

CABINET held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor J Lodge (Chair)
Councillors A Armstrong, C Day, D Eke, J Evans, R Freeman,
N Hargreaves, P Lees and N Reeve

Officers in attendance: L Browne (Monitoring Officer), D French (Chief Executive),
B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager), R Harborough
(Director - Public Services) and R Millership (Assistant Director -
Housing, Health and Communities)

Also present: Councillors A Dean (Liberal Democrat Party Group Leader), N
Gregory (Chair of the Scrutiny Committee), B Light (Green Party
Group Leader), A Storah (Chair of Local Plan Leadership Group)
and M Tayler (Thaxted Independents' Party Group Leader)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Pepper and Councillor Pavitt (Uttlesford Independents' Group Leader).

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2020 were approved as a true and correct record.

3 QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS FROM NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (STANDING ITEM)

In response to a Member question, the Chief Executive said the Corporate Plan Delivery Plan would be considered by Scrutiny and Cabinet at the meetings in September and October respectively.

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

Councillor Gregory said the Local Plan Scrutiny Committee had met for the first time to look at specific Local Plan issues and there was consensus from the Committee that it had been an effective exercise. He said Councillor Evans, the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan, had done an admirable job in answering the Committee's questions, but a number of concerns had been raised. He highlighted the following:

- Lack of progress on the Local Plan

- The disruption caused by the Government’s Planning White Paper
- The cancellation and reinstatement of the previous Local Plan Leadership Group (LPLG) and Scrutiny Committee meetings
- Dedicated Project Manager
- The depth and regularity of information received by the Scrutiny Committee in respect of Local Plan matters

Councillor Evans said he had found the engagement with the Scrutiny Committee extremely useful. He said he felt he had answered a number of the concerns and urged the Committee to take on board the Administration’s reassurance.

Councillors Day and Lees said there was much work going on behind the scenes and that it was important that Scrutiny remained a “critical friend”.

Councillor Gregory said the Committee required detail to enable effective scrutiny. He questioned whether all Members understood the governance arrangements surrounding the Local Plan process and whether the arrangements as published had been implemented in practice.

In response to a Member question regarding the Members’ Bulletin, the Leader said he would look into how progress on the Local Plan was effectively communicated with Members.

5 REPORT OF DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS (STANDING ITEM)

Cabinet noted the delegated decisions relating to the Investment Opportunity on 19 August 2020 and the Statement of Community Involvement Temporary Suspension on 14 July 2020.

6 REPORT ON ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE DETERMINED BY THE ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE AND LOCAL HERITAGE LIST COMMITTEE (STANDING ITEM)

Members noted the record of decisions list following the Assets of Community Value and Local Heritage List Committee meeting on 14 July 2020:

- o Allotments Field, Station Road, Felsted
- o Felsted Village Playing Field, Braintree Road
- o Ravens Crescent Play Area, Watch House Green
- o Willows Green Play Area, Evelyn Road
- o Bannister Green

7 LOCAL PLAN LEADERSHIP GROUP (LPLG) DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

At the invitation of the Leader, Councillor Storah, Chair of the LPLG, said the Terms of Reference (ToR) before Cabinet had not been considered by the LPLG in full. He said a number of points had been removed from the preliminary draft that had been presented to the LPLG, as he felt they were duplicated in the Constitution and the Group's working arrangements. He said he had no concerns with the ToR as tabled before Cabinet.

The Leader said that as the LPLG was a working group of Cabinet, it was for Cabinet to approve the ToR.

Councillor Evans said the amended ToR reflected the views expressed at the previous Cabinet meeting and highlighted the commitment to hold such meetings in public.

RESOLVED to approve the Local Plan Leadership Group's Terms of Reference and Working Arrangements as set out in the agenda papers.

8 CABINET WORKING GROUPS - APPOINTMENTS

The Leader said the appointment to the Museum Management Working Group had been deferred but would be revisited at the next meeting.

