

CABINET held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on TUESDAY, 9 FEBRUARY 2021 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), A Knight (Assistant Director - Resources) and A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services)

Also present: D Frost (Public speaking)

CAB58 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Councillor Danielle Frost, Great Dunmow Town Council (GDTC), addressed Cabinet. She said GDTC were currently looking at sporting provision available in the town and were conscious of the importance of physical exercise in terms of health and wellbeing. She asked when the grant scheme would be open to applications and how would it be advertised to the community, in the event the scheme was approved.

Councillor Hargreaves said applications would be submitted online and this process would be open until the end of June.

CAB59 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No apologies were received from members of the Cabinet. Councillor Lodge addressed the clerical error on the agenda frontsheet and correctly stated that Councillor Fairhurst was not a member of Cabinet.

CAB60 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

CAB61 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.

CAB62 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Gregory, the Chair of Scrutiny Committee, informed Cabinet that three Scrutiny Committee meetings had taken place since the previous Cabinet meeting.

He summarised the following:

- He said the Committee had welcomed a public speaker concerned about the Stansted Airport Planning application process, specifically regarding the broadcast and minuting of the meeting. He said that these issues would be looked at when the Committee reviewed the entire process, once the appeal had been completed.
- The Climate Change Strategy was impressive and the most effective route to a net zero carbon economy was through the planning system.
- The budget had been scrutinised and the Committee were impressed with its presentation.
- The Administration had a mandate to improve the planning function at the Council and he urged them to introduce SMART objectives and outcomes. He reminded Cabinet of Scrutiny's "obsession" with clear measures of success and that such measures should be in place before expenditure occurred.

CAB63 REPORT OF DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS (STANDING ITEM)

The Chair asked Cabinet to note the delegated decisions made since the previous meeting as set out in the agenda papers.

In response to a question regarding Investment Opportunity 12, the Leader said the item had been through both the Investment Board and Full Council. He said there was a need for confidentiality until the deal had been completed, and he would not comment any further on information he believed had been leaked.

Councillor Hargreaves said a named member of the public, who had concerns regarding the transparency of the decision, had spoken to Councillor Reeve about the matter.

In response to a question relating to Self-build custom register decision, the Director – Public Services said the decision outlined the criteria for those wishing to register their properties as self-build. He said information could be circulated to Cabinet members following the meeting.

CAB64 REPORT ON ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE DETERMINED BY THE ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE AND LOCAL HERITAGE LIST COMMITTEE (STANDING ITEM)

There were no reports on assets of community value.

CAB65 CORPORATE PLAN 2021-25

Councillor Reeve summarised the report on the Corporate Plan, which he said had been reviewed by the Scrutiny Committee. He said the starting point had been to consider whether the Plan, as previously approved, required modification in light of the Local Plan process and Covid-19. He said the Corporate Plan as written was robust and that changes made were mainly changes of emphasis, rather than an overhaul of the Administration's priorities. One example was the shift from a focus on the youth council to a focus on youth in general.

Councillor Reeve proposed approval of the Plan; seconded by Councillor Lees.

The Corporate Plan was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED that the revised Corporate Plan attached at Enclosure 1 is recommended to Council for approval.

CAB66 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET 2021/22

Councillor Hargreaves summarised the report regarding the Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget 2021-22, highlighting areas of note from appendices A to I. He said this had been a particularly difficult year to produce the budget and thanked the Director – Finance and Corporate Services and the Assistant Director – Finance for their work. He proposed the recommendations set out in the report.

Councillor Reeve seconded the proposal.

In response to a question regarding agency workers, Councillor Hargreaves said agency costs were attributed to existing departmental budgets, although it depended on the number of agency staff and whether there were staff vacancies.

Councillor Lees praised the Ward Initiative Fund, which enabled councillors to provide £2000 to good causes in their respective wards, and said it was a fantastic achievement to continue such grants in the current economic climate.

In response to a question relating to the Capital Strategy, Councillor Hargreaves said the budget committed to the building of over 100 council houses in the district.

