

CABINET

9 October 2019

Present: - Councillor Cory (Chairman)
Councillors Fox, Higgins, Goss, King, Lilley, G. Oxford
and J. Young

Also in attendance: - Councillors Barber and Goacher

385. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

386. Have Your Say!

Sir Bob Russell addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) to express his concern about the reduction in funding to Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Council funding had fallen from £100,000 in 2017 to £25,000 in 2019. The CAB provided a crucial service to residents and he could not understand why this administration would reduce its funding. The shortfall could be made up through the funding allocated for Councillors allowances.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety and Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Resources, explained that the Council had to take difficult decisions about which third sector organisations it could support. CAB also received £25,000 from Colchester Borough Homes and from another funding stream from the Council so it received approximately £70,000 per annum in total. Funding to such organisations was also now allocated over a three-year period, which provided greater certainty and helped them to seek funding from other sources.

Bella Greenwood, Grace Darke, Ida Abraiha and Kemal Cufoglu addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) about issues relating to glyphosates. Concerns were raised about the potential harmful effects on humans and wildlife. There were potential links to cancer and to respiratory diseases. Where they were used, warning signs should be used so residents were aware of the possible health issues. There also needed to be a change in the public perception of plants and weeds as they played an important role in maintaining biodiversity, and the Council had a role to play in public education on this issue. The Green Party had established a Glyphosates Working Group in the summer of 2019 to publicise research on glyphosates and campaign for a ban on their use in the Colchester area. A copy of their report was presented to the Cabinet. It was highlighted that the use of glyphosates in public places was banned in several European countries. The report called on the Council to stop using glyphosates.

and work with other local authorities to stop their use also.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, responded and thanked all the speakers. He explained that the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group was looking at the issue and he invited the speakers to attend a future meeting of the Group. The Group had agreed in principle to stop the use of glyphosates and was looking at potential alternatives. The Council was using its procurement processes to drive social value and environmental improvements, and it could look to prevent sub-contractors using glyphosates. He welcomed the report from the Glyphosates Working Group, which would be looked at, and in particular highlighted the points made about the importance of signage.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance and a member of Essex County Council, highlighted that Essex County Council's position on the use of glyphosates was beginning to change. It now used vinegar to remove most weeds and only used glyphosates for the most resilient weeds, such as Japanese Knot Weed.

Councillor Goacher attended and with the consent of Chairman addressed the Cabinet. He congratulated the Council on being recognised by Friends of the Earth as being among the ten most environmentally friendly councils in the country. He also asked for an update on the condition of the River Colne and for confirmation on where material that was collected as part of recycling collections, but was not actually recycled, was disposed of.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation explained that he had spoken to the Environment Agency about issues relating to the River Colne. They had confirmed that they received funding to remove weeds where this posed a danger to wildlife and had acted to remove weeds from the river at Middle Mill and at the Castle Park. It was legally responsible for, and received funding for, dealing with flood risks. It was appreciated that the Environment Agency had suffered funding cuts in recent years. The Environment Agency had undertaken to look at the River Cole again and would advise if it believed that wildlife was in danger. The current conditions of the river were partly caused by the fact there had been drought conditions for the last 18 months and it was anticipated that the river would start to improve naturally as rainfall increased and as there was less sunlight. The Council had approached some contractors who worked for the Environment Agency for an estimate of the costs involved in improvement works should this become necessary. A written response would be sent on the issue raised about the disposal of waste material.

Councillor Barber attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet to ask that the Council consider widening the scope of those notified about works on trees covered by a Tree Protection Order. Currently only properties adjacent to the tree were notified, which sometimes led to problems when contractors arrived to begin work. It would also be useful if ward councillors were notified as a matter of course. He was content to receive a written response.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety indicated that he would look at the issue and provide a written response.

Councillor Cory (as a member of North Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and Essex Well-being Board), Councillor J. Young (as a member of the Board of Anglian

Community Enterprise) and Councillor Fox (in respect of his employment by Community 360) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

387. North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance

Cabinet received a presentation from Pam Donnelly, Strategic Director, Customers and Relationships, Mark Jarman-Howe, Chief Officer, North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance and Rory Doyle, Communities Group Manager.

The presentation set out the aims of the Alliance to act strategically and in partnership to transform the health and wellbeing of the population of North East Essex by creating a sustainable system of health and wellbeing services to meet both the immediate and long term needs of North East Essex. The presentation addressed how this would be delivered through an integrated care system and set out the Alliance's high-level priorities. The Live Well model, which set out the six domains on which the delivery services would be based was also highlighted. The four key themes the Alliance was addressing were system resilience, preventing and reducing inequalities, system integration and a community model of care. The importance of partnership working was stressed. Partners had made significant investment into Council schemes to improve the health and wellbeing of residents. Some examples of the Alliance's work were highlighted, such as the integration of specialist mental health practitioner in housing teams and the Wild Wellbeing Scheme.

In discussion on the work of the Alliance the following issues were highlighted by members of the Cabinet:-

- The development of garden communities was consistent with the work of the Alliance. They would provide sustainable communities, with access to employment opportunities and open space. Secure and good quality housing was crucial in ensuring good health and wellbeing. The Council needed to lead on the provision of good quality housing and the award-winning Council housing provided by Norwich City Council was noted.
- Whilst the emphasis on "Die Well" was to be welcomed this would require systemic change in the approach to healthcare, with its emphasis on surgical interventions. Any such change would involve considerable work for Colchester Borough Council and its partners.
- Understanding of the scale and impact of mental health issues, particularly amongst children, had grown over the last few years. Improved focus on mental health issues by the Council and its partners would help take some pressures off the NHS and would also deliver community safety benefits.
- The concept of Community Wealth Building, whereby procurement was used to ensure wealth was kept within communities and used to add social value, needed to be explored further.
- The value of integrated approaches to health and well-being issues across the Council was emphasised. Links to the work of the Zones teams needed to be developed, as they were a key link to communities.
- Access to open space was also important in helping those suffering with dementia;

In conclusion, the Cabinet expressed their thanks for the presentation and indicated their support for the work that the Alliance was undertaking.

