

Minutes

Policy, Resources & Economic Development Committee Wednesday, 2nd February, 2022

Attendance

Cllr Hossack (Chair)	Cllr Mynott
Cllr Parker (Vice-Chair)	Cllr Mrs Pearson
Cllr Barrett	Cllr Poppy
Cllr S Cloke	Cllr Wagland
Cllr Lewis	

Also Present

Cllr Aspinell
Cllr J Cloke
Cllr Mrs Pound

Nick Binder - Parking Partnership Manager

Officers Present

Kim Anderson	- Partnership, Leisure and Funding Manager
Phoebe Barnes	- Corporate Manager - Finance
Greg Campbell	- Corporate Director (Environment & Communities)
Phil Drane	- Corporate Director (Planning and Economy)
Mike Dun	- Trade Waste Officer
Zoey Foakes	- Governance & Member Support Officer
Amanda Julian	- Corporate Director (Law and Governance) and Monitoring Officer
Steve Summers	- Strategic Director (Deputy Chief Executive)
Jacqueline Mellaerts	Van - Corporate Director (Finance & Resources)
Jonathan Stephenson	- Chief Executive
Ian Winslet	- Strategic Director - Regeneration and Housing Development
Nick Binder	- Parking Partnership Manager

LIVE BROADCAST

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

279. Apologies for absence

No apologies were received for this committee meeting.

280. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the Policy, Resources and Economic Development meeting held on 24th November 2021 were approved as a true record.

281. South Essex Parking Partnership - Proposed New Term for the Partnership Agreement

The current 11-year term of the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) Joint Committee Agreement ends on 31 March 2022. The purpose of this report sought approval from the Council to a new offer from Essex County Council (ECC) to continue the operation into a new term under a new Joint Committee Agreement, commencing on 1 April 2022. The proposed term is five years with the option to extend a further twelve months on three consecutive occasions. The proposed Agreement was considered by the SEPP Joint Committee on 28 October 2021. It unanimously supported its proposed terms and recommended that its constituent councils formally approve them.

The Chair wanted to thank Parking Enforcement Team Leader, Emma Cross and the team for their role in Brentwood.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED**:

That Members formally agree to the proposed terms of the new offer from Essex County Council to enter into a new South Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee Agreement from 1 April 2022. Refer to Appendix A for details of the proposal.

282. Order of the agenda amendment

The Chair amended the order of the agenda to take Item 9 after Item 3. This was agreed by the committee.

283. Response to the Transport East 30-Year Strategy

This report sought approval on a formal response to the Transport East Draft Transport Strategy public consultation "A 30-year transport strategy for the East". The strategy is informed by the East's unique contribution to the UK

and specific challenges throughout the region. It identified a vision and four strategic priorities (decarbonisation to net-zero; connecting growing towns and cities; energising coastal and rural communities; and unlocking international gateways). It identified six core corridors that play a vital role in the movement of people and goods in the East, two of which flow through the borough.

A proposed response to the consultation on behalf of the Council is set out in Appendix A. This is broadly supportive of the high level aims of the 30-year strategy but raised concern that some of the specific transport issues in the borough are not sufficiently referenced. A consultation brochure providing an overview of the strategy is set out in Appendix B.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED UNANIMOUSLY**.

Members are asked to:

R1. Approve the response to the Transport East 30-Year Strategy consultation, as set out in Appendix A.

Reasons for Recommendation:

Transport East is setting a collective vision for the future of transport in Essex (and beyond), through a partnership that Brentwood Borough Council is part of. The proposed response set out in Appendix A on behalf of the Council expresses support for the 30-year strategy but challenges specific issues relevant to the borough that at present are not sufficiently covered. Ongoing partnership working with Transport East would enable these issues to be discussed and tackled.

284. Financial Initiatives Group (FIG)

Members were aware that one of the key objectives within the Council's Corporate Strategic Plan 2020-2025 is to sustain £1 million revenue via commercial activities to reduce the council's revenue budget gap.

To assist with this objective and meet the targets set out in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and build on the initiatives already developed it was considered appropriate to introduce a member's cross working party, re-named Financial Initiatives Group (FIG) to review and develop financial initiatives for presentation to and consideration by this committee.

On 30 September it was resolved at this committee to set up formal cross party members Financial Initiatives Group (FIG) and the Terms of Reference were agreed.

This Group would be led by Cllr White and met in November and a total of 13 opportunities have been identified and collated by impact and priority. The group will feedback to PRED on a regular basis to monitor progress.

This item was information only and no voting was required.

285. Brentwood Regeneration Fund

The Council, in its 'Brentwood 2025' Corporate Strategy, had stated 'Growing our Economy' as a central plank of its ambition and had committed to developing a culture that supported the creation of new enterprise, inward investment and the growth of existing business. Regeneration of housing and other sites in the Borough is central to this ambition and the Council was already directly delivering affordable housing to support local families and, in turn, their contribution to the local economy. The Council is now looking at how it might go further with this social purpose activity and proactively facilitate regeneration projects where sites are stalled and where some financial intervention, through a dedicated 'Regeneration Fund' might unlock development and help accelerate delivery.

A presentation on the Regeneration Fund was given to the Committee by Ian Winslet.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED**.

