

MINUTES OF CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET

on 27 January 2026 at 7pm

Present:

Cabinet Members

Councillor S Robinson, Leader of the Council (Chair)
Councillor L Foster, Deputy Leader of the Council
Councillor C Davidson, Cabinet Member for Finance
Councillor N Dudley, Cabinet Member for an Active Chelmsford
Councillor D Eley, Cabinet Member for a Safer Chelmsford
Councillor S Goldman, Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Property
Councillor R Moore, Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford

Cabinet Deputies

Councillor J Lardge, Cabinet Deputy for Cultural Services
Councillor T Sherlock, Cabinet Deputy for Sustainable Transport

Opposition Spokespersons

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

Also present: Councillors R. Hyland and A. Sosin

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Armstrong, Bonnet, Hawkins, Potter and Raven.

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.

3. Minutes and Decisions Called-in

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

4. Public Questions

One public question had been submitted for the meeting, [which can be viewed via this link](#). The question asked about the decision to end the loan agreement with the Essex Regiment Museum Collection at the Museum of Chelmsford, specifically, the rationale to end the loan, consideration of alternatives, engagement with stakeholders and the community, absence of a public plan for the Collection's future and the Council's Civic Duty and Heritage Stewardship.

In response the Cabinet Deputy for Cultural Services thanked the member of the public for their question, acknowledged their separate full statement and thanked them for their service. The Cabinet Deputy referenced the previously provided written response and expanded on those points. It was noted that the arrangement had ended because the Essex Regiment Museum Trust chose to dissolve, leaving no legal or sustainable basis for the Council to continue managing a large, specialist collection of more than 50,000 items not owned by the Council. The Cabinet heard that the Council had worked with the Trustees and the Royal Anglian Regiment Museum Trust over several years to explore alternative options, however neither organisation had possessed the capacity or resources to deliver those options, particularly given the scale of the collection, its conservation requirements, and the financial pressures faced by all councils. It was also noted that the transfer of the collection to the Royal Anglian Regiment Museum Trust had been required under the Essex Regiment Charity Deeds and had been considered the only responsible and sustainable way to secure long-term specialist care.

The Cabinet heard that this also reflected historical continuity, as the Essex Regiment had amalgamated into the Royal Anglian Regiment. It was confirmed that the Museum of Chelmsford would maintain the city's connection with the Regiment by retaining and displaying locally significant artefacts. This included items from the Essex Yeomanry, which were not part of the transfer and would remain on display. It was reported that the dedicated Essex Regiment Museum gallery had closed on 4 January 2026, and that the space was being repurposed into a flexible, multipurpose area to support community engagement and future temporary exhibitions. The Cabinet Member also offered a continued dialogue with the member of the public outside of the meeting to discuss their concerns further.

5. Members' Questions

Councillor Hyland asked a question about the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge report and the progress that had been made, with regard to recommendations made on the Council's scrutiny function.

In response the Leader of the Council stated that the peer challenge team had recently returned to the Council to review progress against the agreed action plan, including those elements related to scrutiny. It was noted that they had been pleased to note many improvements already implemented, including training for Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members and the Chair, carried out by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny, as recommended by the peer challenge team. The Leader also referenced pre scrutiny information sessions for all Councillors that had been carried out on important topics and that the peer challenge team had found Chelmsford to be a high performing authority with a clear

leadership and sense of direction. It was noted that their final written report was awaited and that the Council would then consider what further improvements, if any, might be appropriate. The Leader also suggested that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was the right place to raise such questions and encouraged Cllr Hyland to discuss with the Chair and Vice Chair what should be on the agenda and to attend the Committee.

6.1 Local Lettings Plans

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which sought to establish a legally compliant and consistent process for the use of Local Lettings Plans that would enable the Council to make best use of existing and new housing stock, whilst still meeting its legal duties to households in housing need and to approve the document as presented in Appendix 1. The Cabinet were also informed that Chelmsford Policy Board had considered the report and recommended it for approval.

Options:

1. Agree to the process, set out in Appendix 1, for creating Local Lettings Plans, and approve the document as presented in Appendix 1.
2. Amend and agree the process, set out in Appendix 1, for creating Local Lettings Plans, and approve the document
3. Not approve the process for creating Local Lettings Plans and continue the allocation of housing through the existing Allocations Policy.

Preferred option and reasons:

That Cabinet agree to the process, set out in Appendix 1, to approve the document for creating Local Lettings Plans, as this allows the Council to make best use of existing and new housing stock whilst still meeting its legal duties to households in housing need.

Discussion:

The Cabinet Member for Fairer Chelmsford confirmed that any Local Lettings Plans would be time limited to ensure legal compliance, in agreement with a registered provider. In response to a question, it was confirmed by the Cabinet Member that it was hoped the use of Local Lettings Plans would assist with providing additional opportunities to households on the housing register.

