
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET,
HELD ON FRIDAY, 25TH JUNE, 2021 AT 10.30 AM
IN THE PRINCES THEATRE, TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA,
CO15 1SE**

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

Group Leaders Present by Invitation:

Councillors Jayne Chapman (Leader of the Independent Group), Ivan Henderson (Leader of the Labour Group), Gary Scott (Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group), Mark Stephenson (Leader of the Tendring Independents Group) and Gina Placey (Deputy Leader of the Tendring First Group)

Also Present: None

In Attendance: Ian Davidson (Chief Executive), Lisa Hastings (Deputy Chief Executive & Assistant Director (Governance) and Monitoring Officer), Damian Williams (Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery)), Richard Barrett (Assistant Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer), Anastasia Simpson (Assistant Director (Partnerships)), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager), William Lodge (Communications Manager), Kai Aberdeen (Theatre General Manager (Technical)), Katie Wilkins (Human Resources and Business Manager) and Matt Cattermole (Communications Assistant)

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Carlo Guglielmi (Deputy Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance) and Councillor Terry Allen (Leader of the Tendring First Group).

20. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet, held on Friday 21 May 2021, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Placey (Deputy Leader of the Tendring First Group) declared a Personal Interest in respect of Agenda Item 10 (Report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder – A.3 – Citizens Advice Tendring – Service Level Agreement 2021/22) insofar as she was a Trustee on the Citizens Advice Tendring Board.

22. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

There were no announcements made by the Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock OBE) on this occasion.

23. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CABINET MEMBERS**Roll out of Mental Health Well-being Hubs in Schools across the District**

The Portfolio Holder for Partnerships (Councillor McWilliams) was very pleased to announce that twenty-one schools in Tendring and Colchester were opening up new Wellbeing Hubs after a successful pilot scheme at Great Bentley Primary School. That School, working in partnership with Tendring District Council (TDC), had first launched its wellbeing hub in April 2017 in order to provide a focus on its pupils' wellbeing and help them to thrive, initially running as a six month trial. Following that pilot and its evaluation, which had shown that it had been successful, the North East Essex Health & Wellbeing Alliance (the Alliance) had granted £245,000 from its Investment Fund in order to roll-out the scheme across the District to 21 more schools. Delayed by Covid, all of the relevant training was now in place and baseline data collected, and the 21 school hubs had officially opened. A ribbon cutting ceremony had been held at Great Bentley Primary School on Monday 21 June to mark the transition from pilot to permanent initiative.

Councillor McWilliams stated that she had been very impressed by the scheme and informed Cabinet that the Great Bentley hub was an after school facility, where children with mild to moderate mental health issues were supported in group activity around the themes of play, art, construction, and science, gaining a "rucksack of skills" to help them understand self and learn skills to take them forward into secondary school and beyond. She reported that feedback from the children had included: "I have someone to talk to now – so my worry seems smaller"; "I understand that anxiety is normal but it doesn't stay for ever and I have ways to work with it"; "Learning how to use my breath has really helped"; and "Just knowing someone cares and is there for me makes things a whole lot better".

Councillor McWilliams also informed Cabinet that, in addition, the hub also offered information sessions for parents and carers covering topics such as sleep, nutrition and behaviour management. She further reported that Tracey Caffull, the Executive Head Teacher at Great Bentley Primary School, had stated the hub had made such a positive impact on young people's lives by both supporting pupils with tailored sessions that had helped them develop an awareness of self, the skills to gain confidence and strategies to support but also engaging with parents to ensure children received enough sleep, a good diet and consistent responses from the adults around them.

Councillor McWilliams then responded to a question asked by Councillor I J Henderson in relation to waiting times for children to see a counsellor after the initial assessment of their mental health issues by confirming that he would receive a written response.

Octopus Ahoy!

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Tourism (Councillor Porter) informed Cabinet that the "Octopus Ahoy!" street art trail had officially gone 'live' that morning. There was an 'app' available to download which included sites across the District for children to find and win prizes.

24. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY THE COUNCIL

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

25. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY A COMMITTEE

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

26. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEMS - A.1 - EXECUTIVE DECISION(S) 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 Decision(s) 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-19 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, inter alia, 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 is recommended that to enable formal decisions to be made on behalf of Cabinet the following procedure should be adopted:

- 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, 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 decision 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 decision taken as a matter of urgency had related to:-

“Additional Restrictions Business Grant Scheme [Published 7 June 2021]”

Decision: That the Leader of the Council, on behalf of the Cabinet, approves the extension of the application deadline for the existing Additional Restrictions Business Grant Scheme from 31 May 2021 to 30 June 2021.”

