
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET,
HELD ON FRIDAY, 25TH MARCH, 2022 AT 10.30 AM
COMMITTEE ROOM - TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA, CO15
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Cabinet Members Present:	Councillor Neil Stock OBE	Leader of the Council (Chairman)
	Councillor Paul Honeywood	Portfolio Holder for Housing
	Councillor Lynda McWilliams	Portfolio Holder for Partnerships
	Councillor Alex Porter	Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism
	Councillor Michael Talbot	Portfolio Holder for Environment & Public Space

Group Leaders Present by Standing Invitation: Councillors Jayne Chapman BEM (Leader of the Independents Group), Ivan Henderson (Leader of the Labour Group), Mark Stephenson (Leader of the Tendring Independents Group), Colin Winfield (Leader of the Holland-on-Sea Group), Gina Placey (Deputy Leader of the Tendring First Group) and Ann Wiggins (Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group)

Also Present: Councillor Andy Baker

In Attendance: Ian Davidson (Chief Executive), Lee Heley (Interim Corporate Director (Projects Delivery)), Richard Barrett (Assistant Director (Finance and IT) & Section 151 Officer), Tim Clarke (Assistant Director (Housing and Environment)), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager) and Matt Cattermole (Communications Assistant)

144. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Carlo Guglielmi (the Deputy Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance), Mary Newton (the Portfolio Holder for Business & Economic Growth), Terry Allen (the Leader of the Tendring First Group) and Gary Scott (the Leader of the Liberal Democrats Group).

145. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet, held on Friday 25 February 2022, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

146. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ivan Henderson read out the following statement:-

"In relation to Item A7 – the Reference Report from the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee in respect of the Joint Use Sports Facilities Update, in particular any discussion on the recommendation from the Committee for additional funding to enable community access to resume in the evenings and weekends at the facilities in Harwich, I declare that I have a Personal Interest, due to a family member working at the facility, under paragraph 5.1(f) of the Members' Code of Conduct. The Monitoring Officer has, following the principles set out in Section 33 of the Localism Act 2011, agreed to grant a dispensation to allow me to speak on the item for the sole purposes of representing the residents living in the Harwich area as Ward Councillor relating to the loss of the facility to the community whilst adhering to the duties and responsibilities of the Members' Code of Conduct."

147. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Refugees from the Ukraine

The Leader of the Council (Councillor Stock OBE) referred to the possibility of refugees from the continuing conflict in Ukraine being housed in this District and he gave an assurance publicly that the Council's Officers were preparing for all eventualities in relation to this important matter.

148. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CABINET MEMBERS

There were no announcements made by the members of the Cabinet on this occasion.

149. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY THE COUNCIL

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

150. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY A COMMITTEE - REFERENCE FROM THE RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - A.7 - JOINT USE SPORTS FACILITIES UPDATE

As reported in detail under Minute 146 above, Councillor Ivan Henderson had declared a Personal Interest in this matter but that he had been granted a Dispensation by the Monitoring Officer.

Cabinet was aware that, at its meeting held on 14 March 2022 (Minute 65 referred), the Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee ("the Committee") had received an update on progress with the Joint Use Sports Centre transition process at Brightlingsea and Harwich, following the end of joint use agreements with the Sigma Trust on 31 December 2021.

As part of that update, the Committee was provided with a written report from the Council's Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Tourism. That report had referenced, inter alia, the following matters:-

- *"Following on from the Cabinet report, Sigma Trust have agreed to keep their facilities open to the community and are working with Council Officers to accommodate as many of the existing customer base as possible. Updates are being provided to the respective Town Councils via the Joint Use Facilities Transition Period and Engagement Group which has met regularly since the start of 2022.*

