
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET,
HELD ON FRIDAY, 21ST FEBRUARY, 2020 AT 10.30 AM
ESSEX HALL - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA, CO15 1SE**

Present: Councillors Neil Stock OBE (Leader of the Council)(Chairman), Carlo Guglielmi (Deputy Leader of the Council & Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder), Paul Honeywood (Housing Portfolio Holder), Lynda McWilliams (Partnerships Portfolio Holder), Mary Newton (Business and Economic Growth Portfolio Holder), Alex Porter (Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder) and Michael Talbot (Environment and Public Space Portfolio Holder)

Group Leaders Present by Invitation:

Councillors Terry Allen (Leader of the Tendring First Group), Jayne Chapman (Leader of the Independents Group), Ivan Henderson (Leader of the Labour Group), Gary Scott (Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group) and Mark Stephenson (Leader of the Tendring Independents Group)

Also Present: None

In Attendance: Ian Davidson (Chief Executive), Ewan Green (Corporate Director (Planning and Regeneration)), Lisa Hastings (Head of Governance and Legal Services & Monitoring Officer), Richard Barrett (Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits Services & Section 151 Officer), Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer) and William Lodge (Communications Manager)

111. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Joy Broderick (Independent Living Portfolio Holder).

112. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Friday 24 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

113. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

114. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock OBE) informed Cabinet that he had, on Wednesday 19 February 2020, attended a meeting held at The Kingscliff Hotel, Holland-on-Sea, with representatives from Public Health England, Health Watch, other local

NHS bodies, Essex County Council and with Professor Marmot, Institute of Health Inequality also in attendance which had discussed the very high levels of health inequality in parts of Clacton-on-Sea and its environs and what economic investments solutions could be found to alleviate such inequalities.

The Chief Executive (Ian Davidson) also outlined the useful outcomes and pending actions from that meeting, which had been an “eye opener” for many of the attendees and that supporting evidence of this issue would be submitted to an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) meeting to be held in the House of Lords in Parliament during March 2020.

115. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CABINET MEMBERS

There were none on this occasion.

116. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY THE COUNCIL

There were none on this occasion.

117. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY A COMMITTEE - REFERENCE FROM THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - A.1 - HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY

The Cabinet was informed that, at its meeting held on 13 January 2020 (Minute 85 referred) the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee had had before it the Council’s draft Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2024 and accompanying Briefing Note.

At that meeting Members were informed that the draft Homelessness Reduction and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 had been approved by the Housing Portfolio Holder to go out to public consultation and that the consultation period had been running since 6 January 2020 for six weeks. As part of the consultation process, it had been suggested that the draft strategy be presented to the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee (CLOS).

Members were further informed that Section 1 Homelessness Act 2002 required the Council to carry out a review of homelessness in the District and to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy based upon the conclusions in that review and predicted future levels of homelessness in the District. The Council was required to comply with the provisions of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011 and subsequently the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017) in assessing, preventing and tackling homelessness in the District.

The Homelessness Reduction & Rough Sleeping Strategy had been drafted following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. That Act had initiated the most significant change to homelessness administration and legislation since the first homelessness legislation was passed in 1977. The Strategy had been developed to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the District at a time when homelessness was increasing locally and nationally with associated social and financial costs.

The strategy set out the national and local strategic setting for homelessness and the causes and demographics of homelessness and rough sleeping in the District. It also

set out the challenges the Council faced in tackling homelessness and rough sleeping locally and how homelessness was an issue that needed to be tackled in partnership with other agencies. The Council, as a community leader, could facilitate earlier prevention and better partnership working.

The strategy identified four key strategic priorities to reduce homelessness and rough sleeping in the District as follows:

- Earlier Intervention and Education
- Better Partnership and Holistic Working
- Increasing the Supply of Suitable Accommodation
- Exploring New Ways to Prevent and Tackle Rough Sleeping.

Once the consultation period expired, the Council would produce an action plan to deliver the priorities identified in the strategy.

Following the information provided, Members were given the opportunity to ask questions which were responded to by Peter Russell (Executive Projects Manager (Housing)), Tim R Clarke (Head of Housing and Environmental Health) and Councillor Honeywood. Officers agreed to re-examine the section of the Strategy referencing the levels of deprivation in the area. A typographical error on page 27 of the report was also highlighted to officers.

Following discussion the Committee had recommended to Cabinet that the various housing delivery methods available to the Council be looked into and that a detailed presentation be provided to all Councillors by Housing Officers and the Portfolio Holder for Housing in order to discuss the range of options available.

Cabinet had before it the Housing Portfolio Holder's response to the CLOS Committee's recommendation which was as follows:-

"I would like to thank the members of the committee for considering the content of the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. If we are to have a positive impact on reducing the number of people threatened with homelessness we must influence an increase in the number of truly affordable homes that are available in the district. To this end Cabinet has agreed in principle to a house building and acquisitions programme with the ambition to bring 200 additional homes into our own housing stock.

There are a number of ways in which the Council can finance and deliver these additional homes and a report on each proposed scheme will be brought to Cabinet for final approval. Given the complex nature of some delivery methods I do not see merit in providing a presentation to all Councillors at this stage, especially when some of these methods may well not prove to be viable for technical or legal reasons.

I, along with officers from the Housing and Finance teams, am considering which options are the most advantageous to the Council and our residents and it may well be that a combination of delivery methods are used to achieve the 200 home target. Once an option has been assessed as viable and robust I will provide full details to Cabinet for consideration."

Having considered the recommendation made by the CLOS Committee and the response of the Housing Portfolio Holder thereto:-

It was moved by Councillor P B Honeywood, seconded by Councillor G V Guglielmi and:-

RESOLVED, that Cabinet notes the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee's recommendation and endorses the response of the Housing Portfolio Holder thereto.

118. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEMS

There were none on this occasion.

119. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.2 - PERFORMANCE REPORT: OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2019 (QUARTER 3)

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder (A.2) which presented it with the deliverables and measurable outcomes for the Cabinet's agreed Priorities and Projects 2019/20, as well as reporting the current position as at Quarter Three (October – December 2019).

Members recalled that the Performance Reports (*Resources & Services and Community Leadership*) set out the detailed actions and targets for the delivery of the Council's priorities throughout the year by including both the Council's emerging Corporate Plan 2020/24 and Priorities and Projects for 2019/20.

In respect of the Quarter 3 position (*as reported in the Resources and Services Performance Report*) Members were informed that of the 22 indicators and projects where performance was measured, 21 (95%) were on, or above, their expected target and 1 indicator (5%) was not currently in line with expected performance. The indicators and projects highlighted in the *Community Leadership Performance Report* were deemed 'non measurable' as the Council's role was that of 'influence' only.

Cabinet was advised that the respective reports were due to be presented to the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 17 February 2020 and to the Community Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6 April 2020.

Transforming Tending Project

Cabinet also received an update within the Portfolio Holder's report on the current progress of the transformation project in Clacton-on-Sea which touched on the following areas:-

- (1) Pier Avenue & Barnes House Offices;
- (2) Northbourne Depot;
- (3) Westleigh House demolition;
- (4) Town Hall Phase 2 structural works;
- (5) IT Network and Firmsteps Interface; and
- (6) Scanning and Digitalisation.

Having considered all of the information provided in the report and its appendices:-

It was moved by Councillor G V Guglielmi, seconded by Councillor Stock OBE and:-

RESOLVED that the current position for each performance measure as at Quarter Three (October – December 2019) be noted.

120. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.3 - FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT - IN-YEAR PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE BUDGET AT END OF THE THIRD QUARTER 2019/20 AND LONG TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST UPDATE

The Cabinet gave consideration to a comprehensive report of the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder (A.3) which provided it with an overview of the Council's financial position against the budget as at the end of December 2019 and also presented it with an updated long term forecast.

In respect of the in-year financial position as at the end of December 2019:

It was reported that the position to the end of December 2019, as set out in more detail within the appendices, showed that, overall, the General Fund Revenue Account was underspent against the profiled budget by £2.864m. As had been the case in previous quarters, the variance to date primarily reflected the timing of expenditure and income although any significant issues arising to date had been highlighted and comments provided as necessary within the Portfolio Holder's report.

Cabinet was made aware that, in respect of other areas of the budget such as the Housing Revenue Account, capital programme, collection performance and treasury activity, apart from additional details set out in the report, there were no major issues that had been identified to date.

Members were informed that any emerging issues would be monitored and updates provided in future reports which would include their consideration as part of updating the on-going long term financial forecast.

Cabinet was advised that some necessary changes to the budget had been identified which were set out in Appendix H to the Portfolio Holder's report, with an associated recommendation included within the report. The net impact of all of the budget adjustments was a surplus of £0.446m.

