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Resources and Services Overview and
Scrutiny Committee

24 May 2021

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE,
HELD ON MONDAY, 24TH MAY, 2021 AT 7.30 PM
IN THE PRINCES THEATRE, STATION ROAD, CLACTON ON SEA, CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors M Stephenson (Chairman), Scott (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Barry, Codling, Griffiths, Harris, Land and Morrison
Also Present:	Councillor Porter, Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism (in respect of the item at minute 6) and Councillor Baker
In Attendance:	Michael Carran (Assistant Director (Economic Growth & Leisure)), Richard Barrett (Assistant Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer), Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Keith Durran (Democratic Services Officer) and Matt Cattermole (Communications Assistant)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

On this occasion there were no apologies for absence submitted on behalf of Councillors.

2. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on Monday 1 February 2021 be approved as a correct record and were then signed by the Chairman.

It was further **RESOLVED** to receive the notes of the informal meeting of the Committee Members on 29 March 2021 and to approve the decisions there in.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest by Councillors in relation to any on the agenda for this meeting.

4. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

On this occasion no Councillor had submitted notice of a question.

5. REPORT OF ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FINANCE & IT - A.1 - ANNUAL CAPITAL AND TREASURY STRATEGY FOR 2021/22 (INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL AND TREASURY INDICATORS)

It was reported to the Committee that on the 7 April 2021, the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder had agreed the Annual Capital and Treasury Strategy for 2021/22 (including the Prudential and Treasury Indicators) for the purpose of consultation with this Committee prior to consideration of adoption of the strategy. The points highlighted in that report were:

- The Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations required the Council had set out its treasury strategy for borrowing, and had prepared an Annual Investment Strategy (required by Investment Guidance subsequent to the Act) that had set out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments, "having regard" to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. Revised editions of both documents were issued in December 2017.
- From 2019/20 the Capital Strategy had been combined with the Treasury Strategy into one document, which was required to be updated / approved annually.
- The proposed Annual Capital and Treasury Strategy for 2021/22 was set out in **Appendix A**.
- The Capital Strategy element of the combined document covered the various elements surrounding capital investment decisions and the key criteria that investment decisions were considered against.
- The Treasury Strategy element of the combined document covered the various elements that satisfied the requirements of the various codes that governed the borrowing and investment activities of the Council and had been prepared in the light of advice received from the Council's Treasury advisors and reflected the latest codes and guidance.
- Prudential and Treasury indicators were included as an Annexe to the combined strategy and were therefore included within **Appendix A**.
- Under the Prudential Code the Council had freedom over capital expenditure as long as it was prudent, affordable and sustainable. The Prudential Indicators either measured the expected activity or introduced limits upon the activity, and reflected the underlying capital appraisal systems and enabled the Council to demonstrate that it was complying with the requirements of the Prudential Code.
- The Council's investments would be undertaken in accordance with its Treasury Management Practices. Those were expanded to include use of non-specified investment in property to yield both rental income and capital gains from 2016/17. If credit ratings remained at their current extremely low levels it was likely that a significant proportion of the Council's investments would continue to be in government securities such as with other Local Authorities. The business rates grant process associated with COVID 19 had

demonstrated a need to maximise flexibility in the range of counterparties the Council used plus rates paid by the Debt Management Office had frequently been negative since autumn 2020, which was why two Money Market Funds were opened up in December 2020.

- As part of the same report, 2020, the Capital and Treasury Strategy reflected the exploration of using property investment funds as part of the Council's wider investment portfolio. However, at the present time that was no longer being actively pursued given the significant impact from COVID 19 and how unclear it had made the risk / reward equation going forward. All references to that type of investment had been removed from the strategy for 2021/22. However, it would be revisited once the economic recovery from COVID 19 had reached the point where it may again be considered as a potential useful addition to the investment portfolio.
- As was always the case, other 'quality' investment opportunities would always be explored during the year in consultation with the Council's external advisors to maximise returns on investments within a continuing and overall risk-averse approach.

After a detailed discussion the Committee **RESOLVED**:

- To request that the head of Democratic Services and Election and the Section 151 Officer to develop proposals for training for the members of the Committee in relation to Local Government Finance and implement this on the basis that further training needs may then be further identified.
- The Committee also recommended that Cabinet approves the submission of all schemes for which they were reserve provisions and one off funds set aside to finance, be subject to the assessment set out in the draft Annual Capital and Treasury strategy 2021/22 and presented to the Office Project Board to determine whether the funding should be released.

6. A.2 - TOURISM STRATEGY FOR TENDRING

The Committee was advised that at its meeting on 21 May 2021 Cabinet had approved the Tourism Strategy now be presented to this Committee. This had followed Consultation on the Strategy in 2020.

That five year Tourism Strategy replaced the previous version for Tendring, which had expired in 2016.

