
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET,
HELD ON FRIDAY, 26TH JUNE, 2020 AT 10.30 AM
MEETING WAS HELD IN ACCORDANCE WITH SI 2020/392. LINK TO LIVE STREAM
IS FOUND HERE: [HTTPS://WWW.TENDRINGDC.GOV.UK/LIVEMEETINGS](https://www.tendringdc.gov.uk/livemeetings)**

Present: Councillors Neil Stock OBE (Leader of the Council)(Chairman), 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)(except items 14 - 17 (part)), 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: Councillor Peter Cawthron

In Attendance: Ian Davidson (Chief Executive), Paul Price (Deputy Chief Executive & Corporate Director (Place and Economy)), Damian Williams (Acting Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery)), Richard Barrett (Assistant Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer), Tim Clarke (Assistant Director (Housing and Environment)), Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services and Elections), Peter Russell (Executive Projects Manager - Housing), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager), William Lodge (Communications Manager) and Karen Hardes (IT Training Officer)

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Joy Broderick (Portfolio Holder for Independent Living) and Carlo Guglielmi (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance).

15. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on Friday 29 May 2020 be approved as a correct record.

16. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

17. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

[Covid-19 Public Health Emergency Update](#)

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock OBE) referred to the recent announcement by the Prime Minister that the Covid-19 'lock down' measures would be substantially eased from 4 July 2020. He paid tribute to the vast majority of the residents of the District who had, in effect, voluntarily put their lives on hold and borne various forms of hardship for the last three months.

Councillor Stock expressed grave concern for the economic situation in the country and, in particular, the District which would exacerbate the acknowledged high levels of health inequality and deprivation in the District. He stated that there was therefore an urgent need to get the District's economy 'back up and running'.

The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive then responded to points made by Councillors I J Henderson and Allen.

18. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CABINET MEMBERS

There were no announcements made by Cabinet Members on this occasion.

19. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY THE COUNCIL

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

20. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY A COMMITTEE

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

21. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEMS - A.1 - EXECUTIVE DECISIONS TAKEN AS A MATTER OF URGENCY

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Leader of the Council (A.1) which notified Members of recent urgent Executive Decisions taken by the Leader of the Council on behalf of the Cabinet.

The Cabinet recalled that, as part of the Council's response to the COVID-10 public health emergency the Council's Monitoring Officer had produced a formal "Note on Decision Making Business Continuity Arrangements" which had set out the ways in which the normal operational business of the Council could continue in relation to decisions which would normally be referred to Cabinet, Council or Committees.

In relation to Cabinet decisions the Monitoring Officer's formal Note as issued on 20 March 2020 had contained the following information and advice:-

"The Constitution requires certain matters to be decided by Cabinet collectively. The Leader of the Council may exercise any of the powers delegated to the Cabinet:

- a. Following a resolution of the Cabinet (subject to the Constitution), or*
- b. In cases of urgency, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer and/or Section 151 Officer.*

In cases of urgency the decision of the Leader of the Council will be recorded and published in accordance with the Constitution. The Leader of the Council will also be

required to make a public statement at the next formal meeting of the Cabinet which will explain why they had taken the decision as a matter of urgency.

Therefore, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, it was recommended that to enable formal decisions to be made on behalf of Cabinet the following procedure should be adopted:

- *Reports that would have been considered by Cabinet are emailed to the Group Leaders;*
- *a period of five working days would be provided for Group Leaders to email any comments/questions etc. to the relevant Portfolio Holder, Leader and officer(s) identified;*
- *responses to comments/questions would be supplied to the Group Leaders;*
- *this information will be taken into account by the Leader prior to making his formal decision;*
- *a formal decision will be published recording the matters taken into account;*
- *at the first formal meeting of Cabinet a report of the decisions taken by the Leader under urgency powers will be produced; and*
- *if it was necessary for a key decision to be made under urgency provisions this must be reported to Full Council (in accordance with the Access to Information Procedure Rules 15 & 16.2).*

Whilst it was anticipated that decisions taken during urgency provisions would be limited or uncontroversial in nature, with Group Leaders' comments being sought prior to decisions being made, it must be highlighted that the ability of Members to undertake the statutory overview and scrutiny function is not removed."