In response to a question regarding the Walden Place redevelopment scheme, the Assistant Director – Finances said any slippage into 2021-2022 would not be shown in the papers before Members.

Councillor Evans said the good work on the budget should be communicated to the wider public, and such information should be produced in a way to make it accessible to all.

The recommendations were approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to recommend the budget strategies and reports for 2021/22 as set out in Appendices A to H of the report and the associated Annexes for approval by Council.

CAB67 INTERIM CLIMATE CHANGE PLANNING POLICY

Councillor Pepper presented the report on the Interim Climate Change Planning Policy. She thanked officers, residents and cross party members for their efforts in producing the policy. She said the primary reasons for the delay in presenting the document was due to Covid-19 and the lack of resources available. She said there was now a climate change budget of £1 million to cover costs over the next three years. She said the policy before Cabinet included robust green measures to protect the local environment and these correlated with the Council's green objectives. Essex County Council had endorsed the document and had cited Uttlesford District Council as a leader against climate change.

The Policy was proposed by Councillor Pepper, and duly seconded by Councillor Eke.

Councillor Eke said sustainable transport would be an important element of future development in the district. He said the focus should not just be on electric but also on other non-fossil fuels such as hydrogen.

In response, Councillor Pepper said sustainable mode of travel would be part of the Uttlesford Climate Strategy.

The Policy was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to approve the Interim Climate Change Planning Policy document as non-statutory development management guidance.

CAB68 UTTLESFORD CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Councillor Pepper presented the report on the Uttlesford Climate Change Strategy. The Strategy outlined the key climate issues relating to green infrastructure, skills and funding in order to meet the Council's goal of achieving net zero carbon by 2030. The information was presented in an accessible manner to allow public engagement. She said a ten year interim action plan would follow the Strategy, and this would include measures of success on which the plan could be judged. This would tie in with the County's own Climate Change Policy, as well as the Council's emerging Local Plan.

Councillor Pepper proposed to endorse the Strategy to Council for approval.

Councillor Evans seconded the recommendation.

The recommendation was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to recommend to Council the draft Climate Change Strategy set out in Appendix 1 for approval

Councillor Dean raised a point of order relating to an earlier part of the meeting. He said he had received a communication from the relevant member of the public who had been in communication with Councillors Hargreaves and Reeve regarding Investment Opportunity 12, stating that he had not received a phone call from Councillor Reeve. In fact, the resident had been offered a phone call but had asked for a response in writing instead.

Councillor Reeve said this is what Councillor Hargreaves had said earlier.

CAB69 **GRANT ALLOCATION POLICY (SPORTS PROVISION - MAJOR PROJECTS)**

Councillor Pavitt left the meeting at 8.13pm.

Councillor Armstrong introduced the report on the Grant Allocation Policy (Sports Provision – Major Projects). He said Uttlesford had been starved of funding for sports facilities during the past decade and the Policy would set out how this process would work.

Councillor Oliver, Chair of the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee, said that whilst the Committee had endorsed the Policy for adoption, it had done so subject to a number of specific concerns. He said a number of amendments should be made to improve the Policy; firstly, to remove the requirement that sport grants be fully spent within the same year as they were allocated; secondly, the Policy also stipulated that an organisation could not receive a sports grant if it had received any other grant from the Council, clarity was required as to whether this included grants from the Member Ward Initiative Fund. Thirdly, clarification was required as to whether there were any time restrictions in terms of an organisation applying for grants year on year. He said the Committee had expressed disquiet that this year's grant appeared to have already been decided as per item 13 on the agenda. He also asked that if policies were brought to the GAP Committee in future, that the relevant Cabinet Member attend the meeting to present the policy.

Councillor Hargreaves thanked Councillor Oliver for his comments. He responded to the point regarding spending the grant within the same year it had been allocated. He said it was common practice to have such conditions within a grants policy but it would be sensible to look at this to make it less "draconian". In regard to the comment that this year's grant had already been allocated, he said there had been a longstanding agreement, made in principle by the previous Administration, and much work had been put in by the organisers; without the Council's support, the project would not have the necessary funding to continue.