- *The Council has arranged for a single point of contact at both sites, who are available to support existing users/hirers. These Officers have and will continue to support hirers who may have challenges in making the transition.*
- *To date over 90% of current hirers (50 out of 55) at Brightlingsea and Harwich Sports Centres have either agreed and signed new booking forms with Sigma Trust, or agreed in principal to the new conditions and Sigma are awaiting forms to be returned.*
- *There has been a trend at Brightlingsea towards block bookings and at Harwich towards more casual use. As the Sigma Trust cannot accommodate casual use, an action plan was devised of how casual use could be converted to hirers. The plan which is being worked through by the single point of contact at each site is set out in Section 2 of the Portfolio Holder's report.*
- *In addition to the work above, local people have been asked if they are interested in establishing a new club or clubs, which would allow racket sports to continue under the management of the Sigma Trust. The deadline for responses has now passed and a meeting with those interested is being arranged. Around 20 people have come forward in Harwich and there has been no response in Brightlingsea to date.*
- *Given the level of interest shown by users in Harwich to form a club, the Council will work closely to support the formation of a racket sports club to block book from the Sigma Trust, and will look to invest to support its development.*
- *The Leader of the Council agreed at Council in February 2022 to include the proposal for investment in sports facilities in Harwich and Brightlingsea to come forward through the Corporate Investment Plan. He reiterated this point at Cabinet February 2022, and agreed that officers will develop options to be considered by Cabinet in March.*
- *Once the transition period is over on 31 March 2022 hirers of both facilities will become customers of the Sigma Trust, while arrangements for the Squash Courts at Harwich will be developed and reported to Cabinet in March. The booking process which has been set in place by the Trust, will also allow new customers use of the facilities."*

After a discussion the Committee had **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet:-

"That Cabinet consider allocating a level of working capital to enable community access to resume in the evenings and at weekends, with a view to councils liaising with Sport England and Active Essex to establish a body to link between the community and the Sigma Trust in the longer term. In establishing this body/company it would take into account and integrate the new Sports Facilities Strategy into their development."

The Cabinet had before it the responses of the Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder thereto as follows:-

"I would like to thank the Committee for its views on the Joint Use Sports Facilities. As Members of the Committee will be aware, although at this stage under the Sigma Trust the two facilities will not be open during school holidays and weekends, the Trust has indicated that opening hours will increase if there is a demand and financial case to do so. As the Committee are also aware, at their meeting on 25 March 2022, Cabinet will consider whether to assign a budget to support existing/newly formed clubs and organisations to make the transition from the facilities under the Council's management to that under the Sigma Trust. I will continue to work with the Chairman of the Resources and Services O & S Committee on the development of the emerging Sports and Activity Strategy."

Having considered the recommendation of the Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee, together with the response of the Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder thereto:-

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

RESOLVED that the recommendation made by the Resources and Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee be noted and that the response of the Leisure and Tourism Portfolio Holder thereto be endorsed.

151. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEMS - A.8 - FREEPORT EAST FULL BUSINESS CASE

Cabinet gave consideration to a detailed report of the Leader of the Council (A.8) which sought its support for the submission of the Freeport East Full Business Case; to approve the Council's participation in the governance of Freeport; the approach to business rate retention set out in the report; and to recommend to Full Council that it confirms that Freeport East is consistent with the Council's priorities and policy framework, as set out in the Corporate Plan 2020-2024, in particular, a growing and inclusive economy.

It was reported that, on 13 December 2021, the outline business case had been formally approved by Government and that the three tax sites in Felixstowe, Harwich and at Gateway 14 near Stowmarket had been agreed, published on GOV.UK and the necessary Statutory Instruments laid to enshrine them in legislation.

Freeports

Members were reminded that the Government aim for Freeports was to attract businesses that imported, processed and add value to goods, and then to re-export those goods. At a Freeport, imports could enter certain sites with simplified customs documentation and without paying tariffs. Businesses operating inside designated areas in and around the port could then manufacture goods using the imports and add value before exporting them, again without full tariffs or customs procedures. If the goods moved out of the Freeport into another part of the UK, then they had to undergo the full import process, including paying any tariffs.

It was proposed that Freeports would be part funded by retained business rates, which was the share of business rates retained by central government. Government had proposed that, for Freeports, the retained business rate scheme would offer the opportunity for billing authorities to retain more business rates than they otherwise would have. This was effectively extra funding for the area. Money would be available to be spent supporting the development and delivery of the Freeport sites themselves, and to deliver on the wider Freeport policy objectives of improving infrastructure, skills, innovation, investment, trade and net zero initiatives, benefiting residents in the area surrounding the Freeport, including almost all of the District of Tendring.

