
**MINUTES OF THE RESUMED MEETING OF THE CORPORATE
MANAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 5 JANUARY 2017 AT
9.32 A.M. IN THE CONNAUGHT ROOM, TOWN HALL, CLACTON-ON-SEA**

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

Also Present: Councillors Broderick, Ferguson (Portfolio Holder for Tourism and Culture), G V Guglielmi (Portfolio Holder for Enforcement & Community Safety and Interim Portfolio Holder for Finance, Revenues & Benefits), Honeywood (Portfolio Holder for Housing), McWilliams (Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Health and Well-being), Parsons, Talbot (Portfolio Holder for the Environment), Turner (Portfolio Holder for Commercialisation) and Watling (Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration) [all item 50 (part) only]

In Attendance: Head of Finance, Revenues & Benefits Services (Richard Barrett), Head of People, Performance and Projects (Anastasia Simpson) and Committee Services Manager (Ian Ford)

Also in Attendance: Chief Executive (Ian Davidson), Head of Customer and Commercial Services (Mark Westall), Head of Environmental Services (John Fox), Head of Housing (Tim R. Clarke), Head of Planning (Cath Bicknell), Head of Public Realm (Ian Taylor), Head of Regeneration (Tom Gardiner), Head of Sport and Leisure (Mike Carran), Environmental Health Officer (Chris Smetherham-James), Technical Officer (Jon Hamlet) and Housing Options Co-ordinator (Cathy Low) [all item 50 (part) only]

50. UPDATED FINANCIAL BASELINE 2017/18 AND DETAILED BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR A REVISED BUDGET 2016/17 AND ORIGINAL BUDGET FOR 2017/18

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Whitmore.

Following the adjournment of the meeting on 19 December 2016 the Committee resumed and considered the following matters:

The Chief Executive introduced the session and reminded the Committee that the purpose of the day was to review and scrutinise the budget for 2017/18, consider any suggestions/ideas and make recommendations to the Cabinet. He also highlighted the differentiations between revenue and capital budgets and “one-off” and “ongoing” projects/commitments and their separate budgetary impacts. He also invited Members to put forward matters to be included on the agendas for future All-Member Briefing.

The Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Holder, accompanied by the Head of Regeneration, attended the meeting and answered Members’ questions on:-

- (1) Community Rail Partnership – what does the Council get for its contribution?;
- (2) Proposed Rail Maintenance Depot in Manningtree Area; and
- (3) What are the Council’s plans for spending the SME Growth Fund, the Development Growth Fund and the Business Investment and Growth budgets?

The Environment Portfolio Holder, accompanied by the Head of Environmental Services and the Technical Officer, then attended the meeting and answered Members' questions on:-

- (1) Recycling – what is the Council doing to increase recycling and increase recycling credits?;
- (2) Charges for Garden Waste Collection;
- (3) Dog Warden Service – what does the Council get in return for its expenditure?;
- (4) Devices for “tracking” Dogs;
- (5) Public Health Specialist – what is the role and what return does get on its expenditure?; and;
- (6) Street Sweeping Contract – what are the arrangements for monitoring the contractors?

The Tourism and Culture Portfolio Holder, accompanied by the Head of Sport and Leisure, then attended the meeting and answered Members' questions on:-

- (1) Clacton Air Show – what are the plans to increase income from sponsorship and bucket collection/sales in order to remove the cost pressure and make the Air Show self-financing?;
- (2) Arrangements for the sale of Air Show Programmes;
- (3) Potential for outsourcing of sponsorship/marketing to a third party; and
- (4) Potential for an iPhone application for the Air Show.

The Leisure, Well-being and Partnerships Portfolio Holder, accompanied by the Head of Sport and Leisure, then attended the meeting and answered Members' questions on:

- (1) Sports Centres – what are the reasons for the decline in income?; what are the business plans to make them self-financing and increase usage?; and what are the plans to get grant funding?;
- (2) Catering and other retail opportunities at Clacton Leisure Centre;
- (3) Impacts of the temporary closure of Frinton and Walton Swimming Pool;
- (4) Implications of ceasing the JCCs at the Sports Centres;
- (5) Underuse of the Hard Courts at Clacton Leisure Centre;
- (6) Outsourcing of Leisure Centres;
- (7) Avenues to get external grants e.g. via Sport England;
- (8) Princes Theatre – what is the long-term business plan?;
- (9) Refurbishment of the Princes Theatre toilets;
- (10) Essex Hall – why have the hire charges been reduced given that it has just been redecorated and refurbished?;
- (11) Swimming Pools – what is the long-term business plan to increase income?; and
- (12) Is the Council getting value for money from its contributions to the CAB?

The Enforcement & Community Safety Portfolio Holder and Interim Finance, Revenue & Benefits Portfolio Holder, attended the meeting and answered Members' questions on:

- (1) Mast at Holland Haven – what marketing of the Mast has been undertaken following the termination of the lease by the Harwich Port Authority?; what are the terms of the lease?; can we put the rent up for the London Port Authority to compensate?; and
- (2) Rural Infrastructure Fund.

