

CABINET held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 12 JULY 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

Officers in attendance: B Ferguson (Democratic Services Officer), R Harborough (Director - Public Services), A Knight (Assistant Director - Resources) and S Pugh (Assistant Director - Governance and Legal)

Speakers: Councillors N Hargreaves and M Lemon; D Bardell and W Blostone.

CAB19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Barker declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme, as a member of Essex County Council for the Dunmow Division.

CAB20 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING(S)

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 May 2018 were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to Councillor Alan Dean being marked as present.

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June were received and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CAB21 NOMINATION OF THE BLACK HORSE INN, WHITE RODING AS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

The following people spoke on this item: Councillor M Lemon, D Bardell and W Blostone. Summaries of their statements are appended to these minutes.

The Chairman moved Item 16 forward in proceedings for the benefit of the public speakers.

Councillor Barker thanked the speakers for their comments and said she agreed with the findings in the report that the Inn was a valid nomination. She said there was a time in the recent past that the pub furthered the well-being and social

interests of the community, and it was realistic to think it would continue to do so in the future.

Members agreed the Black Horse Inn met the qualifying criteria to be listed an asset of community value.

RESOLVED to approve the nomination to list The Black Horse Inn, White Roding as an asset of community value.

CAB22 BUDGET FINAL OUTTURN - 2017/18

Councillor Howell presented a report recommending approval of the budget outturn position, as well as reserve transfers and balances, and capital programme slippage requests. He thanked the finance team for their hard work in publishing the accounts in good time for the third consecutive year. He said the reference to paragraph 22 in recommendation 'b' of the report should read paragraph 23.

In summarising the report, Councillor Howell highlighted the increased investment income from the loan to Aspire (CRP) Ltd, which was an important contribution to the Council's finances, as well as a key factor in the final underspend for 2017/18. He drew attention to the request that the underspend be allocated to the reserves to support the Local Plan submission process and the new Depot Site. He also noted the Capital Outturn for 2017/18 which showed the slippage for the year.

RESOLVED to:

- a. Approve the 2017/18 outturn position set out in the report.
- b. Approve the reserve transfers and reserve balances set out in the report.
- c. Approve the Capital Programme slippage requests as detailed in the report.

CAB23 TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN - 2017/18

Councillor Howell presented the annual statement of the key treasury management activity and outcomes. He highlighted the details of the loan to Aspire (CRP) Ltd to purchase the 50% share in Chesterford Research Park, including the terms of the loan and rate of interest, as well as the loan agreement the Council had entered in to with Phoenix Life Ltd. He said paragraph 19 should read as follows, 'The loan structure was the first **10** years at a **variable** rate and the further 25 years on **fixed** rates.'

RESOLVED to approve the 2017/18 Treasury Management Outturn and associated prudential indicators as set out in the appendices to the report.

CAB24 **LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - 2019/20**

Councillor Howell reported on the process for reviewing the Local Council Tax Support (LCTS) scheme and the requirement to consult on the proposed scheme before submitting it to Council for approval in December. He said the scheme was important as over 3,000 of the most vulnerable people in the district claimed local council tax support, although he highlighted the downward trend in claimants in the past five years, as demonstrated in table 9 of the report.

The 2019/20 scheme was proposed to be set on the same basis as 2018/19 but a significant change was proposed to the empty homes premium, with an increase from 50% to 100% after two years of non-occupancy. There were exceptions to the premium, such as owners living in Armed Forces or job related accommodation, or annexes to a main residence. It was stated that 70 properties in the district would attract that premium and a dedicated member of staff was working directly with the owners to bring those properties back into use.

With the consent of the Chairman, Councillor Hargreaves asked a question relating to a property in Newport, which had remained unoccupied for twenty years.

Councillor Redfern said she knew of the property as it had been investigated by the Council. The owner paid council tax, and had said it would be occupied in the future. She said it could be brought back to the Council's attention in six months' time if it remained unoccupied.

In response to a comment from Councillor Barker regarding empty homes, Councillor Redfern said empty homes needed to be reported. She asked Members to refer such cases to the Environmental Health team, who would bring these properties back into use.

In response to a Member question, the Assistant Director – Resources said the outcomes of the LCTS consultation would be circulated with the results of the wider budget consultation for 2019/20.

RESOLVED to agree the proposals for the 2019/20 LCTS scheme and consultation process as set out below:

- a. The 2019/20 LCTS scheme is set on the same basis as the 2018/19 scheme and therefore the contribution rate is frozen for the fifth consecutive year.
- b. The Council continues to protect Vulnerable and Disabled Residents and Carers on a low income.
- c. The empty homes premium is increased from 50% to 100% after 2 years of non-occupancy.

CAB25 CORPORATE PLAN DELIVERY PLAN 2018/19 QUARTER 1 PROGRESS UPDATE

The Chairman said good progress was being made on a number of Corporate Plan priorities. He drew attention to the programme to reduce social isolation in the district, and said the work with the Young Foundation was being followed up and a number of projects had been identified.

CAB26 MEMBERS NEW HOMES BONUS SCHEME 2017/18

Councillor Ranger presented the Members New Homes Bonus Scheme report, which proposed revised criteria for 2017/18. The purpose of the scheme was to allow Members to spend an allocated sum of money on local projects that would benefit the residents of their ward. He said representations had been received since the report had been published and he read out the revised recommended criteria.

In response to a Member question, Councillor Ranger said Members did not necessarily need to spend their allocated money in their ward, although they did need to spend it for the benefit of people living in their ward. In practical terms, this meant that a Member could spend their allocation in a neighbouring ward, on facilities or schemes that were used by their residents.

Councillor Redfern asked whether the Payments Made table (appendix B) could be amended in future, to show money spent per ward rather than per Member. She said she worked as a team with her fellow ward Member when allocating money, although her input had not been recorded. Members agreed with this request.

RESOLVED to adopt the revised criteria to the scheme as set out below:

- a. It has to be spent for the direct community benefit of the member's ward.
- b. Any unspent allocation can be carried forward to the following year, providing the amount is less than 50% of the allocation for that year. If it exceeds 50% of the in-year allocation only 50% shall be carried forward.
- c. It must not commit the Council to expenditure in future years.
- d. The member must not have a 'Disclosable Pecuniary Interest' or a 'Personal and Prejudicial Interest' in the award of the grant, and must declare any "Personal Interest" which is not prejudicial, all as defined in the Members' Code of Conduct. Possession of a personal interest which is not prejudicial will not bar a member from awarding a grant.

e. In election year the money only becomes available from 1 June (i.e. to the newly elected Member) and there will be no carry forward from the preceding year.

CAB27 PCSO MATCH FUNDING

Councillor Ranger presented the report that set out the proposal for the allocation of the Council PCSO match funding monies as agreed in the 2018/19 budget, which would increase the number of PCSOs employed in the district. In the autumn of 2017 the Council had approached Town and Parish Councils to establish the level of interest in joint funding PCSOs, and Saffron Walden Town Council and the parish cluster of Stansted, Henham and Elsenham had come forward with bids.

There was a consensus among Members that this was an excellent initiative.

RESOLVED to agree:

- a. That the Council enters into a two year PCSO joint funding agreement, commencing no earlier than 1 October 2018 with the Stansted, Henham and Elsenham Cluster.
- b. That the Council enters into a PCSO one year joint funding agreement, commencing no earlier than 1 October 2018 with Saffron Walden Town Council.
- c. That the draft 2019/20 budget is increased to cover the remaining six months funding for a second PCSO.

CAB28 NOMINATION OF THE CLUBHOUSE, MILLIBAR CAFE, ANCILLARY BUILDINGS AND CARPARK, ANDREWSFIELD AIRFIELD AS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

Councillor Barker presented the report on the nomination the Clubhouse, Millibar cafe, ancillary buildings and carpark, at Andrewsfield Airfield as an asset of community value. She said a nomination for the Airfield had previously been considered by the Asset of Community Value committee, but had been rejected on the basis that it incorporated all of the land on site. She said this application was appropriate as it nominated specific buildings and areas of the site which were physically used by the local community.

Members considered the application and there was agreement that it was a valid nomination, as it had been demonstrated that there was a time in the recent past when the clubhouse, café, ancillary buildings and car park furthered the interests of the community, and it was realistic to think that these buildings would further the interests of the community in the next five years.

RESOLVED to approve the nomination to list the Clubhouse, Millibar Cafe, ancillary buildings and carpark, at Andrewsfield Airfield, as an asset of community value.

CAB29 LOCAL ENERGY EAST STRATEGY

Councillor Barker presented the Local Energy East Strategy report. She said the ambitions and objectives of the strategy were aligned with principles of sustainable economic growth, and the ambitions mirrored the Council's own Climate Local Strategy. If endorsed, Members were informed that the Council could capitalise on local energy growth initiatives and utilise additional resources for the development of the proposed Garden Communities.

In response to a Member question, the Director – Public Services said these initiatives had been considered in the Local Plan, and energy efficiency was a key aspect of design.

RESOLVED to endorse the Local Energy East Strategy.

Public Speaking

Councillor Lemon spoke in support of listing the Black Horse Inn, White Roding as an Asset of Community Value. He said White Roding needed the Black Horse Inn to ensure the community remained sustainable, and to continue to grow in the future. The Inn was a social hub of the community and was used by various local groups; if the Inn was to disappear, there would be nowhere in the village for these groups to meet.

Councillor David Bardell spoke on behalf of White Roding Parish Council and in support of listing the Black Horse Inn as an Asset of Community Value. He said the Parish Council objected to the proposal to turn the Inn into a private dwelling as it was the last pub in the village. He said if the pub was run effectively it could thrive, create a focal point for the village and serve the needs of local residents. Local development was occurring and the pub presented the best chance for developing community cohesion.

Will Blostone spoke on behalf of the Save the Black Horse Inn group and in support of the listing. He said if the pub was not listed there was a good chance it would disappear forever, severely damaging community life in the village. The pub hosted local groups and clubs and furthered the social wellbeing of the community. He said it was for business reasons that the pub had failed, not due to a lack of demand from locals.