

MINUTES OF  
CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET

on 2 June 2020 at 7.00pm

Present:

Cabinet Members

Councillor S J Robinson, Leader of the Council (Chair)  
Councillor M C Goldman, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford  
Councillor C K Davidson, Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford  
Councillor M J Mackrory, Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development  
Councillor R J Moore, Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford

Cabinet Deputies

Councillor M Bracken, Economy and Small Business  
Councillor D Clark, Strategy  
Councillor A Davidson, Healthy Living  
Councillor S Rajesh, Community Safety  
Councillor C Tron, Affordable Housing

Councillors

K Bentley, N Chambers, P Clark, W Daden, S Dobson, N Gulliver, R Hyland, R Massey, R Poulter, I Roberts, J Raven, M Sismey, M S Steel, M Watson and R T Whitehead

## 1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

The attendance of members was confirmed. Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor J Galley, Oppositions Spokesperson.

## 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. Councillor Steel declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 6.1 as a member of the Riverside gym.

### 3. Minutes and Decisions Called-in

The minutes of the meeting on 3 March 2020 were confirmed as a correct record. No decisions at that meeting had been called in.

### 4. Public Questions

Written statements had been received from two members of the public in support of the Tindal Square Public Realm Improvements Scheme, one of whom read out his statement in person.

### 5. Members' Questions

Councillor K Bentley on whether the Council was planning to reintroduce charges for parking in its car parks and whether key workers would be exempt from the charges.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development said that charges had recently been reintroduced. The multi-storey car parks had been reopened, with social distancing measures in place, surfaces sanitised and only one person allowed in the lifts at one time. There were no plans to exempt key workers from charges as that would be administratively difficult to introduce and would have an adverse effect on income at a time when the Council was facing financial difficulties.

#### 6.1 Petition on the Use of the Riverside Gym by Under 16s (Greener and Safer Chelmsford)

##### Declarations of interest:

Councillor M Steel declared a non-pecuniary interest and took no part in the discussion on this item.

##### Summary:

A petition had been received requesting that the Council reconsider its decision to change the opening hours for unaccompanied 14/15 year olds to the Riverside gym facility. The organiser of the petition attended the meeting formally to present and speak to it.

##### Options:

1. Accept the petition and extend the access for under 16s to the same as adult customers
2. Extend the hours for under 16s to an alternative time (e.g. 7pm midweek evenings)

3. Continue with current arrangements but continue to monitor the position and keep under review.

#### Chosen Option and Reasons:

Option 3 on the grounds that the changes had helped to resolve most of the problems experienced at the facility under the former arrangements for the use of the gym by 14 and 15 year olds.

#### Discussion:

In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member for Greener and Safer Chelmsford explained the reasons for adopting the current arrangements for the use of the gym by 14 and 15 year olds. She said that the Riverside facility had a duty of care to young people and, like other such facilities, wished to ensure the careful supervision of their use by young people. The Riverside gym gave youngsters equal or better opportunities than other providers to use its facilities during peak times and the leisure centre as a whole provided a wide range of activities not necessarily available at other sites.

The Cabinet Member went on to outline the plans for the reopening of the Riverside Leisure Centre, which it was intended would take place on 6 July, taking into account all government advice and having carried out detailed risk assessments. The gym would run pre-booked one hour sessions and operate the same arrangements as before the lockdown. Online classes would also be held for those unable to access the facilities.

Asked whether there would be any scope to provide gym sessions in a more controlled environment for unaccompanied youngsters from outside Chelmsford who would have difficulty attending before 5.30pm, the Cabinet Member said that she would discuss the possibility with officers and inform the questioner of the outcome. On a suggestion that a "teenage plus" membership scheme be introduced for talented 14 and 15 year olds who could use the gym unsupervised and on the recommendation of an instructor, the Cabinet Member said that that too would be part of the monitoring and review arrangements in place once the gym reopened and long-term usage patterns could be assessed. A programme for talented athletes was already in place which provided flexibility on the times of training.

In response to a question about progress on the Council providing its own online petition facility, the Cabinet Member for Connected Chelmsford said that the recent focus of Digital Services had been on enabling remote working and meetings. The introduction of an e-petitions scheme would be pursued when capacity allowed, but in the meantime the Council was happy to accept online petitions from other sources.

RESOLVED that the current arrangements for the admission of 14 and 15 year olds to the Riverside Gym facilities be retained but that they continue to be monitored.