Freeport East

Cabinet was aware that Freeport East was based around the Port of Felixstowe and Harwich International Port, and included the Gateway 14 Site in Stowmarket, Suffolk. It comprised 275 hectares of space and facilities across three sites eligible for tax relief

("Tax Sites") at Felixstowe dock, Bathside Bay in Harwich, and Gateway 14 in Stowmarket. Those sites were also eligible for customs duty relief, and there were four additional sites also eligible for customs reliefs ("Customs Sites").

Members recalled that the Harwich Tax Site was intended to be developed as a Clean Energy Hub and thereby create 1,900 jobs. The tax site was largely comprised of areas to be reclaimed from the sea in order to provide a development platform. Significant third party funding in the region of £80m would be required for this site in addition to funding from the Port, the potential future users of the site, and £7m of seed capital funding provided by HM Government. Two additional Customs Sites were proposed in Essex including the site at Horsley Cross, which had not been allocated in the Local Plan and which required planning permission. The sites in Suffolk, although of much smaller scale than Bathside Bay, were ready for development.

Cabinet was reminded that the Ports of Harwich and Felixstowe were both owned and operated by companies owned by Hutchison Group Ltd. The Gateway 14 Site in Stowmarket was owned by Mid Suffolk District Council which was also the billing authority for that site. As part of the operation of the Freeport, the lead authority and the billing authorities had to work together to monitor the site. Responsibility for giving tax exemptions remained with HM Revenue and Customs.

Redistribution of retained business rates

It was reported that, to accompany the Final Business Case, all partners had been asked to support the high-level arrangements for business rates retention, under which the retained business rate monies would be divided into three pots. The proposed pots were all funded from Retained Business Rates as follows:

- **Pot A** was the existing rates funding calculated on the same basis as would currently apply to the distribution of rates. Pot A was distributed to local authorities to ensure they did not lose out from Freeport. Councils allocated this funding to their general fund and could spend it as they saw fit.
- **Pot B** provided funding from retained business rates to support or accelerate development of a Tax Site if it was required. An application for funding from Pot B by Hutchison Group Ltd could assist with the development of Bathside Bay. At present the detailed approach to distributing Pot B was yet to be determined.
- **Pot C** provided a fund for economic development within the sub-region, aligned to achieving the wider Freeport Policy objectives including investment in skills, innovation, levelling up, trade, investment, infrastructure, security and net zero carbon.

Members were informed that the Pot C fund would be administered by the lead authority, East Suffolk Council, and decisions on its use would be determined by the Freeport East Supervisory Board, of which it was proposed Tendring District Council would be a member. Projects would need to impact on the area within the Freeport boundary [map](#). The funding within Pot C would be defined by the scale of funding required by Pot B to develop the Freeport sites, and the time taken for the Tax Sites to be delivered and occupied and so to begin to generate business rates.

Funding requirement - capital

Cabinet was advised that the Council was not being asked to commit capital funding to the Freeport East programme. It was being asked to support a change to the redistribution of rates in a way which did not affect its current financial position but which reduced the amount of retained business rates which could in future be available under any rate retention scheme.

Work was ongoing with partners to address the identified funding gap for Bathside Bay, including the potential use of retained business rates, provided modelling continued to demonstrate sufficient future income to allow this, as well as wider 'Pot C' investment to deliver the economic development objectives of Freeport East.

As part of those ongoing discussions, local authorities, including Tendring District Council, would not be asked to provide any direct funding or take on any financial / borrowing risk.

Cabinet was made aware that the retained rates modelling for the Freeport East tax sites had been revised for the Full Business Case. The modelling used a methodology commissioned and approved for the Enterprise Zones in Norfolk and Suffolk, modified to estimate rates for the Freeport. This revised modelling indicated that there would be sufficient funding from retained rates to make development of the full Harwich tax site at Bathside Bay viable.

As a result, Freeport East would work with the Freeport Hub and other governmental agencies such as the Department for International Trade and the UK Infrastructure Bank to provide upfront funding on the basis that, in principle, some, or all, of the retained rates in Pot B generated from the Harwich tax site would be allocated to repay this upfront funding. The Council would be party to those negotiations as the rates billing authority for the Harwich tax site in control of rates. The Council would explore appropriate mechanisms in order to allow the Pot B income to be transferred to another party over the lifetime of the Freeport to repay the upfront funding into the tax site.

