

**MINUTES OF THE CABINET  
HELD ON**

30 November 2023

7.30 - 10.30 pm

**PRESENT**

**Committee Members**

Councillor Dan Swords, Leader of the Council  
Councillor David Carter, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing  
Councillor James Leppard, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance  
Councillor Nicky Purse, Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Environment  
Councillor Stacy Seales, Portfolio Holder for Community

**Other Councillors**

Councillor Tony Durcan  
Councillor Tony Edwards  
Councillor Michael Garnett  
Councillor James Griggs  
Councillor Kay Morrison  
Councillor Aiden O'Dell  
Councillor Daniella Pritchard  
Councillor Matthew Saggars  
Councillor Chris Vince

**Officers**

Andrew Bramidge, Chief Executive  
David Coleman, Housing Operations  
Manager (Property)  
Simon Freeman, Deputy Chief  
Executive and Director of Finance  
Paul Keen, Communications Officer  
Amanda Lucas, Graphic Designer  
Adam Rees, Senior Governance  
Support Officer

53. **WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Leader said that the meeting was being webcast live and would be available for repeated viewing after the meeting had ended. By continuing to attend the meeting, you were consenting to being filmed and to appearing in the webcast.

54. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Hardware.

55. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

56. **MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2023 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

57. **MATTERS ARISING**

The Leader said he believed he had sent Councillor Edwards information about the Strawberry Star development, but would check.

58. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

59. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

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

60. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader noted a number of examples of progress against the council's five priorities and thanked council officers for their work to deliver this progress. He also updated Cabinet on changes at HTS.

61. **PETITIONS**

None.

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

**RESOLVED** that the following decisions are noted.

- a) Leader of the Council - 1 November 2023
- b) Portfolio Holder for Economic Development - 13 November 2023

63. **CORPORATE PLAN**

Cabinet received the new draft Corporate Plan.

The Leader said that the wording in the Corporate Plan on potholes would be changed, as well as whether the Plan should include more information about energy efficiency in owner-occupier homes.

The Leader would write to Councillor Kay Morrison with information on the school readiness programme.

Proposed by Councillor Dan Swords (seconded by Councillor James Leppard) it was:

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

- A** The Corporate Plan 2024 - 2028, attached as Appendix A to the report, is adopted.
- B** The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, prepare a delivery programme for the duration of the plan to be agreed by Cabinet annually.
- C** The review of the Corporate Plan achievements, in future, form part of a report monitored by Cabinet annually.
- D** Delegation be given to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to make minor and inconsequential changes to the Plan.

64. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE**

Cabinet received a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-2028.

The Leader agreed that he would provide Councillor Vince with further details about the risks set out in the MTFP.

Proposed by Councillor Dan Swords (seconded by Councillor James Leppard):

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet recommended to Full Council that The Medium-Term Financial Plan 2024 - 2028, attached as Appendix A to the report, be approved.

65. **FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 2 2023/24**

Cabinet received the Quarter 2 Financial Performance report for 2023/24.

The Leader said he would provide Councillor Vince with more information about the variance for the Playhouse sound system.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Dan Swords) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet:

- A** Noted the forecast outturn position set out within the report in respect of the General Fund as at the end of quarter 2 (April – September) of 2023/24 with a projected favourable variance of £145,000.
- B** Noted the forecast outturn position set out within the report in respect of the Housing Revenue Account as at the end of quarter 2 (April – September) of 2023/24 with a projected adverse variance of £543,000.

- C** Noted the forecast outturn position set out within the report in respect of the Non-Housing Capital Programme as at the end of quarter 2 (April – September) of 2023/24 with a projected adverse variance of £0.383 million.
- D** Noted the forecast outturn position set out within the report in respect of the Housing Capital Programme as at the end of quarter 2 (April – September) of 2023/24 with a projected favourable variance of £8.994 million.
- E** Approved the Period 6 reprofiling into 2024/25 within the Housing and Non-Housing Capital Programmes included within Appendices C and D to the report.
- F** Recommends to Full Council the approval of the Budget allocations identified for 2023/24 within the Housing and Non-Housing Capital Programmes included within Appendices C and D to the report.
- G** Approved the virements for the Non-Housing and Housing Capital Programme identified within the tables included in paragraphs 19 and 27 of the report.

66. **NORTH ESSEX COUNCILS**

Cabinet received a report on partnership working with North Essex Councils.

Proposed by Councillor Dan Swords (seconded by Councillor James Leppard) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet agreed:

- A** That the council will work in partnership with other councils in North Essex under the banner of North Essex Councils (NEC).
- B** To jointly resource a small team to collectively represent North Essex Councils, establish a detailed terms of reference for NEC and develop a clear programme of work.
- C** That the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive continue to represent the council on the North Essex Councils Partnership with the appropriate delegation to act in line with the principles outlined in the report.
- D** That the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive report progress of the workstreams to Cabinet at least once per financial year.

