
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET,
HELD ON MONDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2025 AT 10.30 AM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, AT THE TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-
ON-SEA, CO15 1SE**

PRESENT:

Councillor M E Stephenson

Councillor I J Henderson

Councillor A P H Baker

Councillor M Barry

Councillor P Kotz

Councillor G G I Scott

Councillor A Smith

PORTFOLIO:

Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance (Chairman)

Deputy Leader of the Council & Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism

Portfolio Holder for Housing & Planning

Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Public Realm

Portfolio Holder for Assets

Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Heritage

Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Group Leaders Present by Standing Invitation: Councillors J D Bray (Leader of the Reform UK Group) and J B Chapman BEM (Leader of the Independent Group)

In Attendance: Chief Executive (Ian Davidson), Corporate Director (Economy & Place) & Deputy Chief Executive (Lee Heley), Director (Finance & IT) & Section 151 Officer (Richard Barrett), Assistant Director (Housing & Environmental Health) (Tim Clarke), Head of Democratic Services & Elections (Keith Simmons), Committee Services Manager (Ian Ford), Committee Services Officer (Bethany Jones) and Communications Officer (James Dwan)

137. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors G R Placey (the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships) and P B Honeywood (Leader of the Conservative Group).

138. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was moved by Councillor M E Stephenson, seconded by Councillor I J Henderson and:-

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet, held on Friday 21 February 2025, be approved as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

139. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

140. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council reminded those persons present that this meeting had been postponed from its original date of Friday 17 March 2025 due to the DCN Conference which he had attended along with the Deputy Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive. Attendees had had the opportunity to talk to the Minister of State for Local

Government and English Devolution (Jim McMahon OBE MP) on LGR matters and to talk to Leaders of Councils who had already gone through previous iterations of LGR and Devolution.

141. ANNOUNCEMENTS BY CABINET MEMBERS

There were no such announcements on this occasion.

142. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY THE COUNCIL

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

143. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY A COMMITTEE - REFERENCE FROM THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE - A.1 - REVISED PLANNING PROBITY PROTOCOL

Cabinet had before it a reference report (A.1) which enabled the Cabinet to consider the recommendations made by the Standards Committee in relation to a revised Planning Probity Protocol and sundry other related matters.

It was reported that the Standards Committee ("the Committee"), at its meeting held on 5 February 2025 (Minute 34 referred), had considered the Monitoring Officer's report (A.1) that had presented the updated revised version of the Planning Probity Protocol, following consultation with the members of the Planning Committee, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, Planning Officers and the Independent Persons.

It had been reported that some themes emerging from that consultation were:-

- the concept of Bias needed to be stronger.
- stronger links to the Members' Code of Conduct, declarations of interest and the impact of participation at meetings.
- importance of seeking advice earlier.
- a determination should be made as to which Planning Applications submitted by Officers of the Council in their personal capacity should be submitted to the Planning Committee for determination i.e. Senior Officers above a certain grade and all Officers employed within Planning Services and Legal Services.
- the importance of Member Training needed to be stressed within the Planning Probity Protocol.
- stronger details needed around Planning Committee Members attending public meetings with applicants, developers and objectors, and
- site visits section needed to be stronger relating to the exceptional circumstances.

The Committee had been made aware that the outcome of the consultation was set out in detail in Appendix B of the Monitoring Officer's report. In addition, it had been considered necessary to include some text around the Protocol on Member and Officer Relations, as that had been omitted in the first review and was deemed relevant.

The Committee had decided, inter alia, to recommend to full Council that:-

- (1) *the revised Planning Probity Protocol (subject to tracked changes being accepted as well as the typing errors being amended) be adopted and incorporated into the Council's Constitution;*

- (2) *the Planning Committee's Terms of Reference be amended to reflect that personal planning applications submitted by the proposed seniority level of Officers plus all Officers within Planning and Legal Services will be referred to the Planning Committee; and*
- (3) *training on the Planning Probity Protocol forms part of the Mandatory Training as required by Council Procedure Rule 33.3 for Members of the Planning Committee.*

Having duly considered the recommendations put forward by the Standards Committee:-

It was moved by Councillor M E Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Baker and:-

RESOLVED that Cabinet recommends to Full Council that:-

- (1) the revised Planning Probity Protocol be adopted and incorporated into the Council's Constitution;
- (2) the Planning Committee's Terms of Reference be amended to reflect that personal planning applications submitted by the proposed seniority level of Officers plus all Officers within Planning and Legal Services will be referred to the Planning Committee; and
- (3) training on the Planning Probity Protocol forms part of the Mandatory Training as required by Council Procedure Rule 33.3 for Members of the Planning Committee.

144. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL'S ITEMS - A.2 - DELIVERING AGAINST THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE PLAN 2024-28 - FINAL PROPOSALS FOR HIGHLIGHT PRIORITIES FOR 2025/26

Cabinet considered a detailed report of the Leader of the Council (A.2).

Members were aware that the Council's adopted Corporate Plan 2024-28 ('Our Vision') set out its strategic direction. That strategic direction itself sought to reflect the issues that mattered most to local people, the national requirements from Government and the challenges that faced the District over the time period of the Plan.

The themes of the 2024-28 Corporate Plan ('Our Vision') were:

- *Pride in our Area and Services to Residents*
- *Raising Aspirations and Creating Opportunities*
- *Championing our Local Environment*
- *Working with Partners to Improve Quality of Life*
- *Promoting our heritage offer, attracting visitors and encouraging them to stay longer*
- *Financial Sustainability and Openness*

The Corporate Plan ('Our Vision') itself was set out at Appendix A to the Leader's report (A.2).

Cabinet was aware that it established each year its highlight priority actions to deliver against the Corporate Plan and thereby ensured that the ambition of that Plan was central to its work.

Members were reminded that the priority actions did not cover every separate element of the ambition of the four-year Corporate Plan; nor were they intended to indicate that other projects, schemes or activities were not being pursued. They were though intended to reflect imperatives across the Council and for the District and actions that it was right to focus on in 2025/26.

Members recalled that the initial proposals had been agreed by Cabinet on 20 December 2024 and had been the subject of a consultation exercise, a summary of which was included within the body of the Leader's report (A.2).

Cabinet was informed that the desire among respondents for local residents to be engaged in the big decisions facing the Council/District was clear. Likewise steps to improve the area through supporting the local economy to grow, providing opportunities for skills development and "place setting" with partner organisations had come through in that consultation.

Cabinet was aware that, since the initial priorities had been proposed by Cabinet, the Government had published its English Devolution White Paper and had requested expressions of interest for areas to be included within the Devolution Priority Programme. On Wednesday, 5 February 2025 the Deputy Prime Minister had announced that Greater Essex had been accepted onto the programme, which included developing proposals for Local Government Reorganisation. An Interim Plan was required to be submitted to Government by 21st March 2025 and Full Council had considered this at its meeting on 11th March 2025.

It was reported that the degree of the impact of both the devolution and local government reorganisation programmes were still unknown but, due to the tight deadlines being imposed and the level of preparation work at a senior level, it was clear that the Council's resources would be significantly affected for 2025/26. Therefore, in adopting any priorities Cabinet were mindful that those would be subject to change and reflection throughout the year. It was also right that devolution and local government reorganisation was recognised as a highlight priority for 2025/26 given the potential importance to delivery of services for residents that would be decided in the parallel processes of devolution and local government reorganisation.

Appendix B to the Leader's report (A.2) set out the final proposed highlight priority actions for 2025/26. The principal changes in those finalised proposals from the Initial highlight priorities approved by Cabinet for consultation purposes had been set out in the outcome of consultation and engagement section of that report.

The Chief Executive advised Cabinet that the highlight priorities for 2025/26, as formally adopted, would need to be kept under review and amended as necessary to take account of the Council's emerging workloads and capacity as a result of Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation affecting Greater Essex.

Being cognisant that adopting highlight priority actions allowed Council activity to remain focused against Our Vision and provided the framework for the annual performance monitoring system of the Council based on the milestones approved as part of the priority actions and that with Local Government Reorganisation pending it was important to ensure the Council could respond accordingly, and where possible sought to identify areas where closer working between authorities would serve to be an effective use of resources:-

It was moved by Councillor M E Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Smith and:-

RESOLVED that Cabinet -

- a) notes the outcome of the consultation on the initial highlight priorities adopted for that purpose at Cabinet's meeting on 20 December 2024;
- b) approves the final highlight priorities for 2025/26, as set out at Appendix B to the Leader of the Council's report (A.2); and
- c) expressly approves the inclusion of a new highlight priority, as set out in the aforementioned Appendix B, in relation to the critically important area of devolution and local government reorganisation in view of their consequential impact on delivery of services to residents of the District.

145. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE & GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.3 - TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS: 2025/2026 MUNICIPAL YEAR

Cabinet considered a report of the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder (A.3) which enabled Cabinet, as required by the Constitution, to submit for formal approval to the Annual Meeting of the Council a timetable of meetings for the 2025/2026 Municipal Year.

In presenting this report the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder drew Cabinet's attention to two matters. The first matter concerned the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee and its meeting dates in 2025. The Council's Planning Policy Team Leader had consulted with the Chairman of the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee (Councillor Guglielmi) to agree dates for meetings of that Committee during 2025 to progress the review of TDC's Local Plan. It was proposed that the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee would meet, during 2025, on the following dates:-

Wednesday 28th May
Monday 21st July
Monday 8th September
Monday 8th December

The Portfolio Holder therefore suggested that those dates should be accommodated within the Timetable of Meetings for 2025/26 that went forward to the Annual Meeting of the Council.

The second matter concerned the submission of the detailed Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) proposals to the Government. As had been reported to Members at Full Council on 11 March 2025 the deadline for the submission by Essex Councils of the final LGR proposals for Greater Essex was 26 September 2025. To meet that deadline, it was likely that extra meetings of Cabinet and/or Full Council, and possibly other bodies, outside of those in the scheduled timetable, would be required in order for this Council to make its decision regarding the final proposal on LGR prior to the deadline. It was too early to be able to fix any dates for such extra meetings, but the Portfolio Holder felt that Cabinet in making its decision on this matter should acknowledge that such extra meetings were likely to be needed later this year.

Having considered the timetable of meetings proposed by the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder, together with the other matters set out above and to enable the timetable 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 M E Stephenson, seconded by Councillor I J Henderson and:-

RESOLVED that -

- (a) the timetable of meetings for the Council and its Committees, as set out in the Appendix to report A.3, but subject to the inclusion of dates for meetings of the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee as set out hereunder, be agreed, in principle, and be submitted to the Annual Meeting of the Council for formal approval;

Wednesday 28th May 2025
Monday 21st July 2025
Monday 8th September 2025
Monday 8th December 2025

- (b) the proposed dates for All Members' Briefings and Councillor Development Sessions be noted; and
- (c) Cabinet notes that special meetings of the Cabinet and/or Full Council and potentially other bodies will likely be required in order to ensure that Tendring District Council can make its formal decision on the submission of the final Local Government Reorganisation proposals for Greater Essex by the Government's deadline of 26 September 2025.

146. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE & GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.4 - ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

Cabinet considered a detailed report of the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder (A.4) which asked Cabinet to approve the recommended changes to the Constitution for referral onto Full Council following a review undertaken by the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance through a Working Party constituted for that purpose.

It was reported that the Review of the Constitution Portfolio Holder Working Party (CRWP) had met on 19 February 2025 and that the meeting had been attended by its Chairman, the Corporate Finance & Governance Portfolio Holder (Councillor M E Stephenson) as well as Councillors Guglielmi, Kotz, Talbot and Wiggins.

A summary of the proposed changes compared to the existing Parts of the Constitution had been provided under each heading in the background section of this report and in each case, the content had been revised to provide greater clarity, ensure effectiveness and efficient up to date working practices for both Members and Officers and also to ensure it was in accordance with legislation, where necessary.

Cabinet was informed that additional matters which had arisen since the meeting of the CRWP, related to the following proposed amendments:-

- Two technical financial amendments suggested to the Financial Procedure Rules by the Section 151 Officer (one for the use of an associated reserve account for Section 106 monies, and a second relating to a further decision being required once an application for External Funding has been successful).
- Consistency and clarity on when the exemption to Call-in applied to Portfolio Holder decisions and Officers making Key Decisions (to ensure the wording was correct in two places).
- Minor clarification on Officers exercising their discretion on the Members' Referral Scheme under the Planning Committee's terms of reference (to make clear an Officer decision was required).
- Consistency on the principles applying to Officers exercising delegated powers for both Executive and Non-Executive functions (ensuring the same wording was used and emphasising the discharge of those functions by Officers was subject to criteria); and
- Proposed changes to the Executive Functions Scheme of Delegation covering the Traffic Regulation Order process.

