
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET,
HELD ON FRIDAY, 14TH DECEMBER, 2018 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), Zoe Fairley (Investment and Growth Portfolio Holder), Paul Honeywood (Housing Portfolio Holder), Lynda McWilliams (Health and Education Portfolio Holder), Fred Nicholls (Corporate Enforcement Portfolio Holder), Mick Skeels (Snr) (Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder) and Michael Talbot (Environment Portfolio Holder)

Group Leaders Present by Invitation:

Councillors Robert Bucke (Leader of the Liberal Democrats / Tendring First Group), Ivan Henderson (Leader of the Labour Group) and Mark Stephenson (Leader of the Tendring Independents Group)

Also Present: Councillor Giles Watling MP

In Attendance: Ian Davidson (Chief Executive), Martyn Knappett (Deputy Chief Executive), Paul Price (Corporate Director – Operational Services), 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), Karen Neath (Head of Leadership Support and Community), Tim Clarke (Head of Housing and Environmental Health), Anastasia Simpson (Head of People, Performance and Projects), Andy White (Head of Property Services) (except items 83 – 91), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer) and Will Lodge (Communications and Public Relations Manager)

Also in Attendance: Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections [Designate])

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Carlo Guglielmi (Deputy Leader of the Council & Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder), Joy Broderick (Leader of the Holland-on-Sea Group) and Mary Newton (Leader of the UKIP Group).

78. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Friday 9 November 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

79. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor I J Henderson declared a Personal Interest in relation to Agenda Item 13 – Report A.8 – Mayflower 400: An Opportunity for Tendring insofar as he was involved in the planned commemorations through his various roles and responsibilities as a Harwich Town Councillor, a member of the Harwich Tourism Group and a member of the management board for the Harwich Festival organisation.

Councillor Stock OBE declared a Personal Interest in Agenda Item 8 – Report A.3 – North Essex Garden Communities Limited – Shareholder Update and Approvals insofar as he was a Director on the Board of Directors of that company.

80. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

There were none on this occasion.

81. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CABINET MEMBERS

(1) Rapid Electric Vehicle Charging Point

The Corporate Enforcement Portfolio Holder (Councillor Nicholls) made the following statement:-

“This Council is considering installing a rapid electric vehicle charging point. Highways England have been providing opportunities for local authorities to install rapid electric vehicle charging points on the strategic highway network with grant funding for their installation. This is part of a wider project in the region and Babergh District and Mid-Suffolk District Councils took the lead and made the bids on behalf of other authorities.

The area proposed for the Tendring District is The Quay at Harwich and the charging point will be a very useful asset for the area and will encourage new visitors. It should also be a very useful asset for local businesses. The only downside is that we will have to convert one of the two disabled badge holder parking bays into a disabled adapted electric vehicle bay. Therefore disabled drivers will be able to use the bay only when charging a vehicle and non-disabled drivers will also be able to use it to charge their vehicle. However, there remains one other disabled bay which as 10% of the parking area is still higher than the recommended level of 6%.

The situation will be reviewed in future if a higher demand for additional disabled only parking is established.”

(2) Swim Safe Programme

The Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder (Councillor Skeels Snr.) made the following statement:-

“The Council has now received confirmation from Swim England that the Swim Safe programme will be rolled out in Clacton, Walton and Dovercourt from June until the end of August 2019. Around 2,000 children (between 7 and 14 years old) will be provided with free 60 minute Swim Safe sessions run by qualified lifeguards and instructors and which will include:-

- *Beach safety advice provided by qualified lifeguards on land;*
- *Up to 30 minutes in-water tuition with qualified instructors; and*

- *All the right kit for swimming outdoors (including swimming hats, wetsuits and swimming aids).*

82. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY THE COUNCIL - A.1 - PETITION: OLD FIRE STATION, MILL LANE, WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE

Cabinet recalled that, at the meeting of Council held on 27 November 2018, the Chief Executive had reported the receipt of a petition submitted by Mr Steven Walker, a resident of Walton-on-the-Naze. The petition had been signed by 105 residents of the District and had requested that the Council make the necessary arrangements (including making a preservation order) in order to protect the Old Fire Station building in Mill Lane, Walton-on-the-Naze from demolition.

