

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET
HELD ON**

9 September 2021

7.30 - 10.24 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Andrew Johnson, Leader of the Council and Lead on Economic Recovery

Councillor Joel Charles, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Community Resilience

Councillor Simon Carter, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Councillor Alastair Gunn, Portfolio Holder for Environment

Councillor Michael Hardware, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Growth

Councillor Dan Swords, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration

Additional Attendees

Councillor James Leppard

Councillor Nicky Purse

Councillor Matthew Siggers

Other Councillors

Councillor David Carter

Councillor Mike Danvers

Councillor Tony Durcan

Councillor Tony Edwards

Councillor Eugenie Harvey

Councillor Chris Vince

Councillor Nancy Watson

Councillor Mark Wilkinson

Officers

Brian Keane, Chief Executive

Andrew Bramidge, Head of Environment and Planning

Niel Churchill, Communications Manager

Simon Freeman, Head of Finance and Property and Deputy to the Chief Executive

Julie Galvin, Legal Services Manager

Jane Greer, Head of Community Wellbeing

Andrew Murray, Head of Housing

Adam Rees, Senior Governance Support Officer

33. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Russell Perrin.

34. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

35. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2021 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

36. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

37. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The questions, together with the answers, are appended to the minutes.

38. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

39. **PETITIONS**

None.

40. **FORWARD PLAN**

Councillor Charles said that the report on the Partnership Grant Review would now be considered at the 4 November meeting. The Health and Wellbeing Strategy would now be a position statement to enable up to date data to inform the strategy.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan is noted.

41. **JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 1 2021/22**

Cabinet received the Joint Finance and Performance Report for Quarter 1 2021/22.

Proposed by Councillor Andrew Johnson (seconded by Councillor Dan Swords) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted:

A the projected outturn position set out in sections three and four of Appendix A to this report for the first quarter (April – June) of 2021/22 as follow:

- i) A projected overspend of £103,000 representing 0.2 per cent of the gross General Fund Budget.
- ii) The Council performed on or above target for 40 out of 46 (87 per cent) of its monthly and quarterly Key Performance Indicators (KPIs); and successfully completed 6 out of 59 (10 per cent) of its service milestones.

42. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT, QUARTER 1 FINANCE REPORT 2021/22**

Cabinet received the Housing Revenue Account, Quarter 1 Finance Report 2021/22.

Proposed by Councillor Simon Carter (seconded by Councillor Andrew Johnson) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted:

- A** The Quarter 1 – Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget Monitoring report as set out in the report and in Appendix 1 and 2.
- B** That the forecast HRA general working balance as at 31 March 2022 will be £3.246 million.
- C** The recent changes made to the use of retained Right to Buy (RTB) receipts and the balance of £7.067 million of retained RTB receipts held as at 31 March 2021 in order to finance the new build capital programme.

43. **CAPITAL PROGRAMMES, QUARTER 1 FINANCE REPORT 2021/22**

Cabinet received the Capital Programmes, Quarter 1 Finance Report 2021/22.

Proposed by Councillor Simon Carter (seconded by Councillor Andrew Johnson) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Notes the progress in the delivery of the Council's Housing Capital Programme (HCP) as at Quarter 1 2021/22 as follows:
 - i) The current budget is £38.922 million, including £1.25 million carried forward from 2020/21. The projected outturn at Quarter 1 is £34.249 million as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.
- B** Noted the progress in the delivery of the Council's Non Housing Capital Programme (NHCP) as at Quarter 1 2021/22 as follows:
 - i) The current budget is £23.328 million, including £3.984 million carried forward from 2020/21. The projected outturn at Quarter 1 is £18.302 million as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.
- C** Noted that various delays encountered across both the Housing and Non Housing Capital Programmes, many of which are as a direct result of the Pandemic, mean it is anticipated that further re-profiling will be required at Quarter 2 2021/22.

- D Approved the inclusion in the NHCP budget of an additional £17,760 for the purchase of tablets and the use of a Mobile Canvasser Application for Electoral Registration, Canvass and Elections. Expenditure is to be financed from the annual IER grant and an approved Revenue carry over from 2020/21.

44. **ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2020/21**

Cabinet received the Annual Treasury Management Report 2020/21.

Proposed by Councillor Andrew Johnson (seconded by Councillor Joel Charles) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted:

- A The annual Treasury Management Report for 2020/21 (Appendix A to the report), including that the Council operated within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement during 2020/21, and that the report is recommended to Full Council for approval.

45. **TOWN PLAN - DRAFT FOR CONSULTATION**

Cabinet received a report to approve a consultation on the draft Town Plan.

Proposed by Councillor Michael Hardware (seconded by Councillor Dan Swords) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A Cabinet endorsed the vision and aspirations as set out in the consultation draft of the Harlow Town Plan as set out in Appendix A to the report.
- B Cabinet authorised that public consultation be undertaken on this draft for a period of eight weeks with any minor amendments following the Cabinet meeting to be delegated to the Head of Environment & Planning in conjunction with the Portfolio Holders for Strategic Growth and Regeneration.
- C The Town Plan Panel then considers the results of the subsequent consultation exercise and produces an updated version of the Town Plan for adoption by Cabinet.

46. **EV CHARGE POINTS CONTRACT AWARD**

Cabinet received a report to approve a contract for the supply of EV chargepoints.

Councillor Tony Durcan declared a pecuniary interest as a remunerated Council appointed Director of HTS (Housing and Regeneration) Ltd.

Proposed by Councillor Alastair Gunn (seconded by Councillor Dan Swords) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** Harlow Council enters into a contract with BP Pulse for the supply of Electric Vehicle (EV) chargepoints in pay and display car parks as listed.
- B** Authority be delegated to Head of Finance to negotiate and (if appropriate and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment) legally complete the necessary contract documents.
- C** Harlow Council implements a steering group and officer working group to develop a strategy to install On Street Residential Chargepoints (ORCS) in residential estates and in other locations across the town.

47. **CONTRACT AWARD FOR DELIVERY OF HARLOW COMMUNITY HUB SERVICE**

Cabinet received a report for a contract award to provide a pilot community hub service.

Proposed by Councillor Joel Charles (seconded by Councillor Andrew Johnson) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** Contractor A is awarded the contract for delivery of a Pilot Community Hub Service for a period of six months from 1 October 2021 at £90,000 subject to Paragraph 13 in the report.

48. **FIRE SAFETY WORKS - PENNYMEAD TOWER, NETTESWELL TOWER AND SPRING HILLS TOWER**

Cabinet received a report to award a contract for fire safety works on Pennymead, Netteswell and Spring Hills towers.

Proposed by Councillor Simon Carter (seconded by Councillor Andrew Johnson) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** The most advantageous tender in consideration of price and quality combined as submitted by Contractor B, be accepted in

the sum of £1,060,367 for the delivery of updated fire compartmentation between floors, in service duct and ventilation system, internal and front entrance fire doors programme, subject to contract and Leaseholder Consultation.

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

a) **Referral from Scrutiny Committee - Housing and Accommodation - Requirements for Adults with a Moderate/Severe Learning Disability**

Cabinet received a referral from the Scrutiny Committee on housing and accommodation requirements for adults with a moderate/severe learning disability.

Proposed by Councillor Simon Carter (seconded by Councillor Andrew Johnson) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** The recommendations contained in the consultant's report be adopted.
- B** Cabinet noted the Committee will be considering a report on the implementation of the recommendations at its meeting in July 2022.

b) **Referral from Cabinet Policy Development Working Group - Carbon Management Plan**

Cabinet received a referral from the Cabinet Policy Development Working Group on the Carbon Reduction Plan.

Proposed by Councillor Alastair Gunn (seconded by Councillor Andrew Johnson) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Approved the Carbon Reduction Plan for 2021-26 as attached to this report with a commitment to achieving a 15.6% reduction in carbon emissions from the Council's operations in the plan period, equating to a 50% reduction on the 2014/15 baseline.
- B** Agreed to set a target of achieving Net Zero by 2040 with a commitment to review this on an annual basis and seek to improve on this target as the development of carbon free technology enables that to happen.

- C Agreed to receive a further report to set out how the Council, in exercising its community leadership role, can bring forward a broader Climate Change Strategy for the town.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the following meetings are noted.

- a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 23 June 2021 of Harlow Local Highways Panel
- b) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 1 July 2021 of Shareholder Sub Committee
- c) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 5 August 2021 of Cabinet Policy Development Working Group

51. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Cabinet – 9 September 2021

Questions from the Public

1 Nicholas Taylor to Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council):

The consultation period for Epping Forest District Council's (EFDC's) Local Development Plan Main Modifications is now under way and comments are invited to be received by 23rd September 2021. Harlow residents have not been consulted about this Plan although it proposes to allow the building of several thousand new homes on Harlow's borders with Epping Forest District Council (EFDC) on what is effectively Harlow's Green Belt. In fact, some existing Harlow residents' gardens are just 12 feet from the EFDC proposals.

