

Minutes

Council Meeting



27th March 2017

These Minutes principally record decisions taken and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions. A webcast of the meeting is available for six months at www.braintree.gov.uk.

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
Councillor J Abbott	Yes	Councillor G Maclure	Apologies
Councillor Mrs J Allen	Yes	Councillor D Mann	Yes
Councillor M Banthorpe	Apologies	Councillor J McKee	Apologies
Councillor P Barlow	Yes	Councillor R Mitchell	Yes
Councillor J Baugh	Apologies	Councillor Mrs J Money	Yes
Councillor Mrs J Beavis	Yes	Councillor Lady Newton	Yes
Councillor D Bebb	Yes	Councillor J O'Reilly-Cicconi	Apologies
Councillor K Bowers	Yes	Councillor Mrs I Parker	Apologies
Councillor Mrs L Bowers–Flint	Yes	Councillor Mrs S Paul	Apologies
Councillor G Butland	Yes	Councillor Mrs J Pell	Yes
Councillor S Canning	Apologies	Councillor R Ramage	Yes
Councillor J Cunningham	Yes	Councillor F Ricci (Chairman)	Yes
Councillor Mrs M Cunningham	Yes	Councillor B Rose	Yes
Councillor T Cunningham	Yes	Councillor Miss V Santomauro	Yes
Councillor M Dunn	Apologies	Councillor Mrs W Scattergood	Yes
Councillor J Elliott	Yes	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt	Yes
Councillor Mrs D Garrod	Yes	Councillor P Schwier	Yes
Councillor J Goodman	Yes	Councillor C Siddall	Apologies
Councillor A Hensman	Yes	Councillor Mrs G Spray	Yes
Councillor P Horner	Yes	Councillor P Tattersley	Apologies
Councillor D Hufton-Rees	No	Councillor Miss M Thorogood	Apologies
Councillor D Hume	Apologies	Councillor R van Dulken	Yes
Councillor H Johnson	Yes	Councillor Mrs L Walters	Yes
Councillor Mrs A Kilmartin	Yes	Councillor Mrs S Wilson	Apologies
Councillor S Kirby (Vice-Chairman)	Yes		

90 **CHAIRMAN'S AND/OR LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman's announcements covered the following:

Mr John Collar - The Chairman announced that Mr John Collar, former Councillor of Braintree District Council, had passed away. Mr Collar had been an elected Member from May 1991 to May 1995 and from May 1999 to May 2011, representing the Bumpstead Ward.

Chairman's Rural Business Reception – The Chairman reported that on Friday, 17th March 2017 he had hosted the Rural Business Reception at Fennes, Bocking. This event had formed part of the Council's Business Exhibition. The aim of the Reception had been to bring together senior representatives from the District's rural businesses for an information gathering and networking session, focusing on opportunities and funding streams which were available for businesses.

Terrorist Attack in London on Wednesday, 22nd March 2017 - The Chairman reported that PC Kris Aves, who grew up in Braintree, had been returning from a commendation ceremony at Metropolitan Police headquarters with colleagues when he had been struck by the attacker's car on Westminster Bridge. PC Aves was being treated in hospital for significant injuries. The Chairman expressed the Council's very best wishes to PC Aves and his family at such a difficult time.

The Leader did not have any announcements to make.

91 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interest was declared:-

Councillor G Butland declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 8a – 'Report from Councillor G Butland – Leader of the Council' as a Director of North Essex Garden Communities Limited.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Councillor Butland remained in the meeting and took part in the debate and decision when the Item was considered.

92 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked, or statements made.

93 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 22nd February 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

94 **POLLING STATION REVIEW - POLLING DISTRICT BH – BOCKING (HIGH GARRETT)**

INFORMATION: It was reported that Foley House, High Garrett, which had been designated as the Polling Station for Polling District BH – Bocking (High Garrett) had ceased operating as a Care Home for the elderly and that it was no longer available for hire as a Polling Station. It was proposed that Bocking Village Hall,

Church Street, Bocking should be designated as the permanent Polling Station for electors instead.