RESOLVED that the process and document for creating Local Lettings Plans set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

(7.10pm to 7.14pm)

7.1 One-year extension to the current South Essex Parking Partnership Joint Committee Agreement

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which sought their approval to extend the current Operational Period of the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) by one year, up until 31st March 2028, to coincide with Local Government Reorganisation.

Options:

1. Approve the extension of the current Operational Period of the South Essex Parking Partnership by one year up until 31st March 2028.
2. Not approve the extension of the current Operational Period of the South Essex Parking Partnership by one year up until 31st March 2028.

Preferred option and reasons:

Cabinet approve the extension of the current Operational Period of the South Essex Parking Partnership by one year up until 31st March 2028, thereby enabling parking enforcement to be continued to be carried out by SEPP up until local government reorganisation.

RESOLVED that the extension of the current Operational Period of the South Essex Parking Partnership by one year up until 31st March 2028 be approved.

(7.14pm to 7.15pm)

8.1 Budget Report 2026/27

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which contained recommendations for the setting of the Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2026-27 and the level of Council Tax for that year.

Options:

To agree or vary the proposals contained within the report, whilst paying regard to the financial sustainability of any amendments.

Preferred option and reasons:

Recommend the report to Council for consideration, so meeting statutory obligations.

Discussion:

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the 2026/27 Budget and informed the Cabinet, that for the first time in many years, the report delivered positive news due to the much more substantial Government grant compared to previous years. It was noted that strong lobbying of the Government from the Council's Leader and Chief Executive over the rising cost of homelessness had led to this. They also stated that costs in general continued to rise and the housing crisis persisted, but that the Council had managed to keep strong control of its finances, through difficult decisions and strong growth from fees and charges via residents using services such as the Leisure Centres and Car Parks. The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that money had been put aside in the budget for Local Government Reorganisation, improved services including higher provision of dog waste bins, investments for the first time in a few years in the asset replacement reserve, reinstating the Highways Rangers service and grant funding for the charitable sector and businesses.

The Cabinet were also informed that increases to fees and charges had all been kept under the rate of inflation, with some frozen including for short term car parks. It was also noted that to retain a balanced budget, a below inflation increase of 2.97% to the City Council's element of Council Tax had been proposed. The Leader of the Council thanked the Chief Executive for their continued strong lobbying of Government to increase grant funding and also referenced the importance that they had continued to reduce the amount of the budget that was funded by Council Tax, with this now under 20%, meaning the Council's revenue budget was mainly funded by fees and charges and grants. The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance thanked staff across service areas for their continued hard work in generating additional income.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL the Revenue and Capital Budgets for 2026/27, as set out in Appendix 1 including:

- the new **revenue and capital investments in services** identified in **Section 5**;
- the **Capital Programme** in **Section 11**;
- the **Revenue Budgets** in **Section 10**.

- i. An increase in the average Band D level of Council Tax for the City Council to £234.85 (+2.97%), which is within the referendum threshold, in Section 9.
- ii. The movement in reserves and the Medium-Term forecast shown in Section 7 and note the s151 Officer's assessment.
- iii. The inclusion of special expenses, parish-tier council precepts, and other precepting authority charges, once confirmed, as detailed in Section 9. (These will not be available until Full Council.)
- iv. A delegation to the Chief Executive to agree, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, the pay award for 2026/27 within the normal financial delegations.
- v. A delegation to manage the use of the LGR reserve. The proposal is set out in Section 7.

RESOLVED that;

- i. A delegation to the Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance be approved, to update the budget report as required to reflect:
 - final Government funding announcement
 - parish-tier council precepts; and
 - Business Rate Retention income following submission of the NNDR1 return.

Any resulting budget variations will be managed through the use of, or contribution to, reserves to maintain a balanced budget.

- ii. A delegation to the s151 Officer after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance be approved, to prepare a formal budget and council tax resolution for submission to Full Council.

(7.16pm to 7.25pm)

8.2 Capital, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies 2026/27

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet received a report setting out a proposed approach to the management of the Council's cash, capital investments (the capital expenditure programme) and other types of investment, including property.

Options:

1. Accept the recommendations contained within the report and appendices.
2. Recommend changes to the way the Council's investments are to be managed.

Preferred option and reasons:

Recommend the report to Council without amendment for consideration and thereby meet statutory obligations.

Discussion:

The Cabinet Member for Finance informed the Cabinet that a change had been made to Treasury Management to improve cashflow resilience, by doubling the amount held in liquid funds and that the Treasury Management and Investment Strategies had been recommended to Cabinet, by the Treasury Management and Investment Sub-Committee. It was noted that the Capital element of the report had essentially been covered as part of the Budget Report.

