

Minutes

Policy, Projects and Resources Committee 1 February 2018

Attendance

Cllr Mrs McKinlay (Chair)	Cllr Keeble
Cllr Kerlake (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Kendall
Cllr Faragher	Cllr Mynott
Cllr Hossack	

Apologies

Cllr Barrett	Cllr Parker
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Substitute Present

Cllr Hirst

Officers Present

Phoebe Barnes	-	Principal Accountant
Chris Leslie	-	Commercial Manager
Philip Ruck	-	Chief Executive
Jean Sharp	-	Governance and Member Support Officer
Steve Summers	-	Chief Operating Officer
Adrian Tidbury	-	Estates and Valuation Surveyor
Daniel Toohey	-	Monitoring Officer
Jacqueline Van Mellaerts	-	Financial Services Manager

267. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllrs Barrett and Parker. Cllr Hirst substituted for Cllr Parker.

268. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee held on 15 January 2018 were approved as a true record.

269. Memorial Walls

The report before Members continued from the Committee report made at the November 2017 meeting where officers put forward an outline idea, for agreement in principle, to build a Memorial Wall scheme which would in turn enhance the appearance of Woodman Road Cemetery.

Since then the scheme had been developed further and new ideas had emerged.

The central area of the cemetery lent itself to becoming the next “section” to be developed, and rather than just building a wall there were some more attractive ready-made options available that were relatively easy to install, more cost effective than a wall, plus they stored ashes. By using a combination of granite “Columbaria” and granite “Sanctums” (Vaults) the development could provide an attractive and desirable memorial.

At the far end of the cemetery, the boundary fence was in a bad state of repair. By investing in good quality fencing, it would be possible to develop this area into a “pet” memorial section where a plaque could be purchased to place on the fence to remember a pet. It was not envisaged at this stage to register the Council for the appropriate licences to accept ashes from pets, but this would be reviewed.

A business case had been drawn up and was appended to the report as Appendix A and approval was being sought from the Committee to proceed with the project.

Cllr Mrs Mckinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED

- 1. That approval be given to the proposed design, fees and length of agreement; and, subject to compliance with procurement regulations and requirements, to order 60 Sanctums, 2 Columbaria, a bench and tree grill along with the appropriate construction necessary to allow for the fitting of these.**

2. That a section of boundary fencing be purchased, subject to compliance with procurement regulations and requirements, and used for displaying Pet Memorial Plaques, in a separate area from the human areas of the cemetery, at the proposed fee rate and length of agreement.
3. That a report be made to the Environment and Enforcement Committee to propose a move away from ground interments of ashes or, alternatively, approve higher fees for ground interments of ashes wef 2019/20 or sooner.

Reason for recommendations

This scheme will enhance the appearance and attractiveness of Woodman Road cemetery. People will have more choice for storage of ashes and a peaceful place to sit and reflect upon their loved ones in a pleasant environment. It also introduces a memorial area for pets.

270. Lease of Land Next to Wash Road Electrical Transformer Station

The report sought delegated authority to grant a lease of land next to the electrical transformer station in Wash Road. There was opportunity to lease the site (subject to planning) for a battery storage facility that would be linked to the national grid, assisting with storage of renewable energy and addressing power outages.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Hossack **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED

That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Paid Service consulting with the Chair of Policy, Projects and Resources Committee, and the Monitoring Officer to negotiate the terms and grant a lease or licence of land by the electrical transformer station along Wash Road.

Reason for recommendation

Committee approval is required to grant a commercial lease of over £25,000.

271. Medium Term Financial Plan 2018/19 - 2020/21

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) considered by Policy, Projects and Resources Committee on 29 November 2017 gave Members an update on the various significant changes that would impact on the Council's financial position. Particular issues highlighted, relevant to the General Fund & HRA included the phasing out of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), changes to the New Homes Bonus & the Business Rates Retention schemes.

The fundamental principles of the Council's MTFP were to:

- (i) Maintain a sustainable financial position against a background of unprecedented financial uncertainty and reduced government funding, including the delivery of efficiency targets.
- (ii) Support the vision of our Borough through appropriate identification of resources required to deliver the key priorities outlined in the 'Vision for Brentwood'.
- (iii) Maximise opportunities and mitigate risks associated with the fundamental change to the way in which local government is financed.

