
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET,
HELD ON FRIDAY, 20TH MAY, 2022 AT 10.34 AM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, AT THE TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-
ON-SEA, CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillor G V Guglielmi	Deputy Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance (Chairman)
	Councillor J D Bray	Portfolio Holder for Planning
	Councillor P B Honeywood	Portfolio Holder for Housing
	Councillor L A McWilliams	Portfolio Holder for Partnerships
	Councillor M C Newton	Portfolio Holder for Business & Economic Growth
	Councillor M J Talbot	Portfolio Holder for Environment & Public Space

Group Leaders Present by Invitation: Councillors E T Allen (Leader of the Tendring First Group), J B Chapman BEM (Leader of the Independents Group), G G I Scott (the Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group), M E Stephenson (Leader of the Tendring Independents Group) and C P Winfield (Leader of the Holland-on-Sea Group)

Also Present: Councillor A P H Baker (Deputy Leader of the Tendring Independents Group)

In Attendance: Lisa Hastings (Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer), Damian Williams (Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery)), Richard Barrett (Assistant Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager), Katie Wilkins (Human Resources and Business Manager) and Elizabeth Kirby (Apprentice (Communications Team))

1. CHAIR

In the absence of the Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock OBE), the Chair was occupied by the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor G V Guglielmi).

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors I J Henderson (Leader of the Labour Group), A O J Porter (Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism) and N R Stock OBE (Leader of the Council).

3. MINUTES AND EXEMPT MINUTE OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes and the exempt minute of the meeting of the Cabinet, held on Friday 25 March 2022, be approved as correct records and be signed by the Chairman.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members on this occasion.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**PPMA National Awards – TDC Success**

The Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor G V Guglielmi) was pleased to announce that Tendring District Council and its partners had been Highly Commended at the PPMA National Awards for an innovative health initiative namely the setting up of a well-being hub at Great Bentley School.

Meeting with the Chairmen of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees

The Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor G V Guglielmi) informed Cabinet that the Leader of the Council and himself, together with senior Officers, had held the first meeting under the auspices of the Council's adopted Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Protocol with the Chairmen of the Council's two overview & scrutiny committees. He stated that the meeting had gone extremely well and had been very useful and productive for all concerned.

Councillor M E Stephenson, speaking in the capacity of Chairman of the Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, endorsed Councillor Guglielmi's comments.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CABINET MEMBERS**Tendring Community Fund**

The Partnerships Portfolio Holder (Councillor McWilliams) reminded Members that cash grants were available to support organisations working in their local community. Those grants would be awarded from the Tendring Community Fund to help groups deliver initiatives, with both capital and revenue projects eligible. The Tendring Community Fund had a total pot of £356,000 available.

She stated that such schemes should particularly look to tackle issues such as social isolation and unemployment, or improve education or health outcomes or the environment, and support Tendring District Council's key priorities. Such applications would receive more support if they had matched funding from other partners, such as charities, businesses or public sector bodies.

Councillor McWilliams further reminded Members that applications for the first round of funding had to be submitted by 5pm on Monday, 13 June 2022 and she was pleased to inform Members that three such applications had already been submitted.

Planning Matters

The Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor G V Guglielmi) welcomed Councillor Bray to this his first meeting of the Cabinet since his recent appointment thereto by the Leader of the Council as the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Planning.

Councillor Bray informed Cabinet that he had already had meetings with senior Officers on many planning issues and especially the issue of enforcement. He stated that he intended to introduce, as a first step, a dedicated generic email address for planning enforcement, which would ensure a much faster response by Officers to Members' emails on such matters.

7. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY THE COUNCIL

There were no matters referred to the Cabinet by the Council on this occasion.

8. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY A COMMITTEE - REFERENCE FROM THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - A.1 - CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Cabinet was aware that, at its meeting held on 21 March 2022 (Minute 53 referred), the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee ("the Committee") had undertaken an enquiry into the safeguarding and education position concerning those persons of school age not attending mainstream schools.

