



Minutes of the ordinary meeting of Council held on 11 December 2024 when there were present:-

Mayor: Cllr L McCarthy-Calvert
Deputy Mayor: Cllr B Campagna

Cllr S Ainsley	Cllr J Huntman
Cllr N Benson	Cllr D Jones
Cllr D Blackwell	Cllr J Knott
Cllr K Bowker	Cllr K Knott
Cllr L Breading	Cllr L Larman
Cllr S Brooke	Cllr R Lillis
Cllr T Copsey	Cllr D Macpherson
Cllr M Cortes	Cllr P May
Cllr M Dearson	Cllr S Mountford
Cllr L Dixon	Cllr B Palmer
Cllr A Edwards	Cllr J Payne
Cllr M Fuller	Cllr C Sach
Cllr T Gibson	Cllr R Savage
Cllr W Gibson	Cllr D Silk
Cllr A Harbinson	Cllr G Watson
Cllr N Harvey	Cllr B Wimbledon
Cllr G Howlett	Cllr G Withers

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr P Greig, Cllr N Pachy and Cllr D Thomas

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Hutchings	- Chief Executive
M Harwood-White	- Director, Commercial & Assets
A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services (MO)
L Wosko	- Assistant Director, Finance & Procurement (S151)
S Garner	- Assistant Director, Development Services
S Jarvis	- Assistant Director, Environment
D McLoughlin	- Assistant Director, Estates
J Parker-East	- Assistant Director, Environmental Health, Licencing & Community
A Parrott	- Assistant Director Climate & Growth
M Smith	- Assistant Director, People & Engagement

S Worthington - Democratic Services Manager
H Boyd - Democratic Services Officer
A Mead - Electoral & Democratic Services Apprentice

130 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

131 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 2024 were agreed.

132 ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor reflected on the activities and events of the Christmas season and thanked Castle Point Leisure for their support with the Charity School Christmas Concerts, which took place across the Borough. The schools, in collaboration with Canvey Community Choir, held three performances, attended by the Deputy Lieutenant, Mayors and Chairs from neighbouring boroughs, as well as representatives from Trust Links and the Indee Rose Trust.

Special thanks were extended to St. Mary's Church for hosting the Civic carol service on the first Sunday of Advent, which raised £512 for Cancer Research. The Hadleigh Christmas Lights event was acknowledged with thanks to the Reverend Peter Hillman, and appreciation was expressed for Hayley Meagher and the marching corps. The Mayor had enjoyed attending various Christmas events, carol services, and open days, including the Runnymede Hall Christmas event, which attracted 500 attendees. Attention was drawn to the upcoming weekend event at Waterside Farm Leisure Centre, as well as Morrison's Santa's Grotto and the Havens light up event at the Salvation Army Temple, scheduled for the following Sunday.

The Mayor reflected on 18 months of service without having the opportunity to cut a ribbon, noting that this changed recently with the opening of Seevic's new hi-tech learning suite, housed in their canvas building and a ribbon cutting at last year's business award winners, Chair Way to Heaven. The nominations for this year's business awards were open and applications can be made via the Council website.

The Mayor moved a Motion without notice, seconded by Cllr D Blackwell, that item 18 be taken next, and this was agreed unanimously.

133 PETITIONS SUBMITTED BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Council considered the report of the Chief Executive in response to a petition submitted by members of the public of which notice had been given pursuant to paragraph 12.15 of Chapter 2 of the Council's Constitution.

The call for action detailed in the petition stated: “We the undersigned, call on Castle Point Borough Council to accept this petition as a request to remove the Hadleigh Salvation Army Farmland, site GB8, from the local plan consultation, and any future local plan, as we strongly object to any housing development on this farmland.”

It was emphasised that the wording of the petition was critical, as it determined whether the Council could legally act on the request. The petition’s signatories asked the Council to remove site GB8 from the local plan consultation and from any future local plan.

Addressing the first part of the petition’s call for action, which concerned the removal of site GB8 from the local plan consultation, it was noted that the Regulation 18 consultation had already closed. Consequently, the only consultation to which the petition’s request could apply was the Regulation 19 consultation, which follows a decision by Full Council to approve the draft Castle Point Plan for submission to the Government.

