

**MINUTES OF
CHELMSFORD CITY COUNCIL CABINET**

on 14 November 2023 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 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, C. Davidson, R. Hyland and B. Knight

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Eley, Foster, S. Goldman, 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 10 October 2023 were confirmed as a correct record. The decision on 12 September 2023 in respect of the Hylands PSPO, had been called in by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and considered on 19th October. The Committee had supported the decision of the Cabinet and did not wish for it to be amended.

4. Public Questions

No public questions were asked at the meeting.

5. Members' Questions

One question was asked at this point of the meeting and other questions were asked by Councillors under the relevant items. Cllr Thorpe-Apps asked a question about the use of

TruCam, on the back of growing concern about speeding and road safety within villages. They asked if it was considered an effective way of providing additional speed enforcement above any beyond what was already being delivered by the Safer Essex Road Partnership, Essex Police and Community Speedwatch. They noted that they understood the system was in use in Maldon and that they believed there was scope for the Safer Chelmsford Partnership to agree and investment in TruCam. They asked if the Council would consider making the investment in road safety and noted that it was odd that Chelmsford's parishes were not able to use the valuable tool.

In response the Cabinet Member for a Greener and Safer Chelmsford stated that the initial purchase was quite expensive but that officers had spoken with colleagues at Maldon District Council to see if they would consider carrying out enforcement within Chelmsford as a pilot scheme on an hourly rate. It was noted that there was interest but as they were recruiting officers, they would not be able to offer a service until February 2024 at the earliest. It was also noted that decisions around community safety priorities were based on the strategic assessment undertaken by the partnership annually. It was noted that a wide variety of data was analysed before proposing priorities for the One Chelmsford Board to endorse and that Community policing teams aligned their priorities with those from the partnership, but did also have scope to work to the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan and the Crime Prevent Strategy. The Cabinet Member also referred to the quarterly meetings held with Essex Police to discuss policing issues and recommended that the matter could also be raised then. The Cabinet Member also stated that they could not guarantee a service after the possible pilot but data from it would be analysed and other funding streams may come forward.

6.1 Community Infrastructure Levy: Governance Arrangements for the Neighbourhood Allocation in the Unparished Wards (Growing Chelmsford)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report proposing a new approach to how the Council governed the expenditure of the neighbourhood allocation of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) within the nine unparished wards of the City's administrative area. It was noted that the proposed changes were being brought forward for two main reasons. Firstly, to ease pressure on the Council's capital programme and wider budget position and secondly to enable the funding to be used more strategically to deliver local infrastructure that supported the development that had come forward in the urban area. The Cabinet heard that the proposal would split 85% for City Council Capital projects and 15% for community led projects, with grants of under £10k still being approved under delegated powers with grants of over £10k still coming to Cabinet.

Options:

1. To agree the proposed changes to the governance of the CIL Neighbourhood Allocation in the nine unparished wards as set out in this report.
2. To make amendments to the recommendations set out within this report.
3. To not agree the proposed changes to the governance of the CIL Neighbourhood Allocation in the nine unparished wards as set out in this report.

Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 was the preferred option for the reasons set out in the report, easing pressure on the Council's capital programme and wider budget position and enabling the funding to be used more strategically to deliver local infrastructure, that supported the development that had come forward in the urban area.

Discussion:

In response to questions from opposition members, the Cabinet Member for a Growing Chelmsford confirmed that as a result of the proposed changes the unparished areas would have 2% of CIL available for community requests. The Cabinet Member also stated that they would continue to look at improving the publicity of the available grants but in some instances the required organisations did not come forward for all of the available funds. Other members of the Cabinet also stated that this change would help to ensure all of the funds were actually spent for the benefit of residents. It was also noted that the unparished area did consist of nine wards, but for these purposes was referred to as one area.

RESOLVED that;

1. Cabinet adopts the suggested amendments to the governance of the neighbourhood allocation of CIL in the nine unparished wards as set out in this report, and
2. the Director of Sustainable Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for a Growing Chelmsford is authorised to agree and publish the proposed changes within a revised Community Infrastructure Levy Governance (Allocating and Spending CIL) document.

(7.10pm to 7.25pm)

6.2 Publication of revisions to the Chelmsford Local Development Scheme (LDS) (Growing Chelmsford)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report that detailed the revised Local Development Scheme for approval and publication. The Cabinet noted that the LDS set out the programme of work for the preparation of statutory and non-statutory development plan documents for the period of 2023-28. The LDS had been recommended to Cabinet by the Chelmsford Policy Board on 2nd November 2023 and officers were confident that the timetable would be met.