In relation, to any funding requirements for transport or other infrastructure, the detailed investment needed for the proposed green energy hub at Bathside Bay, Harwich would become known as further details regarding the proposed uses were developed. Infrastructure requirements directly related to the green energy hub could be addressed through developer contributions as part of the planning process to gain, or vary, the necessary planning consents. Wider infrastructure provision could be funded through 'Pot C' retained business rates.

Funding requirement - revenue

It was reported that the revenue costs of the Freeport East Delivery Team were being met from the £1m Government capacity funding until they could be supported by income from a top-slice of retained rates. However, around £400,000 a year from 2022/23 would also be required over, and above, Government funding for revenue projects to meet the Freeport East policy objectives, primarily skills, innovation, and net zero carbon targets. Those revenue projects were not set out in the Full Business Case and would be proposed and agreed by the Freeport East supervisory board once the Freeport East entity was formed.

In total, the commitment could amount to £0.8m-£1m of revenue prior to rates income being received in 2024/25 to cover Freeport policy objectives. This funding was to be

undertaken on a one-fifth share for each of the five authorities, equating to £160,000 in total each, £80,000 in the financial years 2022-23 and 2023-24. In the Financial Year 2024/2025 projected rates income would mean there would be no need for further forward funding for that year, with rates income increasing to the point where it was expected that forward funding would be repaid by 2026-27.

Governance

Cabinet recalled that the Outline Business Case had proposed a Company Limited by Guarantee as the vehicle for decision making. However, an options appraisal process was currently underway on the best future model so that the form of the entity that governed Freeport East could best follow its functions. The current draft Full Business Case referred to the “governing entity” rather than specifying a company.

A shadow board was currently established and included a number of partners including:

- Tendring District Council
- Essex County Council
- Suffolk County Council
- East Suffolk Council
- Mid Suffolk District Council
- University of Essex
- Hutchison representative
- New Anglia LEP and South East LEP

Members were informed that, under current proposals for the governing entity, Tendring District Council would be a member, and would appoint a Director to the board, along with East Suffolk District and Mid Suffolk District Council and Hutchison Port. Essex County Council and Suffolk County Council and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) would be members. Each County Council would both have permanent representation on the governing entity but the LEPs would rotate members annually.

Cabinet was advised that the Terms of Reference for the governing entity within the Full Business Case currently proposed that decisions will be taken by unanimity, which sought to overcome the larger number of Suffolk than Essex authorities, and the imbalance between public and private sector partners. Partner authorities would continue discussion of the proposed governance model. The Leader of the Council would consider the risks and issues before making a final decision on participation in the governing entity.

Skills

Members were made aware that the Full Business Case would include a Skills Plan, currently in draft. This was expected to include innovation hubs at Bathside Bay focused on clean energy and at Gateway 14, more widely scoped. A focus for the skills work would be retraining people made redundant through the pandemic to work at tax and customs sites, and also careers aspirations for children in schools.

Having duly considered all of the information and advice contained in the Leader of the Council’s report and in order to enable this matter to continue to be progressed:-

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet -

- a) formally supports the Freeport East Full Business Case to be submitted by East Suffolk District Council to the Government;
- b) agrees to the approach to local business rate retention, as set out in the Full Business Case and summarised in the Leader's report;
- c) agrees that the Leader of the Council and Officers can participate in the governance proposals set out in the Full Business Case on the principle that Tendring District Council becomes a member of the body set up to govern the Freeport;
- d) notes that any decision to formally become part of the governing body will be taken by the Leader of the Council, in accordance with previous delegations, following consultation with his Portfolio Holder Working Party;
- e) approves the Leader of the Council appointing a Member representative to that governing body;
- f) assigns £160,000 to pay for projects in support of Freeport East to be agreed through the Freeport governance structure and notes that the Full Business Case sets out the expectation that this sum should be repaid to the Council from future retained business rates; and
- g) recommends to Full Council that Freeport East be confirmed within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework, and included as part of the Corporate Plan 2020-2024, as previously adopted by Full Council.

152. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.1 - PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS: 2022/2023 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder (A.1) which submitted a proposed programme of meetings for the 2022/2023 Municipal Year.

Having considered the programme of meetings proposed by the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder and in order to enable the programme of meetings to be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council for approval and adoption, in accordance with the Council's Constitution:-

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

RESOLVED that –

- (a) the programme of meetings for the Council and Committees, as set out in the Appendix to item A.1 of the Report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder, be agreed, in principle, and be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council for formal approval; and
- (b) the proposed dates for All Members Briefings and Councillor Development Sessions be noted.