Having considered the contents of the report:

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

RESOLVED that –

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

27. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.2 - ANNUAL CAPITAL AND TREASURY STRATEGY FOR 2021/22 (INCLUDING PRUDENTIAL AND TREASURY INDICATORS)

Cabinet had before it a report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder (A.2) which sought its approval of the Annual Capital and Treasury Strategy for 2021/22 (including Prudential and Treasury Indicators) for submission to Council on 13 July 2021.

It was reported that the Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations required the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing, and to prepare an annual investment strategy (as required by Investment Guidance subsequent to the Act) that set out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments, “having regard” to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. Revised editions of both documents had been issued in December 2017.

Members were reminded that, from 2019/20 the Capital Strategy had been combined with the Treasury Strategy into one document, which was required to be updated/approved annually.

Cabinet recalled that the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder had approved the Annual Capital and Treasury Strategy for 2021/2022, including the Prudential and Treasury Indicators, on 7 April 2021 for consultation with the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

It was reported that the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered the Strategy at its meeting held on 24 May 2021. Their comment along with the response of the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance was as follows:

Comment of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee recommended that Cabinet approves the submission of all schemes for which there were reserve provisions and one off funds set aside, be subject to the assessment set out in the draft Annual Capital and Treasury Strategy 2021/22 and presented to the Officer Project Board to determine whether the funding should be released.

PFH Response

“This will effectively form part of the review of all key projects and activities that is currently underway as part of the accelerated delivery programme.”

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock OBE) formally thanked the Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee for reviewing the Strategy and for its comment.

Pursuant to the provisions of Cabinet Procedure Rule 1.5(ii) the Leader of the Labour Group (Councillor I J Henderson) requested that his Group’s concerns about the following matter be recorded in the minutes of the meeting:-

- whether the Council’s project to build 10 new Council owned homes in Jaywick Sands had been subject to evaluation in respect of its value for money; its expected return on the capital investment and an impact assessment.

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock OBE) requested that a detailed response be sent to Councillor Henderson on the above.

Having considered the Strategy and the proposals contained therein:-

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- a) notes the outcome from the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 24 May 2021 and agrees the response thereto from the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance; and
- b) agrees that the Annual Capital and Treasury Strategy for 2021/22 (including Prudential and Treasury Indicators), attached within Appendix A to item A.2 of the Report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder, can be submitted to Council for its approval.

28. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.3 - CITIZENS ADVICE TENDRING - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT 2021/22

Earlier on in the meeting Councillor Placey (Deputy Leader of the Tendring First Group) had declared a Personal Interest in respect of this item insofar as she was a Trustee on the Citizens Advice Tendring Board.

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder (A.3) which sought its agreement to an updated Service Level Agreement (SLA) with Citizens Advice Tendring (CAT) for 2021/22.

It was reported that Tendring District Council had provided grant funding to CAT backed by an annually agreed SLA, for a number of years. This 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.

Members were made aware 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 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. 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.

Cabinet was advised that Schedule 2 (2.8) of the 2020/21 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 an envisaged temporary cessation of all face-to-face advice. Advice staff had been deployed to remote home working, providing advice via email, telephone and in writing. The CAT's office closures and suspension of services at their outreach sites had remained in force since that time. CAT had seen the departure of a significant number of volunteers during the course of the pandemic but had recently recruited a number of new volunteers and were in the process of undertaking intensive training with those individuals.

Having considered all of the information contained in the Portfolio Holder's detailed report:-

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

RESOLVED that -

- a) Tendring District Council enters into a Service Level Agreement with Citizens Advice Tendring for a further year from 1st April 2021 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) authorises the Assistant Director (Partnerships) to sign the agreement on the Council's behalf.

29. MANAGEMENT TEAM ITEMS

There were none on this occasion.

30. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor McWilliams 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.

31. EXEMPT MINUTE OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 21 MAY 2021

It was **RESOLVED** that the exempt minute of the meeting of the Cabinet, held on Friday 21 May 2021, be approved as a correct record.

The Meeting was declared closed at 10.48 am

Chairman