

MINUTES OF CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET

on 5 March 2019 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor R T Whitehead, Leader of the Council (Chairman)
Councillor N Gulliver, Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development
Councillor P J L Hutchinson, Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing
Councillor J Jeapes, Cabinet Member for Leisure
Councillor A J McQuiggan, Cabinet Member for Information Technology & Corporate Services
Councillor M Sismey, Cabinet Member for Waste Management, Recycling & Parking Services
Councillor S R Sullivan, Cabinet Member for Safer Communities & Cultural Strategy

Also present:

Councillors
L Ashley, J A Deakin, F B Mountain,
S J Robinson and M Springett

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Galley, Cabinet Member for Finance and Councillor R Massey, Cabinet Member for Parks.

2. **Declarations of Interests**

Members of the Cabinet were reminded to declare at the appropriate time any personal and prejudicial interests in any of the items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were declared.

3. **Minutes and Decisions Called-in**

The minutes of the meeting on 29 January 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. No decisions at that meeting had been called in.

4. **Public Questions**

Further to questions asked by the public at the Council meeting on 27 February 2019, a member of the public asked whether the Cabinet would make a commitment to discuss the declaration of a climate emergency before the local elections on 2 May 2019.

The Leader of the Council said that he was unable to give such a commitment. The Council required time to research the implications of and consult the public on declaring a climate emergency and he could not say at this stage how long that would take. He confirmed, however, that the Council was working on the matter and, as evidenced by the new Corporate Plan being discussed at this meeting, was committed to ensuring that the Council played its part in tackling climate change.

5. **Members' Questions**

Councillors who were not members of the Cabinet asked questions or made statements on the following matters:

Councillor L Ashley on whether the stallholders at Chelmsford Market were satisfied with its revised layout and design.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Management, Recycling and Parking Services replied that, based on the latest information he had, a few stallholders had been unhappy about the timing of the refurbishment but he was not aware of significant numbers objecting to the layout. However, he would confirm whether that was the case and let Councillor Ashley know.

Councillor S J Robinson on:

- (a) whether, in the light of the response to the earlier question from a member of the public, the Cabinet regarded climate change as a problem that needed to be urgently addressed.

Cabinet members replied that whilst the Council was only one of many players involved in tackling climate change, it was committed to playing its part and doing what it could to protect the environment. The United Kingdom as a whole had reduced its carbon emissions in recent years and the Council was looking at how it could most effectively continue to contribute to the national efforts to address climate change.

- (b) whether the City Council would allow its car park in Firs Drive to be used for the parking of school buses when they were no longer able to park outside the grammar schools in Broomfield Road as a result of the introduction of a cycle highway in that road as part of the Chelmsford Growth Package. Councillor Robinson added that he had been told by the County Council that the City Council had declined to agree to that suggestion.

The Leader of the Council said that no request had been made to him to consider that arrangement, but the idea could be discussed with the County Council as part of continuing talks about the Growth Package.

- (c) when the modular homes in Fox Crescent would be occupied.

The Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing said that information related to the confidential contractual arrangements for this project had recently been given to members of Councillor Robinson's group and he was unable to expand on those details in open session. The Council had now taken over the final part of the project, which he was keen should be completed as soon as possible.

6.1 **Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) (Planning and Economic Development)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The Development Policy Committee on 28 February 2019 had recommended that the Cabinet adopt the proposed Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy and a Supplementary Planning Document that supported that Strategy. The Strategy was intended to avoid and mitigate disturbance to wildlife habitats from increased recreational visits to the Essex coast resulting from new housing development.

Options: Approve the proposed Strategy and associated documents with or without amendments.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The recommended Strategy would help deliver the new Local Plan and protect the Essex coastal environment.

RESOLVED that:

1. the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (Essex RAMS) Document (Technical Report and Mitigation Report) attached at [Appendix 1](#) of the report to the meeting be adopted;
2. the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) draft Supplementary Planning Document attached at [Appendix 2](#) of the report be approved for consultation; and
3. the Director of Sustainable Communities or the Planning and Strategic Housing Policy Manager be authorised to make minor changes to the draft Supplementary Planning Document should it be necessary prior to the consultation commencing, and to prepare and approve the necessary consultation documentation.

