

CABINET held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on TUESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER 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, L Pepper and N Reeve

Officers in attendance: D French (Chief Executive), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager), R Harborough (Director - Public Services) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

Also present: Councillors M Caton (representing the Uttlesford Liberal Democrat Group), N Gregory (Chair of the Scrutiny Committee), R Pavitt (Leader of the Uttlesford Independents) and M Tayler (Leader of the Thaxted and the Eastons Independents).

CAB49 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dean (Uttlesford Liberal Democrats' Group Leader) who was substituted by Councillor Caton.

CAB50 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 October were approved as a true and correct record.

CAB51 QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS FROM NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (STANDING ITEM)

There were no questions or statements from non-Executive Members of the Council.

CAB52 REPORT OF DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS (STANDING ITEM)

As Councillor Gregory was running a few minutes late, the Leader said Item 5 – Consideration of reports from overview and scrutiny committees would be taken once he had arrived.

Cabinet noted the following delegated decisions that had been taken since the previous Cabinet meeting:

- Planning for the Future - Consultation response – published on 28 October 2020
- Appointment of Councillor Bagnall as Chair of the Local Plan Leadership Group (LPLG) – published on 4 November 2020

- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (England) (No.4) Regulations 2020 – published on 16 November 2020

CAB53 REPORT ON ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE DETERMINED BY THE ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE AND LOCAL HERITAGE LIST COMMITTEE (STANDING ITEM)

There were no reports from the Assets of Community Value and Local Heritage List Committee.

CAB54 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2021/22

Councillor Gregory entered the meeting at 7.10pm.

Councillor Hargreaves presented the report outlining the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22. He said that the Scheme was the most generous in Essex and that the number of claimants had been falling in recent years, although this trend had been reversed with an increase of applications this year. He corrected the table found at paragraph 23, as the year should state 2021-2022. An extensive consultation had been carried out in relation to the Scheme, but the response rate had been low. He said he would respond to the comments from Thaxted Parish Council in relation to how the Scheme was funded, as this had changed in the past five years. He proposed recommending the Scheme to Full Council.

Members discussed the survey and how to increase consultation responses.

Councillor Hargreaves said it was difficult to increase the response rate to the consultation, as it was not a high priority for most people, particularly if they were happy with the scheme as proposed. He said in previous years consultations were carried out at great expense, with little positive impact on the response rate.

Councillor Lees asked members of Cabinet and Group Leaders to look over the survey and to see whether changes could be made to increase the response rate of future consultations.

RESOLVED to recommend for approval by Council the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2021/22 based on the following;

- I. The contribution rate is frozen for the sixth consecutive year at 12.5%.
- II. The Council continues to protect Vulnerable and Disabled Residents and Carers on a low income.

CAB55 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Gregory, the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, said that the Scrutiny Committee had not met since the previous Cabinet meeting and therefore he had nothing to report. He said the next Scrutiny Committee meeting would take place on 10 December to consider Local Plan items.

CAB56 **UTTLESFORD ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN**

Councillor Reeve summarised the report on the Uttlesford Economic Recovery Plan. He said there were many businesses and individuals in the District that required assistance and that £1 million had been made available to help with the economic recovery. The draft Recovery Plan before Members tonight outlined how that money would be best spent. The primary drivers of the Plan, in addition to the priority of economic recovery post Covid-19, were the need for a green economy and to tie in economic development with the emerging Local Plan. Furthermore, there were four main areas of focus:

- Business support
- Information, advice and guidance (to individuals as well as businesses)
- Skills and training
- Job creation, now and in the future

He highlighted some success stories of economic recovery, including a local online shopping service, whereby local retailers offer their goods on a shared website, to which 40 or 50 businesses had already signed up. He thanked the officers involved in drafting the Plan and proposed the recommendation set out in the report, subject to any minor changes that needed to be made before consideration by Full Council.

In response to a question from Councillor Caton, Councillor Reeve said the Economic Development team were under resourced and additional staff would be brought in to ensure there was capacity to meet the objectives of the Plan.

In response to a question regarding the visitor economy, Councillor Reeve said he would look at how best to promote 'Uttlesford's tourist trail'.

Councillor Gregory said he welcomed the Recovery Plan's bias to action in the current climate and smart objectives could follow in due course.

Members discussed the lack of a job centre in Uttlesford, and the importance of having a Citizen's Advice Bureau in the district.

RESOLVED to:

- i. recommend the report included at Appendix A to Council for approval, subject to any changes as required.
- ii. delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder Economy, Investment and Corporate Strategy to make further changes as required ahead of consideration by Full Council.

CAB57 **NEWPORT QUENDON & RICKLING NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Councillor Hargreaves declared a non-pecuniary interest as Chair of the Newport, Quendon and Rickling Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. He abstained from voting on this item.

Councillor Evans summarised the report regarding the Newport, Quendon and Rickling Neighbourhood Plan. He said that by grouping together, the three villages had produced a cost effective neighbourhood plan, and benefits relating to the planning process and development control would be attained once it was in place.

Councillor Hargreaves spoke on the neighbourhood plan process and the challenges faced by settlements regarding new development. He said the neighbourhood plan would provide a framework for positive development in future and that the villages had already benefitted from the draft Plan, as it had assisted in negotiations with developers and had been referenced by Planning Inspectors.

RESOLVED to approve the changes proposed in **Appendix 3** of the report, and that the submitted Newport Quendon & Rickling Neighbourhood Plan:

- a) be modified as set out in Appendix 3, subject to a seven-week consultation period in line with Regulation 17A of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016;
- b) that the Plan is progressed to Referendum covering the area of Newport, Quendon and Rickling Parishes subject to no substantive objections being lodged to the modifications proposed; and
- c) That authority to be delegated to Director of Public Services, in consultation with the Planning Portfolio Holder, to consider responses to consultation on the proposed decision relating to the departures from the Examiner's recommendations, and to determine the final changes to be made to the neighbourhood plan before it proceeds to the referendum.

The meeting was closed at 8.17pm.