Having considered the outcome of the annual review of the Constitution carried out by the Review of the Constitution Portfolio Holder Working Party and the Portfolio Holder's recommendations arising therefrom, together with the additional matters set out above and to enable those recommendations to be submitted to the Full Council for approval and adoption:-

It was moved by Councillor M E Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Kotz and:-

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

1. RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL that:

- (a) the Council's Constitution be amended to reflect the proposed changes as set out in Appendices A to J attached hereto this report (A.4);
 - (b) the membership of the Audit Committee be increased to seven (from five) with effect from the Annual Meeting of the Council on 29 April 2025; and
 - (c) it supports the intention to introduce from April 2025 a new box within the standard template for Cabinet and Committee reports and that the new box will be headed "Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Implications".
2. supports the intention to introduce from April 2025 a new box within the standard template for Cabinet and Committee reports and that the new box will be headed "Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Implications".
 3. supports the Leader of the Council's proposal to amend the Scheme of Delegation to Portfolio Holders, especially in relation to the process regarding Traffic Regulation Orders, as set out in Appendix K.

147. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE CORPORATE FINANCE & GOVERNANCE PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.5 - FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25 - GENERAL UPDATE AT THE END OF DECEMBER 2024

Cabinet considered a detailed report of the Corporate Finance and Governance Portfolio Holder (A.5) which provided a general update and overview of the Council's financial position against the 2024/25 budget as at the end of December 2024 and looking ahead to 2025/26 and beyond.

SECTION 1 - In respect of the in-year financial position at the end of December 2024:

It was reported that the position to the end of December 2024, as set out in more detail within the appendices, showed that overall, the General Fund Revenue Account was overspent against the profiled budget by £0.294m (£0.724m at the end of September 2024). However, it was highlighted that this position continued to primarily reflect the timing of when the Government reimbursed the Council for the cost of meeting housing benefit claims and the parliamentary election expenses incurred earlier in the year.

Cabinet was made aware that in terms of proposed in-year adjustments to the budget, Appendix H set out a limited number of largely unavoidable cost pressures, along with reflecting some favourable issues emerging in the second half of the year to date.

It was proposed that the overall net impact of the proposed budget adjustments set out in Appendix H would be adjusted against the Corporate Investment Fund. In terms of the proposal to set aside money to support the delivery of the Council's savings and efficiency plans and wider corporate priorities as set out within Appendix H, a recommendation was included within the Portfolio Holder's report (A.5) to provide for a delegation to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance to utilise that funding.

It was reiterated that any emerging issues would be monitored and updates provided in future financial reports, which would include their consideration as part of updating the long-term financial forecast where necessary.

Members were informed that a recommendation had been included within the report (A.5) to provide for a delegation to the Corporate Director (Place and Economy), in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holders to adjust the 2025/26 budgets for sport and leisure facilities to respond to the favourable income position currently being experienced across the various centres. Further details were set out in Appendix B.

SECTION 2 - In respect of the long-term financial forecast update:

Members were aware that as highlighted in the report to Full Council on 11 February 2025, future year's estimated annual deficits remained significant against the context of the Council's overall net budget.

In terms of the later years of the forecast, it was highlighted that there were significant challenges arising from inflationary increases, which were expected to exceed the Council's ability to raise income from council tax and business rates over the long-term plan. Therefore, at some reasonable point in the future, the Council must be able to put itself in the position of balancing its annual budget, otherwise the position was not sustainable.

Set against this position, it was also acknowledged that there would be further impacts from the Government's proposals relating to changes to the Local Government Finance Settlement and 'reset' of the business rates retention model. In addition, Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation would also make financial planning even more challenging over the forecast period. Such issues would need to remain highlighted within the forecast risk assessment that accompanied the wider forecast and further updates would be provided during 2025/26 as necessary.

It was reported that notwithstanding the above, the Council's long-term plan and Forecast Risk Fund provided flexibility and support, against which the development of the Council's forecast could be considered, and it continued to provide the time and opportunity to respond to the structural annual budget deficits and changes highlighted above.