Officers from Essex County Council had attended that meeting and Members had been advised of the potential impacts, suggested by research, of children missing school, such as:

- *Slower progress in learning*
- *Worse Prospects for future employment*
- *Poorer mental health and emotional well-being*
- *Restricted social and emotional development and*
- *Increased vulnerability to safeguarding issues and criminal exploitation*

The Committee had also been informed which children were at risk of missing education, namely:

- *Children at risk of harm/neglect*
- *Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller families*
- *Families of Armed Forces*
- *Missing Children/runaways*
- *Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System*
- *Children who cease to attend a school*

The Essex County Council officers had also advised Members of figures within Essex and specifically in Tendring of children who were Electively Home Educated (EHE) and that a rise was being seen nationally. The Committee was shown figures of the following:

- *Children Missing from Education (CME) broke down by quadrants*
- *EHE broke down by quadrants*
- *A breakdown of school aged CME by district*
- *A breakdown of school aged EHE by district*

Members of the Committee had been further informed at that meeting that, currently, parents who removed their child from school were not required to tell their Upper Tier Local Authority; they were not required to provide the school with a reason for de-

registering their child from a school; they did not have to have their EHE plans documented at the time of de-registering their child; and they were not required to let an inspector into their home to observe their EHE system.

The Committee was also advised that in the admissions process for schools, the Education Compliance Team of the County Council offered support for parents to navigate the appeals process in order to reduce their perception of alienation from the process. Where there were schools with unusually high numbers of children being de-registered, the Education Compliance Team would work with that school in order to address any issues leading to those de-registrations.

That meeting was also informed that schools across Essex were signed up to support young carers who otherwise could lose out on mainstream education. It was also the case that a Fair Access Protocol was in place for secondary school age children to facilitate them returning to mainstream schooling if a home schooling experience was not successful following a child being de-registered.

After a discussion the Committee had recommended to Cabinet:-

“That Cabinet agrees to:-

- (1) Send a letter of support to the Secretary of State for Education for the introduction of the following powers/measure to safeguard the position of those de-registering from mainstream schools and opting for Elective Home Education (EHE) namely:-*
 - (a) that the details of the proposed Elective Home Education should be documented and submitted to the Upper Tier Local Authority in advance of the child being de-registered.*
 - (b) that a backstop right of access for the Upper Tier Local Authority be provided to the home and to the child where Elective Home Education is provided with a view to confirming the position.*
 - (c) that Academies be urged to provide access on their sites in a locality for those being home schooled to undertake examinations close to home.*
 - (d) that parents of children being home schooled be required to provide regular updates to the Upper Tier Local Authority on the progress of the children being home schooled.*
- (2) That an email be sent to all Tendring District Councillors, prepared by Essex County Council, to explain the position on those missing from mainstream education and the routes for reporting concerns about those children (which, if recommendation (1) above is also approved) could be accompanied by the letter to the Secretary of State as referred to in that recommendation.”*

The Cabinet had before it the response of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder thereto as follows:-

“With reference to the enquiry into Children Missing Education, I fully support the recommendations of the Committee and I will action the following:-

a) *Writing to ECC giving the Cabinet's support to strengthening home education.*

b) *Writing to the Secretary of State for Education outlining support for the powers/measures as indicated above, as well as giving support to the Essex County Council Cross-Party Response to the House of Commons' Education Committee Report entitled "Strengthening Home Education" (published 26 July 2021).*

In summary the cross party response further outlines the urgent need for a number of additional safeguarding measures for Upper Tier local authorities together with the financial support per pupil to set standards to ensure consistency regarding regular monitoring, communication and assessment of the suitability of home education."

Having considered the recommendations of the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee, together with the response of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder thereto:-

It was moved by Councillor McWilliams, seconded by Councillor Newton and:-

RESOLVED that the recommendations made by the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee be endorsed and that the response of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder thereto be approved.

9. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEMS

There were no such items to consider on this occasion.

10. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.2 - UPDATE ON COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Cabinet considered a detailed report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder (A.2) which provide it with an update on community projects and which also sought Cabinet's endorsement for a number of community projects that contributed to the Council's Community Leadership role.

Members were aware that this Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024 placed Community Leadership at the forefront of everything the authority did through the delivery of high quality, affordable services and working positively with others. To deliver that aspiration, a number of community projects had been formed under the following themes:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Education
- Community Safety
- Economic Growth & Leisure

Officers had been instrumental in the sourcing of, and applications for external funding, for the delivery of a number of those projects. To date this had secured £4.4 million of funding for those initiatives.

The Portfolio Holder's report provided an overview of the projects which had been identified in accordance with the role of the Council, as a Community Leader. The Council was not the statutory provider for Education, Health and Wellbeing. However,

through influence, bringing stakeholders and partners together to share and improve practices, there were a number of areas where the Council could offer support to Education and Health providers, and ultimately children, learners, patients and residents across the District.

