

**MINUTES OF
CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET**

on 20 November 2018 at 7.00pm

Present:

Councillor R T Whitehead, Leader of the Council (Chairman)
Councillor J Galley, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
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 R Massey, Cabinet Member for Parks
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, Museums & Cultural Strategy

Also present:

Councillors

P J Cousins, J A Deakin, F B Mountain, J A Potter, S J Robinson, G C Seeley and M Springett

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

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 16 October 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. No decisions at that meeting had been called in.

4. **Public Questions**

No questions were asked or statements made by members of the public.

5. **Members' Questions**

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

Councillor F B Mountain on when the barrier to the Civic Centre car park would be repaired.

The meeting was informed that delivery was awaited of the necessary parts and enquiries would be made about when the repair would be carried out.

Councillor S J Robinson on whether bins of the design used in the High Street which could accept recyclable and non-recyclable waste could be installed in other parts of Chelmsford.

The Cabinet Member for Waste Management, Recycling and Parking Services said that he would look into the possibility of doing that.

Councillor J A Deakin on whether other members would support a suggestion that councillors attending the Christmas meal after the next Council meeting bring along items to donate to the local food bank.

The Leader of the Council said that he would consider that suggestion.

7.00pm to 7.04pm

6.1 **Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2018/19 (Finance)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The Treasury Management Sub-Committee had recommended that the Cabinet and Council approve the [report](#) on the review of the Council's treasury management strategy for 2018/19.

Options: Approve the strategy or recommend changes to the management of the Council's investments.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The existing investment strategy was proving to be sound and productive and required no changes at present.

Discussion: Asked whether there were risks associated with the investment of funds with local authorities responsible for social services functions, the Cabinet Member for Finance said that the Council's treasury advisors had not flagged such investments as having undue risks. Whilst the rates associated with investing with other local authorities were generally consistent with those of other types of investment, the Council had invested a greater portion of its cash in other funds where, at the time, the rates had been more favourable.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that:

1. it notes that Treasury Management operations have complied with the prescribed strategy;
2. it notes that it may be necessary to borrow for short term liquidity needs towards the end of the financial year in line with the Authorised Borrowing Limit set out in the report; and

3. it recognises that the investment strategy does result in some risk to capital invested but that this is at an appropriate level.

7.04pm to 7.08pm

6.2 **Mid-Year Review of the 2018/19 Budget (Finance)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The Cabinet considered a [report](#) which examined the Council's original budget for 2018/19 against the financial activity to date and provided an update on the level of projected reserves.

Options: Accept the mid-year budget or make amendments to the agreed budget.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The mid-year budget reflected reasonable variations to the original budget and the projected reserves were satisfactory.

Discussion: With regard to the reduction in income from the summer music festival in Hylands Park, the Cabinet Member for Parks said that discussions were being held with the organiser about future events and how best the Council could achieve the most favourable income stream. The discussions had been satisfactory but, as they concerned sensitive commercial matters, details could not be provided at this meeting.

In response to a question as to when changes were expected to the system of business rates, the Cabinet Member for Finance said that the government would be making an announcement on 6 December 2018. One of the main areas of interest for local authorities would be the effect on them of the reorganisation of business rates and what it would mean in terms of their income.

It was pointed out that the introduction of Universal Credit in other parts of the country had reportedly led to an increase in personal debt and homelessness among recipients. Asked whether this was likely to happen in Chelmsford, the Cabinet Member for Strategic Housing pointed to the experience with the introduction of the Homelessness Prevention Act. It had led to an increase in the number of homeless people elsewhere in the country but in Chelmsford, through the work and diligence of the Council's Housing Services staff and the restructuring of the Service to focus on homelessness prevention, the numbers going into temporary accommodation had fallen. The Cabinet Member believed that the effects of Universal Credit on homelessness could similarly be managed by the Housing Service and that the number presenting as homeless in Chelmsford would continue to decrease. The Cabinet Member added that the Service had also been successful in improving the collection rates for rents and arrears of rent in recent months.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that it approve the proposed changes to the 2018/19 budget and Reserves as set out in the report to the meeting and Appendices 1 and 2.

7.08pm to 7.18pm

7.1 **Review of the Constitution (Information Technology and Corporate Services)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The Cabinet's views were requested on three changes to the Council's Constitution relating to the means by which the Independent Remuneration Panel was convened, the process for approving members' extended absences, and the confirmation of Article 4 Directions.

Options: Support or not the proposed amendments to the Constitution.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The proposed changes would improve the efficiency of decision-making.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that the three changes to the Constitution detailed in the [report to the meeting](#) be endorsed.

7.18pm to 7.20pm

7.2 **Police, Fire and Crime Panel (Information Technology and Corporate Services)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The County Council had invited this Council's comments on proposed changes to the Constitution of the Police, Fire and Crime Panel, which oversaw the work of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex.

Options: Approve or not the proposed changes to the Panel's Constitution.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The revised Constitution updated and reflected changes to the operation of the Panel since its establishment.

RESOLVED that the revised Constitution documents for the Police, Fire and Crime Panel submitted as appendices to the [report to the meeting](#) be approved.

7.20pm to 7.22pm

8.1 **Chelmsford City Council Authority Monitoring Report (Planning and Economic Development)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: The Cabinet received the latest [Authority Monitoring Report](#) (AMR) for Chelmsford prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The AMR, the publication of which had been supported by the Development Policy Committee on 8 November 2018, was used to monitor the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies in the Local Plan were being achieved.

Options: Approve or amend the AMR before its publication.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The AMR was factual and met the requirements of the 2012 Regulations.

Discussion: During discussion on this item, it was pointed out that, in a number of years, the targets in the current Local Plan for the provision of new dwellings and affordable housing had not been met. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development was asked whether he would do everything in his power to ensure that those targets in next Local Plan were achieved. The Cabinet Member gave that assurance, although he added that this would be dependent on sites coming forward and the developments gaining planning approval. The meeting was also informed that where, in the past, the Council had been unable to secure the target proportion of affordable housing, it had sought additional contributions from the developer towards infrastructure and other community benefits.

RESOLVED that the Director of Sustainable Communities be authorised to publish the Authority Monitoring Report for April 2017 to March 2018.

7.22pm to 7.26pm

8.2 **Interim Policy for Mitigating the Impact of New Dwellings on European Designated Sites (Planning and Economic Development)**

Declarations of Interest: None

Summary: In advance of the adoption of the Essex RAMS, Natural England had advised that all Essex local authorities put in place an interim policy to ensure that any residential planning applications which had the potential to affect coastal European designated sites were compliant with the Habitat Regulations.

Options: Approve or amend the proposed interim policy set out in the [report](#) to the meeting.

Chosen Option and Reasons: The proposed policy met the requirements of Natural England and the Habitat Regulations.

RESOLVED that an interim policy be approved that requires all new residential development in Chelmsford to contribute £100 per dwelling unit to fund mitigation means required under the Habitat Regulations.

7.26pm to 7.28pm

9. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

10. **Reports to Council**

RESOLVED that the following items be the subject of report to the Council:

- Treasury Management Mid-Year Review (minute number 6.1)
- Budget Mid-Year Review (minute number 6.2)
- Review of the Constitution (minute number 7.1)

The meeting closed at 7.28pm

Chairman