153. **CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.2 - DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION PHASE TWO COMPLETION PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS AND EXPLORATION OF FURTHER DIGITAL INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder (A.2) which:-

1. reviewed the outcome of the digital transformation phase two programme and reported the deliverables, outturn and analysis; and
2. set out potential further investment opportunities for consideration via the Corporate Investment Plan.

Cabinet recalled that, at its meeting held on 16 February 2018, it had approved a Digital Transformation programme of works with estimated capital one-off costs of £865,200 and ongoing revenue costs of £220,500 per annum. That programme had comprised three key strands of investment, as follows:

- 1) a new *MyTendring* council self-service web portal providing services 24/7;
- 2) a Cloud Migration Strategy, migrating IT systems and data storage from Council-owned/ maintained hardware to rented pay-as-you-go Microsoft Azure platform resources; and
- 3) a new Council smartphone *LoveTendring* 'Tourism and Events' App to promote tourism events. This was a new technology opportunity trial for the Council.

Performance details of the digital transformation programme were provided in Appendix A to the Portfolio Holder's report. A summary of the key programme performance and deliverables was as follows:

- ***From a programme time perspective the deliverables had been severely delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the need to divert limited resources to support higher council priorities e.g. IT enabled council business continuity and local economy supporting business grants enablement.***
- ***From a cost perspective the original / scoped programme had been delivered within budget.***
- ***From a deliverable quality perspective 19,382 registered subscribers used the MyTendring service - more than one in four Tendring households. Growth forecasts suggested 24,000 subscribers by June 2022 - one in three Tendring households. Promotional marketing was planned throughout 2022.***
- ***MyTendring service users rated their service satisfaction at 4.6 stars out of 5 stars average or 92% very satisfied and had raised 19,400 customer self-service requests during the last 12 months.***
- ***19,400 self-service requests equated to a council average resource saving of £59,173 per annum or 10.5% ROI per annum based upon the capital investment.***

- *MyTendring self-service was a key local economy COVID business grant supporting access channel - 4,686 MyTendring self-service grant applications had been processed, and growing.*
- *The adopted Cloud migration strategy had enabled seamless council business continuity during the COVID pandemic – TDC’s aging on-premises infrastructure simply could not have supported the necessary overnight switch to remote working and self-service. TDC’s disaster recovery response position was also greatly strengthened.*
- *The Council’s cybersecurity had been significantly strengthened through Microsoft’s £5 billion investments in cloud-only cybersecurity protective services.*
- *The re-engineered/ re-launched LoveTendring App had achieved 1,351 downloads between July and August 2021 - promoting leisure and tourism events and real-time District-wide beach crowding (social-distancing) information. Rated third overall in the Google Appstore ‘events App category’ ratings (September 2021) further enhancements were planned for 2022.*
- *The programme had facilitated the development of an in-house digital developer skills resource delivering ongoing and new service efficiencies, cost savings, cost avoidances, innovative support applications, partner working opportunities.*

In addition to the above, Cabinet was informed that a number of essential cyber security initiatives were now underway following a collaborative approach taken with the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) who had also provided associated funding of £150,000. The threat from cyber security was steadily growing and if an attack on the Council was successful, recovery / remedial actions could cost several millions of pounds, as unfortunately had been experienced by other Local Authorities elsewhere in the country.

It was highlighted to Members that the delivery of a digital transformation project that spanned several years would introduce a number of risks that had required additional / unavoidable costs to be recognised that were to a large extent outside of the direct / estimated initial project costs e.g. Microsoft licensing costs and other changes to the wider digital environment.

It was felt that the impact of a strong digital transformation approach was essential in any modern forward thinking organisation, which also provided a significant level of resilience. A good example being how this had underpinned the various successful activities that had been undertaken at the start of, and throughout, the Covid-19 pandemic, to ensure that the Council could function and provide its essential services as seamlessly as possible. This ethos had had a major impact looking back but would equally have a major impact looking ahead to 2022/23 and beyond.