Cabinet was reminded that the challenges faced by the Housing Revenue Account also remained significant and included increased expectations and requirements that continued to emerge from the Social Housing Regulation Act and associated enhanced powers of the Housing Regulator. The HRA 30 Year Business plan would be developed over the coming months alongside a review of the announcements included within the Government's recent Autumn Budget Statement with the aim of responding to such challenges set against the wider context of continuing to provide a financially sustainable position in the long term.

Having considered the financial position for the Council and to respond to emerging issues in 2024/25 along with developing the budget and long-term forecast from 2025/26:-

It was moved by Councillor M E Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Barry and:-

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) notes the Council's in-year financial position at the end of December 2024 along with the latest financial forecast update;
- (b) approves the proposed adjustments to the 2024/25 budget as set out in Appendix H to the Portfolio Holder's report (A.5);
- (c) requests Officers to review any potential longer term / on-going impact of the items set out in Appendix H, as part of developing the forecast for further consideration by Cabinet later in the year;
- (d) in respect of the additional sum of £0.250m made available to support the delivery of savings / efficiency plans and wider corporate priorities that is set out in Appendix H, authorises the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Finance and Governance to utilise this funding to support any associated work and activities;
- (e) notes the financial forecast update set out in this report (A.5) and requests Officers, in consultation with Portfolio Holders to further develop the forecast and associated savings and efficiency plans for presenting to Cabinet later in 2025/26;

- (f) in respect of the budget for 2025/26, authorises the Corporate Director (Place and Economy), in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Leisure and Public Realm and Corporate Finance and Governance to adjust the sports and leisure facilities budgets as necessary to better reflect the current experienced income and expenditure positions, but with no net overall impact on the Council's wider budgeted position; and
- (g) invites the views of the Resources and Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the information set out in this report along with the Council's wider financial position as part of its work programme for the year.

148. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH, REGENERATION & TOURISM PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.6 - ESSEX DEVOLUTION CONSULTATION RESPONSE

Cabinet considered a report of the Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism Portfolio Holder (A.6) which asked Cabinet to endorse the proposal that the consultation response to the Government's Greater Essex Devolution Consultation be undertaken by the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Tourism (Deputy Leader). The response on behalf of Tendring District Council could either be standalone or form part of an Essex-wide response to go forward as part of the open consultation which closed on 13 April 2025.

Members were aware that the Government had accepted Greater Essex onto the 'Devolution Priority Programme', but before taking a decision on whether to proceed to make the necessary legislation to enact devolution in Essex, the Government had launched a consultation seeking views from interested parties on a proposal to form a Mayoral Combined County Authority. The text of the consultation and its questions was included as Appendix A to the Portfolio Holder's report (A.6) and was open until 13 April 2025.

The consultation sought views from those who lived and worked across Greater Essex on the effect of establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority in the area and included questions on the proposed geography and how the Mayoral Combined County Authority would make decisions.

It was reported that Combined County Authorities were organisations made up of a group of councils who came together over larger areas that people recognised and worked in. They allowed councils to work together in a structured way and to take decisions over a wider area footprint, with powers and responsibilities being held by that Combined County Authority. Combined County Authorities did not replace the councils within the area delivering services, those would continue to be provided by the relevant council.

Cabinet was informed that a Combined County Authority could be led by a directly elected Mayor. This was then known as a Mayoral Combined County Authority. The Government's consultation stated: *"it is supportive of places having Mayors because they have a mandate to take big decisions affecting more people, they have convening power to tackle shared problems, and they are accountable to the local electorate for the decisions they take. Mayors in other parts of the country have become vital local leaders, delivering on the promise of change in their area to drive growth, more joined-up delivery, and earning trust."*

Members were cognisant that Essex had an 'upper-tier' Essex County Council and 'lower-tier' district, borough and city councils – with responsibility for local services split between the two tiers. In addition, there were the two unitary councils of Southend and Thurrock. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 had introduced Combined County Authorities consisting of upper tier local councils only - so in Greater Essex: Essex County Council (ECC), Southend and Thurrock. As a district council, Tendring District Council could not be a full constituent member of the Combined County Authority but it could participate as a non-constituent member and serve on committees.

Cabinet was advised that Greater Essex Combined County Authority's constituent members (ECC, Southend, Thurrock Councils and the Mayor) would be able to appoint a maximum of seven non-constituent and associate members to support the delivery of their work programme.

