

COUNCIL

17 OCTOBER 2012

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

24. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 June 2012 and 18 July 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

25. Have Your Say!

Dave Harris addressed the Council pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 6(1) about Colchester in Bloom. The Colchester in Bloom team had exceeded all expectations. The Committee and volunteers had worked hard all year and as a consequence had won a Gold award. This was a significant achievement. Gardeners, businesses, allotment holders and Council officers, particularly the parks staff, all deserved praise for the efforts they had made under the leadership of Pam Schomberg.

The Mayor responded and indicated that Fordham had entered Anglia in Bloom and had won best newcomer and a silver award in the small village category.

Pam Schomberg addressed the Council pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 6(1). Colchester in Bloom had been established three years ago with the aim of making a difference. In the first two years, Colchester had won a silver gilt award but to have won gold and be awarded best in category was a real achievement. Colchester in Bloom had been responsible for planting of boxes in the Town Centre. Its own contest had attracted over 100 entries. In order to help Colchester in Bloom to

progress, she asked Councillors to provide information about what was going on in their communities and to encourage residents to take part.

Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, thanked Pam Schomberg and all those who had contributed towards Colchester in Bloom on behalf of the Council and hoped that Councillors would support Colchester in Bloom in 2013.

Angel Kalyan addressed the Council pursuant to the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 6(1). She referred to correspondence sent to Councillors in June 2011 which had not been acknowledged or replied to substantively. The Monitoring Officer had advised Councillors that this was a matter for the Courts. However the Council had not placed the matter before the Courts. She expressed concern about the role and powers of the Monitoring Officer and asked:-

- If Council supported and promoted this system of governance;
- Whether there was anyone with a role in the governance of the Council who would fully embrace and take action to ensure equality for all;
- If so, how would the necessary change that the Council needed be brought forward.

Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that a written response would be sent.

26. Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor made the following announcements:-

- On 10 November 2012 there would be a Lexden Choral Remembrance themed concert at St Peter ad Vincula, Coggeshall;
- An announcement would be made in due course about the details of the civic event on 1 December 2012;
- A civic carol service would be held in St Botolph's Church on 13 December 2012.

The Mayor presented the following awards to officers of the Council:-

RSPCA Silver Footprint award in respect of the Stray Dog service;
SOCITM Three star award in respect of Colchester Borough Council's website;
Customer Excellence Awards for Resource Management, Corporate Management and Environmental and Protective Services.

27. Year End Review of Risk Management

RESOLVED that the recommendation contained in minute 25 of the Cabinet meeting of 5 September 2012 be approved and adopted (MAJORITY voted FOR).

28. Results of Consultation on Proposal to Change the Name of Harbour Ward

RESOLVED that the recommendation contained in minute 11 of the Accounts and Regulatory Committee meeting of 25 September 2012 be approved and adopted (MAJORITY voted FOR).

29. Questions to Cabinet Members and Chairmen

Councillor T. Young (in respect of his position as Chairman of Colne Housing) and Councillor Frame (in respect of his position on the Board of Colne Housing) declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the questions on Abbots Activity Centre pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule7(5) and left the meeting whilst these questions were asked and responded to.

Questioner	Subject	Response
Pre-notified questions		
Councillor Harris	<p>Can I ask for the Council to apply to its own employees and to the employees of all contractors it uses, the "Living Wage" concept, as other Councils are in other parts of the country. The living wage will ensure that the very lowest paid are dealt a better hand, albeit a very small amount above the minimum wage.</p> <p>The Living Wage is a number. An hourly rate, set independently, every year (by the GLA in London). It is calculated according to cost of living and gives the minimum pay rate required for a worker to provide their family with the essentials of life.</p> <p>This would set an example to others in Essex</p>	<p>Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, indicated that adopting the Living Wage concept would increase the wages of a number of Council staff, particularly at Leisure World. It would also raise complex issues as the Council would be obliged to require all contractors to pay their staff at this rate when working on Council contracts. Whilst some Councils had adopted the concept this had on occasions been accompanied by job cuts or reductions in salaries of other officers. Consideration would be given to the concept as part of the budget process.</p>
Verbal Questions		
Councillor Hazell	<p>Whether the full costs of inviting teams to Colchester had been factored into the budget for securing the use of Colchester</p>	<p>Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing, responded that the Partnership had worked hard to bring a team to Essex</p>

