

Ordinary Council meeting 11.12.2013

Chair's Report to the Council

Committee: Overview & Scrutiny

Chairperson: Councillor Hones

1. Update on Task and Finish Groups

- 1.1 Review of Parking Consultation – The Committee received a report providing an overview of the consultation process relating to changes to off street parking. The report indicated that the Council was not alone in its challenge to generate interest in parking issues, sighting low return rates for a number of parking consultations carried out by other Local Authorities. It was concluded that any future consultation should provide all users with an opportunity to participate, and although this has been tried in the past through traditional methods, other options should be considered.
- 1.2 Funding Strategy 2013-2016 – The Committee received a report summarising the recommendations of the task and finish group to the Strategy and Policy Board at its meeting on 20 November 2013. Recommendations summarised as follows:
 - 1.3 The Task and Finish Group felt that there was a need to be open and transparent with all of the funding, and one of the key priorities set out in the Funding Strategy is the implementation of a clear governance process and procedures for future funding. This will include who will be responsible from both an officer and member perspective on any key decisions and processes for reviewing the outcomes from funding. This will come back to Performance and Resources Board for approval.
 - 1.4 The Task and Finish Group welcomed the development of a Community Hub within the Town Hall and this will be progressed as part of the Town Hall Delivery Project.
 - 1.5 The development of Service Level Agreements with each of the Parish Councils. There will also be further one to one meetings together with regular liaison meeting with all of the Parish Councils.

1.6 The development of a policy for in kind support to the Voluntary and Community Sector and this Policy will include free printing and the use of meeting rooms for voluntary and community sector organisations.

1.7 Ongoing support and guidance will be given to the Voluntary and Community Sector directly from Council Officers or in liaison with Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services.

1.8 Member Training – The Committee received an update regarding the progress made with exploring needs and options for member training. Councillor Tee invited Councillors Lloyd and Le-Surf to join the task and finish group. Councillor Tee informed the Committee that the group, with the support of officers, will be analysing the results of the survey circulated to members and will report back to the Committee with a further update.

2. 2013/14 Second Quarter Performance Indicators

2.1 The Committee received the second quarter performance indicator report with a verbal summary from the appropriate senior officers. At the request of the Committee at its previous meeting, the report provided further context and benchmarking information.

3. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2014/15

3.1 Further to work undertaken by a Task and Finish Group, the Committee agreed the following proposed changes to the LCTS Scheme for 2014/15 for adoption by Full Council on 11th December 2013

- a) To introduce protections for residents acting as a carer.
- b) To update the applicable amount for working age claimants by 1%.
- c) To delay the assessment of notional income for self employed claimants until their third year of operation and using either the higher of the current rate of minimum wage or the appropriate market rate for the employment market that the claimant or their partner is operating in.

3.2 Members also agreed the following amendment to current Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions for 2014/15:

- a) To reduce the discount on properties that have major repairs or structural alterations to 25% for 12 months.

3.3 Members also agreed the proposals to impose penalties on residents who fail to notify the Council of a relevant change in circumstances that affects the amount of Council Tax liability as follows:

- a) Housing Benefit - £50
- b) Local Council Tax Support - £70
- c) Council Tax - £70

4. Medium Term Financial Plan

4.1 The Committee considered the following:

4.2 The planning assumptions to be used in the formulation of the MTFP, the potential budget pressures and, the proposal for the General Fund Working Balance to be maintained at a minimum level of £2.5 million to mitigate against the combination of known risks.

5. Call-In Report

5.1 The Committee agreed to defer the Hutton Community Centre Call-In agenda item to so that Cllr Quirk, as the caller-in, could have the opportunity to consider calling witnesses.

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[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

524. **LAND AT WILLIAM HUNTER WAY BRENTWOOD:** At the suggestion of the Chairman, the Board agreed to consider this item (which was contained under Part Two of the Agenda) whilst the press and public were still present at the meeting. Following on from previous decisions of the Council with regard to the redevelopment of the William Hunter Way site, negotiations with Halladale on the proposed lease and development agreement were progressing satisfactorily and a planning application was likely to be submitted in the near future.

Several issues had arisen during negotiations on which further decisions of the Council may be required:-

1. The Barclays Bank car park was currently situated within the proposed development site and negotiations were at an advanced state to acquire this area of the site and relocate the car parking spaces elsewhere. Compulsory Purchase had previously been authorised in respect of the site but it was hoped that this would not be necessary in respect of the Barclays land and that this issue could be resolved through negotiation.
2. As Halladale had been discussing their proposals with potential occupiers and with local residents, certain changes were likely to come forward to the original scheme. These changes might affect the financials associated with the scheme. If this was the case, and bearing in mind that the next Policy Board meeting was not until the end of June, it was suggested that the previous cross-party group of Members be reconvened to agree any amendments to the heads of terms of the Development Agreement and the disposal of the site by way of a long lease.

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3. The William Hunter Way site comprised a large number of different parcels of land, some registered with the land registry and some not. Advice had been received that it would be beneficial to appropriate the whole site for planning purposes under section 232 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This would have the benefit of extinguishing all rights (including private rights of way) upon the carrying out of activities on the land in accordance with a planning permission. There were compensation provisions for anyone who could subsequently claim such rights but the Council would require an indemnity from a purchaser in respect of any compensation under this section.

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

1. To delegate authority to the CE&TC following consultation with the Chairman of the Policy Board, to take all necessary action to acquire the Barclays Bank Car Park site in William Hunter Way, including the provision of alternative car parking if necessary for Barclays. Any financial expenditure incurred by the Council to be first agreed by the District Valuer.
2. That following advice from CBRE and the District Valuer, if necessary any amendment to the Heads of Terms and decision on the disposal of the site by way of a long lease to Halladale be delegated to the CE&TC following consultation with a cross-party group of Members comprising of the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, the Chairmen of the Environment and Community Panels and the Leaders of the two Opposition Groups on the Council.
3. To appropriate the whole of the William Hunter Way site for planning purposes under Section 232 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

[DTC/DoLS-Keane]

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[REDACTED]

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