

CABINET held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 11 JANUARY 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor H Rolfe (Chairman)
Councillors S Barker, S Howell, V Ranger, J Redfern and H Ryles

Also present: Councillor A Dean (Liberal Democrats Group Leader and Chairman of Scrutiny Committee), Councillor J Lodge (Residents for Uttlesford Group Leader).

Officers in attendance: D French (Chief Executive), R Harborough (Director - Public Services), A Hart (Conservation Officer), S Pugh (Interim Head of Legal Services and Interim Monitoring Officer) and A Webb (Director - Corporate and Financial Services)

CA75 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2017 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to the following amendments.

Substitute the following words at CA60 as a correction to Minute CA49:

“That Scrutiny Committee had endorsed the Cabinet’s decision but wished the Cabinet to take into account the need to achieve infrastructure enhancements for the benefit of the community by investing some of the capital receipts from the land sale.”

In the resolution to Minute CA63, the following amendments:

- Rickling Primary School
- Rickling Green Recreation Association, Rickling
- All Saints Church, Rickling

CA76 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Dean as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee reported on arrangements for the provision of training for Scrutiny members as part of a drive to improve the way scrutiny operated. Sufficient funding had been secured for this initiative from the LGA to allow for three days of external support. This would involve personal interviews with committee and other members as well as officers.

CA77 REFUGEE WORKING GROUP (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Redfern reported briefly on the successful arrival and housing of a Syrian refugee family in December. The family was receiving regular visits from a support worker.

CA78 **BUSINESS RATES - REVALUATION RELIEF**

Councillor Howell presented a proposal to amend the criteria for the Business Rates Relief Scheme so that it would be awarded automatically to qualifying businesses without the need for an application process.

The change had been proposed by the Government to counter the low take up rate for the relief scheme from eligible businesses at a much lower than expected rate of only 30%.

He further proposed awarding the Pub Relief after the application of all other reliefs. The effect of the current policy requiring pub relief to be awarded before other reliefs were applied was having a detrimental effect on many pubs in small village communities.

The revaluation of business rates had taken around 50% of businesses out of business rates entirely. The transitional scheme funded by Government allowed for relief for companies with a rateable value of less than £200k suffering an increase of 12.5% or more.

Councillor Ryles added his support for these proposals.

RESOLVED to recommend to Full Council the following amendments to the criteria of the Business Rates Relief Schemes:

- a) That the revaluation relief scheme is awarded automatically to qualifying businesses, by withdrawing the application process.
- b) That the Pub Relief is awarded after all other reliefs have been applied.
- c) To notify all qualifying businesses that the relief will be awarded automatically.

CA79 **THE MOORS, LITTLE DUNMOW - REDEVELOPMENT**

Councillor Redfern introduced a report proposing the redevelopment of The Moors, Little Dunmow to replace 12 Council owned bungalows with a mix of 16 new dwellings, with associated gardens and a parking court area. The bungalows were all showing signs of worsening subsidence the remediation of which was not considered as financially viable.

Japanese knotweed was also confirmed as present on the site and would need specialist treatment to eradicate it.

Preliminary indications were that costs of the redevelopment would be in the region of £2,485,000. Provision for this work had been made in the Housing

Revenue Account. Redevelopment would allow the use of some Right to Buy capital receipts. In addition to the estimated cost, there was a £300,000 allowance for abnormal site issues including Air Source Heat Pumps, enhanced elevational treatment work and site demolition costs.

Councillor Barker congratulated the sensitivity shown in dealing with the residents of the existing bungalows, some of whom had been in occupation for a great many years.

Executive and other members asked a number of questions about the detail of the plans included in the report, including the application of garden village principles. In responding to these comments, Councillor Rolfe said that the key question revolved around the quality of design, with attention paid to issues of sustainability such as ease of access to public transport and energy efficiency.

The Director of Public Services noted that the availability of Right to Buy receipts was time limited and it was important to press ahead quickly.

The Cabinet endorsed the design proposals included in the report whilst noting these were subject to change. Councillor Redfern confirmed that the intention was to achieve the highest possible specification within the cost provision but some compromises might be unavoidable.

RESOLVED to approve the redevelopment of The Moors, Little Dunmow to replace 12 Council owned bungalows with a mix of 16 new dwellings, in line with the detail in the report.

CA80 **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Councillor Barker proposed the adoption of the amended Statement of Community Involvement following consideration by the Planning Policy Working Group on 14 December.

Following a question from Councillor Dean about a representation received from Dr Mott concerning the lack of neighbourhood planning in Elsenham, Cabinet members discussed the capacity of some villages to undertake neighbourhood plans. Councillor Barker commented that, while a number of neighbourhood plans were in progress, the process was more suited to larger settlements. She was willing to consider further discussing the options with parish councils. In some cases it might be beneficial for smaller parishes to consider co-operating with neighbouring villages.

The Cabinet supported the revised Statement of Community Involvement.

RESOLVED to adopt the amended Statement of Community Involvement.

CA81 **ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE NOMINATION FOR ANDREWSFIELD AIRFIELD**

Councillor Barker reported on the receipt by Braintree District Council of a nomination from Great Saling Parish Council to list Andrewsfield Airfield as an asset of community value. The land and building was partly within Uttlesford and there was a joint responsibility on both authorities to determine the application. This had to be done by 1 February 2018.