Non-constituent members were representatives of an organisation; for example, a district council, local NHS trust, the Police and Crime Commissioner, or a local registered housing provider. Non-constituent members *could* be given voting rights, at the discretion of the Combined County Authority (see below).

Associate members were named individuals who could provide particular experience or expertise – for example, on active travel, or local businesses. Associate members could not have voting rights (see below).

The Combined County Authority's constituent members (the Mayor and seven constituent council members) would be the decision makers within the Combined County Authority. Constituent members would automatically have voting rights. Non-constituent members could be given voting rights at the discretion of the Combined County Authority; associate members could not be given voting rights. All members would have a single vote. The default voting arrangement for Combined County Authority decisions to be approved would be a simple majority in favour, including the Mayor (i.e. 5 out of 8).

Mayoral Combined County Authority summary, as proposed by the Government consultation, with Mayoral elections in May 2026:

Mayor
ECC – 3 members
Southend – 2 members
Thurrock – 2 members

Eight members with one vote each. Majority for decisions, five votes. Seven additional members - either non-constituent (organisational) or associate (individual) - could be appointed to the authority. Non-constituent (organisational) members could be given voting rights at the discretion of the combined authority.

Cabinet was made aware that the Mayoral Combined County Authority would change should local government reorganisation take place. The new unitaries would replace Essex County, Southend and Thurrock Councils as constituent members, alongside the Mayor and legally, it would become a Combined Authority. This change did not affect the functions, powers or funding available to the area. The governance and decision-making arrangements within the Combined Authority would then be updated to reflect any changes needed.

Members were aware that local authorities in Greater Essex were discussing how best to progress Devolution and respond to the consultation. There was an ambition to submit one response from Greater Essex councils, which were supportive of devolution and positive about the benefits it could bring to transport and local infrastructure, skills and employment support, housing and strategic planning, economic development and regeneration, environment and climate change, health, wellbeing and public service reform, and public safety. The response would also support the establishment of a Mayor in Greater Essex. The consultation response would come to a view on the number of members from each Upper Tier authority on the Combined Authority and the voting rights of districts.

Recognising that it was important to focus on the residents of Tendring District as the District Council engaged with partners on Devolution and that whilst the Council was not a Decision maker on devolution, it should advocate to put local residents and businesses in the best place possible as the Strategic Authority was planned and further noting that the Leader and Deputy Leader exercising their responsibilities on behalf of Cabinet would allow for the District Council to sign off the response at the appropriate time either alone or alongside other local authority partners before the deadline on 13 April 2025:-

It was therefore moved by Councillor I J Henderson, seconded by Councillor M E Stephenson and:-

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) acknowledges work is continuing to ensure that the District of Tendring is in the best possible position should devolution go ahead; and
- (b) endorses the Leader of the Council approving the Council's response to the Essex Devolution Consultation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Tourism.

149. CABINET MEMBERS' ITEMS - REPORT OF THE ECONOMIC GROWTH, REGENERATION & TOURISM PORTFOLIO HOLDER - A.7 - COMMUNITY REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP - PROGRAMME UPDATE AND FURTHER WAVE OF PROJECTS

Cabinet considered a detailed report of the Economic Growth, Regeneration & Tourism Portfolio Holder (A.7) which updated Cabinet on progress on the Community Regeneration Partnership programme and recommended that Cabinet agree the high-level strategic approach and scope of the remaining projects aimed at place-based regeneration in Clacton and Jaywick and make delegations for the responsibility for the approach to delivery, and oversight thereof.

It was reported that the programme included 15 projects, identified by civil servants through a 'Deep Dive' process in January 2024. This Portfolio Holder report (A.7) delivered on the commitment made to Cabinet in December 2024 to bring a future report to Cabinet setting out the scope and details of the second and third waves.

Members were informed that the 15 projects had been grouped into:-

- (1) four thematic clusters, relating to common geography and outcomes in the context of past vision and regeneration work by the Council; and
- (2) four 'waves', relating to the timelines attached to each project for scoping and delivery. The first and fourth waves had been approved by Cabinet in December 2024, which included delegation to enter an appropriate funding agreement with the identified delivery partners.