Options:

To either approve or not the publication of the revised Local Development Scheme.

Preferred option and reasons:

To approve the publication of the revised Local Development Scheme as the Council is required to publish an up-to-date Local Development Scheme by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

RESOLVED that the LDS set out in Appendix 1 be approved for publication.

(7.26pm to 7.29pm)

7.1 Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (Leader)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Constitutional Working Group arising from its reviews of the City Council's Constitution. The Cabinet were asked to consider two matters. Firstly, a clarification in relation to methods of voting at meetings. Secondly broadening the existing officer delegation to the Legal and Democratic Services Manager in relation to minor amendments to the Constitution, subject to consultation with the Chair of Governance Committee.

Options:

To either accept or reject the recommendations being made by the Constitutional Working Group and the Governance Committee to the Council.

Preferred option and reasons:

To recommend the proposed changes to the constitution for the reasons set out in the report and appendices.

RECOMMENDED to Council that it approve the amendments to the Constitution detailed in Appendix 1 to the report.

(7.29pm to 7.30pm)

7.2 Review of Scheme of Members' Allowances (Leader)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The views of the Cabinet were requested on the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel appointed to review the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme.

Options:

As the Cabinet was only being invited to comment on the Panel's recommendations the consideration of options was not applicable to this report.

Discussion:

The Cabinet heard a view from a ward Councillor, that the allowance for the Leader's and Opposition Leader's role was far too low and as a result the positions were being undervalued. They felt that these roles should attract a higher allowance and that the amount of Councillors should be reduced to fund the increases. In response the Leader of the Council noted that 34 of 57 Cllrs had responded to the survey and those responses were detailed in the report that would also go onto Council for a final decision. It was also noted that in terms of the numbers of Councillors, this was a separate matter for a future boundary review and did not apply to the Members Allowances Scheme.

RESOLVED that the Council be informed that the Cabinet has no comments on the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the review of the Members' Allowances Scheme.

(7.30pm to 7.35pm)

7.3 Treasury Management Mid-Year Review (Leader)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report on the Treasury Management activities undertaken in the first part of 2023/24 and the extent of compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy. The Treasury Management and Investment Sub-Committee had concluded that no changes to the Strategy were required ahead of the full, annual review later in the financial year.

Options:

1. Accept the recommendations contained within the report.
2. Recommend changes to the way by which 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 Chair of the Treasury Management and Investment Sub Committee, thanked the Section 151 officer and their team and other Sub Committee members, for their hard work in monitoring the investments and the strategy.

RESOLVED that the report on the Treasury Management activities in 2023/24 be noted and the Council be requested to review the report and approve the 2023-24 Treasury Strategy without change.

(7.36pm to 7.38pm)

7.4 North Essex Councils joint working arrangements (Leader)

Declarations of interest:

None.

Summary:

The Cabinet considered a report updating them on progress since agreeing the North Essex Authorities (NEA) Memorandum of Understanding in January 2023 which also sought approval to establish the North Essex Councils partnership.

Options:

1. To support the recommendation. The preferred option is for the Council to support the recommendation in this report, helping to mitigate a range of key strategic risks and opening-up additional opportunities that would not be available to the Council operating alone.
2. To not support the recommendation.

Preferred option and reasons:

Option 1 - The preferred option is for the Council to support the recommendation in this report, helping to mitigate a range of key strategic risks and opening-up additional opportunities that would not be available to the Council operating alone. Alternatively, not supporting the recommendation risks this Council jeopardising the increasingly positive relationships between North Essex Councils and missing out on the considerable potential benefits set out in this report.

Discussion:

The Cabinet heard that the partnership would enable opportunities to share back office services with other Councils, which would be beneficial in areas where it has been difficult to recruit to certain posts and to also explore other potential benefits. In response to a question, it was clarified that this would not put jobs at risk and would instead assist with opportunities to share resources more effectively.

RESOLVED to agree that Chelmsford City Council (the Council) will work in partnership with those Councils set out in paragraph 1.1 and will be collectively referred to as the North Essex Councils (NEC).

(7.38pm to 7.40pm)

8. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

9. Reports to Council

Items 7.1,7.2 and 7.3 were subject of a report to Council.

The meeting closed at 7.40pm

Chair