

Minutes

Council Meeting 12th December 2011



These minutes principally record decisions taken and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions. A web cast of the meeting is available at www.braintree.gov.uk.

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
Councillor J E Abbott	Yes	Councillor J S Allen	Yes
Councillor M J Banthorpe	Yes	Councillor P R Barlow	Yes
Councillor J Baugh	Yes	Councillor J C Beavis	Yes
Councillor D L Bebb	Yes	Councillor E Bishop	Yes
Councillor R J Bolton	No	Councillor G Butland	Yes
Councillor C A Cadman	Yes	Councillor S Canning	Yes
Councillor T G Cunningham	Yes	Councillor J G J Elliott	Yes
Councillor Dr R L Evans	Apologies	Councillor A V E Everard	Yes
Councillor J H G Finbow	Yes	Councillor M J Fincken	Yes
Councillor L B Flint	Apologies	Councillor T J W Foster	Yes
Councillor M E Galione	Yes	Councillor C Gibson	Yes
Councillor P Horner	Yes	Councillor S A Howell	Yes
Councillor H D Johnson	Yes	Councillor S C Kirby	Yes
Councillor M C M Lager	Yes	Councillor D J Louis	Apologies
Councillor C Louis	Yes	Councillor D Mann	Yes
Councillor J T McKee	Yes	Councillor D G Messer	Apologies
Councillor R G S Mitchell	Yes	Councillor J M Money (Chairman)	Yes
Councillor Lady P Newton	Yes	Councillor J O'Reilly-Cicconi	Yes
Councillor Mrs I C F Parker	Yes	Councillor J A Pell	Yes
Councillor R P Ramage	Yes	Councillor D M Reid	Apologies
Councillor D E A Rice	Yes	Councillor W J Rose	Yes
Councillor C Sandbrook	Apologies	Councillor S Sandbrook	Apologies
Councillor V Santomauro	Yes	Councillor W D Scattergood	Yes
Councillor W Schmitt	Yes	Councillor A F Shelton	Yes
Councillor L Shepherd	Yes	Councillor C Siddall	Yes
Councillor G A Spray	Yes	Councillor J S Sutton	Yes
Councillor J R Swift	Yes	Councillor P Tattersley	Yes
Councillor C M Thompson	Yes	Councillor M Thorogood	Yes
Councillor L S Walters	Yes	Councillor R G Walters	Yes
Councillor S A Wilson	Apologies	Councillor B Wright	Yes

46. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that she had attended the staff long service awards on 17th November. The total service of staff receiving awards had totalled over 500 years.

47. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:-

- Councillor Lager declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9(i)a, Statements from the Leader and Cabinet Members, as a Director of Witham Public Hall Trust, as a question related to the management of the Hall emerged during debate;
- Councillor McKee declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6, Policy Recommendations and References – Cabinet 5th December 2011 as a Director (District Council representative) of the merged BEAU-BDS;
- Councillor R Walters declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6, Policy Recommendations and References – Cabinet 5th December 2011, and Agenda Item 9, Question Time, as a Director (Essex County Council representative) of BEAU. He decided to stay in the meeting but not vote on those items.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct all Members remained in the meeting for these items and took part in the debate and decision thereon, unless stated otherwise.

48. **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the minutes of the Council meeting held on 7th November 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

49. **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: No questions were asked or statements made.

50. **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS AND REFERENCES – CABINET 5TH DECEMBER 2011**

INFORMATION: The following Recommendations were considered:

Minute 65, Construction of New Enterprise Facilities/Start-Up Units at Springwood Drive, Braintree

DECISION:

- (1) That the Council's land be transferred to the new BDS/BEAU merged organisation under a long lease and the Director of Sustainable Development be authorised to agree a lease covering the existing BEAU site and the extension site with BDS/BEAU for a 125 year term in accordance with the proposals set out in the report.
- (2) That the expenditure of £866,000 of Growth Area Funding to design and build the extension of the Enterprise Centre be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION: To commit land and funding to enable the new organisation, under a new lease, to provide additional business start-up units and to continue to provide start-up support across the District.

Minute 67, Growth Area Funding - Update Construction of New Enterprise Facilities/Start-Up Units at Springwood Drive, Braintree

DECISION: That the re-allocation of Growth Area Fund capital and revenue funding as detailed in the report be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION: To approve funding for Growth Area Fund projects.

51. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES

DECISION: That the appointment of Members to vacancies on the following Committees be confirmed:-

- (1) **Licensing Committee.** Councillor Allen to replace Councillor S Sandbrook.
- (2) **Overview and Scrutiny Committee.** Councillors Horner and Shelton to replace Councillors D Louis and C Sandbrook.

52. STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

INFORMATION: No statements were made.

53. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

(i) Reports from the Leader and Cabinet Members

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to the written reports of the Leader and Cabinet Members who gave the following responses to questions raised:

Councillor Butland, Leader

Councillor Butland believed the Council is ahead of many authorities nationally in terms of the localism agenda. For example, in engaging communities in managing facilities, and ward members engaging with communities on how resources should be used. A member development session would be arranged to explain the Localism Act in more detail and how the Council will change and take forward the Act. He believed there is more the Council can devolved down to communities.

The development of the Joint Locality Board is an attempt by Essex County Council to engage more locally. Much work needs to be done to develop the working arrangements of the Board although he expected opposition group members to be involved in the committees.

Councillor Butland also agreed that the Board and its arrangements should be subject to scrutiny.

Councillor Beavis, Communities

Councillor Beavis advised that she would provide a written reply to Councillor Barlow on whether it was the intention of the Council that community groups

taking over the running of Council assets (eg. Witham Public Hall) would be fully self-funding or if those groups could seek supplementary funds.

Members have been provided with information on how the Neighbourhood Action Partnerships (NAPs) and Joint Action Groups (JAGs) feed into the Responsible Authority Group (RAG). Over 20 community groups have been involved in two RAG Task and Finish Groups.

Councillor Beavis believed that careful and steady progress is being made in relocating users of the Halstead Senior Citizen Centre as set out in her report. Work at Ramsey College to relocate the Citizens Advice Bureau and Play Park Group would begin in the New Year.

Councillor Beavis disagreed with the view of Councillor Fincken that the level of interest in JAGs has decreased. She said that attendance has increased. In respect of ward members having to leave JAG meetings during the confidential session, she acknowledged that this is a concern for some members, however, she believed it was appropriate for members to leave meetings at this point.

In response to a question from Council Abbott on decision making, she agreed that those taken more locally, where appropriate, are best.

Councillor Lady Newton, Enterprise, Housing and Development

Councillor Lady Newton advised that the Council would be working closely with the new owners of Newlands Centre, Witham, to seek their thoughts on the development of the Centre. The Council will consult Witham Town Council early on its proposals for the development of the town centre and the development of the Newlands centre may be a key part of the consultation. Public views will also be sought on the Council's proposals for the Town Centre.

The Council's target for building new affordable housing is averaged over a four year period and the Council is meeting its target.

By taking a small charge for car parking, the parking ticket machines would still be used enabling the Council to obtain numerical data on the impact of the reduced charge.

Councillor Schmitt, Environment

Councillor Schmitt reminded members that the new times for opening of recycling centres will commence on 9th January. In response to a question from Councillor Scattergood, Councillor Schmitt agreed to find out and circulate details on the opening hours of recycling centres in Suffolk.

The periods for reducing car parking charges are at times requested by local traders when they are experiencing low levels of footfall.

Councillor Abbott said he had been made aware that the Highways Agency is claiming it has no responsibility for maintenance of footways alongside the A120 and A12 beyond structural maintenance. Councillor Schmitt agreed to clarify maintenance responsibilities and what rota of maintenance might be expected.

Councillor Fincken raised concerns that works carried out on Marks Farm Roundabout had led to unexpected traffic congestion. Councillor Butland responded that he had asked Essex County Council to improve road markings at the roundabout to help address the situation.

Councillor Schmitt advised that a briefing paper on fuel procurement would be circulated shortly. She agreed that once arrangements within Essex authorities had been finalised, she would look at the possibility of a regional arrangement for fuel procurement.

The take up of Jubilee Oaks in the District has been successful with only a few Parish Councils declining the trees due to having no suitable space.

Councillor Siddall, Efficiency and Resources

Councillor Siddall advised that the Council is currently not in a position to provide information on whether the relocation of business rates might proceed and what benefits it might bring to the Council. He would provide information to members as soon as the Council had firmer information.

(ii) Chairmen's Statements

INFORMATION: No reports were made.

(iii) Minutes of Meetings (Public Session)

INFORMATION: No statements were made.

54. BUSINESS OF EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

INFORMATION: There were no reports received from Council representatives on external organisations, or issues raised.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.21pm.

Mrs J M Money
(Chairman)