MINUTES OF THE CABINET
HELD ON

29 January 2015 7.30 - 8.35 pm

PRESENT

Cabinet Members
Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council
Councillor Tony Durcan, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration & Enterprise
Councillor Jean Clark, Portfolio Holder for Governance
Councillor Mike Danvers, Portfolio Holder for Resources
Councillor Emma Toal, Portfolio Holder for Youth & Community
Councillor Rod Truan, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Mark Wilkinson, Portfolio Holder for Environment

Additional Attendees
Councillor Maggie Hulcoop
Councillor Dennis Palmer
Councillor Edna Stevens

Officers
Malcolm Morley, Chief Executive
Graham Branchett, Chief Operating Officer
Graeme Bloomer, Head of Place
Simon Freeman, Head of Finance
Jane Greer, Acting Head of Community Wellbeing
Brian Keane, Interim Head of Governance
Andrew Murray, Head of Housing
Joel West, Governance Support Officer

Other Councillors
Councillor Andrew Johnson
Councillor Joel Charles
Councillor Simon Carter
Councillor Sue Livings
Councillor Linda Pailing
Councillor Russell Perrin
Councillor Tony Hall

95. FILMING OF MEETING

The Leader of the Council advised all attendees that this meeting was being filmed and the footage will be made available for public viewing from the Council’s website.

96. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.
97. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Tony Durcan declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 19 (Disposal of Wissants and adjacent land for the provision of affordable housing) as he is a Council-appointed representative on Circle Housing (South Anglia) Housing Association. Councillor Durcan took no part in the discussion or vote on this item.

98. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2014 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

99. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

100. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The questions submitted and responses provided are appended to these minutes.

101. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

102. **PETITIONS**

None.

103. **FORWARD PLAN**

**RESOLVED** that the Forward Plan is noted.

104. **RECENT DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE LEADER, DEPUTY OR PORTFOLIO HOLDER(S)**

None.

105. **OUTCOME OF THE LGA PEER CHALLENGE 2014**

The Cabinet received a report that advised of the outcome of the recent LGA Corporate Peer Challenge and proposed measures for how the Council might add value to the Challenge’s findings.

Proposed by Councillor Jon Clempner (seconded by Councillor Tony Durcan) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet:
A Notes the findings of the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge as detailed in the feedback letter attached as Appendix A of the report submitted.

B Asks the Scrutiny Committee to conduct a review into two of the key themes highlighted by the Challenge, with terms of reference as detailed in Appendix B of the report submitted.

106. CORPORATE PLAN 2015/16 - 2017/18

The Cabinet received a report proposing a Corporate Plan for 2015/16 to 2017/18.

Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Jon Clempner) Cabinet:

RESOLVED that:

A Cabinet recommends to Full Council that the updates to the Corporate Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18, attached to the report submitted, are adopted.

B Authority is delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make minor and consequential amendments to the Corporate Plan.

107. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2015/16 - 2019/20


Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Jon Clempner) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends to Full Council:

A That the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2015/16 to 2019/20 is adopted.

B That the proposals in relation to reserves as set out in paragraphs 24 to 30 of the report submitted and contained within Section 5 of the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved.

C That the planned increases in Council Tax as set out in the Medium Term Financial Plan be approved.
108. **GENERAL FUND BUDGET 2015/16**

The Cabinet received a report proposing an annual revenue budget for the Council. The report included proposed changes to the Council Tax charge.

Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Jon Clempner) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:

A The General Fund estimates for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix A of the report submitted are approved.

B The proposed transfers between the General Fund and Earmarked Reserves, set out in paragraphs 16 to 22 of the report submitted, are approved.

C The proposed Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix C of the report submitted are approved.

D The Pay Policy Statement as set out in Appendix G of the report submitted is approved.

E The Council’s Band D Council Tax for 2015/16 be set at £263.02, which represents a 1.5% increase compared to the Band D Council Tax for 2014/15, subject to final Government announcements relating to capping expected in early February 2015.

109. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN 2014/44**

The Cabinet received a report proposing a formal update on the business plan of the Council’s landlord service over the next 30 years.

Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Jon Clempner) it was:

**RESOLVED** that:

A The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2014/44, attached as Appendix A to the report submitted, is approved.

B Authority be delegated to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to make minor amendments to the Plan, if necessary, following consultation.
110. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2015/16**

The Cabinet received a report forecasting the outturn budget for the Council's Housing Revenue Account in the current year, and a proposed budget for the next year, 2015/16.

Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Jon Clempner) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:

A The rent increase for individual dwellings as set out in paragraphs 7 to 15 of the report submitted and effective from 6 April 2015 be agreed. This equates to an average weekly rent of £93.60, an average increase of 2.2%.

B Service charges for individual dwellings, as set out in paragraphs 16 to 23 of the report submitted, effective from 6 April 2015 for tenants and 1 April 2015 for leaseholders be agreed. This equates to an average weekly service charge to tenants of £1.92.

C Heating charges are increased as set out in paragraphs 24 to 29 of the report submitted, effective from 6 April 2015 for tenants and 1 April for leaseholders. Average weekly general needs charges are £13.10 per week (leaseholders £18.67 per week, equivalent) and, for sheltered accommodation, £10.24 per week.