The Monitoring Officer had considered that, in responding to COVID-19, the Council was in exceptional times which therefore satisfied the grounds of urgency.

It was reported that in making the decisions in question the Leader of the Council had exercised his delegated power as set out in the Council's Constitution in Part 3, Schedule 3 (Responsibility for Executive Functions) - Section 3 (General Principles Regarding Decision Making by the Cabinet) – Principle 4b [Part 3.28].

Members were reminded that the decisions taken as a matter of urgency had related to the following matters:-

- (1) Business Rates Covid-19 Grants Scheme [Published 26 March 2020];
- (2) CAROS Scheme – Waiver of Rents [Published 26 March 2020];
- (3) Council Tax Hardship Scheme [Published 26 March 2020];
- (4) Tendring Community Fund – Allocation of £1,000 to Members [Published 26 March 2020];
- (5) Write-Off of Leisure Facilities Income for April 2020 [Published 26 March 2020];
- (6) Annual Capital and Treasury Strategy 2020/21 [Published 24 April 2020];
- (7) Annual Review of the Council's Constitution [Published 24 April 2020];
- (8) Creative and Cultural Strategy for Tendring [Published 24 April 2020];
- (9) Education, Economy and Skills [Published 24 April 2020];
- (10) Performance Report Quarter 3: October – December 2019 [Published 24 April 2020];
- (11) Scrutiny of the new Waste and Recycling Collection Service [Published 24 April 2020];

- (12) Tendring Heritage Strategy [Published 24 April 2020];
- (13) Write-off Leisure Facilities Memberships Income for May 2020 [Published 29 April 2020]; and
- (14) Discretionary Business Grants Scheme [Published 2 June 2020].

Having considered the contents of the report:-

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, moved by Councillor Talbot and:-

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) the urgent decisions taken by the Leader of the Council on behalf of the Cabinet, as detailed in this report, be formally endorsed.

22. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.2 - PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS: AUGUST 2020 TO APRIL 2021

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder (A.2) which enabled it to give consideration to the proposed programme of meetings for the period August 2020 to April 2021.

Members were aware that the Cabinet was required by the Constitution, to submit for formal approval to the Annual Meeting of the Council a programme of meetings for the forthcoming Municipal Year. However, due to the outbreak of Covid-19 and the ensuing global public health emergency, meetings of the Council (including the Annual Meeting), its Committees and the Cabinet had been unable to take place during March, April and early May 2020. Legislation had been passed that permitted Councils not to hold an Annual Meeting in 2020.

In addition, Parliament had enacted The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 (the "Regulations") which enabled local authorities to hold meetings remotely such as video conferencing and to 'live stream' those meetings to enable the public to watch, and/or listen to, the proceedings.

It was reported that Paragraph 4 of those Regulations permitted the Council to determine how such meetings were held and enabled flexibility on the time and date and frequency without the requirement of additional notice. With the approval of the relevant Chairmen, one Cabinet meeting, two Planning Committee meetings, one Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee meeting and one Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting had been arranged and successfully held under the new Regulations.

It was therefore considered timely that a full programme of meetings for the remainder of what would have been the 2020/21 municipal year be submitted for Cabinet's endorsement in order that it could then be submitted for approval to Full Council. The programme also included provisional dates for part of 2021/22.

Having considered the proposed programme of meetings and in order to enable this matter to be submitted to full Council for its decision:-

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

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the programme of meetings for the Council and its Committees, as set out in the Appendix to this report, be agreed, in principle, and be submitted to Full Council for formal approval; and
- (b) the proposed dates for All Member Briefings for Members be noted.

23. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.3 - HOUSING STRATEGY 2020-2025: DELIVERING HOMES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF LOCAL PEOPLE

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Housing Portfolio Holder (A.3) which sought its endorsement of a new Housing Strategy for the period 2020-2025.

The Cabinet was aware that local authorities were not required by Government to have a formal housing strategy, but that they were expected to adopt a strategic approach to housing in their local areas in order to deliver a thriving housing market and address local needs. To that end a draft Housing Strategy had been agreed by Cabinet at its meeting held in July 2019 in order to enable consultation to be undertaken seeking the views of the public and the Council's partners.

