

**MINUTES OF
CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET**

on 8 April 2025 at 7pm

Present:

Cabinet Members

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

Cabinet Deputies

Councillor S Goldman, Cabinet Deputy for Economy and Strategic Projects
Councillor J Lardge, Cabinet Deputy for Cultural Services

Opposition Spokespersons

Councillors, S. Dobson, J. Jeapes, M. Steel, A. Thorpe-Apps, R. Whitehead and P. Wilson

Also present: Councillor B Knight

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C Davidson, Eley, Hyland, Raven and Sherlock.

2. Declarations of Interest

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

None were raised.

3. Minutes and Decisions Called-in

The minutes of the meeting on 11 March 2025 were confirmed as a correct record. No decisions had been called in.

4. Public Questions

No public questions had been submitted for the meeting.

5. Members' Questions

Cllr Jeapes asked a question in relation to the grass cutting regime of species-rich areas. The Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford shared that these areas were mown at least twice a year with additional mowing of margins for access, dependant on weather conditions.

6. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

7. Reports to Council

None of the items were subject of a recommendation 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 8.1, 8.2 and 8.3 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).

8.1 Chelmer Waterside Development (Deputy Leader)

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 a report which sought their approval, for the marketing and disposal of the three sites (Badow Road, Brockley Road and Wharf Road) and any associated land and property that form Chelmer Waterside by way of a Development Agreement.

Options:

1. To market the land for disposal by way of a development agreement.
2. To market the land for sale subject to planning.

Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 was the preferred option as it would offer the optimum balance between the Council's desire to retain control over the development and reducing the financial and operational risks associated with development.

Discussion:

The Cabinet received a summary of the report from the Deputy Leader which explained the historical Grant Funding Agreement between Chelmsford City Council and Homes England which set out a number of conditions and milestones for infrastructure and housing delivery and that this grant could be reclaimed by Homes England if these conditions were not met. The Deputy Leader explained that the recommendation would allow for a tender notice to be issued and it would be brought back to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

RESOLVED that marketing the land for disposal by way of a development agreement be agreed.

(7.02pm to 7.10pm)

8.2 Development of Lower Anchor Street Car Park (Deputy Leader)

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:

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which sought their approval, for the sale of land currently owned by Chelmsford City Council to CHP for the purpose of developing affordable housing units. In addition, the report sought approval for the budget allocation necessary to provide a grant to deliver the developed units as affordable rent rather than shared ownership. The proposed development is aligned with the Housing Strategy, and it will contribute to the reduction of housing need in the City.

Options:

1. To approve the land sale and provide grant funding for the development.
2. To approve the land sale without grant funding.
3. To approve the land sale and provide a reduced grant with some units being sold as shared ownership units.
4. Dispose of the property without nomination rights.

Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 was the preferred option as the sale and grant funding would contribute to the alleviation of the housing crisis in the City, providing much-needed affordable housing for households on the waiting list and reducing the reliance on temporary accommodation (TA).

RESOLVED that;

- i. That the Director of Public Places after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford be authorised to conclude terms for the sale of the land at Anchor Street Car Park to provide affordable housing.
- ii. The additional capital budget of £0.6m be approved to provide a grant to CHP to enable the housing developed on the site to be let at affordable rents based on LHA rates.

(7.10pm to 7.17pm)

8.3 Refurbishment of 1 Springfield Lyons (Deputy Leader)

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:

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which sought their approval, for the business case for the refurbishment of the commercial property and to agree the additional required budget.

Options:

1. To refurbish and relet the building.
2. To undertake a part refurbishment and then sell the building.
3. To sell the building.

Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 was the preferred option due to the potential for long-term rental income and the flexibility to cater to a broader range of tenants by subdividing the space. Refurbishment was seen as the most sustainable way to generate value in the long term.

Discussion:

Councillor Jeapes raised a question in relation to security and was informed that there was now 24-hour CCTV and an urgent response alarm in operation. The previous tenants had taken their security measures away once they had vacated which had left the building vulnerable. The Cabinet was assured that this had been rectified sufficiently.

RESOLVED that;

- i. Approval to enter the refurbishments contract be delegated to the Director of Public Places after the value engineering exercise is completed.
- ii. That an increase to the capital budget from £2m to £2.95m to fund costs of the works identified to relet the building be approved.

(7.18pm to 7.24pm)

The meeting closed at 7.24pm

Chair