D Garage rents are increased to £8.36 per week (for a standard garage) and proportionate increases for other garages, car ports and car spaces, from 6 April 2015, as set out in paragraphs 30 and 31 of the report submitted.

E Other charges are increased, as set out in paragraph 32 of the report submitted, with effect from 1 April 2015.

F The growth bids as outlined in paragraphs 33 and 34 of the report submitted are approved.

G The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget as set out at Appendix A of the report submitted is approved.

H A minimum HRA working balance of £2,695,000 at 31 March 2015, rising to £2,727,000 at 31 March 2016, as set out in Appendix B to the report submitted, is agreed.

111. **CAPITAL PROGRAMMES 2014/15 - 2019/20**

The Cabinet received a report proposing capital programmes for 2014/15 and a forecast to 2019/20, for both housing and non-housing capital spend.
Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Jon Clempner) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:

**Housing Capital**

A The Housing Capital programme 2015/16 is approved, as set out in Appendices A and B of the report submitted.

B The forecast programme for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20 is noted, as set out in Appendices A and B of the report submitted.

**Non Housing Capital**

C The revised Non Housing Capital Programme 2014/15 is approved, as set out in paragraphs 30-43 of the report submitted.

D The Non Housing Capital Programme for 2015/16 is approved, as set out in Appendices C and D of the report submitted.

E The transfer of 3,581 garages to the General Fund and the implications for the Non Housing Capital Programme as detailed in paragraphs 22, 23 and 50 of the report submitted be noted.

FAgggregate borrowing of £3,276 million up to 31 March 2015, and a further £1.772 million, in 2015/16 be approved to support the Non Housing Capital Programme.

G The Non Housing Capital Programme forecast for 2016/17 to 2019/20 be noted, as set out in Appendices C and D of the report submitted.

112. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2015/16**

The Cabinet received a report proposing a Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2015/16. The report described the various statutory requirements on the Council in respect of its treasury management.

Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Jon Clempner) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommends to Full Council that the proposed revised Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2015/16 (attached as Appendix A to the report submitted) be approved for implementation with immediate effect, including specifically:
113. **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

The Cabinet received a report that proposed an update to the Council’s Procurement Strategy in line with European and national legislative changes that govern procurement and the aspirations of the Council.

Proposed by Councillor Jean Clark (seconded by Councillor Mark Wilkinson) Cabinet:

**RESOLVED** that the Procurement Strategy 2015 is approved as the framework for achieving the Council’s objectives and aspirations in the procurement of goods, works and services.

114. **DISPOSAL OF WISSANTS AND ADJACENT LAND FOR THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

The Cabinet received a report that proposed disposal of an existing housing site to regenerate the area and provide affordable housing.

To avoid any confusion caused by the recent changes to the Council’s senior management, the Cabinet felt it would be preferable to delegate authority to finalise the disposal to the Chief Operating Officer.

Proposed by Councillor Rod Truan (seconded by Councillor Mark Wilkinson) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet:

A Approves the freehold disposal of 1-21 Wissants and adjacent land, as set out in the attached red line plan at Appendix 1 to the report submitted, to Circle Housing Group under the terms of the Stansted Area Housing Partnership (SAHP) agreement to enable the provision of seven affordable houses to rent.

B Delegates authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to negotiate and agree the final terms and details of the disposal and thereafter complete the freehold transfer.
115. **DEBT WRITE OFFS**

The Cabinet received a report itemising a number of debts which were deemed irrecoverable and proposed to be written off.

Proposed by Councillor Mike Danvers (seconded by Councillor Jon Clempner) Cabinet:

**RESOLVED that:**

A Irrecoverable Council Tax amounting to £19,826.80, as specified in Appendix A Table 1 of the report submitted, be written off.

B Irrecoverable non-domestic rates amounting to £136,267.67 and credit balances amounting to £8,755.78, as specified in Appendix A Table 2 of the report submitted, be written off.

C Irrecoverable sundry debts amounting to £5,902.73, as specified in Appendix A Table 3 of the report submitted, be written off.

116. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM COMMITTEES/WORKING GROUPS/PARTIES AND PANELS**

None.

117. **MINUTES OF PANELS/WORKING GROUPS**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the following meetings are noted.

a) Minutes of meeting Tuesday 4 November 2014 of Housing Standards Board

b) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 27 November 2014 of Cabinet Overview Working Group

118. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
CABINET – 29 JANUARY 2015
QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Agenda item 5 refers

1. Mr H Hoad, 114 Greenhills, Harlow to Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council

Why are paper copies of agendas still sent to Councillors as they have tablets to receive them?

Reply from Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council

There has been a significant delay outside of the Council’s control with the installation of a new Wi-Fi network. The Wi-Fi installation is necessary to provide resilience and to ensure that agendas and other documents can be made fully accessible electronically at the meetings for Councillors and members of the public.

2. Mr H Hoad, 114 Greenhills, Harlow to Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council

How much of the increase in Council Tax for 2015/16 is due to the cost of the clear-up necessary due to the actions of the travellers in Harlow?

Reply from Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council

The proposed increase in Council Tax is not related to any of the costs incurred by the Council in relation to the clearing of sites across the town as a result of the travellers.