The report before Members considered:

- (i) The General Fund budget proposals for 2018/19 to 2020/21.
- (ii) The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2018/19 onwards.
- (iii) The Capital Programme 2018/19 to 2020/21.
- (iv) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED

General Fund:

1. To approve the General Fund - Revised MTFP for 2018/19 as shown in Table 9 which includes the proposed savings target, presenting a zero net Funding Gap for 2018/19.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

2. To approve the HRA Business Plan for 2018/19 and beyond as shown in Appendix C of the report.

3. To approve a 1% decrease in rents for 2018/19 and for the following year.
4. To recommend to apply the formula rent to all new tenancies from April 2018/19.

Capital programme

5. To approve the Existing and New Schemes of the proposed Capital Programme for 2018/19 to 2020/21 as set out in Tables 16 and 17 of the report.

Treasury Strategy

6. To approve the Treasury Management Strategy as set out in Section 12 of the report.

Section 151 Officer's Assurance Statement

7. To note the Section 151 Officer's Assurance Statement as set out in Section 13 of the report.

(Cllr Hirst declared a non-pecuniary interest under the Council's Code of Conduct by virtue of being a Trustee of Thames Chase).

Reasons for recommendation

The Council is required to approve the Budget as part of the Budget and Policy Framework.

272. Asset Development Programme Update

Since the January P, P&R Committee check and challenge sessions had taken place between Council Officers, the Project Delivery Team, the Project Lawyer and the EELGA and JCG consultants who arranged and coordinated the Market Soundings exercise. These sessions reviewed and summarised the key findings of the market soundings and discussions took place on how best to take the procurement of a joint venture partner forward, including initial thoughts on governance, procurement process, key decisions to be taken, crucial milestones etc. These were still being developed and a further report would be made at the March 2018 PPR meeting highlighting activity in relation to key sites incorporated into the joint venture procurement.

Each month, a "Project Highlight Report" was produced for the Asset Development Programme, setting out achievements for that month and what was planned for the coming month and reported to Project Board. Achievements in January 2018 and planned activities were detailed in the report for Members' information.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report and following a discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED

To note the progress of the Asset Development Programme Project Board

Reason for Recommendation

PPR Members to note progress at this stage.

273. Wholly Owned Company and Joint Venture

The report before Members set out the business case to create a company that would be wholly owned by the Council. It also provided an update on the progress of acquiring a partner to assist in the development of the Council's sites to realise regeneration and financial objectives.

As part of the Council's asset development programme a private company was required to engage in commercial activity and to facilitate future opportunities.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report and following a full discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

- 1. That a report recommending the creation of a wholly owned company, (WOC) be brought to the next PPR Committee following finalisation of the governance arrangements.**
- 2. That the work on the procurement of an asset development partner continues and a decision to formally tender be brought back to the Committee.**

Reasons for Recommendation

To create a wholly owned company Committee recommendation to Council and subsequent Council approval is required.

274. South Essex Vision 2050

The purpose of the report before Members was to outline the work undertaken by Leaders and Chief Executives of South Essex Councils to create a vision and sense of place for the area commonly known as South Essex Vision 2050 also to explain the reason for the formation of a Joint Committee with the title of the Association of South Essex Local Authorities.

Members were advised that South Essex Councils were defined as Brentwood, Basildon, Thurrock, Southend, Rochford, Castle Point and Essex County Council.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report and following a discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

1. That Members support the co-ordinated approach with neighbouring authorities on strategic place shaping in the South Essex 2050 Vision.

2. That Members agree and support a programme of further collaboration on key strategic place shaping to support much needed infrastructure and economic growth to underpin delivery of the local plan.

Reason for recommendations

In order to fulfil the obligation of the Duty to Co-operate as required for the Brentwood LDP to be accepted, and to promote and deliver much needed infrastructure and economic growth, Brentwood must engage with the surrounding boroughs.

275. Devils Head Cross Roads - Dedication of Land for Highway Purposes

The report before Members considered a request from Essex Highways for an extension to the Highway Rights over the Council land title at the 'Devil's Head' cross roads in Warley.

Cllr Mrs McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kendall **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report and following a discussion a vote was taken on a show of hands and it was

RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY

1. That the land coloured red on the plan – Appendix A - be dedicated as highway.

- 2. That delegated authority be given to the CEO in consultation with the Leader of the Council to finalise agreements with ECC in regards to safety improvements at Devil's Head crossing.**

Reason for Recommendation

To enable safety improvement works as proposed by Essex County Council to be carried out at the junction of Hartswood Road and Eagle Way, 'Devils Head' Crossroads.

276. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm