

MINUTES OF THE CABINET HELD ON

10 December 2024

7.00 - 9.05 pm

PRESENT

Committee Members

Councillor Dan Swords, Leader of the Council and Chair of Personnel Committee

Councillor David Carter, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing

Councillor Danielle Brown, Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing

Councillor Joel Charles, Portfolio Holder for Public Protection

Councillor Hannah Ellis, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Transformation

Councillor Alastair Gunn, Portfolio Holder for Garden Town and Planning

Councillor Nicky Purse, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability

Other Councillors

Councillor Jodi Dunne

Councillor Tony Edwards

Councillor Michael Garnett

Councillor Mark Ingall

Councillor Kay Morrison

Councillor Stefan Mullard- Toal

Councillor Matthew Siggers

Councillor Lanie Shears

Councillor Jake Shepherd

Officers

Niel Churchill, Communications Manager

Rebecca Farrant, Assistant Director - Corporate Services

Julie Galvin, Legal Services Manager and Monitoring Officer

James Gardner, Assistant Director - Regeneration

Adam Rees, Senior Governance Support Officer

Paul Keen, Communications Officer
Cara Stevens, Assistant Director, Housing Operations (People)

Jacqui Van Mellaerts, Assistant Director - Finance

Tanusha Waters, Assistant Director - Planning and Building Control

78. WEBCAST INTRODUCTION

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

79. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Hardware and James Leppard.

80. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Shepherd declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 15, Shopfront SPD, as a member of Harlow Civic Society.

81. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2024 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

82. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

83. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

84. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

85. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader set out how the council had continued to deliver its corporate priorities.

86. **PETITIONS**

None.

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

RESOLVED that the following decisions be noted.

- a) Portfolio Holder for Economic Development - 17 October 2024
- b) Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services and Transformation - 23 October 2024
- c) Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing - 6 November 2024

88. **TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME – BUILDING HARLOW’S FUTURE**

Cabinet received a report on the transformation programme.

Proposed by Councillor Dan Swords (seconded by Councillor Hannah Ellis) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Endorsed the transformation programme, Building Harlow's Future, as set out in appendix A to the report.
- B** Would receive quarterly updates on activity and progress within the programme.

89. **PERFORMANCE, FINANCE AND RISK - SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER**

Cabinet received the performance, finance and risk report for September and October.

The Leader agreed to send a copy of the improvement plan to Councillor Morrison.

Proposed by Councillor Dan Swords (seconded by Councillor Hannah Ellis) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Noted the performance of key performance indicators for September and October.
- B** Noted the financial performance and position as of October (period 7) of 2024/25 financial year.
- C** Approved the Period 7 reprofiling into 2025/26 within the Housing and Non-Housing Capital Programmes included within Appendices E and F to the report.
- D** Noted the current strategic risks for the council's operations.

90. **HOUSING REGULATOR UPDATE**

Cabinet received an update report on progress on actions agreed with the Housing Regulator.

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the progress being made against the actions agreed with the Regulator for Social Housing to manage our ongoing social housing compliance.

91. **ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REPORT 2023/24**

Cabinet received the annual treasury management report for 2023/24.

Councillor Mullard-Toal would be provided with a written answer on the amount required to service the council's debts.

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the annual Treasury Management Report for 2023/24 (attached as Appendix A to the report), and that the Council operated within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement during 2023/24 and recommended it to Full Council for approval.

92. **SHOPFRONT SPD**

Cabinet received a report on adopting a shopfront supplementary planning document.

Proposed by Councillor Alastair Gunn (seconded by Councillor Hannah Ellis) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

A Noted the responses received to the consultation (as set out in Appendix B to this report). and agrees the consequential amendments made to the Shopfront Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

B Adopted the SPD (as set out in Appendix A to this report) and delegates authority to the Assistant Director – Planning and Environment, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for HGGT and Planning, to make and agree any minor or inconsequential amendments to the Shopfront Design SPD arising from any matters discussed and agreed at Cabinet.

93. **INSURANCE TENDER EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Cabinet received a report on insurance tender evaluations.

Councillor Saggars would be provided with a written answer on any changes to insurance related to cyber security.

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

RESOLVED that:

- A** Cabinet noted the outcome of the insurance tender process for the council's main insurance programme as detailed in Appendix A to the report.
- B** Authority is delegated to Assistant Director – Finance (Section 151 Officer) in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Finance to make final contract awards following the outcomes of minor clarifications, which are not expected to materially affect the evaluation.
- C** Cabinet noted that Arthur J Gallagher will be retained as insurance brokers for the duration of the Long-Term Agreement.
- D** Quoted premiums be subject to review based on claims experience as 28 February 2025 and any portfolio changes since submission of the ITT. If the council exercises its right under the ITT to seek revised terms from unsuccessful tenderers, award of contract is delegated be Assistant Director – Finance (Section 151 Officer) in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Finance.

94. **REVIEW OF LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**

Cabinet received a report on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme.

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Endorsed the introduction of the new income banded Council Tax Reduction Scheme for working age applicants.
- B** Recommended to Full Council to approve the new banded Council Tax Reduction Scheme.
- C** Recommended to Full Council to give delegated authority to the Assistant Director – Finance in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance to implement the scheme by April 2026.

95. **HARVEY CENTRE ASSET MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Cabinet received an update report on Harvey Centre asset management.

Proposed by Councillor Dan Swords (seconded by Councillor Hannah Ellis) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the impressive progress and exceeding performance of the Harvey Centre for the reported period.

96. **COUNCIL HOUSE BUILDING CONTRACT AWARDS**

Cabinet received a report on delegations for council house building contract awards.

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

RESOLVED that delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director – Regeneration and Commercial Development, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to proceed with final construction phase of all schemes within the Council Housing Building Programme (CHBP), within the financial budget set in the approval Harlow Council Capital Programme 2024/25 - 2027/28.

97. **HARLOW REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP LLP ANNUAL PROGRESS UPDATE**

Cabinet received an annual progress report on the Harlow Regeneration Partnership LLP.

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet noted the progress of the HRP for the first full year of activity.

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

None.

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

None.

100. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

101. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED that the following item be taken in private session on the grounds that it is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as specified under Paragraph 3 of Part One of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, if and so long as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

102. **TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY**

Cabinet received a report on the Town Centre Strategy.

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommended to Full Council that:

- A** Delegated authority be given to the Leader of the Council and Assistant Director of Finance (s151 officer) to finalise the capital financing for the redevelopment site as detailed in the report.
- B** Delegated authority be given to the Leader of the Council and Assistant Director Regeneration and Commercial Development to procure and appoint a main contractor for the redevelopment site as detailed within the budget profile set-out within this report and in accordance with Council's procurement framework.
- C** A budget is allocated for the negotiated purchase price and associated costs per the agreed Capital Programme and the terms of this report and approve that associated Capital Strategy and Treasury documents are amended to reflect the capital acquisition as detailed in the report.
- D** Delegated authority be given to the Leader of the Council and Assistant Director of Finance (s151 officer) to finalise any required capital financing for the acquisition of as detailed in the report.
- E** Delegated authority be given to the Leader of the Council, Assistant Director of Finance (s151 Officer) and Assistant Director of Regeneration & Commercial Development to negotiate and complete the acquisition as detailed in the report.
- F** Delegated authority be given to the Leader of the Council and Assistant Director of Regeneration and Commercial Development to enable the occupation of the building as detailed in the report subject to public procurement rules and Council Contract Standing Orders.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL