

# Minutes

---

## **Policy, Projects and Resources Committee** **Tuesday, 20th November, 2018**

### **Attendance**

Cllr Mrs McKinlay (Chair)	Cllr Kendall
Cllr Kerslake (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Mynott
Cllr Barrett	Cllr Parker
Cllr Hirst	Cllr Ms Rowlands
Cllr Hossack	

### **Also Present**

Cllr Bridge  
Cllr Chilvers  
Cllr Mrs Pound

### **Officers Present**

Philip Ruck	-	Chief Executive
Zoe Borman	-	Governance and Member Support Officer
Steve Summers	-	Chief Operating Officer
Greg Campbell	-	Director of Operations
Phoebe Barnes	-	Principal Accountant
Jacqueline Van Mellaerts	-	Chief Financial Officer
Kim Anderson	-	Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager
Chris Leslie	-	Executive Director of Commercial Services

### **204. Apologies for Absence**

No apologies had been received.

### **205. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The Minutes of the Policy, Projects and Resources Committee held on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2018 were approved as a true record.

### **206. Chair's Update**

The Chair answered questions posed by Members and advised that:

Advertising and images of the new Town Hall are currently being displayed on the Town Hall hoarding. Arrangements will be made for Members to look around the Town Hall once it is safe for them to do so, and Members will be updated on the organisations occupying Town Hall space.

Regarding parking on housing green spaces, Members had been invited to come forward with proposals in their ward. Any proposals should be directed to Mr Summers. Further detail would be worked up once the viability of proposed spaces have been considered.

## **207. Leisure Strategy - Brentwood Community Halls**

The Council's six community halls are currently managed by Brentwood Leisure Trust through a management agreement. At the 29 November 2017 Members agreed that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of Policy, Projects and Resources Committee to investigate, negotiate and subject to viability, agree a new Service Level Agreement and new leases with Brentwood Leisure Trust. This agreement and the leases will cease in March 2019. In September 2018 the Council launched a preliminary market engagement exercise to ascertain if there was any third-party interest in managing the community halls. The report before members set out the outcomes of that exercise and the recommendations for the next stage.

Cllr McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Hossack **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Following a full discussion Cllr McKinlay accepted an amendment to recommendation 2.1 to read:

- 2.1 That Members agree that officers prepare documents and commence a compliant procurement exercise for the management of the Community Halls **and Ward Members be consulted on those halls within their ward.**

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

1. **That Members agree that officers prepare documents and commence a compliant procurement exercise for the management of the Community Halls and Ward Members be consulted on those halls within their ward; and**

2. That at the conclusion of that exercise that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of Policy, Projects and Resources Committee to negotiate and subject to viability agree new leases for the management of the Community Halls.

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

As part of the Council's due diligence in delivering a successful Leisure Strategy, Members and officers need to have a complete picture of the current associated costs, risk profiles of the Borough's leisure facilities and identify any opportunities for improved income generation.

Comments received from Sport England as part of the Local Development Plan consultation, stated that a Leisure Strategy is required that assesses Council owned sports and leisure facilities in order that the Council can continue to work with partners to ensure that appropriate provision is made for the residents of Brentwood. The strategy should not only consider how the Council can provide services, but also how other partners can. The strategy should also use current sports facility evidence to identify strategic priorities to then inform what will be included in the Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan. Following this feasibility work, the Council will then be able to determine which projects will be funded by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and those funded by planning obligations.

The Council's Asset Management Strategy also sets out the need to maximise income where possible from its asset portfolio.

(Cllrs Rowlands and Kerslake declared a non-pecuniary interest as trustees of Brentwood Leisure Trust.)

#### **208. Parking Order Report**

This report seeks to add the car parks listed in Appendix B to the Councils Off Street Parking Order and to introduce parking restrictions where required in these car parks to control parking.

Cllr McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Hossack **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Members raised concerns regarding clarity of the report.

Cllr McKinlay **AMENDED** the motion to move the recommendations in the report and **MOVED** a motion to **DEFER** the item. Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the motion.

A vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED** to **DEFER** the item.

(Cllr Barrett declared a pecuniary interest, and left the room, as he owns a property mentioned in the report.)

## **209. Woodland Management Grant**

Members were reminded of the paper agreed by the Policy, Finance and Resources Committee (PFR) on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016 Min where it was resolved:

That the Committee agreed to grant delegated authority to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with Group Leaders (or their nominated deputy) to enter into a contract with the Forestry Commission to provide a Woodland Management Plan and maintenance for 10 years, providing adherence to procurement rules of the Council are followed.

That the Committee agreed that further opportunities to generate business and income are developed by a detailed business plan.

Following the agreement at PF& R Cttee on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2016 the Council has been successful in the application for a grant to implement a 5-year woodland management plan. The grant is for £46,000.

This work will deliver a number of improvements in the management of the woodland estate including planned maintenance to improve risk management and a method to tackle some of the Ash disease.

This report asked members to confirm acceptance of the £46,000 grant and note the areas/woodland to be worked on over a 5-year period.

Cllr McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

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

**That the committee agreed to grant authority to accept the financial grant offered which commits to undertaking the 5-year plan. Appendix A contains detail of the woodlands that this proposal supports and the timescale.**

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

To ensure that council assets are properly maintained, and appropriate risk protection is afforded to the council and its residents.

(Cllr Mynott declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of the Woodland Trust.)

## **210. Allotments**

This report considers changing the agreement of the existing Allotment sites referred to in this report to Statutory sites and provides recommendations for new Agreements between the Horticultural Societies and the Council.

Cllr McKinlay **MOVED** the recommendation in the report and added a further recommendation:

**2.2 Delegated authority to agree the details be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and representatives of opposition parties should they wish to attend meeting with the Horticultural Societies.**

Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the amendment

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

**1. That future Allotment Agreements be granted in accordance with the terms set out in Heads of Terms attached at Appendix A and that the sites mentioned are designated as 'Statutory Allotments'.**

**2. Delegated authority to agree the details be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Committee and representatives of opposition parties should they wish to attend meeting with the Horticultural Societies.**

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

The documentation (see reference to documents in Appendix H) relating to the allotment sites run by the Brentwood and Hutton Horticultural Societies shows that they have been used as allotments for periods of time ranging between 37 and 62 years and as such these cannot be considered temporary in the context of the Allotment Acts.

For this reason it is recommended that these be given Statutory Status to give the Horticultural Societies the security they are seeking so they can manage the sites in a sustainable way going forward.

New standard agreements are proposed based on the standard Heads of Terms set out in Appendix A and it is proposed that these terms (the rent will need to be index-linked from the date of this report) form the basis of future agreements on all allotment sites within the Borough. The rent is an administrative cost per site and will relate to all sites regardless of the number of plots or plot holders. By way of comparison and to put this charge into perspective, plot charges in other boroughs and parishes are outlined in section 5.5.

Based on these Heads of Terms, new modernised Agreements need to be put in place on the sites to ensure that the sites are sustainable in the future.

## **211. Brentwood Centre Plant Room Repairs**

This report considers the proposed repair and refurbishment works required to the Brentwood Centre Pool Plant room.

Cllr Hirst **MOVED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Following a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

- 1. That delegated authority is given to the Head of Paid Service and, Section 151 officer acting in consultation with the Chair of Policy, Projects & Resources Committee to seek tenders for works to the Brentwood Centre Pool Plant Room as set out in this report.**
- 2. That delegated authority is given to the Head of Paid Service and, Section 151 officer acting in consultation with the Chair of Policy, Projects & Resources Committee to select and award the contract to the successful bidder.**

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

To enable the continued safe operation of the Brentwood Centre Pool Plant room and swimming pools.

(Cllrs Rowlands and Kerslake declared a non-pecuniary interest as trustees of Brentwood Leisure Trust.)