	<p>as an Olympic base or training camp and what communications the Portfolio Holder had had with the garrison and university about the costs.</p>	<p>and Colchester and whilst it had ultimately had not been successful, she did not regard the Partnership as a failure. Enquiries had been made by a number of teams. Colchester Borough Council's expenditure had been approximately £6500 plus officer time. Only £60 had been spent on hospitality. As a representative on the Partnership Councillor Hazell was aware of discussions with the partners on these issues.</p>
Councillor Lissimore	<p>Whether the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services agreed that the bins behind the shops at Prettygate should be emptied on a regular basis and could he ensure that they would not be left to overflow again?</p>	<p>Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, indicated that he agreed and would pass on the concerns about the emptying of these bins to the relevant officers.</p>
Councillor Lewis	<p>The Portfolio Holder for Housing had not provided a response to the question she had posed at Council on 18 July 2012 about the lack of storage facilities or space for sheds in some flats.</p>	<p>Councillor Bourne, Portfolio Holder for Housing, indicated that she had responded and offered an opportunity for officers of Colchester Borough Homes to take Councillor Lewis around relevant properties.</p>
Councillor Lewis	<p>Would the final decision on the appointment of the organisation to run Abbots Activity Centre be subject to pre-scrutiny and would the money saved still be spent on clubs for elderly residents around the borough as was the intention under the original decision?</p>	<p>Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, indicated that the final decision on the organisation to run Abbots would be subject to pre-scrutiny. The position on the savings would be clearer once the firm bids had been received.</p>
Councillor Lewis	<p>Could the Leader of the Council confirm whether the funds saved from the appointment of a new organisation to run Abbots Activity Centre would still be spent on clubs for elderly residents around the borough as was the intention under the original decision?</p>	<p>Councillor Turrell, the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, confirmed that Abbots Activity Centre would not be closing and that the Council would help other clubs for elderly persons within the borough.</p>

<p>Councillor Quince</p>	<p>Would the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure take the opportunity to apologise to the users of Abbots for the way that the Council had handled the decision making process which he considered had been shambolic and whether the Portfolio Holder agreed that the failure to seek business plans was responsible for this.</p>	<p>Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, responded that the Council had nothing for apologise for.</p>
<p>Councillor Willetts</p>	<p>Would the Portfolio Holder for Communities comment on the state of her Portfolio, citing concerns about Vineyard Gate, St Botolph's Quarter, Jumbo and John Lewis? In view of developments, would the bus stop on Queen Street now remain in its existing location?</p>	<p>Councillor Barton, Portfolio Holder for Renaissance, responded that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Vineyard Gate agreement would be signed very shortly; • The Essex County Standard article on the bid for funding for St Botolph's was inaccurate. This had been a speculative bid for a forward funding loan. The Council was moving forward with its plans. • The future of Jumbo was not in her Portfolio. • There had been no plans to move the bus stop on Queens Street.
<p>Councillor Willetts</p>	<p>Would the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure comment on the apparent lessening of commitment to equality and diversity issues and the winding down of the Equality and Diversity Member Liaison Group?</p>	<p>Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, indicated that the administration took equality and diversity issues very seriously. It was looking for different ways of taking the issue forward and invited any member of Council who had issues or ideas to contact her.</p>
<p>Councillor Chapman</p>	<p>Why did the minutes of Council meetings not contain the answers to questions to Portfolio Holders and Chairman?</p>	<p>Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that she agreed that the responses to questions should be included</p>

		within the minutes
Councillor Hayes	Could the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure confirm that Colchester and East Essex Cricket Club had received a grant of £50,000 from Sport England?	Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, confirmed that the club had received such a grant as part of the Olympic Legacy.
Councillor Hazell	Could the Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure give an update on the progress of Fundamental Service Review on Sport and Leisure Services as it impacted on Eudo Road tennis courts and could the Portfolio Holder confirm that none of the tennis courts would be sold for housing?	Councillor Feltham, Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure, confirmed that expressions of interest had been invited and that all the companies that had been invited to submit expressions of interest were sports companies.
Councillor Bentley	Could the Portfolio Holder for Customers consider whether opening hours of 9am -5pm were appropriate for the Customer Service Centre, given the needs of working people without access to the internet?	Councillor Oxford, Portfolio Holder for Customers, indicated that there would be financial implications of offering a wider service. Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that this issue would fall within the remit of the Fundamental Service Review of Universal Customer Contact. The Business Case for this review would be published shortly.
Councillor Quince	Would the Leader of the Council confirm that no tennis courts at Eudo Road would be sold for housing, as she had previously stated in a telephone conversation with Councillor Hazell?	Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, stated that the Fundamental Service Review was almost complete. The Council wanted to create a centre of excellence for tennis and expressions of interest for the site had been sought from sports organisations only.
Councillor Davies	Was the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources aware of the government's proposals to extend the grant to prevent	Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, responded that the grant was being reduced to 40%

	<p>rises in council tax and that therefore the lack of a council tax locally was not due to the administration's prudence?</p>	<p>of the existing level. The government was also transferring a number of the risks around finance from central government to local government and this was increasing the pressure on local government budgets.</p>
<p>Councillor Goss</p>	<p>Would the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy clear up the confusion on the trial of iPads for Councillors?</p>	<p>Councillor Turrell., Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that the Council was looking at new technology. A number of iPads had been purchased for staff to test and the results of this test would be shared with councillors. It had been suggested that the trial also be extended to Councillors and a number of Councillors had purchased an iPad for their own use. However it had not been proposed that iPads would be supplied to all Councillors.</p>
<p>Councillor Goss</p>	<p>Could the Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services confirm whether there had been increase in complaints about rodents in those areas where there had been a move to fortnightly waste collections?</p>	<p>Councillor Hunt, Portfolio Holder for Street and Waste Services, indicated that since 2010 the number of complaints about rodents in the relevant areas had halved.</p>

30. Schedules of Decisions taken by Portfolio Holders

RESOLVED that the Schedules of Portfolio Holder decisions for the period 4 July 2012 - 28 September 2012 be noted.