7.16 to 7.19pm

6.2 **Essex County Council Chelmsford Park and Ride Consultation (Planning and Economic Development)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The Director of Sustainable Communities had prepared for the Cabinet's consideration a suggested response to Essex County Council's consultation on proposed changes to the Chelmsford Park and Ride service. The main changes related to ticket options, fares and the opening days of the Chelmer Valley Park and Ride service. A Green Sheet was distributed at the meeting that set out in stronger terms the Council's opposition to the proposed closure of the service on Saturdays. The suggested response, as amended by the Green Sheet, had been supported by the Development Policy Committee on 28 February 2019.

Options: Approve or not suggested response.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The proposed response, as amended by the Green Sheet, best reflected the Council's views on the future successful operation of the Chelmsford Park and Ride service.

Discussion: It had been suggested at the Development Policy Committee that the Council should also object to the planned increase in charges for the Park and Ride service. The Leader of the Council said that whilst he recognised the arguments in favour of retaining the existing charges, he appreciated that the County Council was facing financial challenges; nonetheless, he believed that a wider discussion was needed about the pricing strategy for the service.

RESOLVED that the proposed response to Essex County Council's Chelmsford Park and Ride Consultation set out in [Appendix A](#) to the report to the meeting, as amended by the [Green Sheet](#) distributed at the meeting, be approved.

7.19 to 7.23pm

6.3 **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Neighbourhood Allocation (Planning and Economic Development)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the CIL Spending Panel on the applications for projects to be funded by the neighbourhood allocation element of CIL.

Options: Approve or not the Spending Panel's recommendations or approve them with amendments.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The projects recommended for approval met the criteria for CIL funding and would benefit the communities in which they were planned.

Discussion: One of those present at the meeting expressed disappointment that a number of what were considered to be worthy and essential projects by the local communities concerned had not been recommended for approval. The Leader stated that many of those projects had not been rejected completely and could be considered further by the Spending Panel if additional information was forthcoming. It was possible that the information requested may be received by the time the report was considered by the Council in July.

The Leader acknowledged concerns that the application system was complicated for those groups that did not have the expertise or resources to navigate the bids process and relied on assistance from, for example, local councillors. However, the Council was continually seeking to improve the application process and wanted to approve as many projects as possible that met the criteria. It was also pointed out that compared to other Essex districts Chelmsford had had considerable success in attracting CIL contributions from developers.

RESOLVED that:

1. the recommendations of by the CIL Spending Panel on the projects set out in the [report to the meeting](#) be approved and the Council on 17 July 2019 be requested to authorise the expenditure;
2. where the CIL funding is agreed and the grant or cost of works is to be met in full by the CIL funding, the budgets sums shown in [Appendix 1](#) of the report to the meeting be approved and included as either Revenue expenditure or added to the Capital Programme; and
3. the appropriate Director be authorised to spend the approved budget after consultation with the relevant Cabinet member, ensuring any conditions of the CIL funding are met.

7.23 to 7.50pm

7.1 Business Continuity Planning for an EU Exit (Leader)

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The report to the meeting set out an assessment of the main challenges presented to the Council by the UK's departure from the European Union and the measures being taken to mitigate them.

Options: The report was for information and the consideration of options therefore not applicable.

RESOLVED that the [report](#) be noted.

7.50pm to 7.53pm

7.2 Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (Leader)

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The Cabinet was asked to approve for publication the Council's annual Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking required under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

Options: Approve or amend the proposed Statement.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The proposed Statement met the statutory requirement to publish such a document annually and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to the principles and objectives contained in it.

RESOLVED that the Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking 2019 contained in the [Appendix](#) to the report be approved and published.

7.53pm to 7.54pm

7.3 **Corporate Plan (Leader)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The Cabinet considered the Council's latest Corporate Plan.

Options: Approve or amend the proposed Plan.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The proposed Plan established the Council's priorities, would guide its future work and set out its ambitions for Chelmsford

Discussion: During discussion of the report it was pointed out that the Plan made only passing reference to the City's canals and rivers; that "community" was mentioned in only a few places in the document; and that the Plan lacked contact details for those who wished to make comments on or find out more about it. The Leader of the Council said that officers would consider those points before the Plan was published.

RESOLVED that the latest [Corporate Plan](#) of the Council be approved and published.

7.54pm to 8.01pm

8. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

9. **Reports to Council**

RESOLVED that the report on CIL Neighbourhood Allocations (minute number 6.3) be the subject of report to the Council.

The meeting closed at 8.02pm

Chairman