In accordance with the Council's adopted scheme for dealing with petitions this matter was now before the Cabinet on the basis that the petition contained between 30 and 249 signatures. Mr Walker, as the lead petitioner, had been invited to address the Cabinet, present the petition and outline the action that the petitioners wanted the Council to take.

Planning Issues

Cabinet was advised that Officers had assumed that what was being asked for by the Petitioners was a Building Preservation *Notice* rather than an *Order*.

Members were informed that Building Preservation Notices were put in place by the Local Planning Authority in order to prevent a building being demolished or altered whilst a decision was awaited by the Secretary of State on whether the building should be formally listed by Historic England. It was important to note that if in the end Historic England did not list the building, the Council could be liable for costs as the landowner. The process for applying for a notice was the same for recommending a building or structure be listed.

With regard to the planning history of the site it was reported that the 'Old Fire Station' had subsequently been used as a public convenience. The land formed part of a Local Plan allocation within the emerging Plan, (MSA9) 'Former Town Hall site, Public Conveniences and depot Mill Lane' though there was some debate as to whether this site would remain an allocation in the Emerging Plan as the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA 2018) appeared to suggest this.

As far as planning applications were concerned, there was an historic application for the change of use to an office above the convenience. More recently, an application in 2005 (05/01507/OUT) had been refused for the erection of 10 flats on land adjacent to the public convenience/old fire station site. The refusal mentioned a lack of parking and flood risk.

Cabinet was advised that the site was located within the Frinton and Walton conservation area. The 2006 conservation area appraisal only mentioned the site very briefly.

Ownership and Future Use of the Site

Cabinet was reminded that the building belonged to the Council and that the Council was not bound to release it to any party. The Council's current plan was to remove the building in order to facilitate the delivery of a core statutory service and to make way for a substantial regeneration scheme when that could be brought forward. Any alternative proposal would have to be very attractive and not prejudice those objectives.

Members were informed that the Lead Petitioner has been in contact by email with the Council's Head of Property Services (Andy White) to state that there were three entrepreneurs who were interested in leasing the building for the following:-

- (1) a community project to enable young people to develop hi-tech skills and knowledge that might enable them to gain future employment; or
- (2) dance/exercise classes; or
- (3) community rehabilitation service for older people and those recovering from surgery/illness.

Mr White continued to liaise with Mr Walker in pursuing the above.

Mr Walker did not attend the meeting.

The Leader of the Council made the following statement:-

"I note the interest of local residents and the desire expressed in the petition for the building to be retained. At the same time I understand that Historic England has decided not to list the building because it does not meet their criteria of historic interest.

The public conveniences were closed as part of a strategy to focus resources on highly used facilities and to manage running costs. The building is in need of considerable repair which is likely to be a significant factor in future decisions.

I am also aware of the longer term potential of the land together with the adjoining old Town Hall site, which has been derelict for some time, to be redeveloped and together form something that will maximise benefit for both the town and the conservation area.

I would like to thank the community for their views and move the third of the options in the report: "Undertaking research into the matters raised" and ask that the Council's officers do further research including giving the interested parties three months to submit a developed expression of interest so that officers can then prepare a report for Members on the options for the site and any proposals from local businesses once these have been evaluated."

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor P B Honeywood and:-

RESOLVED that –

- (a) Officers be requested to undertake further research including giving the interested parties three months to submit a developed expression of interest so that officers can then prepare a report for Members on the options for the site and any proposals from local businesses once these have been evaluated; and
- (b) Mr Walker be informed, in writing, of the Cabinet's decision and that decision also be published on the Council's website.

83. **MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY A COMMITTEE - REFERENCE FROM RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - A.2 - PERFORMANCE REPORT: 2018/2019 SECOND QUARTER**

Cabinet was informed that, at the meeting of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 November 2018 (Minute 36 referred), that Committee had had before it a report of the Deputy Chief Executive which had presented the Performance Report for Quarter Two (July to September 2018), including the Corporate Plan and Priorities and Projects 2018/19.