Cabinet was made aware that a formal Project Initiation Document (PID) was under development for all projects under the CRP2 programme, as the first step of establishing best practice project management protocols. The PIDs expanded on the information provided within this report (A.7) and would follow an approval process including Project Board and Programme Board at Officer level, including senior management, and by the relevant Portfolio Holder. Those PIDs would provide the basis for monthly Highlight Reports throughout the project trajectory through to delivery and close-out.

In order to capitalise on the Government's funding opportunity to address key socio-economic challenges in Clacton-on-Sea and Jaywick Sands, improve local infrastructure, enhance community services, and contribute to the long-term regeneration of the area and recognising that this was a once in a decade opportunity for Tendring to deploy investment on this scale, in addition to other Government funding, to be benefit of Clacton-on-Sea and Jaywick Sands:-

It was moved by Councillor I J Henderson, seconded by Councillor Scott and:-

RESOLVED that Cabinet -

- (a) approves the scope and details of the 'second' and 'third' wave projects set out in Table 2 of this report (A.7) for implementation and that the following delegations are based upon the information as set out in Table 2;
- (b) authorises the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism in consultation with:
 - (i) the Portfolio Holder for Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Public Realm, to approve the detailed brief and procurement strategy through to contract award for delivery for the Public Open Spaces in Jaywick project (Ten_09);
 - (ii) the Portfolio Holder for Assets & Community Safety, to agree the procurement strategy through to contract award for delivery of the Martello Tower E project (Ten_11);
 - (iii) the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Public Realm, to proceed to agree the procurement strategy through to award of contract for the Active Wellbeing Centre Phase 1 project, incorporating urgent repairs (Ten_12);
 - (iv) the Portfolio Holder for Arts, Culture & Heritage, to approve the detailed brief and procurement strategy through to award of contract for delivery of the Spatial Plan for Culture project (Ten_14);
 - (v) the Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Public Realm, to approve the detailed brief and procurement strategy through to award of main building contract(s) for the

Active Wellbeing Centre Phase 1 project subject to the outcome of a formal procurement process;

- (vi) for the Sunspot Solar Panels project (Ten_04) authority is delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism to agree the procurement strategy through to award of contract for completion of the project;
- (c) requests the procurement strategy for each of the projects to specify the relevant Social Value Themes, Outcomes and Measures in accordance with the Council's adopted policy;
- (d) accepts the £60,000 grant received from the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government LUF Capacity and Capability fund and allocates the sum in full to the budget established for the Project Delivery Unit;
- (e) approves that the Regeneration Capital Delivery Board (RCDB) be formally established as the programme governance board with authority for the Community Regeneration Partnership and authorises the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Economic Growth and Tourism to approve the final terms of reference of the RCDB, to include:
 - that the RCDB shall coordinate and oversee the work of Project Boards formed for each Project;
 - that the RCDB shall oversee and approve terms of reference of the Project Boards;
 - that the RCDB shall report directly to the Portfolio Holder for Economic Growth, Regeneration and Tourism by way of a report by the Corporate Director (Place & Economy); and
- (f) approves that with the robust project management principles being established and delivered against, constitutional Portfolio Holder responsibilities and corporate oversight through the Regeneration Capital Delivery Board, each project can progress without reference back to Cabinet, unless the details of the individual scopes are proposed to be altered or timescales for delivery are at risk of being contrary to the MOU with MHCLG.

150. MANAGEMENT TEAM ITEMS - REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES & ELECTIONS - A.8 - PETITION: "SAVE CITIZENS ADVICE TENDRING"

Cabinet considered a report of the Head of Democratic Services & Elections (A.8) which formally reported the receipt of a petition submitted requesting the Council to continue to fund Citizens Advice Tendring and the Mental Health Hub and invited Cabinet to determine its formal response to that petition, which would then be reported to Full Council at its meeting due to be held on 25 March 2025.

Cabinet was informed that a paper petition submitted by Danny Mayzes as lead petitioner, had been received on Friday 21 February 2025. Following a partial check carried out by Officers in Electoral Services, the petition contained at least 514 names and addresses that were legible and those persons were included on the electoral register.

The text of the paper petition stated:-

“We the undersigned petition Tendring District Council to continue to fund Citizens Advice Tendring and the Mental Health Hub to ensure this vital advice service can continue to support the residents, families and small businesses of the Tendring District. The core grants of £144,000 and £28,000 per annum should be reinstated for 2025/2026 and beyond. Citizens Advice is a national treasure and a staple of UK life, and we want this protected locally for the people of Tendring at all costs.

