

**MINUTES OF**  
**CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET**

on 11 March 2025 at 7pm

Present:

**Cabinet Members**

Councillor S Robinson, Leader of the Council (Chair)  
Councillor C Davidson, Cabinet Member for Finance  
Councillor N Dudley, Cabinet Member for an Active Chelmsford  
Councillor D Eley, Cabinet Member for a Safer Chelmsford  
Councillor L Foster, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for a Fairer Chelmsford  
Councillor R Moore, Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford

**Cabinet Deputies**

Councillor S Goldman, Cabinet Deputy for Economy and Strategic Projects  
Councillor J Lardge, Cabinet Deputy for Cultural Services  
Councillor T Sherlock, Cabinet Deputy for Sustainable Transport

**Opposition Spokespersons**

Councillors, J. Armstrong, J Jeapes, M Steel, R. Whitehead and P. Wilson

Also present: Councillors Bonnett, H Clark, Hyland, Massey and A. Sosin

## 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Dobson and Raven.

## 2. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Cabinet were reminded to declare at the appropriate time any interests in any of the items of business on the meeting's agenda.

Cllrs Massey, Robinson and Steel declared other registerable interests for Item 6.2, due to also being Councillors at Essex County Council. Cllrs Eley and Sherlock declared other registerable interests for Item 10.1, due to being Councillors at South Woodham Ferrers Town Council.

### 3. Minutes and Decisions Called-in

The minutes of the meeting on 28 January 2025 were confirmed as a correct record. No decisions had been called in.

### 4. Public Questions

No public questions had been submitted for the meeting.

### 5. Members' Questions

No questions were asked at this part of the meeting.

### 6.1 UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) – 2025/26 Delivery Plan (Leader)

#### Declarations of interest:

None.

#### Summary:

The report to the meeting provided an update on the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) and sought approval of the UKSPF 2025/26 delivery plan. [The Cabinet also noted a green sheet of amendments, which can be viewed here, detailing some minor corrections to figures.](#)

#### Options:

1. To accept the recommendations as set out within the report
2. To make amendments to the recommendations set out within the report
3. To not accept the recommendations within the report

#### Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 was the preferred option, to ensure that the Council maximised the impact of its UKSPF allocation for 2025/26.

#### Discussion:

In response to questions, it was noted that funding had not been placed specifically under the skills sub theme, as it was captured within other initiatives instead and that business support covered the upskilling of employees. It was also noted that Essex County Council covered some of the other areas and that there was a separate grant for rural funding.

#### RESOLVED that;

- i. The contents of the report be noted.
- ii. The proposed delivery plan for the Council's UKSPF 2025/26 allocation be approved.
- iii. Authority be delegated to the Director of Sustainable Communities, to take any necessary actions and decisions required to finalise Chelmsford's Delivery Plan and its effective implementation.

(7.03pm to 7.06pm)

## 6.2 Local Government Reorganisation – governance arrangements for response to MHCLG invitation (Leader)

### Declarations of interest:

Cllrs Massey, Robinson and Steel declared other registerable interests, due to also being Councillors at Essex County Council.

### Summary:

The Cabinet were asked to put in place the governance arrangements for the Council's response to the invitation from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) in relation to local government reorganisation (LGR) within Essex and to note the current position concerning Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation within Essex. The Cabinet were also provided with an overview of the contents of the joint initial response from Essex Leaders.

### Options:

1. To accept the recommendations as set out within the report
2. To not accept the recommendations within the report

### Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 was the preferred option, to ensure the necessary governance arrangements were in place for the Council's response to the invitation from MHCLG in relation to LGR within Essex.

### Discussion:

It was noted that authorities needed to be clear when responding to the Government, about the significant financial costs of LGR and that the evidence of savings was limited. It was also noted 10 of the 15 leaders had agreed to support the five unitary model and five were still to give their opinion. Members also discussed issues around the debt of other authorities within Essex and it was noted that the Essex Leaders and Chief Executive's group had set up working groups to look at different aspects of the later proposal which would need to be submitted, including one on Finance. Members also confirmed that the Connectivity and Local Democracy Working Group would be reconvened soon, on a cross party basis. Members also discussed the size of the new authorities, in terms of members and how the wards would be divided. It was also noted that discussions were already underway with neighbouring authorities and that these would increase once it was clearer, which neighbouring authorities the Council would be merging with. The Cabinet also noted that it was key to reduce any uncertainty for staff and the public where possible, throughout the process.

### RESOLVED that;

- i. The Leader of the Council should respond to the invitation from MHCLG on behalf of the Council, taking into account any representations from others, in doing so.
- ii. The Leader of the Council should take any appropriate executive actions that arise from local government reorganisation.
- iii. The Leader of the Council will convene cross-party meetings as appropriate, to seek views from across the Council, as the LGR process proceeds.
- iv. The update in relation to Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation be noted, including the proposal for a joint initial response to local government

Reorganisation from all Essex Leaders by the 21<sup>st</sup> March deadline, a copy of the response to be published once available.

(7.07pm to 7.30pm)

## 7. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

## 8. Reports to Council

None of the items were subject of a recommendation to Council.

### Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for items 9.1 and 10.1 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A to the Act (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the authority holding that information).