The Deputy Chief Executive (Martyn Knappett) had outlined to the Committee the purpose of the Performance Report as a 'snapshot' performance management tool i.e. it helped the Council's senior management and Members see if the Council was delivering what it had set out to deliver.

Appendix A to the report had contained details of the 18 indicators and projects where performance had been measured. Of those, 15 (84%) were on, or above, their expected target and 3 (16%) were not in line with the expected performance.

The Council's Human Resources & Business Manager (Katie Wilkins) had given the Committee an update in respect of the indicators and projects.

In addition, the Deputy Chief Executive had given the Committee an update in respect of the "Transforming the Way We Work" Project. Matters that the Deputy Chief Executive had touched on included:-

- (1) Ongoing works at Pier Avenue and Northbourne Depot;
- (2) Barnes House Extension and Link – Tender Awarded;
- (3) Westleigh House – Timetable for demolition;
- (4) Town Hall works – Planning permission granted;
- (5) Firmstep: new customer portal;
- (6) Learning Zone – new e-learning platform; and
- (7) New HR Policies – Flexi Working and Remote Working.

In response to a question that had been submitted prior to the commencement of the meeting by Councillor Miles, the Deputy Chief Executive also gave an update on the Council's regeneration plans for land at Mill Lane, Walton-on-the-Naze which included the old Fire Station building which was the subject of the petition considered by Cabinet earlier in the meeting.

Having considered and discussed the information provided in the report the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had:-

"RESOLVED that this Committee recommends to Cabinet that –

- (a) *in the light of recent events, an in-year review of the milestones for the Garden Community project and the Local Plan be carried out with a view to establishing new, more realistic targets and milestones for these projects; and*
- (b) *an in-year review of the impact of the new National Planning Policy Framework's definitions of 'major and 'minor' applications on the Handling of Planning Applications speed of process figures be also carried out."*

The Cabinet had before it the written response of the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder in which he thanked the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee for its consideration and its recommendations and commented as follows:-

- “(a) The milestones for the North Essex Garden Communities project and Local Plan will be updated upon confirmation of the next steps for the Local Plan Examination process. This will likely be confirmed in December 2018 and milestones updated in January 2019.*
- (b) The handling of Planning Applications is measured in line with the Government’s Planning Performance Framework. An adjustment to the methodology for measuring speed of determination of major and non-major planning applications would have only a minor impact on performance. Performance against the targets for both major and non-major applications is good and the movement of some applications from one category to the other would be small.”*

Having considered the recommendations of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the response of the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder thereto:-

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor Skeels Snr. and:-

RESOLVED that the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s recommendations and the Portfolio Holder’s response thereto be noted.

84. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEM - A.3 - NORTH ESSEX GARDEN COMMUNITIES LTD - SHAREHOLDER UPDATE AND APPROVALS

Councillor Stock OBE had earlier in the meeting declared a Personal Interest in this item insofar as he was a Director on the Board of Directors of North Essex Garden Communities Limited.

The Cabinet gave consideration to a comprehensive report of the Leader of the Council (A.3) which provided it with an update on progress to date and the current position regarding the North Essex Garden Communities Project and which also sought its approval of key documents which were necessary to enable North Essex Garden Communities Limited (NEGC Ltd) to operate more effectively.

The Cabinet was advised that that the report did not, other than for information, address any Local Plan issues. Decisions relating to the Local Plan and any wider planning functions would be dealt with separately and that any decisions made in relation to, or by, NEGC Ltd could not predetermine or prejudge the outcome of the proper Local Plan process.

Members were aware that NEGC Ltd had been established in January 2017 by Braintree District, Colchester Borough, Tendring District and Essex County Councils (the company shareholders) and was the strategic delivery vehicle for the North Essex Garden Communities project. The basis for this was the Councils’ shared ambition to promote, plan and deliver sustainable strategic growth at scale and over the long-term; providing the housing, employment and necessary supporting infrastructure required to ensure the best outcomes for current and future communities of North Essex.