The second part of the petition’s call for action was to remove the site from any future local plan. This effectively requested that Members remove site GB8 from the plan-making process entirely, ensuring it would not be considered as part of the Castle Point Plan or any resulting Regulation 19 consultation. It was noted that, since the publication of the report, the petition organiser had clarified that the intent was to exclude site GB8 from any future local plan prepared by any future configuration of the Council indefinitely.

It was reiterated that the approval of the draft local plan is a matter for Full Council and must comply with statutory requirements. The statutory process must be adhered to, as failure to do so could compromise the legality and efficacy of the Castle Point Plan, exposing the Council to risks such as judicial review or the plan being deemed unsound.

The draft Castle Point Plan is scheduled, according to the local development scheme previously approved by Full Council, to return to the Chamber for a decision in January. As such, it was explained that Members had no option during this meeting but to take no further action on the petition.

Regarding future local plans, it was stated that, as a matter of law, a council cannot bind a future council to its decisions.

It was acknowledged, however, that the voices of those who signed the petition were not being ignored. Members recognised the strength of public feeling and the commitment shown by residents who supported the call to action.

The petition referenced material planning considerations, such as the protection of farmland and public open space. These issues were identified during the public engagement phase of the Regulation 18 consultation, which had closed prior to the petition’s submission. It was reported that 39% of responses to the Regulation 18 consultation came from Hadleigh residents, with additional input

from residents in neighbouring Leigh-on-Sea. These responses highlighted significant objections to proposal GB8, citing concerns about the loss of agricultural land, public open space, Green Belt impact, landscape effects, heritage and wildlife issues, and transport and infrastructure capacity.

Members were reassured that all comments submitted during the Regulation 18 consultation would be considered as part of the plan preparation process, regardless of the petition's timing.

The Leader reflected on almost 29 years of service on the Council and emphasised a consistent stance against development on the Green Belt. The Canvey Island Independent Party (CIIP), in coalition with the People's Independent Party (PIP), had stood on a mandate to protect Castle Point's Green Belt and had previously withdrawn a plan that had included 13 Green Belt development sites in order to safeguard these areas. The Leader reaffirmed the commitment to protecting green spaces in the Borough.

Members thanked the Chief Executive for clarifying the Council's legal powers and expressed agreement that the draft plan, scheduled for presentation to the Council in January 2025, would provide clarity and put an end to speculation. Acknowledging the work of the Castle Point Plan Board and the contributions of residents, they reaffirmed the Council's commitment to fulfilling election promises to defend the Green Belt.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr W Gibson, to approve the recommendation set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report, which was unanimously agreed on a show of hands.

Resolved

To note the contents of the Petition but to take no further action in respect of the Petition.

134 REPORTS FROM THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES TO COUNCIL

(1) REPORT OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE: STATEMENT OF LICENCING POLICY

Members reviewed the report of the Licensing Committee, which requested the Council to adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy. The report had been reviewed by the Licensing Committee on November 14, 2024, and the document considered was included as Appendix A.

It was noted that a public consultation had been conducted from July 18 to September 9, 2024. The policy included references to relevant schemes for vulnerable individuals, an addition highlighted during the consultation process. The updated statement was attached as Appendix B.

Cllr J Knott moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr B Palmer, to approve the recommendation set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report, which was unanimously agreed on a show of hands.

Resolved

To approve the Statement of Licensing Policy attached as Appendix B.

(2) REPORT OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE: GAMBLING LICENSING POLICY STATEMENT

Members considered the report of the Licensing Committee, which requested the Council to adopt the Gambling Licensing Policy Statement. The report had been reviewed by the Licensing Committee on 14 November 2025 and the document was set out at Appendix A.

It was noted that no amendments were made during the public consultation period, which ran from July 18 to September 9, 2024. Members expressed their gratitude to the Assistant Director for ensuring the policy was completed in a timely manner.