Councillor Armstrong said he had been talking to other clubs and organisations across the district, and the process was being opened up to all localities.

Councillor Hargreaves said there was a prohibition regarding granting the same organisation two separate grants.

Councillor Day said it would be conducive to have a universal grants policy that applied to all grant processes across the Council.

Councillor Hargreaves agreed and said the entire process would be looked at.

The Chief Executive advised Cabinet that the final wording be delegated to the Director – Public Services and Councillor Armstrong, in order to pick up the amendments suggested by the GAP Committee. She added that Members were completely unfettered in terms of determining the next item.

Councillor Armstrong proposed; Councillor Day duly seconded. The proposal was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the Grant Allocation Policy (Sports Provision - Major Projects) be approved and adopted in principle;
- ii. the Director of Public Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Sports, Leisure, Education and the Arts, be delegated authority to finalise the wording regarding the time limits of the grant as necessary.

CAB70 GRANT TOWARDS A 3G FOOTBALL PITCH IN SAFFRON WALDEN

Councillor Armstrong introduced the report regarding the application for a grant towards a 3G football pitch in Saffron Walden.

In response to a question regarding the project timetable, the Director Public Services said the project was aimed to be completed by 31 July 2021.

The Leader said the cost of the whole project was approximately £1 million, and the organisers had the backing of the Football Association (FA). For context, he said Uttlesford was the only district in the County without such facilities.

Councillor Freeman said he had been aware of this project for a long time and offered his full support.

Councillor Eke said he was delighted that the organisers had secured nearly a £1 million in funding and he supported the project whole heartedly.

In response to a question relating to floodlighting, Councillor Freeman said measures could be put in place, such as specially designed lighting that

minimised spillage akin to the lighting installed at Saffron Walden skate park, to protect the night sky.

Councillor Armstrong the 3G pitch had been backed by many prestigious sporting authorities and the organisers had gone to great efforts to secure the necessary funding.

Councillor Armstrong proposed approval of the grant; this was duly seconded by Councillor Day.

The proposal was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that Cabinet, in principle, awards a grant of £150,000 towards the cost of a 3G artificial grass pitch at Saffron Walden County High School.), subject to the approval of any further details that may be requested by the Grants Panel, before a formal grant offer can be made.

CAB71 DAY CENTRES – HOT MEAL SERVICE

Councillor Freeman presented the report on the Day Centres - hot meals service. He said the centres were currently not in operation due to Covid-19, but a review would be carried out on their future use. He said the aim was to make day centres in Uttlesford appropriate for the 21st Century, and to ensure that they operated in the interests of those who currently use them, as well as widening their appeal. He said he was putting together a working group, including people who had practical experience in running the day centres, and recommendations would be reported back to Cabinet at a later date.

Councillor Dean welcomed the initiative to increase the use of day centres. He asked Cabinet to carefully consider the hot meals service before making any changes. He said that the starting point of the review should be to consider the needs of the current users of day centres, and to listen to volunteers who would also be able to add value to the process.

Councillor Freeman confirmed that volunteers would be key stakeholders in this process and would be heavily consulted during the review, and would contribute to the membership of the working group. He added that officers would also assist in resourcing the working group.

Councillor Tayler said he was keen to be involved and to assist Councillor Freeman to help improve the Day Centre service.

Councillors Lodge and Hargreaves alluded to how mixing generations together, such as the elderly and young children, could be beneficial and should be included in the review.

In response to a question, Councillor Freeman confirmed that any decision relating to day centres would be democratic, subject to consultation and existing funds would be ring-fenced. Furthermore, if recommendations to improve the Day Centre service required further funding, that would also be considered.

Councillor Freeman proposed the recommendation set-out in the report;
Councillor Eke seconded the proposal.

The recommendation was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED that Cabinet confirms that no financial savings will be made from this process and all allocated Day Centre Service budget will be retained for the new service delivery options, both in 2021/22 and ongoing

The meeting ended at 8.58pm.