It was reported that to date NEGC Ltd had developed its strategic rationale and operational capacity with the support of both its shareholder Councils, the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) and key national agencies such as Homes England. The North Essex Garden Communities project was part of the national Garden Towns Villages & Cities programme run by MHCLG which provided direct access to other Garden Towns with associated learning and knowledge/information sharing opportunities, and resources. NEGC Ltd was the largest and most ambitious project in this programme.

Cabinet was informed that the role of NEGC Ltd had been successfully developed to the point where it was a fully operational company recognised by the public and private sectors and local communities, as the focal point for the North Essex Garden Communities project. This had included developing a strategic proposition for the North Essex Garden Communities which had gained significant traction with key Government departments and the development industry.

The report now before Cabinet sought the Council's, as one of the four shareholders, continued support for North Essex Garden Communities Ltd as the strategic delivery vehicle for the North Essex Garden Communities projects through the approval of an Interim Business Plan, Budget and Financial Procedures.

Members were made aware that the Board of NEGC Ltd had agreed an Interim Business Plan for 2018-19 for approval by its shareholders which set out the vision, objectives, work streams and funding requirements for the company in order to continue to support the delivery of North Essex Garden Communities. Key tasks during the year would be to evolve the approach to master-planning, innovation, economic development, programme funding, governance and delivery including consideration of transition towards a locally led development corporation style of approach to delivery of the NEGC project. The potential for the establishment of a Development Corporation would also form part of an options appraisal of a range of options for future delivery of the NEGC programme.

Cabinet was informed that the Interim Business Plan was a precursor to the future preparation of a five year Business Plan which would be progressed when further progress was made with the Local Plan. This was considered to be the best, and most prudent, approach to ensuring that NEGC Ltd continued to deliver positive outcomes on behalf of its shareholders and grant funders as the overall North Essex Garden Communities project progressed.

It was reported that the Interim Business Plan included a draft budget for 2018/19 which required the agreement of shareholders (as part of agreeing the Interim Business Plan). The budget was based on an expenditure of £2.967m against an income of £3.216m. The assumed income included an additional £100,000 contribution from shareholder Councils within 2018/19.

It was also reported that the budget currently assumed an additional £1m from Government in 2018/19. A final determination was still awaited on the exact amount of Government support, however, in the event that this support was less than was assumed, NEGC Ltd would scale back and / or cease certain activities contained within the interim business plan, commencing from the beginning of January 2019, so as to mitigate the budget shortfall. In those circumstances the shareholder Councils would also be provided with a further update.

Cabinet was advised that the forecast end of year balance was £249,000 which was assumed would be carried forward to future years. The report therefore sought agreement to commit £100,000 from this Council, subject to a formal request from NEGC Ltd.

Members were made aware that, to date the funding and spending for NEGC Ltd had principally taken place through Colchester Borough Council's accounts. The Interim Business Plan assumed that, in future, a significant part of the 2018/19 budget would pass to NEGC Ltd, although with some project costs being retained within the Council's account. The allocation of costs would be based on assumptions of which costs should be appropriately met by NEGC Ltd. It was proposed that the allocation between the Authorities accounts and NEGC Ltd would be determined by the shareholder councils' Section 151 Officers.

Cabinet was informed that, alongside the Interim Business Plan, NEGC Ltd was required to conduct its business efficiently and to ensure that it had sound financial management policies in place, which were strictly adhered to. Part of this process was the establishment of Financial Regulations, which would set out the framework which NEGC Ltd would use in order to manage its financial affairs, and this also required the approval of shareholders.

With the permission of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Watling MP addressed the meeting on the subject matter of this item.