Cllr J Knott moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr B Palmer, to approve the recommendation set out in paragraph 4.1 of the report, which was unanimously agreed on a show of hands.

Resolved

To approve the Council's Gambling Licencing Policy Statement, set out in Appendix 2.

135 CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED FOR A COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW(S)

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services, which provided advice on matters related to undertaking Community Governance Reviews (CGRs) under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The report outlined the purpose of CGRs as an opportunity to review and make changes to community governance arrangements to reflect the identity and interests of local communities.

It was noted that if the Council agreed to undertake a CGR, the terms of reference, as set out in draft form in Appendix 1, would need to be approved. The process would include a public consultation and would aim to recommend changes to parish governance arrangements, where necessary. The Council would also be required to have regard to statutory guidance issued by the Boundary Commission and the Government in 2010.

The legal requirement for CGRs was explained, highlighting that there was no legal obligation to carry one out but that the Council must act reasonably and in accordance with statutory guidance when making its decision. The purpose of a

CGR is to ensure community governance reflects community identity, is effective and convenient, and considers non-parish community engagement arrangements. Considerations could include creating, merging, altering, or abolishing parishes; naming and styling parishes; electoral arrangements; and grouping or de-grouping parishes.

Members were informed that no CGR had been conducted since the establishment of Canvey Island Town Council in 2006. It was suggested that a review for Canvey Island should be considered ahead of the 2027 Town Council elections, as the Boundary Commission for England had recently reviewed the Council's electoral arrangements and made recommendations towards changes that could only be implemented through a CGR.

It was noted that there are no other parish or town councils in the Borough, which is unusual given the additional local representation on Canvey Island. However, Ward Members have proactively engaged with the community and undertaken various projects following input from residents and businesses.

The Terms of Reference for the CGR, detailed in Appendix 1, outlined the process and a timetable for the review. Members were reminded that agreeing to undertake a review would not constitute a final decision to make governance changes. The Council would be required to conduct a full public consultation and consider all representations before making a final decision.

Authority to make necessary amendments to the Terms of Reference, such as attaching relevant maps, was proposed to be delegated to the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader.

During discussions, Members welcomed the governance review and expressed full support; however, after engaging with Members, residents, and community partners, there appeared to be no appetite for parish councils on the mainland at this stage.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr W Gibson, to approve the recommendation set out in option 1 of the report, which was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a further Motion, seconded by Cllr W Gibson, to approve the recommendations set out in option 4 and 5 of the report, which was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.

Resolved

- (1) To undertake a Community Governance Review only for Canvey Island.
- (2) To approve the Terms of Reference for the Community Governance Review set out at Appendix 1.

- (3) To delegate to the Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Leader and the Deputy Leader the right to make any necessary technical or administrative amendments to the Terms of Reference to reflect the decision of Council prior to publication of the Terms of Reference.

136 IMPLEMENTATION OF CHANGES TO THE ELECTORAL REGISTER

Members considered the report of the Chief Executive, presented in the capacity of Electoral Registration Officer, seeking approval to amend the electoral register to incorporate recent boundary changes to the Essex County Council electoral divisions.

Following the boundary changes, it was necessary to update the electoral register in preparation for the County elections in May 2025. Although the Borough retained the five divisions of Canvey Island East, Canvey Island West, Hadleigh, South Benfleet, and Thundersley, changes to the boundaries required adjustments.

It was explained that four polling districts would experience no logistical impact from the changes, as noted in paragraph 5.4 of the report. However, polling district AY1, which falls within a single ward for Borough elections, would now span two divisions for County elections.

The Electoral Registration Officer highlighted the legal obligation to ensure each polling district has a polling station. For AY1, the most practical solution was to reconfigure arrangements at Richmond Hall. This would allow voters to continue using the same venue, though they would vote on different sides of the hall depending on the type of election. Additional staff would be available at Richmond Hall to assist voters.

Members were advised there was no alternative to this approach, as it fell under the legal responsibilities of the Electoral Registration Officer. The Council was asked to endorse the decision as per the recommendation. Members were encouraged to direct any technical questions about specific addresses within the new divisions to the Elections Team outside the meeting.

