

# Minutes

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## Finance, Assets, Investment & Recovery Committee Wednesday, 6th March, 2024

### Attendance

Cllr Kendall (Chair)	Cllr Parker
Cllr Barber	Cllr Poppy
Cllr Bridge	Cllr Worsfold
Cllr Laplain	

### Apologies

### Substitute Present

### Also Present

Cllr Mrs Murphy  
Cllr Mrs Pound  
Cllr Slade

### Officers Present

Phoebe Barnes	- Director - Assets & Investments
Laurie Edmonds	- Corporate Manager - Economic Development
Zoey Foakes	- Governance & Member Support Officer
Claire Mayhew	- Acting Joint Director of People & Governance & Monitoring Officer
Jonathan Stephenson	- Chief Executive
Matthew Stickley	- Interim Democratic Services Manager
Steve Summers	- Strategic Director
Tim Willis	- Interim Director - Resources
Richard Wilson	- Commercial Consultant

### LIVE BROADCAST

[Live broadcast to start at 7pm and available for repeat viewing.](#)

### **398. Apologies for absence**

Apologies were received from Cllr Lewis with Cllr Aspinell substituting. It was **AGREED** that Cllr Laplain be Vice Chair for this meeting only.

Apologies were received from Cllr Barrett with Cllr Dr Barrett substituting.

### **399. Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the Finance, Assets, Investment & Recovery Committee held on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 were approved as a true record.

The Chair confirmed that Cllr Barbers requests from the previous meeting were actioned. In relation to the HR workforce query, Cllr Barber would request that the information is given by resignation date rather than exit date.

### **400. Chairs update**

The report began on page 11 of the agenda and highlighted the work the Officers have done.

The Chair gave further updates:

- Following feedback from residents and Councillors, timings of the overnight residential parking will change from 7pm-7am to 7pm-~~8~~am.
- The Chair, Cllr Kendall took part as a panellist on The Big Pitch. The Big Pitch was the finale event for the UK Shared Prosperity Funded GET SET GROW business support scheme. Ten businesses from across Brentwood borough and Rochford district were given the opportunity to pitch for a theoretical £10,000 investment in a “Dragon’s Den” style session. All of the presentations were strong but the judges agreed that the winning pitch came from Leanne Madden, a Brentwood-based entrepreneur who has started a retrofit company. Kudos also goes to Matt Carr from Eco Edge, another Brentwood entrepreneur, who came in second place.
- The Big Pitch was delivered by the new Economic Development OneTeam, which is comprised of Laurie Edmonds as Corporate Manager, Paula Chapman as Senior Economic Development Officer and Nishat Amin as Economic Development Officer. The Chair thanked the Economic Development team for their work on The Big Pitch.
- Arrangements are still being made for a meeting with TFL with Councillors and a proposed date of 19<sup>th</sup> March has been given.
- Coptfold Road Multi Storey Car Park – Ms Barnes confirmed that works are commencing on wiring and foyer doors. Testing has been

successful although there is a slight delay in aligning the finance system and should be live early April.

- William Hunter Way Car Park – the contract has been awarded for resurfacing with work to start after the May Bank Holiday. This will be 10 weeks of work but will be phased in order to keep the car park open and operational.
- Councillors thanked Stuart Anderson for the onsite meeting at Hutton Poplars Lodge.

#### **401. UK Shared Prosperity Fund update**

The report provided a summary of the projects for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) since the last report to the Finance, Assets Investment and Recovery committee on 13 September 2023.

The report included an update on our UK Shared Prosperity Fund spend for 2023/24 and a look ahead to projects for 2024/25.

Mrs Edmonds gave the committee a further in depth update that the E6 (culture) and E10 (sports) grant scheme has now closed. 36 applications from organisations across the borough have been received, requesting just over £1 million pounds for local project delivery. As there is only £388k to distribute, clearly not all applications will be successful.

The E1 High Streets Shop Improvement Grant scheme is live. Ten businesses from across Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone have received grants so far, totalling just under £15k. We have more applications being processed and expect to distribute the remaining £15k of the grant scheme in the coming weeks.

85% of the E6 funding and 75% of the E10 funding will be distributed via the grant scheme. The remaining funding will give the council the opportunity to directly commission projects, such as the Strawberry Sports Festival and refurbishing the heritage boards outside Town Hall.

In reference to E1, a team of officers, including Economic Development, Street Scene, Grounds Maintenance and Community Safety are working at pace to create a long list of Brentwood, Shenfield and Ingatestone capital and revenue improvements, some of which will need to be costed by Essex Highways. The focus will be on projects such as refreshing street furniture, more greening of the high streets and improving wayfinding signage. We will work closely with the Brentwood Connected Business Improvement District to seek opportunities for match funding. Members and other key stakeholders will have the opportunity to comment on works before they are undertaken. There is also the option of topping up the Shop Improvement Grant Scheme to empower more high street businesses to refurbish their shop fronts and make accessibility adaptations.

The feedback from participants of the GET SET GROW scheme has been extremely positive so we would like to extend the scheme to support even more businesses. Some of the new peer support cohorts might include sole traders looking to expand by taking on one or more new members of staff, young entrepreneurs, silverpreneurs and neurodivergent entrepreneurs.

In terms of reporting, we have created capacity within the team to collate the key performance indicators and financial information that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities requires on a regular basis.

Further updates would be brought to members at the next appropriate committee meeting.

The item was for information only so no voting was required.

#### **402. Amendment to the existing Policy for the granting of Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief**

Members were asked to approve the amendment to the existing policy for the granting of Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief required as a result of a change in legislation effective from 1 April 2023. The change is in relation to backdating of discretionary rate reliefs.

The motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Kendall and **SECONDED** by Cllr Laplain. A vote was taken by a show of hands and was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**:

**Members are asked to: To approve the amendment to the existing policy for the granting of Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief.**

#### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

The policy is required to comply with Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1998, Localism Act 2011 and the Non-Domestic Rating Act Regulations 2023

#### **403. Exclusion of press and public**

The Chair wanted to thank members and officers for their contribution over the last municipal year. The Chair thanked his Vice Chair, Cllr Lewis and Cllr Laplain who assisted as Vice Chair in Cllr Lewis' absence.

The Chair also thanked officer Sam Wood, Corporate Finance Manager as he is leaving the Council but has been instrumental within the financier team. The Chair thanked Sam and wished him luck for the future on behalf of the Committee.

The Chair closed the meeting to the public on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 is involved.

**404. EXEMPT - Pay by Phone Contract**

The public were excluded from the meeting for the item of business on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 was involved.

The motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Kendall and **SECONDED** by Cllr Laplain. A vote was taken by a show of hands and was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**405. EXEMPT - Hutton Poplars Bowls Club**

The public were excluded from the meeting for the item of business on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 was involved.

The motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Kendall and **SECONDED** by Cllr Laplain. A vote was taken by a show of hands and was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**406. Urgent business**

There was an item of urgent business to discuss regarding Hutton Football Club Pavilion Hall.

The public were excluded from the meeting for the item of business on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 was involved.

The motion was **MOVED** by Cllr Kendall and **SECONDED** by Cllr Laplain. A vote was taken by a show of hands and was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

**407. EXEMPT - Seven Arches Investments Limited Quarterly report**

The public were excluded from the meeting for the item of business on the grounds that the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 was involved.

The report was for information only and no voting was required.

*(Cllr Bridge declared a non-pecuniary interest due to working with a previous colleague who had a connection to a SAIL owned property.)*