RESOLVED to approve:

- i. Appoint the full membership of the LPLG, as set out in the agenda papers.
- ii. Appoint Councillor Driscoll to the Waste Strategy Panel in replacement of Councillor Jones.
- iii. Appoint Councillors Driscoll and Foley to the vacancies on the Housing Board.

9 BUDGET FORECAST OUTTURN - 2020/21 QUARTER 1

Councillor Hargreaves summarised the report outlining the Budget Forecast Outturn report for Quarter 1 2020/21. The report detailed the financial performance of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital Programme and Treasury Management and predicted a forecast for the end of the 2020/21 financial year. The drop in income from car parking and planning applications were highlighted. Additional spend was also noted in areas such as waste collection and building maintenance. He said the overall picture for the Outturn Forecast, primarily due to the income generated by investments, was good, although the situation could change before the financial year had ended.

.Councillor Lees praised Councillor Hargreaves, the Investment Board and officers for their work in improving the Council's financial situation. She said she was particularly grateful that the Ward Initiative Fund had been reintroduced, which could be of a great help to those charities working through the impact of Covid-19.

In response to a question from Councillor Dean, the Leader said the Economic Development team had recruited a new member of staff, although not at the same level as the individual who had departed.

In response to a question from Councillor Dean regarding the workforce at Stansted Airport and the diversification of the local economy in light of the aviation industry's recent struggles, Councillor Reeve said he had recently met with Councillor Coote and the Unite union, and the proposals that arose from the meeting were currently being digested. He said he was working with the Economic Development Officer to take this issue forward.

In response to a question from Councillor Evans regarding percentage variances, Councillor Hargreaves said it was not standard practice and there would be little value in including percentage changes in such reports as they could be misleading. He said Local Authority accounting differed greatly in comparison to company accounting.

RESOLVED to approve the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme forecast outturn positions including the updated use of reserves and requested slippage for the Capital Programme.

10

ESSEX COAST RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE AVOIDANCE & MITIGATION STRATEGY (RAMS) - STRATEGY, SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) AND PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT (PA)

Councillor Evans thanked the Planning Policy Officer for her work in putting the report together. He said this had emerged from a Stebbing Neighbourhood Plan exercise, during which he had learned that 75 species of birds resided in the parish, with 30 species falling into a vulnerable category. The Strategy had come to fruition due to the collaboration of all twelve authorities in Essex.

RESOLVED to:

- i. adopt the Essex Coast (RAMS) Habitats Regulations Assessment Strategy document 2018-2033 (January 2019).
- ii. adopt the Essex Coast (RAMS) draft Supplementary Planning Document after the final authority considering the SPD agrees its adoption.
- iii. authorise the Assistant Director Planning to make minor changes to the draft Supplementary Planning Document, should it be necessary prior to final adoption by the Partnership.
- iv. authorise the Assistant Director Planning to make non-minor changes to the draft Supplementary Planning Document in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and the Local Plan, should it be necessary prior to final adoption by the Partnership.
- v. authorise the Assistant Director Planning to join the Partnership; make changes to the Partnership Agreement, required by the 12 Local Authorities in the Partnership; and sign the Partnership Agreement, to deliver the Essex Coast Recreation disturbance Avoidance Mitigation Strategy.
- vi. authorise the Assistant Director Planning to put a process in

place to implement, collect, monitor, and pay the tariff to the accountable body of the Partnership.

11 **COUNCIL HOUSE DEVELOPMENT SITES**

Councillor Lees summarised the report detailing the development of council owned homes in various sites across the District.

In response to questions from Councillor Eke and Light in regard to Walden Place, Councillor Lees said she would forward details relating to the development to the relevant Ward Members.

In response to a question from Councillor Eke regarding the delay at the Parkside, the Assistant Director – Housing said she expected the development to be completed in the next three weeks.

The Leader and Councillor Lees expressed their thanks to the Assistant Director – Housing and her team for their excellent work.

RESOLVED that the identified sites and other suitable sites being investigated are progressed through the planning application stage as set out in the report.

The meeting ended at 8.01pm.