Members were further advised that, in addition to the adjustments included within Appendix H, it was also proposed to fund the cost of the changes to the Members' Scheme of Allowances that had been approved at Full Council on 21 January 2020. The total cost was £0.041m in 2019/20 and it was proposed to fund this from the net surplus of £0.446m reported above.

It was reported that, after taking the above into account, the net budget surplus at the end of December 2019 had been revised to £0.405m, which was proposed to be contributed to the Forecast Risk Fund.

Cabinet was informed that, subject to the recommendations set out in the report, as at the end of the third quarter a total of £0.335m would have been contributed to the fund over the course of the whole year. This was £0.165m short of the required target of £0.500m set out in the long term forecast, which hopefully was a gap that could be closed over the remaining quarter of the year.

As in previous years, it was recognised that a number of smaller variances within services emerged over the course of the year that would not necessarily be specifically highlighted or discussed within the in-year finance reports. It was still therefore possible that a range of smaller variances might remain at the end of the year and would contribute to the overall outturn position. Also a number of budgets that related to schemes / initiatives or earmarked for specific purposes might not be fully spent by the end of the year and might be subject to end of year processes such as carry forward requests and therefore remain committed. However, at this stage and after taking into account the current position and information available it was anticipated that any adverse issues would be offset by favourable variances elsewhere within the overall budget at the end of the year.

In respect of the updated long term financial forecast:

It was reported that the long term financial forecast had been reviewed based on the position considered by Full Council at its meeting held on 11 February 2020 and was attached as Appendix J to the portfolio Holder's report. Although the figures set out within that appendix would change as part of updating the forecast on a regular basis during 2020/21, there had been no issues that had significantly increased the risks in future years with the forecast position remaining broadly in-line with original expectations.

Members were made aware that a review of the risks associated with the long term approach to the forecast was also subject to on-going review and was separately reported within Appendix K to the report.

As mentioned during the year, it was important to continue to deliver against the new longer term approach to the budget as it continued to provide a credible alternative to the more traditional short term approach which would require significant additional savings to be identified much earlier in the financial cycle.

Members were advised that the long term forecast and on-going base budget continued to reflect support to external organisations, such as those who would benefit from the CAROS scheme. As included in the report's recommendations, this commitment would remain in place but might need to be revisited in the later years of the forecast as was the case with all other budget lines.

The forecast remained an on-going task going into 2021/22 and beyond with work therefore remaining on-going across the 5 key work strands of:

- 1) Increases to underlying income;
- 2) Controlling expenditure / inflationary increases;
- 3) The identification of savings / efficiencies;
- 4) Delivering a positive outturn position each year; and
- 5) The mitigation of cost pressures wherever possible.

Having considered all of the information and advice contained within the report and its appendices:-

It was moved by Councillor G V Guglielmi, seconded by Councillor Stock OBE and:-

RESOLVED that –

- (a) in respect of the financial performance against the budget at the end of December 2019:
- (1) the current position be noted;
 - (2) the proposed adjustments to the budget, that include a contribution to the Forecast Risk Fund of £0.446m, as set out in Appendix H to item A.3 of the Report of the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder, be agreed; and
 - (3) the use of £0.041m of the contribution to the Forecast Risk Fund of £0.446m to fund the cost in 2019/20 of the changes to the Members' Scheme of Allowances agreed by Full Council on 21 January 2020 be agreed.
- (b) in respect of the Updated Long Term Forecast:
- (1) the updated forecast be agreed, which includes the commitment to on-going support to external organisations within the principles set out in the Portfolio Holder's report; and
 - (2) the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be consulted on the updated long term forecast.

NOTE: Pursuant to the provisions of Article 7.08 1.5 (ii) of the Council's Constitution, the Leader of the Labour Group (Councillor I J Henderson) requested that it be recorded in the Minutes that his Group were opposed to the use of £0.041m of the contribution to the Forecast Risk Fund of £0.446m to fund the cost in 2019/20 of the changes to the Members' Scheme of Allowances agreed by Full Council on 21 January 2020.

121. MANAGEMENT TEAM ITEMS

There were none on this occasion.

122. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor G V Guglielmi and:-

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Agenda Item 13 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act.

123. EXEMPT MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 24 JANUARY 2020

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor G V Guglielmi and:-

RESOLVED that the Exempt Minute of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 24 January 2020 be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

The Meeting was declared closed at 11.27 am

Chairman