Members recalled that the strategy identified four key strategic housing priorities as follows:

- Delivering homes to meet the needs of local people
- Reducing and preventing homelessness and rough sleeping
- Making the best use of and improving existing housing
- Supporting people in their homes and communities.

It was reported that it was the first of those strategic housing priorities that had given the Strategy its title as by the end of the life of the strategy, it was expected that there would be new council housing being delivered in the District for the first time in a generation.

Having considered the contents of the proposed Strategy and in order to enable the Strategy to be submitted to full Council for its formal adoption:-

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

RESOLVED that –

- (a) Cabinet recommends to Full Council that the new Housing Strategy 2020-2025 and its accompanying Delivery Plan be formally adopted; and
- (b) the Housing Portfolio Holder be authorised to monitor performance against the Delivery Plan with periodic updates being presented to Cabinet following the Strategy's adoption by Full Council.

24. **CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.4 - FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY FOR PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING**

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Housing Portfolio Holder (A.4) which informed it about the delivery of financial assistance for Private Sector Housing and also sought its agreement for a revised Financial Assistance Policy (FAP).

Cabinet recalled that it had last agreed revisions to the FAP during 2015.

It was reported that, whilst minor amendments had been made to the policy since, it had now undergone a thorough review in order to better reflect current demand and to make better use of the funding that was available.

Cabinet was made aware that the revisions to the FAP primarily sought to increase spending from the Better Care Fund and to offer a broader range of assistance that could be delivered faster and in a more targeted fashion to those in need.

Having duly considered the contents of the proposed revised FAP:-

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

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the update on delivery of the service since 2015 be noted;
- (b) the revised Financial Assistance Policy for Private Sector Housing as appended to the Housing Portfolio Holder's report be approved and implemented; and
- (c) the Housing Portfolio Holder be authorised to make changes to the policy if required after it has been approved.

25. **CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.5 - FUTURE USE OF SPENDELLS HOUSE, WALTON-ON-THE-NAZE**

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Housing Portfolio Holder (A.5) which informed it of the work undertaken by officers to attempt to find a future use for Spendells House and which also sought its agreement to bring the building back into use as a temporary accommodation unit for homeless households and, in particular, family households.

Cabinet recalled that, following its decision taken on 23 March 2018, Spendells House had been closed and its residents relocated to other housing within the District. The primary reason for its closure had been due to very low demand from those eligible to live in sheltered housing.

It was reported that options for the future use of the site had been considered with the conclusion that the scheme could provide an alternative option to the Council in responding to the demand for temporary accommodation given the increase in homelessness over recent years. Due to the increasing number of homelessness applications and temporary accommodation placements over recent years, which was a trend that showed no sign of diminishing the Council currently was forced to source

temporary accommodation externally via local property owners and bed and breakfast establishments.

Cabinet was advised that, with an estimated capital investment of £0.600m from the Housing Revenue Account, Spendells House could be brought into use as a council owned and managed temporary accommodation providing a better quality and more versatile provision than was currently available externally. The project would enable significant savings to be made compared with the cost of existing options used by the Council which would represent an average 19% return on the Council's investment.

Having duly considered the contents of the report and, in particular, the proposals and advice, risks and implications detailed therein:-

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

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the outcome of the work undertaken in identifying an alternative use for the Spendells House site, Walton-on-the-Naze be noted;
- (b) in consideration of the increase in temporary accommodation placements across the District and significant associated costs, Cabinet agrees that the Spendells House site should be retained and reconfigured for the provision of temporary housing accommodation;
- (c) the Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, be authorised to submit a planning application for the change of use of Spendells House in order to form hostel type accommodation;
- (d) subject to the above, the necessary works be undertaken to the property at an estimated cost of £0.600m, with this cost being met in 2020/21 from within the existing Housing Revenue Account capital programme; and
- (e) the Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery) be authorised to make the necessary adjustments to the base on-going revenue budget (both General Fund and Housing Revenue Account) in order to reflect the on-going cost of operating Spendells House as temporary accommodation, but with no overall net impact on existing budgets.

26. MANAGEMENT TEAM ITEMS

There were no items referred to the Cabinet by the Council's Management Team on this occasion.

The Meeting was declared closed at 11.37 am

Chairman