

Minutes

Cabinet

11th May 2009



Present:

Cabinet Members	Portfolio	Present
Councillor G Butland	Leader	Yes
Councillor N R H O Harley	Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Enterprise & Culture	Yes
Councillor Mrs J C Beavis	Customers & Communication	Yes
Councillor M C M Lager	Efficiency & Resources	Yes
Councillor Lady Newton	Housing & Well-Being	Yes
Councillor Mrs J W Schmitt	Communities	Apologies
Councillor R G Walters	Environment and Sustainability	Apologies

Deputy Cabinet Members	Portfolio	Present
Councillor D L Bebb	Customers & Communication	Yes
Councillor Mrs E Edey	Communities	Yes
Councillor N McCrea	Enterprise & Culture	Apologies
Councillor J McKee	Efficiency & Resources	Yes
Councillor R G S Mitchell	Environment & Sustainability	Yes
Councillor Mrs C Sandbrook	Efficiency & Resources	Yes
Councillor C Siddall	Leader's Portfolio	Yes
Councillor Mrs G Spray	Housing & Well-Being	Yes
Councillor T Wilkinson	Enterprise & Culture	Yes

The following Councillors were also present as invitees of the Leader

Councillor Dr R L Evans, Leader of the Labour Group
Councillor M G Gage, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Leader of Halstead Residents' Association

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J E Abbott, Leader of the Green Group, Councillor R J Bolton, Chairman of Halstead Local Committee, Councillor T J W Foster, Chairman of Witham Local Committee, and Councillor S M Walsh, Chairman of Braintree Local Committee.

Councillors E R Lynch and D Mann were also in attendance.

1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Lager declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8, Cabinet Member update on Essex County Council's Planning Committee and the determination of the Rivenhall Airfield planning application, as he is a member of the Essex & Southend Member Project Board for Waste.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct all Members remained in the meeting for all the items, unless stated otherwise, and took part in the debate and decision thereon.

2 **QUESTION TIME**

There was no questions asked or statements made.

3 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30th March 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

4 **ANNUAL PLAN 2009-2010**

The Leader presented the Annual Plan 2009/2010 and referred to the key projects, the split into major priorities of the Council, and the reference to the relevant Portfolio Holder and the new Programme Boards that will monitor each topic and its implementation. The following minor amendments were advised

- Page 20 E & I 1 and E & I 2 – Regeneration of Town Centres, should read Councillor Harley as Portfolio Holder (not Councillor Butland)
- Page 27 SOC 6 – Witham Public Park – project cost should read £45,000 and £40,000
- Page 28 SOC 11 – Village Agents Project – project cost should read £100,000 and £40,000

Cabinet referred to various items in the Plan including the critical links to the Economic Development Strategy, the new Housing Strategy being complete in November 2009, and the 'bids' system relating to the Affordable Housing Strategy recently going 'live'. With regard to the new Community Centre in Halstead (Page 20 – SOC1) the phrasing of 'possible development' and the production of the feasibility study was a concern. This would be referred to Councillor Mrs Schmitt, Cabinet Member for Communities. There was also an issue on the slow progress of CCTV provision in Halstead, and the August 2009 target date.

DECISION:

1. That the content of the Annual Plan 2009/10 be agreed.
2. It is noted that the end of year performance information and targets for 2009/10 will be included in the Annual Plan when they have been reported to and agreed by the Performance, Innovation and Efficiency Programme Board.

5 **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2009-2012**

Councillor McKee, Deputy Cabinet Member for Efficiency & Resources, introduced the revised and updated Strategy that supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy, and priorities for action by 2012. Reference was made to the procurement cycle, the regulatory constraints and to provide a best practice approach of high quality services that gives value for money, and to procure local services where possible. It was noted that SMART objectives would be added to the Action Plan for 2009/10.

DECISION: That the Procurement Strategy for 2009- 2012 and action plan for 2009-2010 be approved.

