

## MINUTES OF CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET

on 12 March 2024 at 7pm

Present:

### Cabinet Members

Councillor S Robinson, Leader of the Council (Chair)  
Councillor M Goldman, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford  
Councillor N Dudley, Cabinet Member for an Active Chelmsford  
Councillor L Foster, Cabinet Member for a Fairer Chelmsford  
Councillor I Fuller, Cabinet Member for a Growing Chelmsford  
Councillor R Moore, Cabinet Member for a Greener and Safer Chelmsford

### Opposition Spokespersons

Councillors, J Jeapes, J. Raven, M Steel, S Sullivan, A, Thorpe-Apps and R Whitehead

Also present: Councillors H Clark, D Eley, S Goldman, R Hyland, J Potter and A Sosin

### 1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Hawkins and Wilson.

### 2. Declarations of Interest

Members of the Cabinet were reminded to declare at the appropriate time any pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests in any of the items of business on the meeting's agenda.

### 3. Minutes and Decisions Called-in

The minutes of the meeting on 30 January 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 4. Public Questions

No public questions were asked at the meeting.

### 5. Members' Questions

No questions were asked at this stage of the meeting, they were instead asked under the relevant items.

## 6.1 Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy 2024/25 (Connected Chelmsford)

### Declarations of interest:

None.

### Summary:

The Cabinet received a report asking them to amend the existing Discretionary Business Rate Relief Policy to give effect to the Government's intention to extend the existing Retail, Hospitality and Leisure relief and the introduction of the Non-Domestic Rating (Heat Networks Relief) (England) Regulations 2023 which had put Heat Network Relief on a mandatory basis. Cabinet heard that the amendments and additions were a helpful assistance for local business and should be incorporated into the Council's discretionary rate relief policy.

### Options:

To agree or reject the proposals.

### Preferred option and reasons:

To agree the proposals as the policy was a helpful assistance for local business.

RESOLVED that the Discretionary Rate Relief Policy 2024/2025, attached as Appendix A, is agreed.

(7.01pm to 7.03pm)

## 6.2 Community Funding Scheme – Discretionary Grant (Connected Chelmsford)

### Declarations of interest:

None.

### Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report asking them to agree the allocation of the discretionary grant funding for 2024/25 to voluntary and charitable organisations as part of the Council's Community funding Scheme.

### Options:

1. To agree the recommendations contained in this report made by the Community Funding Panel.
2. To agree, with amendment, the recommendations contained in this report made by the Community Funding Panel.

### Preferred option and reasons:

To agree the allocations as recommended which had been through a thorough process of assessment and aligned to the Council's corporate priorities.

### Discussion:

In response to a question, it was noted that the service level agreements were reviewed every two years, but details were not currently published. It was also noted that the service level agreements included promises of funding and some were ending, for example because the organisation no longer existed.

RESOLVED that;

1. Cabinet agrees to allocate £130k in 2024/25 to fund the 24 organisations in the amount shown in Appendix 1, and one year core funding for 3 organisations.
2. That the Director of Connected Chelmsford is authorised to prepare and issue the grant offer letters and grant funding agreements to those organisations receiving the grants for 2024/25

(7.03pm to 7.08pm)

## 7.1 Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Plan (Fairer Chelmsford)

### Declarations of interest:

None.

### Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which presented a refreshed policy framework for the procurement, supply and management of Temporary Accommodation to help address management of the increasing demand and effectively manage cost and value for money.

### Options:

1. Approve the Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Plan.
2. Approve the Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Plan with amendments.
3. Decline to approve the Temporary Accommodation and Procurement Plan.

### Preferred option and reasons:

To approve the Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Plan as presented to assist with the procurement, supply and management of Temporary Accommodation.

### Discussion:

The Cabinet heard that the primary purpose of the Plan was to make sure the Council was meeting its legal obligation, adopting good practice and ensuring the sufficient supply of suitable accommodation whilst minimising financial impact. It was noted that in some cases, residents were accommodated elsewhere outside of Chelmsford and are then moved back at a later date closer to Chelmsford, due to the obligation to house nearby. The plan would allow the Council to potentially leave residents outside of the area if they were happy elsewhere and would give people the choice of where to live, instead of continuously moving. It was noted that the plan would be beneficial for both the City Council and any residents. It was noted that this plan was one of the actions that had arisen from the Council's Housing Action group.

RESOLVED that the Temporary Accommodation Placement and Procurement Plan be approved as presented.

(7.08pm to 7.12pm)

## 7.2 Tenancy Strategy 2024-2029 (Fairer Chelmsford)

### Declarations of interest:

None.

### Summary:

The Cabinet's approval was sought to externally consult on an updated draft Tenancy Strategy 2024-29, as the previous one had been published in 2018 and was due for review and replacement in 2024.

### Options:

1. Approve the Tenancy Strategy, as presented, for consultation.
2. Approve the Tenancy Strategy, with amendments, for consultation.
3. Decline to approve the Tenancy Strategy for consultation.

### Preferred option and reasons:

To approve the Tenancy Strategy for consultation as it was an important document to revitalise conversations with Registered Providers about the challenges and opportunities to create joint solutions through partnership and collaboration.

