

CABINET held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2021 at 7.00 pm

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

Officers in attendance: J Reynolds (Assistant Director - Legal and Governance), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager), R Harborough (Director - Public Services), A Webb (Director - Finance and Corporate Services) and R Tinlin (Interim Chief Executive)

Also present: Councillors M Caton (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group), M Foley (Chair of Stansted Airport Advisory Panel) and N Gregory (Chair of the Scrutiny Committee).

CAB30 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Councillor David Hall of Great Chesterford Parish Council spoke on Items 10 and 12. A summary of his statement has been appended to these minutes.

CAB31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hargreaves and Councillor Pavitt (Leader of the Uttlesford Independents Group).

Councillor Evans declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Item 13 as a resident of Stebbing, which was situated under the flight path.

CAB32 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

CAB33 COMMUNITY SERVICES BUDGET FUNDING FOR THE CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR

The Leader moved to Item 9 on the agenda as Councillor Freeman, Portfolio Holder for Public Services, was required at another meeting. He invited Councillor Day to present the report.

Councillor Day said there was a perception within the local community that Day Centres were to be closed. He said this could not be further from the truth and there was no intention to close Day Centres, but rather re-imagine their purpose to ensure they were of value to a wider demographic. He said he could foresee

them becoming Community Centres or 'drop-in hubs' and this work would be progressed by the Community Services Working Group (CSWG). Funding would be made available to support the community framework but each individual centre would be required to make a bid.

Councillor Freeman reiterated that Day Centres would not be closing. Each Centre would be managed locally and independently of the Council, although the Council would support each hub in reimagining its purpose through the work of the CSWG. He said it was important to get each Centre up and running as quickly as possible. He proposed approval of the recommendation.

Councillor Day duly seconded the proposal.

Councillor Caton welcomed this report and thanked Councillors Day and Freeman for providing clarity.

RESOLVED to approve:

- i. The release of the current budget provision of up to £94,500 to support delivery of community services on an interim basis through day centres
- ii. That the guidance as attached to the report will form the framework for considering requests for interim budget support.

CAB34 QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS FROM NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Caton asked whether solar panels would be installed on the buildings at Little Canfield Business Park.

The Leader said he would welcome these questions when considering the relevant agenda item.

Councillor Caton agreed.

CAB35 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)

In response to a question from Councillor Gregory, Councillor Evans said an update on the implementation of the recommendations of the Task and Finish Group: Planning Obligations would be provided in the autumn. He said additional professional advice was being sought and templates would be revised and republished. He said Scrutiny's request for "bite sized" chunks of information would be in place for Local Plan Scrutiny in September.

Councillor Gregory said there was a busy work programme over the coming months and the meeting towards the end of September would be moved. He said he was pleased to see that the Climate Change Action Plan was coming to fruition and would be presented to Committee in due course.

CAB36 REPORT OF DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS (STANDING ITEM)

Cabinet noted the decision of the Additional Restrictions Grant Policy published on 9 July 2021.

CAB37 REPORT ON ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE DETERMINED BY THE ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE AND LOCAL HERITAGE LIST COMMITTEE (STANDING ITEM)

Cabinet noted the nomination of Hill Green as an Asset of Community Value at the meeting held on 17 August 2021.

CAB38 LITTLE CANFIELD BUSINESS PARK

Councillor Reeve presented the report, which set out the position with regards to the commercial element of the Little Canfield Business Park, following discussion at the Investment Board on 27 July 2021. He responded to Councillor Caton's question regarding solar panel installation and said it was not possible for the time being due to weight load. He proposed approval of the recommendations set out in the report and put forward by the Investment Board.

Councillor Day seconded the proposal.

Councillor Pepper said she was pleased to see green initiatives being incorporated into the building, such as built-in water storage.

RESOLVED to endorse the conclusions of the Investment Board and that:

- i. The sum of £7,500,000 is allocated to the commercial element of the Little Canfield Business Park project from the £300,000,000 commercial fund; and
- ii. The funding should be split on an 80% interest only and 20% repayment funding basis; and
- iii. Council is requested to endorse the allocation and to authorise the necessary borrowing.

CAB39 LOCAL PLAN PRELIMINARY OUTLINE STRATEGY

Councillor Evans presented the report on the Local Plan Preliminary Outline Strategy (POST). He said this outline strategy was required to inform the work of the emerging Local Plan and had already been considered by the Local Plan Leadership group (LPLG). The draft vision and objectives and draft housing requirement had informed the outline strategy, alongside national and local

policy, the corporate strategy, the first consultation on the Local Plan and emerging evidence. He highlighted the key threads underpinning the approach, and the amendments requested by the LPLG. He said the recommendations of the LPLG should be respected and proposed approval.

Councillor Lees seconded the proposal.

Councillor Gregory said he was speaking as Chair of Scrutiny. He said it was difficult to find anything to disagree with the LPLG in terms of their amendments, but he challenged their conclusions in paragraph 9. He suggested that all Members read over the Inspectors report from January 2020 that “forensically dissects” the case for stand-alone Garden Communities. Furthermore, he said the site of Chesterford Research Park would not have been deemed suitable for development if it were not for the history of the site. Building a settlement nearby would not resolve the infrastructure problems of this geographically outlying location and he asked Councillor Evans to revisit this issue.

Councillor Caton said he was a member of the LPLG. He compared this POST document with that of the Greater Cambridge Planning Partnership, which he considered to be more ambitious and visionary. He said Uttlesford’s Local Plan needed to be sold to the community. More inspiration was required and the population needed to be prepared for the difficult decisions ahead.

Councillor Reeve said he was satisfied with the principles outlined in the report and more detailed semantics would come forward in due course.

Councillor Lees said this was a working document and improvements would be applied as the process moved forward. She said there would be no pre-determination and all evidence would be assessed before making a decision. She said the Plan was ambitious, and cited the aspiration to have only 50% of commuter journeys made by car.

Councillor Evans said the principle of Garden Communities would be debated and reviewed, but this was by no means a way of breathing life into the failed Local Plan. He said the more inspirational and visionary elements of the Plan had been made in previous documentation, but accepted that more positive and aspirational communications would be a good step forward.

RESOLVED to agree the Preliminary Outline Strategy (POST) so as to inform work on the emerging Local Plan.

CAB40 **REPORT TO APPROVE THE REVISED MUSEUM MANAGEMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND SAFFRON WALDEN MUSEUM SOCIETY LTD**

Councillor Freeman left the meeting at 8.00pm.

Councillor Armstrong presented the report on the Museum Management agreement between UDC and Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd. The report was accompanied by the Museum Management Agreement 2020, which had

been revised to incorporate the Museum's off-site store at the Shirehill Depot and other minor updates. Approval for the revised Agreement was requested and necessary before the Museum's next Accreditation review by Arts Council England, due in 2022, and further applications for National Lottery funding. He proposed approval of the recommendation.

Councillor Pepper seconded the proposal.

RESOLVED to approve the revised Museum Management Agreement between Uttlesford District Council and Saffron Walden Museum Society Ltd.

CAB41 ETHICAL INVESTMENT POLICY

Councillor Reeve presented the report relating to the Ethical Investment Policy, which had been recommended to Cabinet by the Investment Board. He thanked Councillor Khan and the Director – Corporate and Financial Services for their work on the Policy. He said the core elements had been taken from the United Nations model policy and, whilst it was simple, it was effective. He said the model policy that had been debated by the Investment Board had included “excluded industries,” such as tobacco, but these had been removed as the majority of members on the Investment Board felt it was better to use the principles outlined in the Policy in their own right, rather than rely on an exclusion list. He proposed approval of the recommendation.

Councillor Pepper duly seconded.

Councillor Caton said he was disappointed that the exclusions had not been included in the recommended policy, and felt that things such as gambling should also have been excluded from any council investment strategy.

Councillor Gregory commended the Policy.

RESOLVED to recommend to Council that it formally adopts the revised Ethical Investment Policy as set out at Appendix One.

CAB42 GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON NIGHT FLIGHTS RESTRICTIONS AT HEATHROW, GATWICK AND STANSTED AIRPORTS BEYOND 2024, PLUS NATIONAL NIGHT FLIGHTS POLICY.

Councillor Evans presented the report regarding the Government consultation on night flight restrictions. He thanked the Senior Planning Policy Officer for his expertise on the subject and the report. He said the report had been considered by Stansted Airport Advisory Panel (STAAP) and was debated extensively; these comments had been incorporated into the agenda papers. The Government had outlined the value of night flights but STAAP had wanted data on the value to the local economy. The Panel had also wanted to learn more on the necessity of passenger night flights. He concluded by saying that the response would be

worked upon further by himself and officers, subject to any additional views and the approval of Cabinet, and proposed the recommendation.

Councillor Reeve said two further discussions of STAAP had taken place, due to the weight and complexity of the subject. He seconded the proposal of Councillor Evans to allow further comments on the draft response to be made.

Councillor Pepper reiterated a number of points in the report and said night flights should only be used when essential. A balanced assessment should be carried out to find the true economic value of night flights as weighed against environmental damage.

Councillor Foley, Chair of STAAP, was invited to speak by the Leader. He said he wanted to move towards a period of reducing night flights, and they should only be used as a last resort. He thanked members of the public, Martin Peachey and Michael Young, who had spoken to STAAP at the previous meetings.

CAB43 ALLOCATION OF GRANT FUNDING (SPORTS PROVISION MAJOR PROJECTS)

Councillor Armstrong presented the report on the allocation of grant funding for major sports provision.

The Chief Executive said the recommendation should read “Cabinet awards grants up to the sum of £51,871.55 for the applications received and recommended by the Grants Panel,” in order to check the figures on one of the applications.

The Leader accepted the adjustment and said he was pleased that such funding would be made available to organisations in the District.

Councillor Day said the grants would be welcomed by local clubs and the funding would assist in getting young people to participate in sports. He supported the proposal.

Councillor Evans and Pepper highlighted the issues of LED floodlighting and the need to mitigate against light pollution.

Councillor Armstrong said the Council was working with a number of clubs who were not currently applicable for major project funding. However, they would be directed to alternative funding options, where possible. He proposed the recommendation, as read by the Chief Executive. This was duly seconded by Councillor Day.

RESOLVED that Cabinet awards grants up to the sum of £51,871.55 for the applications received and recommended by the Grants Panel.

CAB44 NEW COMMUNITIES COLLABORATION PARTNERSHIP

Councillor Evans presented the New Communities Collaboration Partnership report. The report set out the proposed 'Partnership Approach' to creating new communities as part of preparing the new Local Plan. The report also included a Model Memorandum of Understanding that landowners, promoters and developers of larger development sites would be invited to sign with the Council as part of the Partnership Approach. This was important as it would allow the development community to know "where they stood" with the Council on dealings with the new Local Plan. He said it was a technical document and the principles flowed from existing council policy. He proposed approval of the recommendation set out in the report.

The Leader seconded the proposal.

Councillor Gregory commended the report and the work presented to Cabinet. He agreed that it was a positive move to bring clarity to the process for external stakeholders. However, there were two issues with the document. Firstly, it was not easily accessible and was complicated. He said it should have been considered by LPLG or Local Plan Scrutiny before determination by Cabinet. Secondly, the document needed to make clear the role of parish and town councils in the district. They could add value to the Local Plan process and should not be an afterthought. He asked Cabinet to refer the report back for further work.

The Chief Executive said the document was based on previous discussions at LPLG and Scrutiny, and therefore he understood why it was considered logical to bring the decision to Cabinet in the first instance.

Councillor Evans agreed and said the document was technical and would have generally been in the purview of officers. However, he said he would welcome Scrutiny's views on the paper although he made the point that the document was technical and legal, and had been drafted by external solicitors. It was not something that could be drafted by Committee. He added that the Council wanted to work in good faith with all stakeholders, including developers and town and parish councils.

In response to a question from Councillor Pepper, Councillor Evans said green space and bio-diversity considerations would be "swept up" by the expression of Garden City principles.

The Chief Executive said he was confident that this working document would be incorporated into the wider policy base of the Local Plan, including green principles being built in as the Plan moved forward. He further explained that the Local Plan would be a series of documents that set out the Council's aspirations for future development. This implementation document was essentially advanced notice on what the Council wanted from the developer community. Furthermore, this was not pre-empting debate; it was simply creating a platform for a common approach with developers.

Councillor Gregory warned against alienating town and parish councils; they were vital stakeholders who required consultation due to their local knowledge, and he requested that they be referenced in the documentation.

RESOLVED:

- i. To support the proposed New Communities Collaboration Partnership approach set out in Appendix 1 for any larger development sites in the forthcoming new local plan;
- ii. To endorse the Model Memorandum of Understanding set out in Appendix 2 and the supplementary paper as the basis for discussion and agreement between the Council and landowners, developers or promoters of large scale development sites in the forthcoming new local plan.

The meeting was closed at 9.01pm.