RESOLVED that the contents of the presentation on the work of the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance be noted.

Councillor Cory (as a member of North Essex Clinical Commissioning Group and Essex Well-being Board), Councillor J. Young (as a member of the Board of Anglian Community Enterprise) and Councillor Fox (in respect of his employment by Community 360) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

388. Local Delivery Pilot

Cabinet received a presentation from Rory Doyle Communities Group Manager, and Jason Fergus, Director Active Essex, on the Local Delivery Pilot.

The Local Delivery Pilot was one of only twelve such pilots nationally and the only one in the East of England. It was an exciting, unique opportunity aimed at tackling systemic inactivity by driving behaviour change, whilst recognising the complex lives that many people led. It was a long-term project, with a five-year delivery plan. The project was now beginning to move into a delivery phase. Delivery was focused on finding solutions that worked and then replicating or scaling them. A micro-grants programme would be established to provide small scale funding to kickstart schemes led by the community. All other investment would be coproduced with a host of different organisations and individuals through the local governance group with support from the core LDP team. The emphasis was on generating projects and solutions within communities, rather than by imposing solutions.

Annie Feltham addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) in support of the Local Delivery Pilot. It was a good example of what the Council did well: ambitious partnership working that brought in external funding and resources.

Councillor Scott-Boutell attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet to highlight the lack of provision for young people in Stanway. She had been looking to address this with a newly appointed police officer. There was a purpose-built youth club, but there were only funds for it to be open one day a week. It was run by volunteers, helped by a youth worker. This would be an ideal scheme to be funded through the Local Delivery Pilot. It would fit with its aims of partnership working and reducing inactivity. It also fitted with the Strategic Plan priorities.

In response, Rory Doyle indicated that the Local Delivery Pilot was focused on getting sedentary people more active in low income communities. However, proposals from across Colchester would be welcomed and part of the project was about leveraging in funding from a wide range of sources, some of which may be suitable for the project she highlighted.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety expressed his thanks for the presentation and welcomed the work on the Local Delivery Pilot, which

helped create community spirit in those communities where it was lacking. The key to this was encouraging physical activity, especially in deprived areas. As well as providing health benefits to individual residents, it would provide community benefits in terms of increased community safety. Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, emphasised the importance of public and community transport in ensuring that those in need were able to participate in activities. Councillor G. Oxford, Portfolio Holder for Customers, highlighted the “Together We Grow” initiative, aimed at ensuring young people at local schools were given access to Highwoods County Park.

RESOLVED that contents of the presentation on the work of the Local Delivery Pilot be noted.

389. Policy and Public Initiatives Work Programme

The Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance, explained that whilst the interest in expanding the provision of adult learning was to be welcomed, she was concerned that if the recommendation was agreed it would lead to duplication of work. There was already a learning shop at Colchester Institute and there was considerable lifelong learning provision through the Wilson Marriage Centre. It was suggested that the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Public Safety and Licensing look into the issue with One Colchester to map and promote the existing provision of lifelong learning.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Public Safety and Licensing work with One Colchester to look at the provision of lifelong learning within Colchester to map the existing provision and ensure that it was effectively promoted and signposted.

REASONS

The Cabinet considered that there if the recommendation from the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel were agreed there would be a risk of duplication of services, as there was already existing provision of lifelong learning.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to the Cabinet to agree the recommendation from the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel.

390. Revolving Investment Fund Capital Update

The Assistant Director submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, introduced the report and stressed the importance of the Revolving Investment Fund in generating capital receipts which were used to improve the borough. The additional borrowing requested was at a prudent level. He also indicated that the Council had undertaken a review of its assets,

which demonstrated that the Council held assets of almost £0.5 billion which were used to generate an income £3.5 million per annum.

Councillor Oxford, Portfolio Holder for Customers, highlighted benefits that were delivered through the redevelopment of the rugby club site, which was funded through the Revolving Investment Fund. This would secure open space, a new community centre, an extra care facility and new homes, including affordable housing.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The latest financial position for the Revolving Investment Fund (RIF) be noted.
- (b) The need for additional resourcing for the next phase of work at Northern Gateway to support the infrastructure first approach that will enable the delivery of the wider scheme and implementation of the masterplan be noted and agreed.

REASONS

Cabinet agreed to create the RIF as a way to recycle capital receipts into profitable high income producing development schemes and regeneration and economic growth projects. This paper sets out the updated financial position of the RIF and proposes allocations of funding to specific projects.

At present there is more funding allocated to projects within the RIF portfolio than there are capital receipts coming into the RIF. In addition, there are projects that the Council have already committed to delivering that require funding for the next phase of works in the Northern Gateway.

To deliver on the infrastructure first approach at CNG South in line with the current masterplan

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It would be possible to consider different allocations to projects. However, the proposals in this report represent a considered view of the cost to deliver a number of projects and the associated income targets. Further funding allocations are required to carry out feasibility studies if new income streams for the council are to be generated in the future.

391. Progress of Responses to the Public

The Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate submitted a progress sheet a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Progress Sheet be noted.

REASONS

The progress sheet was a mechanism by which the Cabinet could ensure that public statements and questions were responded to appropriately and promptly.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet.

The Committee resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

392. Revolving Investment Fund Capital Update – Part B

The Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate, submitted a not for publication appendix to the Assistant Director's report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the not for publication appendix B be noted.

REASONS

As set out in minute 390.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

As set out in minute 390.