Key statistics presented to the Committee on the Strategy were:

- Tourism was estimated to be worth more than £402 million to Tendring, and was responsible for over 8,980 jobs, equivalent to 17.9% of the District's employment. To put matters into perspective, tourism had increased in value to the local economy by £115 million since the previous strategy was written in 2010;
- The coronavirus pandemic had impacted significantly on the local tourism industry and that strategy was tailored to extend 'back to business' support towards the recovery of the sector;
- The strategy set out a 10 point plan for delivery of the following objectives:
 1. Wealth creation
 2. Job creation
 3. Quality of life for local people
 4. Long term growth of the tourism sector
- That strategy recognised that Tendring had wide attraction, that its towns and villages all had their own unique features, tourism offer and charm. It was important that the Council worked with partners to develop those unique selling points and promoted all of the District's component parts. From beautiful coastlines and visitor attractions, to picturesque countryside and heritage of international significance; the power of Tendring's tourism offer was in the diversity of its destinations and that should be embraced and marketed accordingly;
- There had been significant private sector investment in the local tourism industry in recent years, including multi million pound investment into some of Tendring's key attractions. That had improved the quality of the District as a visitor destination and demonstrated local confidence and commitment to raising standards;
- The Council had invested in major projects such as the £36m Coastal Defence scheme for Clacton and Holland, creating tangible tourism assets in Harwich for Mayflower 400, had developed a scheme to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Clacton on Sea and public realm schemes to improve the appearance of the District;
- Furthermore, the Council had invested resources into both organising and facilitating an expanding quality events programme in recent years. Built on the success of the nationally recognised Clacton Airshow and Harwich Illuminate, event organisers had felt empowered to bring events of national significance such as The Tour of Britain and the first 'on road' Motor Rally in England and Wales, to the Tendring District;
- The strategy recognised that tourism was a fast moving, agile economy and the Council was one partner in ensuring long term success. As such, that strategy had greater emphasis on the Council's role of facilitation than its predecessor;

- The strategy was accompanied by a work programme for 2021/22, which set out actions the Council would take to deliver its strategic aims. It was recognised that the work programme was a live document and would adapt to a changing environment.
- During the discussion, one issue that was referenced was that the oldest known painting of the flag of the USA was hung on a wall in Harwich.

The Committee recorded its thanks to the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism and the Assistant Director for Economic Growth and Leisure for attending the Committee, presenting the approved Tourism Strategy and responding to questions from the Members of the Committee.

The Committee **RESOLVED** to Recommend Cabinet:

- To consider the opportunities for working in partnership with local businesses prioritising such services as hotels/bed and breakfast operators to encourage visitors participating/attending or visiting events in the District to stay locally and use the services of those local businesses (Potentially with discounts offered by those businesses).
- To harness opportunities to those attracted to specific places/events locally to be supported to revisit by sharing other places/events locally including those using the book of Holland Ferry, creating a dedicated visit Tending website with the separate charms of the District can be brought together, using QR codes to encourage visits to such a website and to local heritage sites.
- To take additional measures to improve the cleanliness of the District including messaging around “Respecting the district by using the area responsibly” through education encouragement and enforcement to ensure visitors are encouraged back rather than being putt-off by unsightly rubbish and over full bins.
- To consider again the previous recommendation (minute 87 of 21 September 2020 refers) for consistent and common, highly visible branding of events and facilities provided/supported by the council to ensure that those attending those events/facilities are made aware of the Councils role in producing/supporting the same.
- To examine measures to offset the carbon footprint of the Clacton Air Show, which uses over 100,000 litres of Jet Fuel and generates 275 tonnes of CO₂, including the options perused by the Bournemouth Air Festival whereby trees were planted for each tonne of carbon used at the Air Show.
- To note the intention of the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth and Leisure to consider promoting details of bridleways that traverse the District.

7. **SCRUTINY OF PROPOSED DECISIONS**

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 it wished to look into any such decision before it was taken. The relevant forthcoming decisions were before the Committee.

The Committee noted the submitted list of publicised forthcoming decisions.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS MONITORING REPORT

The Committee before it the current Recommendations Monitoring Report which set out those items which had previously made recommendations to the Cabinet/ Portfolio Holder and the approved response to the recommendations and any subsequent action for the Committee to consider.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Chairman of the Committee with the Head of Democratic Services and Elections review the outstanding position on the Recommendations submitted with the view to expediting the conclusion of those matters

9. REVIEW OF WORK PROGRAMME

Further to the informal meeting of the Members of this Committee held on 29 March 2021 (minute 2 above refers) the Committee had before it the current draft Work Programme 2021/22 that outlined the Scrutiny enquires identified by Members for the remainder of the municipal year.

The Committee heard that the draft Work Programme for year 2021/22 had been submitted to Management Team on the 18 May 2021 and Cabinet on the 21 May 2021 with the view to being reconsidered at the 5 July 2021 meeting of the Committee with Comments from Officers.

The Committee noted the contents of the report and the update provided by the Head of Democratic Services and Elections.

The meeting was declared closed at 10.12 pm

Chairman