An overview of each of the projects was provided under the following headings:-

Education Projects

- (i) Tendring Education Strategic Board;
- (ii) Teach First;
- (iii) IntoUniversity;
- (iv) Well-being Hub – rollout of model; and
- (v) Tendring Health & Care Academy.

Health Projects

- (i) Local Delivery Pilot;
- (ii) Ben Clyne: Sheltered Housing Fitness;
- (iii) Jodie Milne: Inclusive Dance;
- (iv) Tendring District Youth Football Club;
- (v) Jaywick Sands Boxing Club;
- (vi) Essex Pedal Power;
- (vii) Disability Cycling;
- (viii) 'Beat the Street';
- (ix) Suicide Prevention; and
- (x) North East Essex Health & Well-being Alliance.

Community Safety Projects

- (i) The Essex Violence & Vulnerability Unit;
- (ii) Youth Impact – Uturn Project;
- (iii) Dot Com and Watch Over Me programmes;
- (iv) SOS Bus Project;
- (v) Crucial Crew;
- (vi) Street Action Days;
- (vii) The Youth Project;
- (viii) CUFITC – Unite our Communities Programme;
- (ix) CUFITC – Mental Health Awareness Projects; and
- (x) CUFITC – 1-2-1 & Small Group Mentoring.

Economic Growth & Leisure Projects

- (i) Tendring Local Cultural Education Partnership;
- (ii) Clacton 150;
- (iii) Green Day;
- (iv) Tendring Junior Ambassadors;
- (v) Theatre Temoir FLOOD project;
- (vi) 'Snapping the Stiletto';
- (vii) Grand Theatre of Lemmings;
- (viii) Essex Children's University – Essex Book Festival Poetry Slam;
- (ix) Hunt & Dalton: Kids' Business;

- (x) Dig4Jaywick Community Garden;
- (xi) Jaywick Sands Beach Clean events; and
- (xii) Jaywick Sands Networking Group.

The Leader of the Tendring Independents Group (Councillor M E Stephenson), in his capacity as the Chairman of the Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, raised his concern that the Council might “be setting itself up for a fall” regarding these budgets should the monies be suddenly withdrawn by the external funders. He suggested that his Committee should regularly scrutinise those budgets.

The Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor G V Guglielmi) and the Environment & Public Space Portfolio Holder (Councillor Talbot) supported those comments.

Having considered the contents of the detailed report:-

It was moved by Councillor McWilliams, seconded by Councillor Newton and:-

RESOLVED that:

- a) Cabinet endorses the projects listed within the Portfolio Holder’s report as those which will continue to be supported in 2022/2023 in alignment with the Council’s Corporate Plan priorities; and
- b) the Community Leadership Overview & Scrutiny Committee be requested to continue to scrutinise this work programme.

11. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.3 - CITIZENS ADVICE TENDRING: SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT 2022/23

Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder (A.3) which sought its agreement for an updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Citizens Advice Tendring (CAT) for 2022/23.

Members were aware that Tendring District Council (TDC) had provided grant funding to CAT backed by an annually agreed SLA, for a number of years. That arrangement supported the provision of free, confidential and impartial advice to residents across a wide range of issues. Since 2013/14, the core grant awarded each year had been £144,000, payable in two instalments of £72,000.

It was reported that the SLA had been thoroughly reviewed in 2017/18 following substantial changes in the governance, management and service delivery of CAT. The revised SLA for 2017/18 had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held on 17 March 2017. All subsequent SLA’s had remained largely the same as the 2017/18 SLA with minor changes only, and all had been agreed by the relevant Portfolio Holder.

Cabinet was informed that Schedule 2 (2.8) of the SLA provided for reductions in CAT core services beyond their control. On 31 March 2020, CAT had reported that they had been operating a reduced service since 16 March 2020 due to the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown. This had involved a temporary cessation of all face-to-face advice. CAT staff had been deployed to remote home working, providing advice via email, telephone and in writing. The CAT’s office closure and suspension of services at their outreach sites had remained in force until recently. A number of key paid

employees and volunteer staff had been lost during the pandemic but numbers were now nearly back to pre-Covid levels, however, some were still undertaking the intensive training that they needed before they were able to give advice. A new, streamlined, training programme had been introduced so that new officers could be fast-tracked. A hybrid service would be in operation where there was a choice for residents - they could either 'drop-in' to surgeries and/or also get advice over the telephone or by email. Eventually, a community team would also be created this year (CAT were seeking funding) as the Families Advisor had proven very successful and there was a real need for that service.