The Enforcement & Community Safety Portfolio Holder and Interim Finance, Revenue & Benefits Portfolio Holder also outlined to the Committee the Cabinet's recent decisions in relation to the decision to dispose of the Council Offices at Weeley; the Customer Services Strategy and its link to the Channel Shift Strategy. He also outlined the impact of recent Government decisions including the further reduction in the RSG; the effect on

Council rents of the Housing Act; the effect of LCTSS, Universal Credit, devolution of Business Rates etc. He also informed the Committee that the Council would soon need to be make very hard decisions to find further savings and would have to become more 'commercial' in its outlook.

The Housing Portfolio Holder, accompanied by the Head of Customer and Commercial Services, the Head of Housing Services and the Environmental Health Officer, attended the meeting and answered Members' questions on:-

- (1) Careline Lifting Service – what has been the take up and how is the budget being spent?;
- (2) Empty Homes – what is the Council doing to reduce the number of these?;
- (3) What is the Enabling Fund budget?;
- (4) How does the Council recover costs from tenants who have caused damage etc. above and beyond normal wear and tear?;
- (5) Homelessness – how many homeless cases has the Council assisted?; how long did they spend in Bed and Breakfast accommodation before being rehomed or they left the District?; what are the Council's options to house homeless people/families?; and
- (6) How does the Council deal with 'rough sleepers'?

The Commercialisation Portfolio Holder, accompanied by the Head of Public Realm, then attended the meeting and answered Members' questions on:-

- (1) Public Conveniences – what are the Council's future plans and what will be the impact on the budget?;
- (2) Memorial Seats – Does the Income cover the Expenditure?;
- (3) Car Parks – what was the uptake of Non-Residents' Parking Permits and additional permits?; what was the income from PCNs issued in July and August?; how many Court summonses for non-payment did the Council issue?; and
- (4) Beach Economy – how can future Sea & Beach Festivals be funded from Income (e.g. sponsorship) rather than an annual cost pressure?

The Head of Planning attended the meeting and answered Members' questions on:-

How is the Council responding to the reduced income from the Building Control service? Should the Council just provide a statutory service?

Having considered all of the information that had been given to the Committee and having reconsidered the comments and recommendations to Cabinet that had been made at the meeting held on 19 December 2016:

It was **RESOLVED** that the following are the Committee's final and definitive **COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS** to be submitted to the Cabinet:

- (a) the Committee supports, in principle, a £5 increase in the Council's Council Tax precept for 2017/2018;
- (b) to enable Parish and Town Councils to plan their budgets accordingly this Council should inform them that the Parish and Town Councils grant from this Council will be phased out in line with the reduction in this Council's RSG;
- (c) the Committee reiterates the corporate view that all work should be placed through the Print Unit and not externally;
- (d) the Committee supports and endorses the Cabinet's prudent decision to use £2.646m from Reserves to meet the cost of paying the three year pension deficit amount in one payment;

- (e) the Council should look to help the Tendring CAB become more financially self-supporting and ensure that this Council's contribution is spent at 100% efficiency once the Officers have clarified the ongoing issues at the CAB;
- (f) the Committee urges Cabinet that, with regard to any individual projects that come forward, however attractive they may appear, due attention must be paid to any ongoing revenue cost implications that may be included within the business case;
- (g) the Cabinet should make itself aware of and investigate the regeneration and employment/training opportunities that could arise from the proposed rail maintenance depot in the Manningtree area;
- (h) that the procurement process for the recycling/waste collection and street sweeping contracts should identify all potential savings options however unpalatable;
- (i) the Committee supports the aspiration of 100% broadband coverage for the District but would urge the Cabinet to be wary of the overall costs and to seek out all possible external sources of finance;
- (j) the Committee welcome the national award for the Clacton Air Show and urges Officers to use the Award to maximise sponsorship and support for the Air Show in order to meet the aspiration of it being self-financing;
- (k) that Officers should the review the JCCs at the District's sports centres with a view to either reducing their costs or ending them;
- (l) the refurbishment of the Princes Theatre toilets should be completed as soon as possible in view of the nine Weddings that are booked to be held in the Princes Theatre this year;
- (m) the Committee looks forward to the problems at the Frinton and Walton Swimming Pool being resolved;
- (n) the Committee understands the current issues with the Careline Lifting Services and looks forward to receiving an update in six month's time;
- (o) the Committee will monitor the Private Sector Renewal Grants/Financial Assistance Loans budget through the quarterly corporate budget monitoring reports;
- (p) once a decision is taken to close and demolish a public convenience this should be implemented immediately in order to avoid any residual costs;
- (q) the Committee welcomes the increased income from Car Parks and the progress being made to accommodate the cost of the Residents Parking Scheme within the base budget and hopes that the problems encountered with the online registration are avoided this year;
- (r) the Committee again notes that Planning Services have had another extremely busy year;
- (s) with regard to asset management, the Council should not lose sight of opportunities to dispose of smaller, unwanted assets whilst concentrating on larger issues such as the disposal of the Council Offices at Weeley; and
- (t) the Committee looks forward to receiving and commenting on the Financial Outturn report in due course.

It was further **RESOLVED** that the Community Leadership and Partnerships Committee be requested to invite representatives from Tendring CAB to attend one of its meetings, once the Officers have clarified the ongoing issues at the CAB.

It was then **RESOLVED** that the Committee receives an update on the progress of the Careline Lifting Service in six month's time.

The meeting was declared closed at 5.17 p.m.

Chairman