My first question is: Although there was a good opportunity to do so in the latest edition of Harlow Times, why were Harlow residents not informed of this Local Development Plan to build several thousand new homes on Harlow's borders?

Reply from Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council):

Harlow Council was not informed of Epping Forest District Council's publication of their Local Plan Main Modifications consultation in advance of this appearing on the Examination website on 15 July. The print deadline for the summer edition of Harlow Times was 9 July, and so it would not have been possible to have included an article on the Consultation.

2 Nicholas Taylor to Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council):

My second question is: As one of the pledges stated by your Party in the pre-election leaflet published in March this year was to 'Stop Summers West to prevent over development in our community', would you please advise me of what action you and your Party are taking to fulfil this promise?

Reply from Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council):

Harlow Conservatives have consistently spoken against, campaigned against and voted against development to the south and west of Harlow since the proposal started to be made in the early 2000's

This Conservative group moved the longstanding policy that Harlow Council was against growth to the South and West of the town.

Under the previous Council, the Labour party did not take that position however and shamefully reversed that policy instead choosing to actively promote growth in that

area and welcoming Epping Forest District Council plans to build widescale developments in Sumners West, Katherines West and Latton Priory.

My party clearly stood on a platform of opposing these developments at the local election and this was most welcomed by the residents of Staple Tye, Harlow Common and specifically Sumners & Kingsmoor and Great Parndon.

We stand ready to honour that commitment to residents and deliver on the pledge we made.

Mr Taylor may not be aware that the agenda for the full council next Thursday 16th September was published last night and I point him to that agenda, which includes a motion from my group on this issue; a motion that if passed will see the council formally object to the Epping Forest District Council Local Plan.

I can assure residents that Conservative councillors intend to pass the motion.

Supplementary question from Nicholas Taylor:

The Inspector has said that it is now too late for objections to the plan other than minor representations. If the motion is passed next week will you formally end the agreement you have to work with Epping Forest District Council on part of their local plan which forms part of the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town?

Supplementary reply from Councillor Andrew Johnson (Leader of the Council):

I'm aware of the comments that the Inspector has made, but my Administration still has a duty to object formally at this point. I'm not willing to end the agreement to work together on Harlow and Gilston Garden Town. We will have to work together with Epping Forest on sites to the East of Harlow. By working together we have a better chance of securing regeneration that Harlow needs and securing housing nomination rights to houses built outside of Harlow. If the Inspector approves the Epping Forest plan I want Harlow Council to have the maximum say possible

3 Alan Leverett to Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):

The Cycle Network in Harlow has been well use during the pandemic and we would hope will continue to be used more when things return to some normality. I am aware that the areas of cycle tracks and footpaths in the ownership of Essex County Council have a maintenance programme in progress whereas the areas under the ownership of the Harlow Council are being left in an appalling state of repair.

Can the Councillor Swords inform me of how much the council will have in this year budget to maintain the footpaths and cycle tracks and when do they expect the maintenance work to be carried out?

Reply from Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):

I am delighted that Mr Leverett has raised what is one of the most exciting areas of my portfolio, namely our plan to rebuild Harlow's cycle track network to a truly world beating standard.

As Mr Leverett knows, because I nearly rode into him on a cycle path a few weeks ago, my passion for this area knows no bounds. I agree that, as with so many areas of the regeneration portfolio, the cycle track network of Harlow has faced decades of decline, with no one taking responsibility to right that wrong.

But that failure ends, and it ends now. I have an extremely ambitious plan to completely rebuild the entirety of Harlow's cycle track network and I am afraid Mr Leverett will have to wait just a short while longer for me to unveil that plan and the funding package to deliver it.

Specifically in response to his point about the adoption schedule, at present Harlow Council owns approximately 10 percent of the town's cycle track network with the remainder being adopted by Essex County Council.

I do not agree with his assessment that Essex County Council have done a fantastic job on their areas and Harlow Council has not. The whole network needs a complete rebuilding and that is what we will deliver.

Supplementary question from Alan Leverett:

Will you look to raise funds and how do you plan to extend the network up to new housing estates and the new hospital if built

Supplementary reply from Councillor Dan Swords (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration):

I can give you a concrete guarantee that we will plan to do those things.