With the above in mind, and against the context of the need to continue to reflect the ever-changing digital environment, further investment opportunities had been explored, which were set out within Appendix B to the Portfolio Holder’s report. Those would be considered further as part of the new Corporate Investment Plan approach.

Having duly considered all of the information, proposals and advice contained in the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder’s report:-

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet -

- (a) notes the outcomes of the digital transformation (phase two) programme within the context of timescales, costs and outcomes; and
- (b) request Officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance, to develop the projects, as set out within Appendix B to item A.2 of the Report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder, for further consideration as part of the Corporate Investment Plan.

154. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.3 - CORPORATE INVESTMENT PLAN

Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder (A.3) which updated it on the progress with the Corporate Investment Plan and recommended investment in four projects along with the acceptance of grant funding to support the development of further projects.

Cabinet recalled that, at its meeting held on 25 February 2022, it had agreed to implement a Corporate Investment Plan approach to investment and to establish a Corporate Investment Board. Cabinet had also asked Portfolio Holders to explore with Officers further items for consideration by the proposed first meeting of the Corporate Investment Board in March 2022.

Members were reminded that the Corporate Investment Plan approach included a pipeline of projects and a Corporate Investment Board that would regularly consider the pipeline of projects and give their view on those that should progress towards a formal decision. Priority drivers would help decision makers to prioritise and choose between competing proposals, and funding would be allocated, or reallocated, to a Corporate Investment Fund to enable the Council to put resources to the recommended projects from the pipeline.

Cabinet was aware that the Corporate Investment Plan did not impact on the current decision making framework within the Council, with the same level of transparency for Officer, Portfolio Holder and Cabinet decisions and the associated scrutiny and "call-in" processes.

It was reported that the Corporate Investment Board had met for the first time on 15 March 2022 and had considered:-

- *the Terms of Reference for the Board, including the priority drivers from the February 2022 Cabinet Report;*
- *the current pipeline of projects; and*
- *from the pipeline, the projects proposed to move forward for decision.*

That meeting had been attended by the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader of the Council, together with the Chief Executive, the Section 151 Officer and the Interim Corporate Director (Projects Delivery).

The Corporate Investment Board had expressed its view that the following projects should be funded and progressed to the formal decision stage:-

Freeport East - £160,000 Skills and regeneration contribution

This contribution covered two years' revenue funding from 2022-2024. It was proposed to enable the partner organisations to implement important regeneration activities alongside the infrastructure work on the Freeport sites in order to demonstrate progress on issues such as skills, innovation and net zero before the Freeport generated business rates income to re-invest.

Joint Use Sports Centres Transition – £25,000 contribution to support continued community use

It was proposed to provide financial support directly to local clubs and organisations in order to enable them to continue to undertake and provide sports and leisure activities to their local communities.

Elite Cycling Tour Series - £80,000

In order to support the cost of hosting a 'leg' of the national elite cycling tour series within the Clacton Town Centre during the month of May 2022. The event would attract visitors to the town centre and allow shops to remain open later and benefit from additional trade. Significant publicity was expected, including national and international media coverage and TV broadcasting.

Health Inequalities Programme

This sought to maintain existing capacity within the service along with taking forward a number of important projects across the District. This was to be fully funded by external contributions from our health partners of £400,000.

In respect of funding from our health partners, the Council had been offered a further grant of £1.65m. This would enable a number of projects to be developed further for consideration as part of future iterations of the Corporate Investment Plan. In the interim period, a recommendation was included to formally accept the funding being offered to the Council.

It was considered that the four projects for delivery progressed the Council's corporate objectives in a timely fashion, including investment in skills linked to Freeport East as part of the Full Business Case; an event of national significance in Clacton Town centre, linked to the Tourism Strategy; funding to support community sports and leisure groups, and a health inequalities programme. As those projects would deliver benefits across a wide range of Council objectives:-

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- a) notes the latest Corporate Investment Plan, as set out within Appendix A to item A.3 of the Report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder;

- b) notes the review of Existing Earmarked Budgets, as set out within Appendix C to the aforesaid report and approves that the Category C budgets highlighted within that Appendix be brought together in order to establish a Corporate Investment 'Reserve' totalling £2,557,680;
- c) agrees that £265,000 from the Corporate Investment 'Reserve', along with £400,000 of external funding, be used to fund the following four items as set out later on in the Portfolio Holder's report and Appendix A thereto:
 - i) contribution to Freeport East - £160,000
 - ii) support the Joint Use Sports Centre Transition - £25,000
 - iii) host a 'leg' of the Elite Cycling Tour Series - £80,000
 - iv) health inequalities capacity and projects - £400,000
- d) authorises Officers, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders, and acting in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, to agree the necessary arrangements to implement the above four items; and
- e) agrees to the acceptance of a grant from our Local Health Partner of £1.65m, and requests Officers to continue to develop schemes and projects that can be supported by this funding for consideration within the Corporate Investment Plan process.

155. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.4 - ESSEX FAMILY FRIENDLY EMPLOYERS CHARTER

Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder (A.4) which sought to raise awareness of, and provide an update on, Essex County Council's new Essex Family Friendly Employers Charter.

It was reported that the Essex Family Friendly Employers Charter was a set of principles that the employer must meet in order to demonstrate they were a family friendly employer.

Those principles focused on the following areas:-

- 1) Family Friendly Strategy and Culture
- 2) Flexible Working
- 3) Annual Leave and Supporting Parents outside of term time

Cabinet was informed that this Council had been accredited as an Essex Family Friendly Employer which supported the Council being an employer of choice and which also demonstrated best practice as a local Anchor organisation.

Having considered the contents of the report:-

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

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

156. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE PARTNERSHIPS PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.5 - TENDRING COMMUNITY FUND WORKING PARTY

Cabinet gave consideration to a report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder (A.5) which provided it with an update on the work of the Tendring Community Fund Portfolio Holder Working Party and which sought Cabinet's approval for its terms of reference and its ongoing work to enable the distribution of grants from the fund.

Having duly considered all of the information and proposals and advice contained in the Partnerships Portfolio Holder's report:-

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) authorises the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships, in her role as Chair of the Tendring Community Fund Portfolio Holder Working Party, to both receive funds and to oversee the distribution of funds relating to the Tendring Community Fund;
- (b) approves the Terms of Reference for the Tendring Community Fund Portfolio Holder Working Party; and
- (c) receives an update report from the Chair of the Tendring Community Fund Portfolio Holder Working Party within twelve months.

157. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - JOINT REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND THE HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.6 - FREEHOLD PURCHASE OF A RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY IN CLACTON-ON-SEA

Cabinet had before it a detailed joint report of the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder and the Housing Portfolio Holder (A.6) which sought its approval, in principle, for the freehold purchase of a two bedroom residential property in Clacton-on-Sea to help meet local housing needs.

It was reported that this proposal was in respect of an opportunity to purchase a two bedroom ex-Council house that was currently being offered under the Right of First Refusal buy back period in Clacton-on-Sea.

Members made aware that, for a number of years, the Council had had a strong demand for two bedroom houses and that this property met the criteria set out in the Council's adopted Housing Acquisitions and Development Strategy.

Cabinet was informed that that, in January 2022, the required Portfolio Holder approval had been obtained in order to initiate the Council's Property Dealing Procedure; to obtain an independent valuation of the property; and to negotiate a price with the owners.

Cabinet was further informed that an independent market valuation had now been obtained and negotiations with the owner had been completed satisfactorily which would enable the purchase to be progressed to a conclusion.

It was felt that whilst the purchase of the property carried a financial cost it would bring an additional dwelling into the housing stock that would help meet a local housing need and would immediately generate rental income and it was therefore:-

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

RESOLVED that Cabinet authorises, in principle, the freehold purchase of the property.

158. MANAGEMENT TEAM ITEMS

There were no such items to consider on this occasion.

159. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

It was moved by Councillor Stock OBE, seconded by Councillor Talbot 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 Items 17 and 18 on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act.

160. EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON FRIDAY 25 FEBRUARY 2022

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

161. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - JOINT REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER AND THE HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER - B.1 - TERMS FOR THE FREEHOLD PURCHASE OF A RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY IN CLACTON-ON-SEA

RESOLVED that Cabinet -

- (a) approves the terms for the freehold purchase, as proposed; and
- (b) authorises the Corporate Director (Operations and Delivery) to enter into a contract and transfer deed to complete the purchase of the property on the terms set out and subject to such other terms that he considers necessary.

The Meeting was declared closed at 11.08 am

Chairman