6 **STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT**

Cabinet received the updated Council's Strategic Risk Register and noted changes in the content of the risk categories, including three new risks. Risks at all levels would be scrutinised and reviewed, and guidance on potential obstacles has been sought from Zurich Risk Management. The main area of additional risk involves counter party issues, created by the current financial situation.

DECISION: That the updated schedules of strategic risks and the action plans for each of the new/revised risks which are above the risk tolerance line be agreed.

7 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2009-2013**

Councillor Harley, Cabinet Member for Enterprise & Culture, presented the Economic Development Strategy and Action Plan and referred to the consultation process, the impact of the economic recession, the introduction of short and long-term measures, and for working on a regional and county level, including with stakeholders. The sub regional economic hubs, i. e. the Haven Gateway, M11 corridor, will be kept under review, and to the awareness of grants available and funding initiatives. The promotion of the District is vital to the Strategy to encourage business and inward investment and involves five Strategic Priorities as part of a realistic Action Plan.

Cabinet supported the Strategy and the need to promote the district and grasp opportunities in the current economic climate, where thousands of jobs are being lost, including in the manufacturing sector. Members stated that the focus should not always be on the three main towns and requested that the north of the area is not overlooked. With regard to Strategic Priorities 2 and 3 the importance of engagement with the local Chambers of Commerce was accentuated. It was noted that the Council had already appointed four apprenticeships, in line with Objective 32 of the Action Plan.

DECISION: That the District's Economic Development Strategy for 2009-2013 and action plan be adopted.

8 **REVIEW OF LOCAL SERVICE PROVISION**

Councillor Mrs Beavis, Cabinet Member for Customers & Communication, stated that a review of the Council's face-to-face services had been undertaken and involves numerous strands, i.e. the work of the Task & Finish Group on Rural Isolation, the demographics of the area and how to reach people in town as well as villages and hamlets. Ways to achieve this could include the use of parish buildings, local libraries and mobile libraries, and the advent of the new village agent. Different ways of working and communicating are being sought and, at present, there are no financial implications. The process will look to months and years ahead to encompass modern ways of working and to avoid any duplication.

DECISION: That the following recommendations of the review be supported

1. To work with Essex County Council to develop a full business case to deliver services in libraries across the district. There would be two models of service delivery from the libraries.
 - a. Service Delivery Points – These would deliver a wide range of services and would have regular surgeries for in depth queries for benefits and planning.
 - b. Information Points – These would provide signposting to district council

services and staff supported internet access, from other libraries across the district. There would also be telephone points provided to provide access to the Customer Service Centre.

2. To consult further with parish and town councils to identify further opportunities for partnership working to improve access to a range of public services for customers.
3. To support any further consultation with Post Offices around payment taking to be dealt with as part of the strategy around taking payments for services being developed by Finance.
4. To await the outcomes of the Village agent project before conducting any further research into the possibility of providing mobile services across the district.
5. For Essex County Council to continue to provide a service on behalf of BDC from Witham Library until a Business Case has been developed to provide services from libraries across the district.
6. To continue the Service Level Agreement with Greenfields at Halstead Area Office until a full business case has been developed with Essex County Council for the provision of services in libraries across the district.

9 **MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

Councillor Bebb, Deputy Cabinet Member for Customers & Communication, presented the Strategy and advised it 'sharpens' the Council's messages, promotes community engagement and interfaces with the 'Shaping up for Excellence' programme. The five priority areas for 2009-2011 were referred to and the need to promote the Council to Members, as well as staff, so they may provide a link between the electorate and the authority. The creation of the People's Panel has attracted 236 members of the public from a 1,000 total target, and this would be revisited at the end of May 2009 to identify any gaps in membership, i.e. by geographical area, age group, and in the rural north of the district. To promote the Council services communication channels are being refined, including websites, and contact with Parish and Town Council's enhanced. Outcomes will be measured, with regular monitoring of the Strategy. Councillor Mrs Beavis moved the recommendation, and stated that the emphasis is on relationship building and customer satisfaction.