## **212. Delegated Authority for Leases and Rents**

The Council is developing its commercial leasing activities and as such the size of this offering has increased partly due to the space which will be offered at the Town Hall. Therefore, leases and the amounts officers have the authority to enter have and will make the process difficult to deliver.

This restriction could affect the Council's ability to compete with other commercial letting agents in the market

Therefore, this report requested an increase and change to the delegated authority for leases to improve the effectiveness and competitiveness of the Council.

Cllr McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report with an amendment to add "and other group leaders"

Following a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

**1. That delegated authority be granted to the Director of Operations in conjunction with the Section 151 Officer and Chair and Vice Chair of Policy, Projects and Resources Committee and other group leaders to grant leases of up to £200,000 (excluding VAT) per year on properties leased at market value.**

#### **Reasons for Recommendation**

To ensure the Council operates effectively it is important to have suitable delegated powers.

### **213. 14 Ongar Road, Brentwood - New Letting**

This report considers the letting of 14 Ongar Road Brentwood following an offer received by the Council.

Cllr McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report.

Members asked if Mr Campbell could clarify the rent term following the meeting.

Following a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

**1. That a new lease be granted in accordance with the terms set out in Heads of Terms attached at Appendix A (Exempt).**

**Reasons for Recommendation**

To ensure that Brentwood Council continue to benefit from the rental income on this property.

To ensure that the property is maintained and kept in repair.

**214. Asset Development Programme Update**

The aim of the Council's Asset Development Programme ("ADP") is to realise the potential of the Council's property asset base so as to deliver improved revenue streams from the portfolio but at the same time securing the regeneration, economic development and housing objectives of the Council. This report provides an update on the work of the Asset Development Programme Project Board ("Project Board") to date.

This report outlines the progress made by the Project Board on a) the Joint Venture Partner Procurement, b) the wholly owned Company (Seven Arches Investments Ltd), c) the Early Successes Programme and other in-house items including the Memorial Wall project.

Approval for a property ownership transfer between Housing and General Fund is being sought, detailed in section 7.

Cllr McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

Members expressed concern over the loss of this house from the Council's housing stock.

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

- 1. To approve the direction of the Asset Development Programme**
- 2. To approve the transfer of 4 Coptfold Road from Housing ownership to General Fund ownership at the independently sourced valuation.**

**Reasons for Recommendation**

To update the Committee on the progress of the Asset Development Programme.



## **215. Former Tenant Debt Recovery Policy**

This report set out proposals for a new Former Tenant Debt Recovery Policy to be implemented within the Housing Department.

The Policy provided the Council with the ability to effectively recover Former Tenant rent arrears as well as any arrears on sub accounts such as court costs or removal costs that are associated with closed accounts.

Cllr McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendation in the report.

Following a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

**1. Committee approved the Former Tenant Debt Recovery Policy as outlined in Appendix A.**

### **Reasons for Recommendation**

To ensure the Council is equipped in recovering Former Tenant Debts, reducing the pressure on the budget restraints.

To provide a robust procedure that meets government guidelines on the recovery of debt.

## **216. 2018/19 Medium Term Financial Plan - Mid Year Review**

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out the key financial management principles and budget assumptions. It is then used as the framework for the detailed budget setting process to ensure that the Council's resources are managed effectively in order to meet its statutory responsibilities and deliver the priorities of the Council, over the medium term.

Cllr McKinlay **MOVED** and Cllr Kerslake **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report.

A schedule omitted from the report was tabled at the meeting.

Following a full discussion a vote was taken by a show of hands and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY:**

- 1. Agree the Revised General Fund Position as shown in Table 7.**
- 2. Agree the current Capital Programme position as shown in Table 8.**
- 3. Agree the current HRA position as shown in Table 10.**
- 4. To Note the Treasury Management Activity and agree the Revised Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy.**

**Reasons for Recommendation**

Effective financial management underpins all of the priorities for the Council and will enable the Council to operate within a sustainable budget environment.

**217. Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

The meeting concluded at 20.15.