The Council has stated publicly that it would not be able to deliver the same level of advice for less cost, and that Council staff would not have the knowledge to deliver the advice required in-house. The Council praises Citizens Advice Tendring as value for money, and despite core funding not having increased in 10 years, the advice service by Citizens Advice Tendring is better than ever and must be retained.”

In addition, the Lead Petitioner, Danny Mayzes, had submitted an E-Petition with the same text. That E-Petition had been e-signed by 349 individuals who had gave an address within the District.

Members were reminded that this matter was an executive function (Partnerships Portfolio) and therefore the Cabinet was the appropriate body to consider this matter.

It was reported that Section 2 of the Council's adopted Scheme for Dealing with Petitions stated, inter alia,:-

“(b) A valid petition containing 501, or more signatures from Tendring residents or non-residents who can be clearly identified as either working or studying in Tendring, will be reported to Council to advise that the petition has been received. Once it has been investigated, a report will be prepared and presented with the petition at the next meeting of the Council for consideration. If it relates to a matter that is an Executive function under the law the petition will also be presented to the first practicable meeting of the Cabinet and any views, comments or recommendations made by Cabinet will be incorporated into the aforementioned report to Council.”

Therefore, having discussed the petition it would be for Cabinet to decide what views, comments or recommendations it wished to be incorporated into the report to Full Council. That report would be submitted to the meeting of the Full Council on 25 March 2025.

The report (A.8) contained the written advice of the Corporate Director (Place & Economy) which was as follows:-

“The petitioner highlights the importance of providing a vital advice service.

Cabinet decided on this matter on 31 January 2025 with the report of the Partnerships Portfolio Holder: Procurement of information and support service. The advice to Cabinet is drawn from that report, which sought approval from Cabinet to provide an information and advice service to local residents with revised requirements via an associated specification and procurement process, with the new arrangements commencing on 1 October 2025. [...] This approach ensures a joined-up approach across the various sectors within the area with the underlying aim of maximising the use of the Council's resources.

Citizens Advice Tendring have been made aware of the proposed approach set out above and they may consider submitting their own 'bid' for the work the Council is seeking to procure and respond to the outcome of that process.

In summary, Cabinet has approved the provision of an information and advice service to local residents, which it will procure via a modular approach to determine who is best placed to deliver the services required and provide best value for the taxpayer. There is a process in place to determine the best provider of advice services for residents. As such, Cabinet should enact the recommendations made in the January 2025 report.

In relation to the Mental Health Hub, the funding for the Mental Health Hub run by Citizen's Advice Tendring remains in the Council's budget and continues."

In addition, the report (A.8) set out the written comments and recommendations of the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships as follows:

"I believe passionately in the importance of advice and information to enable residents to make the best decisions and navigate the systems that provide financial and other support. That is why the Council extended the funding to Citizens Advice Tendring for six months to ensure there is no gap in provision and why we want to go through a process to test the best value provision of advice in the District.

Having considered the petition and reviewed the assessment and advice set out in this report, I believe the right approach is to test which is the best organisation to provide advice in Tendring through the procurement process, as was set out in the January 2025 report to Cabinet."

In accordance with the Petitions Scheme, Danny Mayzes, as Lead Petitioner attended the meeting and addressed the Cabinet, outlining the reasons for the submission of the petition and what action the petitioners wanted the Council to take.

To comply with the adopted scheme for dealing with petitions, as set out in the Council's Constitution:-

It was moved by Councillor M E Stephenson, seconded by Councillor Barry and:-

RESOLVED that Cabinet –

- (a) notes the allocation of £0.072m to Citizen's Advice Tendring to continue to contribute to the existing information and advice guidance service through direct funding for the interim period up to 30 September 2025 in accordance with a subsidy scheme; and
- (b) recommends to Council that having considered the petition and having reviewed the assessment and advice set out within the Head of Democratic Services & Elections' report (A.8), Cabinet believes the right approach is to test which is the best organisation to provide advice in Tendring through the procurement process, as was set out in the January 2025 report to Cabinet.

The Meeting was declared closed at 11.32 am

Chairman