Having considered the financial, risk and legal implications, the detailed proposals set out in the Interim Business Plan, the proposed 2018/19 Budget, the proposed Financial Procedure Rules, the proposed future decisions and work programme and the advice of Officers:-

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor Fairley and:-

RESOLVED that

- a) the implementation of an Interim Business Plan (subject to confirmation of Government funding) for NEGC Ltd for 2018/19 including the associated Budget, as set out in Appendix A to item A.3 of the Report of the Leader of the Council, be approved;
- b) the Financial Procedure Rules for NEGC Ltd, as set out in Appendix B to the above mentioned report, be approved;
- c) this Council's Section 151 Officer be authorised to agree any allocation of the project funds held by Colchester Borough Council between NEGC and the North Essex Authorities;
- d) the commitment of £100,000 from the Garden Communities Budget in 2018/19 upon a formal request by way of a NEGC Board resolution be approved;
- e) a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet in respect of funding assumptions for 2019/20; and

- f) the preparation of a full options appraisal of the Garden Communities delivery options to enable Members to take future decisions on potential Development Corporation proposals, with linked oversight arrangements between the North Essex Authorities, be approved.

85. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - JOINT REPORT OF THE FINANCE & CORPORATE RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND THE CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.4 - UTILISATION OF 20% INCREASE IN PLANNING FEES

The Cabinet gave consideration to a joint report of the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Enforcement Portfolio Holder (A.4) which sought its approval of the utilisation of the additional income created from the 20% increase in Planning Fees introduced in January 2018.

Cabinet recalled that, in January 2018, the Housing White Paper entitled "Fixing Our Broken Housing Market" (February 2017) had been introduced.

Prior to the introduction of the new fee levels, Local Planning Authorities had been invited to commit to re-investing the income from the increase in Planning Fees to the Planning Department. The report now before Members detailed the proposals for the re-investment of income to support five targeted areas including improvements to the Planning Service, namely:-

- Section 106 Agreements monitoring and recovery of obligations;
- Proactive monitoring and enforcement of largescale and strategic developments during build out periods;
- Planning Enforcement – professional evaluation of reactive enforcement complaints and prioritisation of cases in accordance with the harm assessment policy;
- GIS Development – progressing regulatory requirements with regard to data transparency and geospatial data; and
- Enhancing planning staff capacity and skills and other overall improvements to the delivery of the Planning Service (with regard to including e-planning and the office transformation project).

Having considered the information provided in the report:-

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor Nicholls and:-

RESOLVED that the re-investment of income from the 20% increase in planning fees to support the five targeted areas including service improvements, as set out in item A.4 of the Joint Report of the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder and the Corporate Enforcement Portfolio Holder, be approved.

86. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.5 - ADOPTION OF A FEE POLICY FOR MOBILE HOME SITE LICENSING

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Environment Portfolio Holder (A.5) which informed it about the changes to mobile home site licensing introduced by the Mobile Homes Act 2013 and also sought its approval for a Fees Policy.

Members were informed that there were 13 residential mobile home sites in the District that fell under the licensing regime introduced by the Mobile Homes Act 2013 and that the Council had the power to levy a fee for certain activities related to the licensing and the enforcement of licensing provisions on mobile home sites.

Having considered the financial, risk and legal implications of the decision together with the other background information and advice provided by Officers:-

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

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the Fees Policy for Mobile Home Site Licensing, as set out at Appendix A to item A.5 of the Report of the Environment Portfolio Holder, be adopted with immediate effect; and
- (b) the Corporate Director (Operational Services) be authorised to review the Fees Policy from time to time, as required, with any amendments to be included within the Council's Fees and Charging Schedule.

87. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.6 - UPDATED FINANCIAL FORECAST / BUDGET FOR 2019/20

The Cabinet gave consideration to a detailed report of the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder (A.6) which sought to enable Cabinet to consider the updated financial forecast for 2019/20 for consultation with the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members were informed that, as part of maintaining a 'live' forecast, further updates to the position for 2019/20 had been made since the financial forecast had been last considered by Cabinet on 9 November 2018.

It was reported that, at this stage of the budget process, there was a net surplus of £0.002m forecast in 2019/20, an overall change of £0.511m compared with the £0.509m deficit previously reported to Cabinet on 9 November 2018. The long term forecast therefore remained on target.