67. **MAJOR HOUSING WORKS – BUSINESS PROCESS REVIEW**

Cabinet received a report on the major housing works business process review.

Proposed by Councillor David Carter (seconded by Councillor Dan Swords) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet noted the improvements and enhancements made to the Major Works business process.

68. **FREEHOLD DISPOSAL OF OSLER HOUSE**

Cabinet received a report on the freehold disposal of Osler House.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor David Carter) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet:

- A** Declared Osler House as surplus to requirements.
- B** Approved plans to dispose of the Council's freehold interest in Osler House via private treaty to Mind in West Essex.
- C** Delegated authority to the Assistant Director – Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance, to negotiate and finalise the terms of the disposal and (subject to being satisfied that it would be for the best consideration reasonably obtainable) thereafter procure the legal completion of the sale documentation.

69. **PRIVATE HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY (DFGS)**

Cabinet received a report on the Private Housing Assistance Policy.

Proposed by Councillor Nicky Purse (seconded by Councillor David Carter) it was:

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet:

- A** Approved the revised Housing Assistance Policy attached as Appendix A to the report.
- B** Delegated authority to the appropriate Assistant Director, in consultation with the appropriate Portfolio Holder, to make such minor or inconsequential amendments to the policy and to approve procedures for giving it effect as may be necessary from time to time.

70. **QUESTIONS PROCEDURES**

Cabinet received a report on revised questions procedures for meetings.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Dan Swords) it was:

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

- A** A word limit of 200 for each question and 300 words for each answer (except where the complexity of the questions requires a longer response) be implemented.
- B** The deadline for submitting questions be changed to 12pm three clear working days before the meeting.
- C** Questions from Councillors be taken as read, unless it is specifically requested that they are read out.
- D** A new back-end process for dealing with questions is introduced.
- E** The Constitution is amended to reflect A-D above.

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

a) **Referral from Licensing Committee - Hackney Carriage Tariffs**

Cabinet received a referral from the Licensing Committee on Hackney Carriage Tariffs.

Proposed by Councillor Nicky Purse (seconded by Councillor Dan Swords) it was:

**RESOLVED** that:

- A** The Hackney Carriage Tariff Schedule, as set out in Appendices B and D to the original report, be adopted.
- B** The Interim Assistant Director Environment be authorised to take the necessary steps as stated in the report to implement the tariff changes with effect from 22 December 2023.

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

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

- a) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 27 September 2023 of Shareholder Sub Committee
- b) Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 12 September 2023 of Harlow Local Highways Panel
- c) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 12 October 2023 of Safety Committee
- d) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 15 November 2023 of Shareholder Sub Committee

73. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

# Cabinet – 30 November 2023

## Questions from Councillors

**1 Councillor Chris Vince to Councillor Stacy Seales (Portfolio Holder for Community):**

Can you give me a full list of warm banks that will be provided, both by Harlow Council and other organisations, to Harlow residents struggling with heating bills during this cost-of-living crisis?

**Reply from Councillor Stacy Seales (Portfolio Holder for Community):**

Harlow Playhouse will be providing a warm and inviting space, in the theatres Bar and Café areas, to everyone who needs it throughout winter during its current opening hours of 10.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Thursday. 10.30am till 10.30pm Friday and Saturday - although it will be closed Christmas Day and New Years Day.

In addition, Sumners Farm Close, will have space available from 8.30am until 4.00pm all week whilst Harlow Central Library will be providing a warm space Monday to Friday (9am to 5.30pm) and Saturday (9am to 5pm).

Both of these venues are on top of the common rooms at all 22 Supported Housing schemes around the town.

The council has a page on its website dedicated to warm spaces, and has issued a press release on Monday that included a callout to groups who are providing them. We have also worked with external organisations who are providing warm spaces, details of which can be found on the webpage <https://www.harlow.gov.uk/warm-spaces>.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Chris Vince:**

Can we be more on the front foot in the future so residents are aware earlier?

**Reply from Councillor Stacy Seales (Portfolio Holder for Community):**

There are a lot of organisations involved, and there was work taking place before the actual announcement.



**2 Councillor Tony Edwards to Councillor Stacy Seales (Portfolio Holder for Community):**

Could you please say when the work compiling a list of this years “warm spaces” commenced and which organisations have been approached?

**Reply from Councillor Stacy Seales (Portfolio Holder for Community):**

Work compiling this list commenced in October 2023. Organisations approached in compiling the list of warm banks includes Rainbow Services, St Paul’s Church, St Mary’s Church, Heart4Harlow, the libraries, Maybury Centre and Street2Homes.

**Supplementary question from Councillor Tony Edwards:**

Can we make sure that when information is on our website that it is up to date?

**Reply from Councillor Stacy Seales (Portfolio Holder for Community):**

I will take that on board, however there was a lot of work going on.