### Discussion:

The Cabinet heard that the Council wanted to reenergise their relationship with registered providers to make sure that every home was used effectively and in resident's interests, the base document would allow those conversations to start with all of the registered providers. In response to questions, the Cabinet Member for a Fairer Chelmsford stated that an occupancy rate of around 80% wasn't unusual due to the short time circumstances involved. They also stated that CHP had undertaken a review of under occupation numbers but that it was not clear if all registered providers had done so, but the new strategy would encourage that to take place. It was also noted that the incentive for registered providers to respond to underoccupancy was the resolution of health and welfare issues in over occupied properties. It was also noted that the document dealt with registered providers and there was a separate discussion to be had with private sector landlords and that service charges were included on certain properties from registered providers.

It was noted that if approved, any amendments, following the consultation, would be notified to opposition spokespersons.

RESOLVED that;

1. The Tenancy Strategy, as presented be approved for consultation.
2. Following the consultation, the Director of Sustainable Communities be authorised in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Fairer Chelmsford to make, if required, minor amendments and approve the Tenancy Strategy.

(7.13pm to 7.23pm)

## 8.1 Proposed Change to the Constitution (Leader)

### Declarations of interest:

None.

### Summary:

The Cabinet considered a proposal to change the terms of reference for the Treasury Management and Investment Sub committee, to increase the membership from five to seven Councillors.

### Options:

To recommend or not recommend the change.

### Preferred option and reasons:

To recommend the change as it would allow additional members to sit on the Sub-Committee.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the terms of reference for the Treasury Management and Investment Sub Committee be changed to increase the membership from five to seven Councillors.

(7.23pm to 7.23pm)

## 9. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

## 10. Reports to Council

Item 8.1 was subject of a report to Council.

### Exclusion of the Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for items 11.1 and 12.1 on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within paragraph 3 of Part 1 of the Schedule 12A to the Act (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the authority holding that information).

## 11.1 YMCA Funding Request (Fairer Chelmsford)

*Public interest statement: It is not in the public interest to release details of this report at present, on the grounds that the report contains information that is commercially sensitive and to place the information in the public realm will be detrimental to the negotiations to be undertaken by the Council.*

**Declarations of interest:**

None.

**Summary:**

The Cabinet were asked to consider a funding request from the YMCA in support of their development proposals to provide young person accommodation in Chelmsford.

**Options:**

To provide or not provide the grant.

**Preferred option and reasons:**

To provide the grant as it would provide the delivery of units of which the Council would receive nomination rights for some of the units.

**Discussion:**

The Cabinet heard that providing the grant would benefit the Council in the long term with reduced temporary accommodation costs and that the grant would enable the YMCA to seek further funding from elsewhere and was within an existing capital budget. It was noted that further funding or a loan could be provided in the future by the Council, but that a grant had been the best option at this stage. It was noted that social value benefits would be managed and the current number of units was felt to be suitable starting point for nomination rights.

RESOVLED that;

1. The Director of Public Places after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford pursuant to para 3.4.5.46 of the Constitution be authorised to consider, negotiate and agree terms as described in the report.
2. That the grant be funded from the existing capital programme Housing Initiatives budget.

(7.25pm to 7.33pm)

## 12.1 Council's Allocating and Spending CIL Document (Growing Chelmsford)

*Public interest statement: It is not in the public interest to release details of this report at present, on the grounds that the report contains information that is commercially sensitive and to place the information in the public realm will be detrimental to the negotiations to be undertaken by the Council.*

**Declarations of interest:**

None.

**Summary:**

The Cabinet considered proposed changes to the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Allocating and Spending CIL Document to agree in principle the spend of the strategic allocation of CIL raised as part of a new development in Chelmsford Garden Community, on necessary infrastructure projects directly supporting the delivery of the development.

### Options:

To either approve or not the proposed amendments to the Council's CIL Governance – Allocation and Spending Document.

### Preferred option and reasons:

To approve changes to the Council's CIL Governance - Allocation and Spending CIL Document in relation to Chelmsford Garden Community to allow, if required, necessary and viable infrastructure to be delivered to support a new development.

### Discussion:

The Cabinet heard that the proposed amendments would allow strategic CIL receipts to be used to fund infrastructure and support delivery where it was independently verified that the cost of infrastructure might make development unviable. It was noted that S106 and CIL were still separate and S106 funding would still be secured to fund elements of developments that were needed. It was also noted that within the proposals for Chelmsford Garden Community, due to its scale, there is a greater need for infrastructure resulting in higher costs , which means CIL could be used to fund some of the required infrastructure to ensure development remains viable. It was also noted that the changes would not mean developers were able to reduce the percentage of affordable housing on the development site. It was also noted that the current stage was just an agreement in principle but Legal Services were happy with it and would monitor compliance as required.

RESOLVED that;

1. The Council's CIL Governance – Allocation and Spending CIL Document be amended as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.
2. Responsibility be delegated to the Director of Sustainable Communities in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Growing Chelmsford to make any subsequent final amendments to the Council's CIL Governance – Allocation and Spending CIL Document before publication.

(7.33pm to 7.57pm)

The meeting closed at 7.57pm

Chair