In addition, and in order to ensure efficiencies and improve on last year's performance there had been a review of the telephone service. One solution was to implement a 'triage team' which would free up advisers and supervisors who could better use their skills elsewhere. The pandemic had seen CAT move their support from mostly in person drop-in during 2019/20, to mostly via email during 2020/21, and for 2021/22 had delivered most support via the telephone. The local telephone number for CAT had been publicised more widely rather than the Essex-wide contact number. The CAT team also now included a Warm Homes Adviser. This was a 2 year funded post to assist clients with income generation, accessing energy grants, switching suppliers and insulation advice which would end in October 2022. CAT expected this post to be re-funded at the end of the current contract.

It was felt that, during the Covid-19 pandemic, CAT had remained a vital information and advice service to the residents of Tendring. They had helped many people to navigate their way around both established and entirely new challenges such as furlough, Government schemes for the self-employed, redundancy, claiming benefits, dealing with debt, accessing food and services and housing issues.

CAT had produced a statistical dashboard, (the template used nationally), for activity during the years 2020/21 and 2021/22, which were attached at Appendices A and B respectively to the Portfolio Holder's report.

It was reported that, in 2020/21, the value applied to the benefits advice given had totalled £14,100,450 based on the CAT calculation method. In addition to the general advice statistics shown in Appendix B, specialist service statistics for 2021/22 included:

Debt Managed - £820,238
Debt Written Off - £724,175
Benefits Gained £4,124,047

It was noted that less people had been having employment issues over the past twelve months due to clearer Government guidance around Covid-19 and the ending of furlough. Current trends had seen an increase in debt clients over the past twelve months. This had included an increase in clients with rent and council tax arrears. 30.4% of households in Tendring were 'fuel poor' following the new electricity price cap being implemented, this was equivalent to 67,144 households in the area. The cost of a standard bill would rise by 50%. (A household was in fuel poverty if more than 10% of its income was spent on energy bills. Average fuel bills were set to reach almost £2000 per year.) It had also been noticed that more Section 21s were being issued by landlords but not for rent arrears. (A section 21 was the notice which a landlord must give to their tenant to begin the process to take possession of a property let on an [assured shorthold tenancy](#) without providing a reason for wishing to take possession).

Cabinet was advised that CAT would be providing interpreters to help Ukrainian refugees relocated to the Tendring District. The following services had also been developed during the last twelve months:-

	Families Adviser
Mon	Barnardos @ Sydney House
Tue	Jaywick Sands Community Forum
Wed	Mental Health Hub Clacton
Thur	Walton Community Forum
	Domestic Abuse Adviser
Tue	Carnarvon Road / Mental Health Hub
Wed	Outreach venues
Thur	Carnarvon Road / Mental Health Hub
	Warm Homes Adviser
Mon - Wed	Remote appointments, support and advice

In terms of assurance, Cabinet was informed that CAT were audited quarterly for advice given by Citizens Advice National on a RAYG rating. CAT had scored green every quarter which was classed as excellent at 75% or higher. CAT were also audited yearly on 9 areas of the organisation again on a RAYG rating, achieving green overall and scoring excellent for 7 of the 9 areas. This represented the best score the organisation had ever had and demonstrated continuous improvement during difficult times.

The reviewed SLA for 2022/23 was attached at Appendix C to the Portfolio Holder's report and was largely similar to that of last year. Schedule 2 (section 2.4) reflected the current reduction in drop-in services and referenced CAT's intention to increase these as staffing allowed. Schedule 2 (section 2.8) retained a reference to the impact of the pandemic on the service's availability.

A number of case studies were provided in Appendix D which demonstrated the range of advice available to Tendring residents and the results that could be obtained. Having duly considered all of the information and proposals and advice contained in the Partnerships Portfolio Holder's report and it being considered that CAT continued to support Tendring residents and offered value for money:-

It was moved by Councillor McWilliams, seconded by Councillor Bray and:-

RESOLVED that -

- a) Tendring District Council enters into a Service Level Agreement with Citizens Advice Tendring for a further year from 1st April 2022 on the terms and conditions, as set out in the updated agreement shown in Appendix C to item A.3 of the Report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder; and
- b) the Assistant Director (Partnerships) be authorised to sign that Agreement on the Council's behalf.

12. **MANAGEMENT TEAM ITEMS**

There were no such items to consider on this occasion.

The Meeting was declared closed at 11.09 am

Chairman