Members sought clarification regarding the four polling districts in Benfleet. It was confirmed that these were referenced in paragraph 5.4.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr W Gibson, to approve the recommendation set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report, which was unanimously agreed on a show of hands.

Resolved

To authorise the Electoral Registration Officer to take all necessary measures to give effect to Essex County Council division changes and new amended polling districts to ensure that the register reflects existing and new boundaries.

137 CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director, Finance and Procurement and Section 151 Officer, which sought approval for changes to the Council's Contract Procedure Rules. These changes, forming part of the Council's Constitution, were required to align with the introduction of the Procurement Act 2023, effective from February 24, 2025.

The report highlighted that the Procurement Act 2023 was the largest reform since the Public Procedures 2015 and aimed to simplify procurement processes.

Emphasis was placed on transparency, removing barriers for small and medium-sized businesses, and introducing a new digital platform to centralise supplier information. It was noted that existing rules would continue to apply to processes already underway, but all procurements starting after the implementation date would need to follow the new regulations.

The Leader expressed support and stated that this administration prioritised supporting local businesses and improving the tender process. The changes would offer smaller local businesses greater opportunities to participate.

Members enquired about the digital platform, specifically whether businesses would need to pay to join, which could be a potential barrier. The Assistant Director confirmed that they did not believe there would be a fee but final details from the Government were still awaited.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr W Gibson, to approve the recommendation set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report, which was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.

Resolved

To agree and adopt the new and revised Contract Procedure Rules, the changes to which are set out in Appendix 1, to meet the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023.

138 DEPUTY PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services, which sought Council's agreement to create the role of Deputy Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning to support the Deputy Leader in his capacity as Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning.

It was noted that while the Constitution allows the Leader to appoint Portfolio Holders, it does not currently address the appointment of Deputy Portfolio Holders. The introduction of this role would assist the Deputy Leader, who manages a busy portfolio alongside his leadership duties.

The Council had previously agreed revisions to the Local Development Scheme on January 31, 2024, and significant work was underway to ensure the timely

submission of the final Castle Point Plan. The appointment of a Deputy Portfolio Holder would support these efforts.

If the Council approved the role, it was considered appropriate to request that the Independent Remuneration Panel include the Deputy Portfolio Holder position in its review of Members' Allowances, with a report and recommendations to be submitted to the Council.

The Deputy Leader acknowledged that the role of Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning had resulted in a significant workload over the past two years and expressed gratitude to Cllr T Copsey for the support provided. He added that formalising this assistance through the new Deputy Portfolio Holder role would be beneficial.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr W Gibson, to approve the recommendation set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report, which was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.

Resolved

- (1) That the role of Deputy Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning, as detailed in Appendix 1, be agreed.
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Leader, to make any necessary changes to the Constitution to give effect to the appointment of a Deputy Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning.
- (3) That the Independent Remuneration Panel be asked to include the role of Deputy Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning in its review of Members' Allowances.

139 APPOINTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIR 2024/225

Members considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services, which requested the appointment of a new Vice-Chair of the Development Management Committee.

It was noted that due to ill health, Councillor Greig was no longer able to continue in the role of Vice-Chair of the Development Management Committee.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr K Bowker, to approve the recommendation set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report, which was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.

Resolved

That Cllr J Huntman be appointed as Vice-Chair of Development Management Committee for the remainder of the 2024/25 Municipal year.

140 **CONSTITUTION: REVISION TO OFFICER SCHEME OF DELEGATION- ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH, LICENSING & COMMUNITY**

The Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services, which sought approval for revisions to the Officer Scheme of Delegation for the Assistant Director, Environmental Health, Licensing & Community. The proposed revisions aimed to clarify provisions outlined in paragraph 26.8.8 and Appendix E of the Scheme of Delegation.

The report emphasised that the Scheme of Delegation, a key governance document, delineates responsibilities delegated to Council Officers. Regular reviews are conducted to ensure compliance with current legislation and the Council's structure. The report highlighted that the current scheme included certain outdated areas that needed updates to allow officers to work more effectively.