(7.14pm to 7.31pm)

## 6.2 Policy for CCTV (Greener and Safer Chelmsford)

### Declarations of Interest:

None

### Summary:

The Cabinet was requested to approve a policy for the monitoring of third party CCTV systems in Chelmsford.

### Options:

Approve the proposed policy, amend it or not introduce a formal policy.

### Chosen Option and Reasons:

The proposed policy would respond to increasing interest by external organisations for the Council to monitor their CCTV systems.

### Discussion:

It was observed during discussion on this item that much of the CCTV provision appeared to be focused on the city centre. A significant proportion of crime was committed in villages and in shopping centres outside of the city centre not the responsibility of parish councils and therefore it was suggested that systems operated by, for example, housing partnerships be included in the policy. The Cabinet Member said that the policy could be amended in future to include housing partnerships if a review considered it necessary.

RESOLVED that the proposed policy for the monitoring of the CCTV systems of third parties set out in Section 4 of the report to the meeting be approved.

(7.31pm to 7.37pm)

## 7.1 Making Places Supplementary Planning Document – Consultation Draft (Sustainable Development)

### Declarations of Interest:

None

### Summary:

The Chelmsford Policy Board on 3 March 2020 had considered a draft of the Making Places Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which, if approved by the Cabinet, would be published for public consultation. The purpose of the document, which would sit alongside the Local Plan, was to promote and secure high quality sustainable new development of all types and sizes. It set out detailed guidance on the policy requirements of the Local Plan and the standards the local planning authority would expect to see in future developments, including advice on how

developers could go beyond those standards to create the most sustainable and environmentally friendly developments possible.

**Options:**

Approve the document for consultation, amend it or withdraw it.

**Chosen Option and Reasons:**

The draft document reflected the Council's objectives for the provision of new development in the city.

**Discussion:**

The following questions were asked during the discussion of the report:

- Whether residents' groups would be included in the developers' forums for parish councils.
- Whether the words "genuinely affordable housing" could be included in the wording of the theme "A fairer and inclusive Chelmsford" in paragraph 1.6 of the SPD.
- Whether hedgehog highways could be provided in the boundary walls and fences of properties in a development.
- Why the consultation period could not be extended to the normal six weeks and that it would best to avoid holiday periods when it did take place.

In response to those questions, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development said that the developers' forum went through the masterplan process first and other interested parties would be involved once that stage had been completed. There would be an ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders and organisations. On the term "genuinely affordable", he said that that this was open to interpretation and the Council was required to follow the definition of affordable housing secured through the planning system set out in the NPPF. The creation of hedgehog highways or wildlife corridors was something that would need to be agreed by negotiation with developers at the design stage, but it was the wish of the Council to promote and protect wildlife as much as possible in new developments. The four week consultation period was thought to be appropriate and would begin as soon as meaningful arrangements for it, probably concentrating on online responses in the current circumstances, could be put in place.

RESOLVED that:

1. the draft Making Places Supplementary Planning Document and its supporting Appendices submitted with the report to the meeting be approved for public consultation; and
2. the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Greener Chelmsford, be authorised to make any subsequent changes to the SPD and to finalise the consultation material.

(7.37pm to 7.77pm)

## 7.2 Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document – Consultation Draft (Sustainable Development)

### Declarations of Interest:

None

### Summary:

A draft of the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document was submitted for the Cabinet's consideration on the recommendation of The Chelmsford Policy Board on 3 March 2020. It set out how the City Council would seek planning obligations needed to make development proposals acceptable in planning terms and detailed the obligations or contributions required, depending on the scale of development. If approved by the Cabinet the draft would be the subject of public consultation.

### Options:

Approve the document for consultation, amend it or withdraw it.

### Chosen Option and Reasons:

The document presented would meet the Council's objectives for seeking obligations and contributions from developers.

### Discussion:

It was pointed out that under the proposed delegation in recommendation 2 the SPD could be amended without reference back to the Cabinet, as could the SPD on Making Places. The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development assured members that this was not the intention and the delegation related to making only minor changes to prepare the document for consultation. It would return to the Cabinet for final approval.

Although it was suggested that the Council should be selective in deciding which areas of open space should be transferred to it by developers so that they could be maintained by the authority, the Cabinet Member said that he was inclined to the view that all such spaces should be maintained by the Council whatever their size. However, he would consider all responses on this issue that arose from the consultation.