During the discussion, the following issues were noted

- to allow transparency
- no further financial costs or additional resources
- gathered information should be used to design, shape and reshape services, and to inspect and test the quality of the delivered service
- to design the services to meet the needs of the customer
- to focus on the use of 'plain English' and use standard words, with no Council phrase jargon, i.e. 'targeted service-specific marketing activity'
- to target luncheon clubs to contact older people in the area for the People's Panel
- there will always be staff costs in providing a better service
- if surveys identify those who are not satisfied, these people should be contacted to query why they are dissatisfied

It was noted that the 'Value for Money' survey is included in the Action Plan of the Annual Plan and will commence in July 2009 and a campaign target of May 2010. The

Council's Local Democracy Week later in 2009 can be used to contact young people. The Leader stated that, with the earlier focus on the Economic Development Strategy and promoting the District it is important that Portfolio Holders ensure this is all incorporated in a Communications Strategy for the District, to encourage inward investment.

DECISION: That the priorities and activities outlined in the Marketing & Communications strategy and its' associated action plan be agreed.

10 **CABINET MEMBERS' UPDATES**

Councillor Harley, Cabinet Member for Enterprise & Culture, reported that Councillor Abbott and himself had attended the Essex County Council Planning Committee on 24th April 2009, and made statements opposing the **revised plans for Rivenhall Airfield**. He reported that no Councillor on their Planning Committee spoke in favour of the planning application, and the vote to grant had been carried by the vote of the Vice Chairman of the Planning Committee. This controversial application had attracted public opinion and concern, and was held in a small committee room unsuitable for the large numbers of public attending and, overall, the whole democratic process was considered flawed. Therefore, it is proposed to recommend from Cabinet to Council the concerns of this authority.

All Cabinet Members supported the proposal, and stated that the current planning application differs significantly to the extant planning consent for Rivenhall Airfield granted two years previously. The current application proposes an additional large paper pulping facility, and an increased commercial and industrial waste facility – that will result with a massive site at Rivenhall.

DECISION: That it be **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that

This Council continues to support the Waste Strategy of Essex County Council. However, Braintree District Council reaffirms its' opposition to the revised application for Rivenhall Airfield submitted by Gent Fairhead, as it differs significantly to previous consent. That the Leader be supported retrospectively to write to the Secretary of State to 'call-in' this planning application, on behalf of Braintree District Council.

Furthermore, the Council expresses its concern regarding the process of the ECC Planning Committee on 24th April 2009 in terms of public access and quality of discussion to support this application.

11 **REFERENCES FROM COUNCIL/COMMITTEES/GROUPS**

There were no references to be received under this item

12 **CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT**

The Chief Executive, Allan Reid, presented a verbal report on the following

- recruitment is underway for the fixed-term Director's appointment
- a report on management structure will be made to the next Cabinet meeting
- the new Programme Office is now fully recruited
- a new Enforcement Officer has been appointed, following previous reports
- the joint post between BDC and ECC for an Economic Development Officer has been made

- John Morris, gardener at Witham Cemetery, has reached the final category of the Council Worker of the Year award, and members are requested to use their vote
- The Council has received 283 Freedom of Information requests during the last year, 25 of which concern pay and expenses
- The European and County Elections take place on 4th June 2009, with the County count taking place that evening and the European count taking place on 7th June
- The Programme Boards have been structured around the Annual Plan, and their area of work will be defined in a briefing session held within a month, with a meeting within two months
- A 0.5% pay offer has been rejected, and the Medium Term Financial Strategy will be revisited and adjusted
- 'Brainwaves' had been launched as an internal suggestion scheme
- business continuity plans have been made to the swine flu outbreak, and the position will be monitored
- the CAA organisational assessment inspection day is 15th June 2009

The Leader and Cabinet Members sent congratulations to John Morris on his nomination.

DECISION: That the verbal report be noted

13 **DELEGATED DECISIONS**

That the following delegated decision be noted

- Councillor Schmitt agreed an amendment to the Private Sector Housing Renewal and Assistance Policy to reflect the need to reduce the maximum Minor Works Assistance grant from the existing £3,000 to £1,000.