In accordance with Article 5 of the Constitution only the Council has the authority to adopt and approve changes to the Constitution. Council was therefore asked to approve the recommendations in the report.

Members acknowledged the progress made in improving departmental operations and commended the good work completed so far, noting that efforts to enhance processes are ongoing. However, concerns were raised about recent cases involving licence suspensions, highlighting the need for proportional enforcement and fairness in decision-making. Members emphasised that officers' actions should correspond to the actual level of risk posed to public safety.

It was suggested that while investigations into complaints are warranted, drivers should be allowed to continue operating unless there is a clear and immediate risk to public safety. Further sanctions, if necessary, could then be determined during Drivers' Panel hearings. Concerns were also expressed about the financial impact of suspensions on taxi drivers in instances not related to significant safety concerns. Members recommended the implementation of monitoring measures to balance the protection of both drivers and the public, ensuring fair and reasonable enforcement practices.

Cllr T Gibson moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr J Knott, to amend paragraph 26.8.8 (5) of the draft scheme of delegation to: 'in consultation with and with the express approval of the Chair of the Licensing Committee or a member of the Licensing Committee nominated by the Chair.' This was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr J Knott, to approve the recommendation set out at paragraph 3.1 of the report, subject to the change to paragraph 26.8.8 (5) of the scheme of delegation, which was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.

Resolved

To approve the revised Officer Scheme of Delegation for the Assistant Director, Environmental Health, Licensing & Community, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to paragraph 26.8.8 (5) being amended to ‘in consultation with and with the express approval of the Chair of the Licensing Committee or a member of the Licensing Committee nominated by the Chair.’

141 REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL/PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Members considered the update on key areas of business dealt with by the Cabinet since the last ordinary Council meeting held on 9 October.

On 16 October, it was agreed to utilise UK Shared Prosperity Funding for capital improvements to enhance the Thursday market in Canvey Island and to introduce a Saturday market starting in spring 2025.

The Deputy Leader responded to the Essex County Council consultation on the Essex Transport Strategy, and it was agreed that Castle Point Borough Council should be involved in the development of the strategy, including the area-based plan for Castle Point.

Responses were also submitted by the Deputy Leader to the Government consultation on reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and the Essex Local Nature Recovery Strategy Public Consultation.

On 20 November, the establishment of the Housing Improvement Programme, along with the Housing Improvement Programme Board and the Housing Improvement Programme Team, was approved, with £165,000 allocated to fund the initial stages of the Housing Improvement programme. An action plan to address recommendations from the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge in September 2024 was also endorsed.

The Cabinet approved the commissioning of a Tourism and Culture Strategy for the Borough and the preparation of a Biodiversity Report as part of the Council’s obligations under the Environment Act 2021.

Additionally, the Economic Development Officers facilitated the filming of the Sky show *Mr Bigstuff* on Canvey Island. This collaboration, coordinated with the Essex Film Office, brought significant benefits to local businesses, including council income from permits, accommodation bookings, fees to local establishments, a donation to the Canvey Archive, and the use of local taxi services. The filming activity contributed an estimated £12,000 per day to the local economy.

Cllr Palmer, Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Climate Action expressed enthusiasm for the positive news story related to Canvey Island, noting that this initiative was new to the current administration and would serve as a foundation for future progress.

142 ORGANISATIONAL RESTRUCTURE – SERVICE REVIEW OUTCOME

The Council considered the report of the Assistant Director, People and Engagement asking Council to note the dismissal of an individual as a result of compulsory redundancy.

It was noted that it was a requirement within the Council’s Pay Policy Statement that severance packages for staff exceeding £100,000, that arise as a result of compulsory redundancy, would be presented to Council for noting.

Following a restructure the role was deleted and no suitable alternative roles were identified. The total cost of the redundancy of the individual was set out in Exempt Appendix A and was inclusive of amounts payable to the Essex Pension Fund.

Resolved

To note the dismissal of the individual identified in Exempt Appendix A by means of compulsory redundancy.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Chair

Date

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