which was currently let to the NHS;

Option 6(b) – Clacton Civic quarter (Larger new building on Carnarvon Road and releasing the Town Hall) – this offered a whole new state of the art landmark building

looking towards the Civic quarter vision in the Clacton area action plan and this would replace Carnarvon House and would have the potential to tie in with the NHS and Essex County Council (ECC); and

Option 7 – Colchester Borders – a new landmark building looking towards potential joint working and the potential garden village and would be constructed on a new site near to the east of Colchester, potentially near the University of Essex.

The Committee was informed that after consideration of the above options available, it had been decided by the Working Party that Option 3 was the one that would be the most cost effective and was the option that would be recommended to the meeting of the Cabinet on 16 December 2016.

Members asked a number of questions which were answered by both Mr White and Mr Knappett which included:

- Possibility of the Town Hall being let;
- The ownership of Carnarvon House;
- Queries of the figures supplied in Option 3;
- Demolition of Westleigh House and use for extra car park spaces;
- Barnes House in Pier Avenue and the Pier Avenue office building;
- The Triangle Centre in Frinton-on-Sea;
- How the valuations of the various sites had been obtained;
- Backlog maintenance of the Council's sites;
- Logistics of moving staff while office construction was being done;
- Location of the different sections of the Council's services; and
- Option 6 (b) would it be big enough for the Council plus NHS and ECC?

After discussion of the various issues involved, it was **RESOLVED** that the Committee **RECOMMENDS TO CABINET** that:

- (a) Cabinet selects Option 3 - Basic Rationalisation as its preferred option for office transformation; and
- (b) when all of the office transformation works had been completed that any maintenance backlog be dealt with as a matter of priority.
- (c) Officers reconsider the disposal of Westleigh House as part of the project.

39. DATE OF THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING

The date of the next scheduled meeting of the Corporate Management Committee was due to be held on Monday 12 December 2016 in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Weeley at 7.30 p.m.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.32 p.m.

Chairman