

MINUTES OF THE CABINET HELD ON

19 March 2025

7.00 - 10.25 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 Michael Hardware, Portfolio Holder for Economic Development

Councillor Alastair Gunn, Portfolio Holder for Garden Town and Planning

Councillor James Leppard, Portfolio Holder for Finance

Councillor Nicky Purse, Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability

Other Councillors

Councillor Tony Durcan

Councillor Tony Edwards

Councillor Michael Garnett

Councillor James Griggs

Councillor Mark Ingall

Councillor Kay Morrison

Councillor Stacy Seales

Councillor Lanie Shears

Councillor Jake Shepherd

Councillor Nancy Watson

Officers

Niel Churchill, Communications Manager

Rebecca Farrant, Assistant Director - Corporate Services and Improvement

James Gardner, Managing Director

Amanda Lucas, Graphic Designer

Jacqui Van Mellaerts, Assistant Director - Finance

Tanusha Waters, Assistant Director - Planning and Garden Town

Lisa Whiting, Housing Options and Advice Manager

Alan Townshend, Executive Director

Daniel Dickinson, Assistant Director - Legal and Democratic Services (Interim)

Hannah Marriott, Senior Executive Officer

126. 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.

127. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

128. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

129. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 February 2025 are agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

130. **MATTERS ARISING**

None.

131. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

None.

132. **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

None.

133. **COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader advised that Neil Robinson of Renesas (now based at Harlow Innovation Park) would be retiring after 25 years. The Leader wished him all the best in his retirement.

The Leader also noted that the budget for 2025/26 was agreed at Full Council on 27 February 2025 and that it was National Apprentice Week this week. Finally, the Leader confirmed that the new African enclosure was open at Pets Corner.

134. **PETITIONS**

None.

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

RESOLVED that the following decisions be noted.

- a) Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing - 10 February 2025
- b) Portfolio Holder for Garden Town and Planning - 20 February 2025

136. **PERFORMANCE, FINANCE AND RISK - JANUARY**

Cabinet received a report on performance, finance and risk for January.

Proposed by Councillor Hannah Ellis (seconded by Councillor James Leppard) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Noted the performance of key performance indicators for January which demonstrate strong performance on all indicators.
- B** Noted the financial performance and position as of January (period 10) of 2024/25 financial year which demonstrate strong financial performance across the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programmes.
- C** Approved the Period 10 reprofiling into 2025/26 within the Housing and Non-Housing Capital Programmes included within Appendices D and E to the report.
- D** Noted the current strategic risks for the council's operations in Appendix F to the report.

137. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION – UPDATE**

Cabinet received an update report on local government reorganisation and devolution.

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Noted the update on Local Government Reorganisation for Greater Essex and the formal invitation, as set out in Appendix A to the report.
- B** Endorsed the Essex-wide submission and contents of the Interim Plan, as set out in Appendix B to the report.
- C** Delegated authority to the Leader of the Council to approve any minor amendments to the Interim Plan, as agreed by all signatories, prior to its final submission.

138. **CIVIL PENALTIES POLICY**

Cabinet received a report to approve the Civil Penalties Policy.

Proposed by Councillor Joel Charles (seconded by Councillor Nicky Purse) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Approved the separate Civil Penalties Policy under the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and the Electrical Safety Standards in The Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020 as set out in Appendix A to the report.
- B** Approved the amendment to the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy 2023 (attached as Appendix B to the report) to remove Appendix A (the current Civil Penalties Policy) and any references to the Electrical Safety Standards in the Private Rented Sector (England) Regulations 2020.
- C** Adopted and implemented the Civil Penalties Policy.

139. **CONTRACT AWARD FOR ADVICE SERVICES**

Cabinet received a report to award a contract for advice services.

Proposed by Councillor Danielle Brown (seconded Councillor James Leppard) it was:

RESOLVED that:

- A** Delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director - Corporate Services and Improvement, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing, to award an in-budget contract following the completion of a lawful procurement process to avoid any such delay in the provision of service.
- B** Delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director Corporate Services and Improvement, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Wellbeing, to extend the contract beyond the initial period, in line with contract provision for an extension of up to one year.

140. **UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUNDING 2025/26**

Cabinet received a report to approve UK Shared Prosperity Funding programme.

Proposed by Councillor Michael Hardware (seconded by Councillor James Leppard) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet approved the year 4 UKSPF programme as set out in the report.

141. **ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN**

It was noted that the Annual Delivery Plan would go to Cabinet in April 2025.

142. **DfT E-SCOOTER HIRE TRIAL IN HARLOW**

Cabinet received a report to approve an in-principle DfT e-scooter trial in Harlow.

Proposed by Councillor Alastair Gunn (seconded by Councillor Nicky Purse) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Permitted an in-principle approval to the implementation of a DfT e-scooter trial in Harlow in line with the safety mitigations as set out within the report.
- B** Delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder for Garden Town and Planning, in conjunction with the Assistant Director for Planning and Garden Town, through a formal Portfolio Holder decision to agree satisfactory implementation and operational details of the e-scooter trial in Harlow with Essex County Council as the Local Highway Authority and their appointed e-scooter operator.

143. **DEBT WRITE OFFS**

Cabinet received a report to approve non-domestic rates write offs.

Proposed by Councillor James Leppard (seconded by Councillor Hannah Ellis) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Approved the irrecoverable Non-Domestic Rates write offs as set out within the report.
- B** Noted the intention to revise the debt write off process as part of the work to update the council's constitution as set out within the report.

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

- a) Referral from Scrutiny Committee - Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Cabinet received a referral from the Scrutiny Committee to approve the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

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

RESOLVED that:

- A** Cabinet approved the final version of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy as shown in Appendix A, to take effect from the 1 April 2025, along with the Tenancy Strategy and note the summary of the completed public consultation.
- B** Delegated authority be given to the Assistant Director – Housing Operations (People), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to make minor amendments to the strategy as required.

b) Referral from Scrutiny Committee - Climate Change Strategy

Cabinet received a referral from the Scrutiny Committee to approve the Climate Change Strategy.

Proposed by Councillor Nicky Purse (seconded by Councillor Alastair Gunn) it was:

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- A** Noted the responses received to the consultation (as set out in Appendix B to the original report) and agrees the consequential amendments made to the Climate Change Strategy.
- B** Adopted the Climate Change Strategy (as set out in Appendix A to the original report) and delegates authority to the Assistant Director – Planning and Garden Town in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sustainability to make and agree any minor or inconsequential amendments to the Strategy arising from any matters discussed and agreed at Cabinet.

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

None.

146. **MATTERS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

147. **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).

148. **DISPOSAL OF PURFORD GREEN GARAGES**

Cabinet received a report to approve the disposal of Purford Green Garages.

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

RESOLVED that delegation authority be given to the Assistant Director – Housing Operations (People), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to dispose of garage Nos. 1 to 15 and Nos. 30 to 46 Purford Green to a private management company who own and operate other garage sites across the town in order for improvements to be undertaken at no cost to the council and for the capital receipt set out in paragraph 6 of the report, (excluding fees and associated conveyancing costs) to be received in order to fund other housing priorities.

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL