

**CABINET held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2022 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor P Lees (Chair)  
Councillors J Evans, R Freeman, N Hargreaves, L Pepper and M Sutton.

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager) D Hermitage (Director of Planning) and A Webb (Director of Finance and Corporate Services)

Also Present: Councillors M Caton (Leader of the Liberal Democrat and Green Alliance Group), N Gregory (Chair of the Scrutiny Committee) and G Smith (Leader of the Conservative Party Group)

**CAB25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies were received from Councillors Armstrong and Coote.

**CAB26 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 7 July were approved as a correct record.

**CAB27 QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS FROM NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (STANDING ITEM)**

In response to a question regarding the resumption of Saffron Walden Day Centre, Councillor Freeman said the Communities team were currently looking into potential venues and options, including the Garden Rooms in Saffron Walden. The Leader said the Council was awaiting feedback from Saffron Walden Town Council and information regarding proposals for the Day Centre would be shared later in September.

In response to a question regarding proposals for the Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation, it was confirmed that said proposals would be published and put before Members prior to public consultation.

In response to a question regarding Blueprint Uttlesford, the Chief Executive confirmed that an all Member briefing was in hand and details would be circulated in due course.

In response to a question regarding the opening of communal buildings ("warm hubs") in the context of rising energy prices, Councillor Sutton said the Communities team were currently identifying buildings that could be opened to the public during the winter months. The Director of Finance and Corporate

Services said Officers were exploring whether venues could be financially supported to stay open to the public.

The Leader and Councillor Caton agreed to hold a Group Leaders meeting in order to discuss the cross-party coordination of members' Ward Initiative Funds to be put towards heating communal buildings across the District, as well as looking at assisting residents in a more holistic way. Councillor Evans said he had particular concern for those who lived in remote areas of Uttlesford, who could not travel to "warm hubs".

**CAB28      CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)**

Councillor Gregory provided a report on behalf of the Scrutiny Committee, including details on both the Committee and the Stansted Airport Scrutiny Review, which had culminated in a debate at a Full Council meeting in July.

Councillor Gregory said he and the Vice-Chair of Scrutiny had written to the Chief Executive and Director of Planning regarding Local Plan matters. He thanked the Chief Executive for his advice and looked forward to receiving a response before the Local Plan committee cycle began.

Councillor Gregory said the key issue facing the Stansted Airport Scrutiny Review was the "known unknowns", principally the 40 meetings between Officers and Stansted Airport that had not been minuted. However, he said in the circumstances the best outcome had been achieved, and he praised Councillor Caton for initially proposing that the Review was undertaken independently of the Council. He thanked the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer for their work in ensuring the Review was robust and transparent.

In other matters, Councillor Gregory apologised to Councillor Pepper for directing a budgetary question to her, rather than Councillor Hargreaves. He noted the improvement of the Planning performance indicators since the arrival of the Director of Planning. He also noted that the issues with Housing appeared to go back a long time, and the issue would be looked at by the Housing Board and the Governance, Audit and Performance Committee.

Councillor Caton said he felt that the Stansted Airport Scrutiny Review should have allowed more input from 'back-bench' councillors.

**CAB29      REPORT OF DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS (STANDING ITEM)**

There were no decisions to report.

**CAB30      REPORT ON ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE DETERMINED BY THE ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE AND LOCAL HERITAGE LIST COMMITTEE (STANDING ITEM)**

There were no decisions to report.

### **CAB31    ASHDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

Councillor Evans presented the report on Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan. He commended the work of the Steering Group and proposed that Cabinet accept the Independent Examiner's recommended modifications to the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan in full and that the amended Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan proceed to a Referendum in the Parish of Ashdon.

Councillor Hargreaves seconded the proposal. He welcomed the report and said that whilst establishing a neighbourhood plan was hard work, it did result in well-informed steering groups at parish level due to the accumulation of planning knowledge during the process.

Councillor Smith thanked Councillor Evans and said the Steering Group would welcome his comments. He hoped other parishes would come forward with their own neighbourhood plans in future.

The Leader moved to a vote. The proposal was approved unanimously.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- I.      That Cabinet accepts the Independent Examiner's recommended modifications to the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan in full as set out in the Schedule at Appendix 2 and note the recommendation that the amended Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to a Referendum of voters within the Parish of Ashdon to establish whether the plan should form part of the Development Plan for Uttlesford District Council.
- II.     That Cabinet approves the holding of a referendum relating to the Ashdon Neighbourhood Plan and, that it will include all the registered electors in Ashdon Parish.

### **CAB32    REVISED TENANCY POLICY**

The Leader presented the Revised Tenancy Policy report and said the key issue at hand was the removal of fixed term tenancies from the Council's Tenancy Policy. She said it was important that all tenancies were equal and the Council's approach to tenants be consistent. She proposed that the revised Tenancy Policy be adopted.

Councillor Sutton seconded the proposal.

In response to a question regarding the number of downsizing grants that had been issued in the past 24 months, the Leader said she would provide an answer to Councillor Caton in writing.

In response to a question regarding why there was a cost differential for different age groups, the Leader said this would be looked into.

The Leader moved to a vote. The proposal was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approves the revised Tenancy Policy removing Fixed Term Tenancies.

**CAB33 OFFICER DECISIONS - WRITE OFFS 2021/22**

Councillor Hargreaves presented the Officer Decisions: Write Offs 2021/22 report. The report detailed Officers decisions under delegated powers to authorise write offs less than £10,000 in line with the constitution and Financial Regulations. The total value of monies owed to the Council which had been written off by officers for the financial year 2021/22 was £262,831; of this £69,584 had a direct financial impact on the Council.

The report was noted.

**CAB34 SHOP FRONT DESIGN GUIDE**

Councillor Evans presented the report regarding the Shopfront Design guide for Uttlesford. He said it was important that there was a level of quality and consistency with shopfront designs and this guide would assist shop owners across the District. The guide had been circulated for consultation and the feedback had led to the document being revised. He proposed that the design guide be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document.

Councillor Pepper seconded the proposal.

Members commended the report author and the presentation of the Guide.

The Leader moved to a vote. The proposal was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet adopts the accompanying 'Uttlesford Shopfront Design Guide' document as a Supplementary Planning Document

**CAB35 ALLOCATION OF GRANT FUNDING (SPORTS PROVISION MAJOR PROJECTS)**

Councillor Sutton presented the report regarding the Allocation of Grant Funding for major sports provision projects. The report asked Cabinet to to approve two grant applications which had been considered against the Council's Grant Allocation Policy (Sports Provision – Major Projects), for Newport Sports Committee and Great Dunmow Town Council. Councillor Sutton proposed approval of the Grants.

Councillor Freeman seconded the proposal.

Councillor Hargreaves said he would abstain from the vote as the Ward Member for Newport.

The Leader said conflicts of interest had been checked and Councillor Hargreaves could vote if he so wished, although he was entitled to abstain if he felt more comfortable doing so.

The Leader moved to a vote. The proposal was approved. Councillor Hargreaves abstained from the vote.

RESOLVED that Cabinet awards the following grants:

- I. Newport Sports Committee the sum of £100,000 for the provision of a Multi-Use Games Area
- II. Great Dunmow Town Council the sum of £100,000 for the provision of a Multi-Use Games Area. The grant to be released once the remaining funding requirement has been raised.

Before closing the meeting, the Leader permitted a question from Councillor Gregory regarding the Housing Revenue Account, current inflation rates and the indexation of rents. In response, the Director of Finance and Corporate Services said the Council had little scope over indexation. He said the Government had launched a consultation at the end of August to explore the issue of rent setting.

*The meeting was closed at 19:55.*