The Leader stated that with regard to the delegated decision by Councillor Harley to the revision of fees charged for property searches and to set new charges for access to property data, following the introduction of new regulations, this will be referred to Council for decision as the loss of income could be significant and exceed the delegated responsibility of the Cabinet Member. A background report and further details will be provided to the next Council meeting on 22nd June 2009.

DECISION: That it be **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

For the revision of fees charged for property searches and the setting of new charges be considered

14 **APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO SERVE ON OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

DECISION: That the following appointments be made for the 2009/10 Civic Year:

<u>Organisation</u>	<u>Councillor</u>
Blackwater Neighbourhood Board	Lady Newton Mrs G Spray A V E Everard
Braintree College Governing Body*	J Baugh
Braintree District Access Group	Lady Newton

Braintree District CAB Management Board	F Swallow
Braintree District Voluntary Support Agency	Mrs S Howell
Braintree Enterprise Units Managing Body	N R H O Harley
Business Development Services (NW Essex)	N R H O Harley T S Wilkinson
Community Housing Investment Partnership Board (CHIP Board)	G Butland Lady Newton Mrs J W Schmitt
County Youth Strategy Group	A Meyer Mrs J W Schmitt
East of England Regional Assembly	G Butland
Essex Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	A F Shelton
Essex Supporting People Commissioning Body	Lady Newton
Great Notley Country Park – Joint Governance with ECC	R G Walters <i>one BLC member</i>
Growth Fund Board – with Chelmsford BC	G Butland
Joint Committee – Parking Service, with Colchester BC and Uttlesford DC	R G Walters R G S Mitchell
Leisure Partnership Consultative Board	Lady Newton T S Wilkinson
Local Government Association General Assembly	G Butland
Local Government Information Unit	Mrs J C Beavis
Responsible Authority Group	Mrs J W Schmitt
South Anglia Group	Lady Newton
Third Sector Partnership Board	Mrs J W Schmitt
Waste Management Advisory Board for Essex/S'end	R G Walters
West Area Waste Management Joint Committee	R G Walters R G S Mitchell (Sub)

* the Braintree College appointment is additional to that listed on the agenda, and Councillor Baugh will replace Councillor Mrs Sandbrook, for the remainder of the term until July 2011.

15 **APPOINTMENTS TO CABINET GROUPS/BOARD**

DECISION: That the Membership of the following Cabinet Groups/Board for the 2009/10 Civic Year be agreed. It was noted that the initial meeting of the four Programme Boards will take place during June 2009 to discuss workloads/projects.

- (a) Clean and Green Programme Board - Councillors Abbott, Bolton, Collar, Elliott, Dr Evans, Foster, Mitchell, Ramage, Mrs Shepherd and Walters (Cabinet Member)
- (b) Economy and Infrastructure Programme Board – Councillors Harley (Cabinet Member), Hughes, Lambourne, E Lynch, Mann, McCrea, Messenger, Mrs Money, O’Reilly-Cicconi, Mrs Scattergood and Wilkinson.
- (c) Performance, Innovation and Efficiency Programme Board – Councillors Banthorpe, Ms Barlow, Dunn, Gyford, Hume, Lager (Cabinet Member), McKee, Rice, Mrs Sandbrook, Siddall and Mrs Smith
- (d) Supporting our Communities Programme Board – Councillors Baugh, Mrs Edey, Finbow, Ms Flint, Mrs Gage, Meyer, Lady Newton (Cabinet Member), Mrs Pell, Shelton, Mrs Schmitt (Cabinet Member), Mrs Spray and Ms Thorogood
- (e) Joint Consultative Group - Councillors Mrs Beavis, Butland, and Walters.
- (f) Local Government Reform Cabinet Sub Group- Councillors Mrs Beavis, Butland, Dr Evans, M Gage, E Lynch, McCrea and McKee.
- (g) London 2012 Cabinet Working Group: Councillors Ms Barlow, Mrs Beavis, Everard, Mrs Money, Mrs Spray and Wilkinson.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.39pm

G BUTLAND
(Leader)