It had not proved possible to prepare a report in time for consideration at this meeting. She therefore proposed referring this matter for consideration by the Assets of Community Value Committee. As there were a number of other nominations potentially needing to be determined by the date of the next Cabinet meeting, she further proposed delegating the determination of those nominations to the Committee.

It was noted the Committee would meet in public to determine these applications and the decisions made were subject to the normal call in process.

RESOLVED to delegate the following items for determination to the Assets of Community Value Committee comprising the Leader, the Portfolio holder for Environmental Services, and the Portfolio holder for Communities and Partnerships:

- a) the decision on determination of a nomination to list Andrewsfield Airfield as an asset of community value; and
- b) the determination of all other assets of community value nominations that would otherwise have been referred to the Cabinet meeting on 15 February 2018

CA82 **SAFFRON WALDEN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL 2017-18**

Councillor Barker proposed approval of the revised Saffron Walden Conservation Area Appraisal document, including some changes to the area boundary as well as some management proposals. The boundary changes were to zones 4 and 5 as further detailed in the report. She said the appraisal was a living document and it was vital to keep it up to date.

Reference was made to a number of details within the report that would benefit from some clarification. Councillor Barker agreed to circulate revised wording where appropriate.

A short discussion took place on the poor standard of some shop signage in parts of Saffron Walden and members enquired whether it would be possible to impose stricter controls on the style and content of signage. Councillor Barker agreed to take this matter up with planning officers and would notify Councillor Redfern of the outcome.

RESOLVED to approve the revised Conservation Area Appraisal document, in conjunction with the proposed boundary changes.

ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION FOR LOCAL HERITAGE LIST

Councillor Barker presented a report proposing the adoption of the principle of issuing an Article 4 Direction supporting the Local Heritage List. She said the intention of this proposal was to create a heritage list of properties throughout Uttlesford, whether or not they were included within a conservation area, or were within a conservation area subject to an existing Article 4 Direction. The direction of travel was to be in a position to apply a blanket Article 4 Direction across the district to sweep up all of the heritage assets being identified that were considered worthy of protection but did not have listed status.

A number of questions had been raised about particular places within conservation areas. She said that buildings that were not considered worth listing as heritage assets were unlikely to be worthy of having an Article 4 Direction applied to them.

The purpose of issuing the Direction would be to remove specified permitted development rights from selected properties identified on the Local Heritage List. The additional controls over alterations and development would apply to all properties on the Local Heritage List within existing Conservation Areas, and outside them, where it was felt necessary to preserve the special character and appearance of the area. This would allow a more consistent approach to be applied to the management of alterations made to these buildings to help protect their historic, architectural and local importance.

Councillors Redfern, Rolfe, Dean and Lodge each declared a personal interest as occupiers of properties subject to an existing Article 4 Direction.

Councillors raised a number of concerns about the intention of the proposal and the potential for the character of existing conservation areas to be undermined because not all buildings within those areas were subject to strict planning controls. Councillor Dean thought this conflicted with a policy in the Draft Local Plan about the impact of development both inside and adjacent to conservation areas.

The Director of Public Services clarified that, where planning permission was required for development either within or adjacent to a conservation area, the adopted Local Plan had a policy in place designed to protect the special characteristics of the conservation area. The emerging Local Plan was looking at the impact of development adjoining a conservation area on the character of the conservation area.

However, some minor developments did not require a planning application to be submitted. The purpose of the proposed Article 4 Direction was to require planning applications for designated properties to allow the opportunity to consider whether the development protected the character of the conservation area.

In the existing conservation areas already subject to an Article 4 Direction, restrictions on permitted development rights were quite tightly defined and the

scope for development to adversely affect the character of the conservation area was limited. Other conservation areas were less tightly defined. It was therefore a question of balance as to whether the extra obligations placed on property owners by additional controls could be justified.

The Conservation Officer provided further commentary on the intention of the proposal to capture the majority of buildings already identified as being of special architectural significance both inside and outside conservation areas. This would provide wider protection than was presently available across all conservation areas in the district and did not preclude imposing blanket Article 4 protection in the future if additional planning controls were felt to be needed.

Cabinet and other members raised further questions and these were debated at length. Councillor Howell had seconded the proposal and commented that he was in favour of the broad principles contained in the report. He was proud of the Council's position of acting to preserve and protect the very many buildings of special architectural and historic merit in the district, including those outside conservation areas.

There was full support from Cabinet members for the proposal in the report. Once it had been prepared, the Article 4 Direction would be referred to the Cabinet for approval, following a period of public consultation.

RESOLVED to support the principle of issuing an Article 4 Direction supporting the Local Heritage List.

CA84 **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN CONSULTATION**

Councillor Barker explained the process needed to respond to the consultation on Epping Forest District Council's Draft Local Plan. It was agreed that the Council's response should be delegated for submission by the stated deadline for representations of 29 January 2018.

RESOLVED to delegate authority to the Director of public Services, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to respond formally to Epping Forest District Council's "Regulation 19" consultation on its Draft Local Plan.

The meeting ended at 8.10pm.