District Council Ward Members had been consulted and they had supported the change in polling arrangements. All households within the Polling District had also been consulted about the proposal and residents had been advised that, should they have any difficulty in attending Bocking Village Hall to vote they could, on completion of an application form, be issued with a postal vote.

DECISION: That, in accordance with the Representation of the People Act 1983, Bocking Village Hall, Church Street, Bocking be designated as the permanent polling place for electors of Polling District BH – Bocking (High Garrett).

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure that a suitable venue is secured for the conduct of elections for the electorate of High Garrett.

95

GRANTS PANEL AND COUNCILLORS' COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME – UPDATE

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on the work of the Grants Panel, and the Councillors' Community Grant Scheme, which had been launched in September 2016. The Grants Panel comprised nine Members whose role included the monitoring of projects funded as part of the last round of the Mi Community Grant Scheme, and overseeing the introduction of the Councillors' Community Grant Scheme. Officer support was provided by the Council's Community Services Team.

The new Community Grant Scheme had been designed to be managed by all Braintree District Ward Councillors enabling them to support not for profit organisations and groups in developing and delivering community projects for the benefit of local residents. The budget for the scheme provided grant funding of £1,500 for each Councillor to allocate between September 2016 and March 2017, with a further £1,500 being available per Councillor from April 2017 to March 2018. Any unspent funds from the first grant period could be rolled forward and added to the second grant period. Ward Councillors could also pool their monies together, either within their Ward, or with adjoining Wards, provided that it could be demonstrated that the funding would benefit local residents.

During the first six months after launch, feedback to the Panel and Officers had been one of enthusiasm and many comments had been made about how straightforward the scheme had been to implement. As at 28th February 2017, a total of 36 grants had been awarded with the support of 32 Councillors. Details of the grants made were set out in an Appendix to the report.

In discussing this report, Members of the Council praised the new Community Grant Scheme and thanked Councillor Mrs Spray, Chairman of the Grants Panel, for her work in overseeing its implementation. Members asked the Chief Executive to pass on their appreciation to Ms Moira Groborz, Community Services Officer, and Ms Tracey Parry, Community Services Manager for their invaluable support to Councillors who had submitted grant applications.

DECISION: That the report be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To receive a report on the work of the Grants Panel and the Community Grant Scheme.

96

REPORTS FROM THE LEADER AND CABINET MEMBERS AND ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS - PUBLIC SESSION

INFORMATION: The Chairman invited the Leader and the Cabinet Members to introduce their reports. Following this, the Chairman invited Members to ask questions. Questions were not limited to the content of the reports and could be about matters relating to a portfolio, the powers and duties of the Council, or the District.

Consideration was given to the reports of the Leader and Cabinet Members.

Councillor Butland, Leader of the Council, added to his report by stating that the new medical practice located at Braintree college and known as 'Church Lane Surgery', formerly 'St Lawrence Medical Practice' had opened to patients on Monday, 20th March 2017.

With reference to the Essex Leaders and Chief Executives' meeting held on 9th March 2017, Councillor Butland reported that should possible governance collaboration between the Police and Fire services in Essex go ahead it could be the first of its kind in the Country where the Police and Crime Commissioner has responsibility for both functions; and that during the discussion on 'Planning in Essex' he had raised an issue about the promptness and quality of submissions made by Essex Highways in response to consultation by Braintree District Council about planning applications.

Councillor Butland stated that he had attended the second meeting of North Essex Garden Communities Limited Board earlier in the day. Discussions had focused on the company's staff and human resources policies; the appointment of a managing director; the proposed terms and conditions for the 'delivery vehicles' which would be required for each of the proposed garden community sites; and there had been an update on land negotiations. A senior Civil Servant representing the Department for Communities and Local Government had visited the proposed garden community sites earlier in the day and met with the Board informally. Papers associated with meetings of North Essex Garden Communities Limited would be published.