Cabinet was advised that it was important to highlight that the 2019/20 budget included an estimated collection fund surplus of £0.710m. Although this was an on-going item in the budget it was reviewed each year based on in-year collection performance and could therefore only be deemed a one-off 'saving' in 2019/20. Although the amount was available to support the 2019/20 budget, if this was excluded from the forecast, there would be a budget deficit of £0.708m for 2019/20.

Members were informed that, although subject to potential changes to the forecast over the remaining budget setting period, the current forecasted surplus of £0.002m would be paid into the Forecast Risk Fund.

It was reported that any necessary changes emerging from the detailed Local Government Finance Settlement would be included in the figures that would be

presented to Cabinet in January 2019 when it considered the final budget proposals after consultation with the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Cabinet was made aware that once the final position for 2019/20 was determined, the remaining years of the 10 year forecast would be revised, set against the revised 2019/20 position and would be reported to Members later in the budget setting process.

Members were informed that the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 29 November 2018, had considered the in-year performance against the budget as at the end of September 2018 and the long term financial forecast update and had made the following recommendations to Cabinet:-

- 1) *that the Section 151 Officer undertakes a review of the digital transformation business case in terms of estimated costs and planned savings and the performance against the budget to date, with an update to be provided in the Quarter 3 Corporate Budget Monitoring Report 2018/19.*
- 2) *That the Head of IT and Corporate Resilience attends the Resources and Services Committee meeting on 11 February 2019 to discuss digital transformation, as part of the review of the Performance Report 2018/19, Third Quarter.*

The Cabinet was aware that the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder had noted and supported both of those recommendations.

With the permission of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Watling MP addressed the meeting on the subject matter of this item.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Head of Finance, Revenues and Benefits (Richard Barrett) and his officers for their ongoing hard work in maintaining the Council's budgets and accounts. He also made the following statement:-

“There have only been a limited number of changes since we considered the forecast on 9 November – these are highlighted in Appendix A with comments provided within the report.

One of the more significant amendments is in respect of increased business rate income, which may not be such a surprise given the level of commercial property growth we are seeing around the district.

It would be good if I could give the assurance that this level of income was something that automatically continued year on year across the long term forecast. However I can't. The reason being that we nervously await the outcome from the Government's fair funding review next year and indications suggest that business rate income could be subject to a 'reset' with us potentially losing some of this money to the treasury.

The extension to the waste and recycling contract has now also been fully reflected within the updated forecast. The cost of this is more than expected due to RPI increases which would apply across the waste collection market in general rather than something more specific to our own local arrangements.

In terms of net savings, we have identified £328k with all items set out in Appendix B.

We have included a number of unavoidable cost pressures at this stage but recognise there are further items we need to consider funding in 2019/20. Details are set out in Appendix C. It is worth stating that I am committed to providing funding for a number of items set out in the appendix such as the mental health hub and air show. I expect these to be included within the final budget that we will recommend to Council in February.

Several months ago I announced at Cabinet my plan to set up a Clacton Town Centre Working party and I felt that it would be helpful to update Cabinet today on progress made and a practical way in which we plan to back up the work of the Working Party on the ground.

Firstly, I would like to thank Councillor Fairley and the Working Party for the excellent work which they have done.

I am really looking forward to the feedback from the various aspects which it has investigated and the actions to be recommended to the Cabinet. I think that these discussions will shape the future direction of the town centre and bring new economic and community opportunities.

I know that the discussions so far have included looking at the planning policy for the future of the town, car parking, town centre living and digital connectivity etc.

These are all key strategic issues which if we get right will provide a foundation for the town centre to flourish in the 21st Century and beyond and which I am delighted the Working Party is addressing.

When considering something like the Town Centre, however, it is sometimes difficult to look beyond the practical and immediate issues "on the ground, here and now". So inevitably a number of more operational issues have been considered. These are for other parts of the Council to address and take forward.

One such issue is street drinking and anti-social behaviour in the Town. We will always consider every possible solution to these issues and recognise there is a need for a balance between proactive measures and enforcement.

To support this key issue we are pressing forward aiming to appoint an anti-social behaviour post, licensed to take enforcement action. This will create a visible presence in the town centre and address anti-social behaviour quickly, thus encouraging residents and visitors to spend more time in the town centre.