### 9.1 Waterhouse Lane Car Park (Deputy Leader)

*Public interest statement: It is not in the public interest to release details of this report at present, on the grounds that the report contains information that is commercially sensitive and to place the information in the public realm will be detrimental to the negotiations to be undertaken by the Council.*

#### Declarations of interest:

None.

#### Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which sought their approval, for the installation of 22 modular housing units on Waterhouse Lane Car Park.

#### Options:

1. To approve the installation of modular housing units on Waterhouse Lane Car Park.
2. To not approve the installation of modular housing units on Waterhouse Lane Car Park.

#### Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 was the preferred option as it would deliver high quality much needed accommodation units for homeless households and therefore assist with controlling the cost of temporary accommodation.

#### Discussion:

The Cabinet noted that the scheme would utilise funding from the brownfield release fund and result in annual savings for the council, alongside families being able to stay in Chelmsford in a high standard of new accommodation. In response to questions, it was confirmed that the car park was significantly under occupied at the moment and the nearby Coval Lane car park would be able to take on those using the Waterhouse Lane Car Park as it was also not at full occupancy. It was also noted that the Cabinet Deputy for Sustainable Transport could be contacted for more specific information on car parks and that as the scheme was only indicative at this stage, the use of parking spaces for vans within the scheme could be explored.

RESOLVED that;

- i. The installation of modular housing units for use as temporary accommodation on Waterhouse Lane Car Park be approved.
- ii. The Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Fairer Chelmsford be given delegated authority to enter into contract with MMC Construction to lease the Land known as Waterhouse Lane Car Park and provide 22 modular housing units.

(7.31pm to 7.37pm)

## 10.1 South Woodham Ferrers Strategic Growth Site (Greener)

*Public interest statement: It is not in the public interest to release details of this report at present, on the grounds that the report contains information that is commercially sensitive and to place the information in the public realm will be detrimental to the negotiations to be undertaken by the Council.*

### Declarations of interest:

Cllrs Eley and Sherlock declared other registerable interests, due to also being Councillors at South Woodham Ferrers Town Council.

### Summary:

The Cabinet were asked to consider a proposal to use Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to underwrite some S106 requirements of the strategic growth site at South Woodham Ferrers proposed by the developer Vistry, thereby, addressing financial viability with the site and ensuring a policy compliant development including 35% affordable housing.

### Options:

1. Cabinet approves the use of £9m of CIL, or 75% of Vistry's CIL contribution, whichever is the lower, to fund some elements of the draft S106 requirements of the strategic growth site at South Woodham Ferrers.
2. Cabinet approves an amount up to £9m of CIL to fund some elements of the draft S106 requirements of the strategic growth site at South Woodham Ferrers.
3. Cabinet does not approve the use of CIL to fund some elements of the requirements of the strategic growth site at South Woodham Ferrers.

### Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 was the preferred option as the use of CIL would address financial viability for the site and ensure a policy compliant development including 35% affordable housing.

### Discussion:

The Cabinet were informed that the suggested proposal would ensure affordable housing requirements were still met on the site as it would address the financial viability gap with the site. It was noted that it was key for the Council, for the site to still meet the 35% affordable housing target and therefore the use of CIL to fund some of the S106 requirements had been explored. It was noted that if agreed, a revised S106 agreement would need to be considered by the Planning Committee. The Cabinet also heard that it was important specifically for South Woodham Ferrers, for the development to provide the much needed affordable housing, that was of short supply in SWF and that the expected provision of affordable homes, would allow younger residents to afford properties within the town. The Cabinet also heard the requirement to consider the subsidy principles and how the subsidy in this case was consistent with those principles.

In response to questions, it was noted that the CIL policy would need amending as the decision was an executive matter and so it was correct, for it to be considered by Cabinet. It was also noted that, the proposal was the best compromise and officers had worked hard to ensure the provision of affordable housing would not be reduced. It was also noted that the housing was needed as soon as possible and that the proposal had been the best way of ensuring the homes would be delivered on site quickly. The Cabinet also heard that there were specific circumstances with the site that had led to the viability issues and that through officer's work with independent consultants, this was the best solution going forward for the Council.

It was also noted that the decision, would not set a precedent as it was due to unique circumstances and that other strategic sites had recently been approved by the Planning Committee, at the expected 35% affordable housing provision. Members were also reminded of the importance of assessing and comparing the figures within the right context and that land values changed significantly between agricultural and housing use to incentivise landowners to release land for housing. Officers also stated that any discussions on the management of open space at the site, were for a future decision rather than at this stage.

RESOLVED that;

- i. the proposed use of CIL to provide infrastructure at the site and enable the greater provision of affordable housing was consistent with subsidy principles.
- ii. The use of £9m of CIL, or 75% of Vistry's CIL contribution, whichever is the lower, to fund some elements of the draft S106 requirements of the strategic growth site at South Woodham Ferrers, thereby ensuring a policy compliant development be approved.
- iii. Authority be delegated to the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Greener Chelmsford, to prepare a CIL funding agreement between the City Council and the relevant provider of the infrastructure being delivered using the CIL funding.

(7.38pm to 8.05pm)

The meeting closed at 8.05pm

Chair