

Minutes

Policy, Finance and Resources Committee Tuesday, 22nd March, 2016

Attendance

Cllr Mrs McKinlay (Chair)	Cllr Clark
Cllr Kerlake (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Hirst
Cllr Aspinell	Cllr Poppy
Cllr Barrett	

Apologies

Cllr Hossack

Substitute Present

Cllr Poppy (substituting for Cllr Hossack)

Also Present

Cllr Mynott
Cllr Tee
Cllr Kendall

Officers Present

Chris Leslie	- Finance Director
Philip Ruck	- Head of Paid Service
Helen Gregory	- Interim Head of Housing
Claire Mayhew	- Governance and Member Support Officer
Daniel Toohey	- Monitoring Officer

412. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received by Cllr Hossack, Cllr Poppy was substituting.

413. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee held on 16th February 2016 were signed as a true record.

414. Transfer of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Shops to the General Fund

The Chair informed the members of the Committee that this item is to be deferred to a future meeting of the Policy, Resources and Finance Committee.

415. Variation on the Order of the Agenda

RESOLVED, following a request from the Chair, to move Item 4 on Hutton Community Centre to the end of the agenda, due to the confidential nature of the exempt appendices which may have to be referred to in the discussion which would mean the committee would have to move to private session.

416. Response to consultation on new Thames Crossing - Report to follow

Highways England is consulting on proposals for a new road crossing of the River Thames connecting Kent and Essex. Views are being sought on two potential locations, three crossing structures, and four route options.

A scheme has been proposed that identifies a preferred crossing location (Location C), structure (bored tunnel), and route (Route 3).

Responses to the consultation will inform the final recommendation to the Department for Transport. The Government are expected to make an announcement on the final scheme later this year.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Parker and **SECONDED** by Cllr Hirst to agree the recommendation in the report.

A vote was taken by a show of hands it was **RESOLVED** that:

1.1 To approve the Council's response to the Lower Thames Crossing Route Consultation, as set out in Appendix A.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

Brentwood Borough Council's response to the consultation is set out at Appendix A. The response broadly supports the need for a new crossing and is in favour of the crossing location, structure, and route proposed by Highways England.

The Council's response objects to Route 4 on the basis that it would have detrimental impacts on proposed strategic development allocations for new homes and jobs in the Borough, set out in the Brentwood Draft Local Plan. The route would have negative impacts on nearby residents in West Horndon. There are also concerns about the level of re-engineering required to existing infrastructure (such as the A127 and M25 junction 29) and the higher cost implications with no additional economic benefit.

The Council responded to the Lower Thames Crossing consultation held in 2013, at that time supporting Location A (Dartford) rather than Location C (further east, where a crossing is proposed now). This response noted that Location C was preferred from a county-wide perspective because of economic benefits, connectivity improvements, access to labour markets and potential to facilitate regeneration across Thames Gateway. However, Location A was preferred at that time because of the environmental and Green Belt impacts that alternative options would pose and concerns about the cost of required improvements to the existing road network and junctions. The Council's view has changed in 2016 because it is now clear that engineering solutions required to provide a crossing at Location A are complex and not cost effective. There are also concerns about the vulnerability of the national road network in that location. Evidence is now provided to suggest Location C will provide opportunities to improve local connections, relieve congestion at Dartford and provide wider economic growth. Although the Council remains concerned about environmental and Green Belt impacts it accepts that it is not always possible to completely satisfy competing needs.

417. Community Alarms Service

The Council has a number of fees and charges relating to the services it provides. As part of the budget setting process, these charges are reviewed on an annual basis. Whilst some of the fees and charges are statutory, and therefore determined through legislation, the Council must also review its charges for discretionary services to ensure they reflect the current costs of service provision.

Historically review of fees and charges for this service have been on an adhoc basis and have not reflected the true cost of this service.

A motion was **MOVED** by Cllr McKinlay and **SECONDED** by Cllr Poppy to agree the recommendations in the report.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. That Members approve the recommendation made at the 9 March 2016 Environment and Housing Management Committee to increase the Community Alarm Charge by 0.50p per week from the 1 June 2016 which will generate an additional income to the general fund of £22,620.00.**

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

The Council must review its charges for discretionary services to ensure they reflect the current costs of service provision.

Historically review of fees and charges for the Community Alarms service have been on an adhoc basis and have not reflected the true cost of the service.

418. Hutton Community Centre - Report to follow

The report provides an update to the committee in relation to discussions that have taken place between bidders for the letting of Hutton Community Centre.

Members will be aware that against a background of potential co-operation between the two bidders, delegated authority was granted to the Head of Paid Service and Section 151 Officer to negotiate the terms of lease on Hutton Community Centre in consultation with a sub-committee comprising of the Chair and Vice-chair of the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee and a representative of the Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups.

Despite best efforts, agreement could not be reached between the two bidders with negotiations breaking down in February 2016.

Since that time officers have been considering the best solution for the residents of Brentwood, recognising the need to provide a solution that balances the financial return with the social needs of the area emphasising the strong links with the local community that are essential.

Members are advised that the Head of Paid Service issued advice (10 March 2016) to both bidders that the then existing bid process had been stopped, in line with the Council's tender invitation.

Members are also advised that further information has been provided relating to the finances of the Hutton Community Centre Charitable Incorporated Organisation (HCC CIO).

A motion was MOVED by Cllr McKinlay and SECONDED by Cllr Kerlake to agree the recommendations in the report.

Cllr Aspinell MOVED an amendment to recommendation 2.1 to state:

That the Head of Paid Service together with the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the sub-committee comprising of the Chair and Vice-chair of the Policy, finance and Resource Committee and a representative of the Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups be granted delegated authority to negotiate and subject to satisfactory conclusion of those negotiations grant the Hutton Community Centre Charitable Incorporated Organisation (HCC CIO) up to a 15 year lease. Negotiations will include the provision by HCC CIO of adequate terms of occupancy.

This amendment was accepted by the Chair.

After a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED** that:

- 1. That the Head of Paid Service together with the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the sub-committee comprising of the Chair and Vice-chair of the Policy, finance and Resource Committee and a representative of the Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups be granted delegated authority to negotiate and subject to satisfactory conclusion of those negotiations grant the Hutton Community Centre Charitable Incorporated Organisation (HCC CIO) up to a 15 year lease. Negotiations will include the provision by HCC CIO of adequate terms of occupancy.**
- 2. That Members note the lease will be at less than commercial value but recognises the social value that will be provided by HCC CIO.**

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

The report provides a recommendation to allow Members to make an informed decision as to the granting of a lease of Hutton Community Centre.

419. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting concluded at 8.30pm