Overall we have moved from a deficit of £509k to a small surplus of £2k and continue to remain in-line with the long term forecast.

Although subject to the Government's fair funding review, we remain in a good position going into 2019/20 and beyond.

There may be further changes to the forecast as it develops, which will be reflected in the report to Cabinet in January. However the forecast set out in the report provides the most up to date position and I welcome the comments from the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee who are meeting on Monday."

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

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor Skeels Snr. and:-

RESOLVED that –

- a) the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is thanked for the work it has done to date in reviewing the forecast as it has developed;
- b) the comments of the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder in response to issues raised by the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee be endorsed;
- c) the updated Financial Forecast 2019/20, as set out in item A.6 of the Report of the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder and its accompanying Appendices, be approved and;
- d) the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee's comments on this latest financial forecast for 2019/20 be requested.

88. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE INVESTMENT AND GROWTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.7 - SME GROWTH FUND PROGRESS REPORT

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Investment and Growth Portfolio Holder (A.7) which presented a progress report on the SME Growth Fund.

Cabinet recalled that, at its meeting held on 20 April 2018, it had decided to extend the Council's SME Growth Fund to 31 March 2020, and to widen the focus of the scheme to include all non-retail sectors. To fund that extension Cabinet had allocated £250,000 from uncommitted funding which at that time was set against the Growth Fund Budget.

It was reported that since April 2018 five applications had secured a positive appraisal and had been awarded grant funding totalling £261,853. A further two applications were currently in the pipeline but had yet to be progressed to the Full Application stage. In addition several businesses were in the process of registering their interest in securing grant funding through the scheme.

Members were informed that, overall, since the scheme's launch in late 2015, ten applications had been supported by the Fund. This equated to a total grant allocation of £400,104 (which included £125,000 that had been provided by Essex County Council when the scheme had first launched). This funding would create 37 new FTE jobs and safeguard 17.5 FTE jobs, and leverage £831,852.31 in private sector investment. This level of investment in the economy of the District represented a positive return on the Council's financial contribution to businesses via the scheme.

Given the success of the scheme, Cabinet was therefore requested to allocate a further £250,000 to the SME Growth Fund scheme, in order that the Council's work to stimulate enterprise, innovation, business and employment growth in the District via this mechanism could continue.

With the permission of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Watling MP addressed the meeting on the subject matter of this item.

Having considered the information provided in the progress report:-

It was moved by Councillor Fairley, seconded by Councillor Stock OBE and:-

RESOLVED that the SME Growth Fund scheme be allocated a further £250,000 from unallocated resources in the Council's Business Investment and Growth budget.

89. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - JOINT REPORT OF THE FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES PORTFOLIO HOLDER, THE INVESTMENT AND GROWTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND THE LEISURE AND TOURISM PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.8 - MAYFLOWER 400: AN OPPORTUNITY FOR TENDRING

Councillor I J Henderson had earlier in the meeting declared a Personal Interest in relation to this item insofar as he was involved in the planned commemorations through his various roles and responsibilities as a Harwich Town Councillor, a member of the Harwich Tourism Group and as a member of the management board for the Harwich Festival organisation.

The Cabinet gave consideration to a detailed joint report of the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder, the Investment and Growth Portfolio Holder and the Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder which requested that Cabinet approved an action plan and associated budgetary provision in order to set out the Council's commitment to the Mayflower 400 commemorations.

Members were aware that the year 2020 marked the 400th anniversary of the sailing of the Mayflower ship to America. The port of Harwich had played an intrinsic role in that iconic story (which was linked to the birth of American civilisation and the story of Thanksgiving). The ship and its captain, Christopher Jones had hailed from Harwich and John Alden, the Cooper and first pilgrim to set foot on American soil, was also widely believed to have originated from Harwich.