Councillor Bebb, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance, added to his report by referring to the review of the Council's discretionary business rate relief scheme for charities and not for profit organisations, which had now been completed. It was reported that there were currently around 325 organisations which were in receipt of mandatory or discretionary business rate relief, which had a combined total value of £2.97 million. Following consultation with current recipients of discretionary rate relief and stakeholders it was proposed that an objective criteria, point based scheme should be introduced. The impact of the proposal on recipients had been assessed, which indicated that 77 organisations currently receiving discretionary rate relief would receive the same level of award; 12 organisations would receive an increased award; and 7 organisations would receive a reduced award. The net change in the value of awards for all 96 organisations was an increase of £322 for a full year, of which £129 (40%) would be the cost to the Council. The proposal had

been agreed by Cabinet on 13th March 2017 and the new scheme would be implemented with effect from 1st October 2017.

Councillor Butland presented the report of Councillor Tattersley, Cabinet Member for Health and Communities. Councillor Butland added to the report by stating that a decision had been taken to close the 'learner' and 'teaching' pools at Braintree Swim and Fitness Centre in order to repair tiles which had become dislodged. The work would be carried out at the same time as maintenance work to the main pool, which was currently taking place. Each of the pools would re-open with effect from 30th May 2017.

With regard to community transport, it was reported that grant funding received from Essex County Council to support the service would reduce by 14.4%/£15,000 in 2017/18 from £105,541.00 in 2016/17. The figures were currently being evaluated and a report would be submitted to Cabinet on 15th May 2017.

Members asked several questions arising from the reports. A webcast of the questions to and responses of Cabinet Members is available on the Council's website at: <http://www.braintree.public-i.tv/core/>

The main topics covered were as follows:

- The effect of a recent decision by The Planning Inspectorate to allow an appeal for the construction of approximately 350 dwellings on land North of Western Road, Silver End (Application No. 15/00280/OUT) on the Council's five year housing land supply target, and the impact of the decision and other recent decisions on local communities.
- The Council's response to consultation on route options to widen the A12 between Chelmsford and Marks Tey.
- The introduction of the 'Employee of the Month Award Scheme' in January 2017 and recognition of the dedication shown by Phil Shears (Operations) and Anita Emery (Town Hall Centre) who had been the first two winners of the scheme. Members asked the Chief Executive to pass on their appreciation to Phil Shears and Anita Emery.
- A recent visit by a travelling circus to land at Spa Road Witham, the removal of posters advertising circuses and the reinstatement of land following damage by heavy vehicles.
- A proliferation in vehicles being parked on the highway stating 'cash for cars'.
- The removal of graffiti.
- Parking and signage issues at the new 'Church Lane Surgery', Braintree.
- The 'Daily Mile' initiative introduced at Silver End School as part of the Livewell Child project to reduce obesity.
- The work of Witham Ambulance Trust.

The following action was agreed in response to questions raised by Members:

- Councillor Mrs Schmitt, Cabinet Member for Environment and Place, agreed to provide information in writing on what action would be taken to reinstate land at Spa Road, Witham, which had been damaged by heavy goods vehicles associated with a travelling circus.
- Councillor Mrs Schmitt, Cabinet Member for Environment and Place, agreed to report the graffiti on the side of the former Fox Public House, A12, Rivenhall to Officers and to request its removal within 24 hours.
- Councillor Butland, Leader of the Council (on behalf of Councillor Tattersley, Cabinet Member for Health and Communities), agreed to forward concerns about car parking and signage at Church Lane Surgery, Braintree to the practice manager for attention.

97 **LIST OF PUBLIC MEETINGS HELD SINCE THE COUNCIL MEETING OF 22ND FEBRUARY 2017**

INFORMATION: No matters were raised.

There were no matters raised in Private Session.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.23pm.

Councillor F Ricci
(Chairman)