Members are requested to:

Approve the establishment of a 'Brentwood Regeneration Fund' to support commercial regeneration projects in the Borough. Subject to approval of the fund, specific opportunities for the allocation of fund finance will brought to this committee for consideration as they arise.

286. Fees and Charges

Fees and charges made by the Council for various services are reviewed on an annual basis by the relevant Committees relating to the services provided. During the municipal year Chairs of the relevant committees deferred the proposed fees and charges pending further review of the proposed charges considering the current economic climate and the increase in inflationary costs. Officers alongside chairs have reviewed and revised the fees and charges since they were deferred, and they are being brought in totality to the Policy Resources and Economic Development committee for approval. Recommended amendments to the fees and charges are incorporated into the budget setting process to take effect from the following financial year.

An updated version of Appendix D is appended to the minutes and was what members used to vote on.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED**.

Members are asked to:

R1. Agree to the proposed charges for 2022/23 as attached in Appendix A-E and recommend for approval at Ordinary Council on 23rd February 2022.

Reasons for Recommendation

Officers review fees and charges annually and this will be used to inform the 2022/23 budget setting process.

287. Budget 2022/23

This report and appendices sets out all the relevant information in support of setting the Councils Budget for General Fund services and Council Tax for 2022/23, together with financial forecast information through to 2024/25. Also included is information on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget for 2022/23 and the Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25.

- (i) Appendix A - The General Fund budget proposals for 2022/23 to 2024/25.
- (ii) Appendix B - The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget proposals for 2022/23 onwards.
- (iii) Appendix C - The Capital and Investment Strategy for 2022/23 including the Councils capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25
- (iv) Appendix D - Pay Policy Statement
- (v) Appendix E - Section 151 Officers Assurance Statement and useful information
- (vi) Appendix F: Corporate Strategy Budget Summary

The Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee is required to consider the proposals and make recommendations to Ordinary Council for approval on 23rd February 2022.

The figures presented summarise the detailed service budgets, together with known adjustments including the impact of the provisional central government grant funding along with financial implications of COVID-19.

The key elements of the proposed budget are:

General Fund:

- 1) £5 increase in Council Tax for 2022/23 for Brentwood Council services.
- 2) Earmarked Reserves to set aside appropriate balances to mitigate future financial risk and build up in borough regeneration.
- 3) Future uncertainty of Local Government Financing.

Housing Revenue Account:

- 1) For 2022/23 a budget that delivers a small surplus of £34k.
- 2) Increase in rents of CPI plus 1% per annum; equating to 4.1%.
- 3) Continued investment in the delivery of Decent Homes and Development of Housing within the Borough.

4) Significant investment in the Strategic Housing Delivery Programme ensuring the 30 year business plan is sustainable.

Capital:

- 1) Total capital investment of £41.420 million in 2022/23
- 2) Subsequent investment of £38.9 million & £22.3million from 2023 to 2025.

The Chair thanked officers Mrs Van Mellaerts, Ms Barnes and the finance team on work produced.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED**.

Members are asked to:

R1. Approve the proposals for the General Fund Budget and MediumTerm Financial Strategy as set out in Appendix A and recommend to Ordinary Council for approval on 23rd February 2022.

R2. Recommend that Council Tax has a £5 increase for 2022/23, the charge of Band D property increasing to £198.63 per annum for Brentwood Council services only.

R3. Approve proposals for the HRA budget 2022/23 including the 30 year HRA Business Plan within Appendix B and recommend to Ordinary Council for approval on 23rd February 2022.

R4. Approve an increase to rents for 2022/23 by CPI plus 1%

R5. Approve the Capital and Investment Strategy in Appendix C including the Capital Programme and recommend to Ordinary Council for approval on 23rd February 2022.

R6. To note the Pay Policy Statement in Appendix D and recommend for approval at Ordinary Council on 23rd February 2022.

R7. To note the Section 151 Officers Assurance Statement in Appendix E when recommending all for approval to Ordinary Council on 23rd February 2022.

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.

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

A vote was taken on Standing Orders and it was **UNANIMOUSLY AGREED** to extend the meeting for a further 30 minutes.

288. Economic Development Work Programme 2021-2025

In November 2021 Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee approved an Economic Development Strategy that identifies objectives to deliver corporate priorities for economic growth. A work programme has been developed to guide the work of the Economic Development Team in delivering these objectives (Appendix A). This will be brought to the committee on a regular basis so that information on progress delivering the objectives can be monitored by Members.

The Chair commended the work undertaken by Mrs Edmonds and the Economic Development Team.

After a full discussion, Cllr Hossack **MOVED** and Cllr Parker **SECONDED** the recommendations in the report. A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED**.

Members are asked to:

R1. Endorse the Economic Development work programme as set out in Appendix A.

R2. Agree that the work programme is brought back to Policy, Resources and Economic Development Committee on a regular basis to inform Members on objectives and progress.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Economic Development Strategy 2021-2025 is critical to the delivery of the Corporate Strategy 2020-2025. The work programme sitting behind the Strategy details the specific projects and actions needed to achieve on the objectives.

289. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business to discuss.

The meeting concluded at 9.25pm.