In response to questions, Cabinet Members stated that;

- A business case for a new Cemetery and Crematorium continued to be progressed with some suitable land identified, but that LGR would play a part in how this progressed.
- Flexible working had led to employers needing much smaller amounts of office space and work was continuing to look at consolidating all CCC staff into the main Civic Centre building rather than the Coval Lane building, of which elements continued to be let out to other businesses, generating an income.
- No assumption had been made about the amount of capital receipts that might arise from the Chelmer Waterside development, as the Council did not know what the amount might be, so as part of prudent budget planning, it had not made sense to include a figure.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL that they approve the Capital, Treasury Management and Investment Strategies.

(7.26pm to 7.33pm)

8.3 Discretionary Exception to Council Tax Premiums in respect of second homes

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which asked them to determine whether to apply an additional local discretionary exception to Council Tax premiums, imposed in respect of second homes and to consider whether to delegate such decisions to Officers in the future.

Options:

1. To agree a limited local discretionary exception to Council Tax premiums imposed on second homes and to recommend the delegation of future such decisions to Officers
2. To refuse to agree to extend local discretionary exceptions to Council Tax premiums imposed on second homes
3. To not recommend the delegation of future such decisions on discretionary exceptions to Officers

Preferred option and reasons:

Recommend that Council agree the implementation of the discretionary exception and to delegate future decisions on such matters to officers, as it would reduce resident's emotional and financial distress in limited circumstances and the delegation would allow the Council to react swiftly in appropriate cases.

RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL to agree the implementation of additional local discretionary exception to Council Tax premiums imposed on second homes as defined in paragraph 2.4 and to delegate future decisions on such matters to the Director of Connected Chelmsford in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member (Option 1)

(7.33pm to 7.35pm)

9.1 Community Infrastructure Levy – Governance Update

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which detailed proposed changes to the Council's Community Infrastructure Governance document.

Options:

1. Agree the proposed changes to the Community Infrastructure Governance document.
2. Agree the proposed changes to the Community Infrastructure Governance document, with amendments.
3. Do not agree the proposed changes to the Community Infrastructure Governance document

Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 as it was considered appropriate for the policy to be aligned alongside the remainder of the Neighbourhood allocation.

Discussion:

The Cabinet Member for a Greener Chelmsford stated that the proposed change was due to case where a specific Parish Council had hit the cap of CIL that they could receive and that the change would allow the CIL to be spent nearby instead of not being utilised due to national rules limiting the amount that could be provided to a Parish Council. In response to a question about where the CIL would be spent, it was clarified that the proposal was to spend the unutilised CIL on City Council projects within the relevant neighbourhood, which in this case was the two urban wards bordering the Parish of Chignal. It was also noted that as with other

examples the Community Funding Panel would make the final decision on what the funds should be allocated to and that this report concerned neighbourhood CIL, not Strategic CIL.

RESOLVED that the proposed changes set out in the report be agreed and made to the Community Infrastructure Governance Document for publication on the Council's website.

(7.36pm to 7.46pm)

10.1 Community Infrastructure Levy – Spend of Neighbourhood CIL

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which sought their agreement to the proposed spend of the neighbourhood CIL alongside the Capital Programme.

Options:

1. Agree the proposed spend of the neighbourhood CIL.
2. Agree the proposed spend of the neighbourhood CIL, with amendments.
3. Do not agree the proposed spend of the neighbourhood CIL.

Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 as the proposed spend aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan priorities.

Discussion:

The Cabinet Member for an Active Chelmsford, stated that all service areas had put forward projects, of which 10 had been identified and set out in the report before Cabinet. It was noted that additional funding had been sought, as the 10 projects totalled £730k, compared to the available balance of £574k and this had been achieved, via unspent Section 106 contributions and unallocated CIL Cap funding. It was also noted that the funding panel had considered the proposals in November 2025.

RESOLVED that the proposed spend of the Neighbourhood CIL be approved alongside the Capital Programme.

(7.47pm to 7.49pm)

11.1 Greater Essex Combined County Authority – Terms of Reference for nominating body for non-constituent members and future delegation arrangements

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report which sought their approval for the Terms of Reference for the nominating body for non-constituent district tier representation for the Greater Essex Combined County Authority and to approve a delegation for future executive decisions.

Options:

1. Agree the Terms of Reference
2. Not agree the Terms of Reference

Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 was the preferred option as it would allow the Terms of Reference to be agreed and enable the Leader to take any appropriate executive actions.

Discussion:

RESOLVED that;

1. the Terms of Reference for the nominating body for non-constituent members of the Greater Essex Combined County Authority (GECCA) be approved.
2. the Leader of the Council be delegated authority to take any appropriate executive actions that arise from devolution.

(7.49pm to 7.56pm)

12. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

13. Reports to Council

Items 8.1, 8.2 & 8.3 were subject of recommendations to Council.

The meeting closed at 7.56pm

Chair