It was reported that this anniversary provided a once in a generation opportunity for Harwich to regenerate its tourism offer and to open the door to new markets and much needed long term economic development. It was widely believed that thirty five million people could claim to be descendants of the Pilgrims who had boarded the Mayflower and evidence showed that 12% of the general population of the United States of America (USA) saw the anniversary as a reason to visit England in 2020 and revisit the story of their ancestors. That evidence was supported by a number of Mayflower themed tours already being promoted in the USA and a number of bookings confirmed from 2019 onwards.

Cabinet was informed that an externally commissioned report projected that the economic impact of Mayflower 400 nationally for the period 2019-2024 was anticipated at a £615m increase in direct spend and £768m in business turnover. Even a very small proportion of this national uplift being directed to the District of Tendring would have a wide ranging impact on the local economy.

Members were aware that the Council had been working, for around three years, with The 'Mayflower Compact', which was a group of national and international partners, to develop an official 'Mayflower Trail' to expand and open new tourism markets in the USA, The Netherlands and the wider United Kingdom (UK). A decision had already

been made by the Council to open up the historic house of Captain Christopher Jones to visitors for the first time.

Cabinet was advised that The Mayflower Compact was a unique partnership of 11 UK destinations which were connected by the Mayflower story. With central Government money and other external funding secured over recent years, the group had been able to work extensively with the USA travel market and to promote the trail at international trade shows such as 'World Travel Market' and 'Seatrade'. This had elevated the District of Tendring to a platform it could not achieve in isolation and had attracted USA journalists, esteemed travel writers and, importantly, had led to group travel bookings being confirmed some two years in advance of their arrival. Through this platform, Mayflower 400 had the potential to confirm and re-establish Tendring as a District of outstanding heritage on an international level and be the catalyst for long term regeneration through tourism.

Members were informed that, in order to produce a tangible tourism product that would ensure a high quality, sustainable experience was offered to visitors, an action plan, including visitor attractions, events and physical assets had been developed to maximise the benefits of the Mayflower anniversary and to showcase the heritage offered by Harwich and the wider Tendring District. That action plan was before Cabinet as Appendix A to the aforementioned joint report and included the opening of Christopher Jones' house together with the following projects:-

- the provision of a Welcome/Heritage Centre to showcase the relationship between Harwich and the Mayflower in an interactive museum style experience;
- the provision of a heritage trail around the historic town of Harwich, including way markers, trail-heads and pavement plaques;
- a diverse programme of Mayflower themed events throughout the anniversary year; and
- a programme of sport.

Cabinet was made aware that it would take a collaborative approach with a range of key partners and support from the local business community to ensure that the full potential of Mayflower 400 was realised. With that in mind, the budget identified of £135,000 would be used to attract additional funding from partners, such as Essex County Council and Harwich Town Council and provide match funding for appropriate external funding bids. The Council was actively talking to partners about additional investment. Each project listed in the action plan would require the authority of the Portfolio Holders for Finance & Corporate Resources, Investment & Growth and Leisure & Tourism before they could be progressed.

With the permission of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Watling MP addressed the meeting on the subject matter of this item.

Members gave a vote of thanks to the Head of Sport and Leisure (Mike Carran) and his team for the huge amount of effort and time that they had devoted, and continued to devote to this unique opportunity for the District.

Having considered the information provided in the joint report and the accompanying Appendix:-

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

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the action plan for Mayflower 400, as set out in Appendix A to item A.8 of the Joint Report of the Finance and Corporate Resources Portfolio Holder, the Investment and Growth Portfolio Holder and the Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder, be approved and adopted;
- (b) a budget of £135,000 be set aside in 2018/19 (£68,000 from the Business Investment and Growth Budget and £67,000 from the New Burdens Funding carried forward from 2017/18) to support the Mayflower 400 action plan;
- (c) authority to approve the allocation of the budget to individual projects, together with securing match funding on a project by project basis, be delegated to the Portfolio Holders for Finance & Corporate Resources, Investment & Growth and Leisure & Tourism.

90. MANAGEMENT TEAM ITEMS

There were none on this occasion.

91. SEASONAL SALUTATIONS

The Leader of the Council wished everyone present a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

Those persons present suitably responded.

The Meeting was declared closed at 11.45 am

Chairman