

COUNCIL

19 FEBRUARY 2014

Present :- Councillor Colin Sykes (Mayor)
Councillor John Elliott (Deputy Mayor)
Councillors Christopher Arnold, Nick Barlow,
Lyn Barton, Kevin Bentley, Mary Blandon,
Elizabeth Blundell, Tina Bourne, Mark Cable,
Nigel Chapman, Peter Chillingworth, Mark Cory,
Beverly Davies, Andrew Ellis, Annie Feltham,
Bill Frame, Ray Gamble, Martin Goss, Scott Greenhill,
Marcus Harrington, Dave Harris, Julia Havis, Jo Hayes,
Pauline Hazell, Peter Higgins, Theresa Higgins,
Martin Hunt (Deputy Leader) , Brian Jarvis,
John Jowers, Margaret Kimberley, Cyril Liddy,
Michael Lilley, Sue Lissimore, Jon Manning,
Colin Mudie, Kim Naish, Beverley Oxford,
Gerard Oxford, Philip Oxford, Will Quince, Lesley Scott-
Boutell, Peter Sheane, Paul Smith, Terry Sutton,
Laura Sykes, Anne Turrell (Leader of the Council) ,
Dennis Willetts, Julie Young and Tim Young

The meeting was opened with prayers by Eddie Campbell.

51. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Chuah, Cook, Cope, Fairley-Crowe, Ford, Hogg, Lewis, Maclean, Martin and Offen.

52. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

53. Have Your Say!

Angel Kalyan addressed the Council pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 7(5) to claim that the asset of her lease had been devalued by approximately £40,000 and could not be sold at full market value. As officers had failed to take action her property was due to be repossessed. She had been advised by the Council in previous correspondence to put the matter before the courts and she asked Council to advise her and confirm specifically what issues she should ask the court to determine.

The Mayor invited Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive, to respond to Mrs Kalyan on behalf of Council. He explained that Mrs Kalyan's complaints against the Council had

been subject to a number of processes and procedures and all avenues for resolution were now exhausted. The Council did not accept the allegations she made and had advised her on a number of occasions that if she believed she had a case against the Council, she should take the matter to court where the Council would defend its position. It was for Mrs Kalyan to decide what matters to put before the court.

Andy Hamilton addressed the Council pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 7(5) to highlight recent international negative press coverage of the Visual Arts Facility (VAF). The public had always been indifferent to the VAF and the Council had ignored all warnings it had been given. He also expressed concern over the validity of visitor numbers, but it appeared that if the VAF received around 80,000 visits per annum then each visit was subsidised by approximately £20. The Council refused access to information about firstsite. He also raised concerns about the cultural quarter and the number of derelict buildings in the area around the VAF. The Council should put the public interest before its personal ambitions.

Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Community Safety and Culture, stressed that the new director of firstsite, Matthew Rowe, was taking firstsite forward and that it would be asset to Colchester in the long term.

54. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor announced the following events:-

- Bach Choir Concert at St Botolph's Church on 22 February 2014;
- Mayoral Business Dinner on 27 February 2014 at which of a member of the Cabinet would be a guest speaker;
- Rock and Curry evening on 8 March 2014;
- An audience with Elvis and Buddy on 29 March 2014;
- The Sainsbury's Fashion Show on 25 April 2014, which would be compered by Councillor Bentley;
- The Guide Dogs for the Blind would be hosting a concert by the Braintree Male Voice Choir on 26 April 2014;
- May Ball on 30 May 2014.

55. Suspension of Procedure Rules

RESOLVED that Council Procedure Rule 14(3) be suspended for the following item to allow the leader of each political group and the Deputy Leader of the Council to speak untimed on that item only.

56. 2014/15 General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Medium Term Financial Forecast

RESOLVED that the recommendations contained in minute 71 of the Cabinet meeting of 29 January 2014 and the decisions contained in the report by the Assistant Chief Executive entitled Precept and Council Tax Levels 2014/15 be approved and adopted (TWENTY EIGHT voted FOR and TWENTY TWO ABSTAINED FROM VOTING).

57. Officer Pay Policy

RESOLVED that the recommendation contained in minute 77 of the Cabinet meeting of 29 January 2014 be approved and adopted (MAJORITY voted FOR)

58. Review of Member Development Policy and Councillor Role Profiles

RESOLVED that the recommendation contained in minute 79 of the Cabinet meeting of 29 January 2014 be approved and adopted (MAJORITY voted FOR)

59. Election of Deputy Mayor 2014-15

RESOLVED that Councillor Theresa Higgins be appointed Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Colchester for the 214-15 municipal year.

60. Questions to Cabinet Members and Chairmen pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 10

Questioner	Subject	Response
Verbal Questions		
Councillor Hazell	Following the Fundamental Service Review of Sport and Leisure services and cuts to budgets, what action was being taken to refurbish centres such as the Eudo Road tennis centre to help them generate income?	Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, indicated that a written response would be sent.
Councillor Hazell	What reassurances could the Portfolio Holder for Customers offer to residents who had	Councillor B. Oxford, Portfolio Holder for Customers, indicated that a written response would

	expressed concerns about the lack of privacy at the Library and Community Hub? Particular issues of concern were the privacy of the initial contact desk by the stairs and the proximity of the booths to main thoroughfare in the Library.	be sent.
Councillor Hazell	Could clarification be given on the arrangements for the collection of replacement bags for recyclable material and were residents no longer able to trade in old white sacks for replacements without charge?	Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, indicated that the Council was looking for a suitable location for the storage and distribution of recycling bags and sacks in the town centre. They could be ordered by phone or online with orders being delivered by the zones teams. Residents were no longer able to replace worn out sacks without charge.
Councillor Jarvis	Could the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Community Safety and Culture use his influence with the Arts Council to secure exhibits with a broader appeal at firstsite. As the validity of the visitor numbers for firstsite had been called into question, would they still be used.	Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Community Safety and Culture, agreed that a better mix of exhibits was needed and believed that the new director, Matthew Rowe, would help secure this. The visitor figures produced by firstsite had been independently validated and were reliable.
Councillor Harrington	Could the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services look into failures of the IT systems at Leisure World that he had experienced and ensure that they were not	Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure Services, indicated that a written response would be sent.

	symptomatic of wider problems.	
Councillor Chillingworth	Could the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services given some advice on how parking problems on a Council estate within his ward could be best be tackled?	Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services indicated that if the details were provided to him, he would seek the advice of the Technical Team at the North Essex Parking Partnership.
Councillor Ellis	When would Councillor Lewis receive a response to the question she asked on Abbots at the meeting in December 2013?	Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, stated that a response had been sent. She would check and ensure it was forwarded again.
Councillor Arnold	In view of the change of policy in respect of the replacement of white recycling sacks, how could the Council reduce the wear and tear on such sacks, particularly by Council staff?	Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and waste Services, indicated that he would check the position with officers and confirm. However, the Council was looking to source bags of a higher quality.

61. Alcohol Consumption Task and Finish Group

RESOLVED that the contents of the Assistant Chief Executive's report be noted subject to the substitution of Councillor Havis for Councillor Cope on the list of members of the Task and Finish Group.

62. Schedules of Decisions taken by Portfolio Holders

RESOLVED that the schedules of Portfolio Holder decisions for the period 21 November 2013 - 5 February 2014 be noted.