On a request that reference in the SPD to the cycle bridge over the B1012 be removed, the Cabinet Member said that there was scope to discuss doing this at the master planning stage, which would be looking at how to integrate the strategic growth site north of South Woodham Ferrers with the rest of the town. As highway authority, Essex County Council would need to agree to the removal of reference.

RESOLVED that:

1. the draft Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and its supporting Appendices submitted with the report to the meeting and as amended by the points above be approved for public consultation; and
2. the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Greener Chelmsford, be authorised to make any subsequent changes to the SPD and to finalise the consultation material.

(7.55pm to 8.06pm)

### 7.3 Tindal Square Public Realm Improvement Scheme (Sustainable Development)

#### Declarations of Interest:

None

#### Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which presented a preliminary design and two options for the design of a public realm improvement scheme for Tindal Square following public consultation on the project in 2019.

#### Options:

Agree or not to proceed with the Detailed Design of the Tindal Square Public Realm Improvement Scheme.

#### Chosen Option and Reasons:

The preliminary design and Option 1 would best fulfil the Council's ambitions for the improvement of Tindal Square.

#### Discussion:

The Cabinet had received two statements in favour of the scheme, one of which was presented in person by a representative of the Civic Society. In response to a request that the Society be engaged in the discussions with Essex County Council on the scheme and the future use of Shire Hall, the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development said that he would welcome the Society's input. He also referred to a request in the other statement received that the Sebastopol canon be restored to the front of Shire Hall and said that this would be considered as part of the design. He was unable to agree, however, to a suggestion at the meeting that consideration also be given to relocating the War Memorial to Tindal Square. He said that such a project would cost at least £80,000 and, being a listed monument, the necessary permissions would be difficult to obtain.

In response to a question, the Cabinet Member said that the Tindal Square scheme was the next project on the list of public realm improvements and, if finally agreed, would represent the completion of the pedestrianisation of the High Street. Asked to what degree the scheme would contribute to meeting the objective to make Chelmsford net zero carbon by 2030, the Cabinet Member said that it was not

possible to quantify that at the moment but that it was clear that there would be a reduction in traffic in the city centre as a result, that it would encourage walking and cycling, and that more trees would be provided as part of the scheme.

The Cabinet Member agreed with a comment that the County Council needed to make an early and firm decision on the future use of Shire Hall. He said that the City Council continued to hold discussions with the County Council and had suggested possible avenues for funding to support its future use.

RESOLVED that:

1. Cabinet approves the Preliminary Design for Tindal Square and adopts Option 1 as the City Council's preferred option, and that additional contributions are sought to support this Option from external funding sources, including Essex County Council as landowner of the Shire Hall and the County Council's preferred development partner.
2. Should Option 1 not be supported by Essex County Council as landowner of the Shire Hall and the County Council's preferred development partner, Option 2 is progressed.
3. The Director of Sustainable Communities is requested to enter into discussions with Essex County Council as owner of Shire Hall and the proposed developer of Shire Hall to obtain their support for the implementation and funding of Option 1.
4. Cabinet approves the expenditure of up to £320,000 on the Detailed Design and Tender Process for the Scheme and that this budget is added to the Capital Programme and allocated from uncommitted S106 contributions already held by the City Council for public realm purposes.
5. The Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Sustainable Development, is authorised to enter in to an Inter Authority Agreement with Essex County Council to procure and develop the delivery of the scheme on the City Council's behalf.
6. At the end of the Detailed Design and Tender Process a further report is brought to Cabinet to approve the budget and delivery of the Scheme.

(8.06pm to 8.43pm)

## 8. Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement (Leader)

Declarations of Interest:

None

Summary:

The Cabinet was requested to approve for publication the 2020/21 Statement on Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking.

#### Options:

The Statement was a factual document which the Council was required to review and publish annually and therefore the consideration of options was not appropriate.

#### Discussion:

The Statement was welcomed and it was suggested that in order to raise awareness of the issue and demonstrate its leadership role, the Council should set up a cross-party group to monitor the operation of its activities to ensure compliance with the Statement's principles and to further the commitments the authority agreed to when adopting the Charter on Modern Day Slavery. The Leader said that he would ask for a report covering those points to be submitted to a future meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee, which he thought would be the body best placed to monitor the Council's work to combat Modern Day Slavery.

RESOLVED that the proposed Statement on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking for 2020 be approved and published.

(8.43pm to 8.53pm)

## 9. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business

## 10. Reports to Council

None of the reports to the meeting required reference to the Council.

The meeting closed at 8.53pm

Chair