



## CABINET

21st FEBRUARY 2024

### PRESENT:

Councillor Blackwell	Chairman – Leader of the Council
Councillor W. Gibson	Strategic Planning
Councillor Fuller	Environment
Councillor T. Gibson	Special Projects & Assets
Councillor Mountford	Resources
Councillor Palmer	Economic Growth & Climate Action
Councillor Sach	Health Wellbeing & Housing
Councillor Savage	People & Community

**APOLOGIES:** None.

### ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors Acott , Benson, Bizzell, Grieg, Hart, Isaacs, Knott, Lillis, May, Mumford, Skipp A. Thornton, Mrs Thornton ,Walter and Watson.

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Councillors Hart, Skipp and Mrs Thornton had given notice.

### 78. MEMBERS' INTERESTS:

There were none.

### 79. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 17th January 2024, were approved, and signed as a correct record.

### 80. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT UPDATE

Cabinet considered a report on the response from the Chief Executive to the Department for Levelling Up Homes and Communities in respect of possible designation intervention due to a drop in the planning performance against statutory targets of major planning applications. Cabinet was asked to endorse the action plan to sustain improved service.

#### Resolved:

1. To note the letter dated 10 January 2024 from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities and the response from the Chief Executive dated 26 January 2024.
2. To endorse the actions already taken for sustained improvement in the service, including the revised pre-applications service policy.
- 3.

**81. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S POLICY ON THE ACQUISITION AND DISPOSAL OF COUNCIL OWNED LAND**

Cabinet considered a report seeking approval to a refreshed policy on the Acquisition and Disposal of Council Owned Land. The Policy had been substantially re-written to make it clearer and easier to understand and to reflect changes in internal governance which gave elected members oversight and transparency in relation to the acquisition and disposal of Council land and buildings.

The disposal of public assets to community ownership and management was also supported by this refreshed Policy where social and community benefits could be realised.

In response to a question it was confirmed that Members would have oversight through the Asset Review Board which would report regularly to Cabinet.

**Resolved:**

To approve the Acquisition and Disposal of Council Owned Land Policy

**82. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) – 2024/25 RENT LEVELS, REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PLAN FOR 2024/25 AND 2023/24 REVISED**

Cabinet considered report present to Cabinet for consideration and agreement: Proposed rent levels for Council dwellings and garages for 2024/25. HRA Revenue budget for 2023/24 (revised) and 2024/25. HRA Capital Plan for 2023/24 (revised) and 2024/25.

Members' attention was drawn to the implications of not approving the recommended rent increases for dwelling rents. The Council would not receive additional income to the Housing Revenue Account. This would have a direct impact on service delivery. Furthermore, if the dwelling rent increase was not approved, the Council's actual rent levels would diverge further from social housing rent policy and due to the restrictions on increases would result in ongoing lower income levels, with limited opportunity to recoup the lost income.

In response to questions it was confirmed that the HRA was ring fenced and there could be no cross subsidy with the General Fund and vice versa. Most councils and certainly all Essex councils were implementing a rent increase in line with government guidelines.

A report was to be brought to Cabinet on arrangements for stock condition surveys. The current stock condition survey covered thirty years and was up to date informing maintenance and repairs programmes which were not behind.

Information would be sent to all tenants regarding assistance available through benefits and hardship support with the rent notification.

The budget was sustainable. Members were reminded of the implications of not increasing rents in line with government guidelines.

**Resolved:**

1. To approve a rent increase of 7.7% for all social rent HRA dwellings resulting in an average increase of £7.79 per week.
2. To approve a rent increase of 7.7% for all affordable rent HRA dwellings resulting in an average increase of £16.28 per week.
3. Following a £1.68 rent increase being applied to garages in 2023/24 to approve an increase garage rents in 2024/25 by £0.71 excluding VAT.
4. To approve the HRA revenue budget for revised estimate 2023/24 and estimate 2024/25, as set out in Annexe A to the report.
5. To approve the HRA capital plan for revised estimate 2023/24 and estimate 2024/25, as set out in Annexe B to the report.

**83. POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET SETTING FOR 2024/25**

Cabinet considered the report (including the accompanying document forming part of the report) submitting proposals and recommendations for the Council's Policy Framework and Budget Setting for 2024/25. The Cabinet was requested to make appropriate recommendations to be considered at the Council meeting to be held later that evening.

**Resolved:**

**Implementation of Council policies and related spending plans**

1. To approve the continued funding of priority projects and other items of discretionary expenditure, as set out in table 2.3 of the accompanying report.
2. To note the changes from the 2024/25 provisional budget published last year, as set out in table 2.4 of the accompanying report.
3. To note the key items causing the changes in table 2.4, as summarised in table 2.5 of the accompanying report.
4. That subject to recommendations 1 to 3 above, the revenue spending plans for 2024/25, set out in section 2, table 2.1 (summary by Directorate and Policy line) of the accompanying report, are approved.

**Capital spending plans and prudential indicators**

5. That the capital spending plan described in section 8 of the accompanying report (tables 8.2 and 8.3) is approved in respect of 2024/25.
6. That, as required by section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003, and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code), the following Prudential Indicators are approved, as set out in the appropriate sections of the accompanying report:

Prudential Indicator - Reference to sections 8, 9 and 10 of accompanying report	
Capital expenditure	Tables 8.2 and 8.3
Capital financing requirement (CFR)	Table 8.4
Authorised limit for external debt	Table 8.5
Operational boundary for external debt	Table 8.6
Ratio of financing costs to new revenue stream	Table 8.7 (a & b)
Gross external borrowing does not exceed CFR	Section 8 – para 55
Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing - upper and lower limits	Table 9.2
Upper limits of fixed and variable interest rate exposures	Table 9.3
Maximum period and counterparty limits for specified and non-specified investments	Table 10.2 & 10.3

7. That the Statement of Minimum Revenue Provision for 2024/25, as stated in paragraphs 57 to 62 of section 8 of the accompanying report, is approved.
8. That, as stated in paragraph 68 of section 8 of the accompanying report, and as required by the Prudential Code, the statement of the Chief Financial (s151) Officer in respect of the affordability, deliverability and appropriateness of risk management arrangements with respect to the Capital Strategy is noted.
9. That the policies and strategies supporting the budget framework and contained within the accompanying report are approved.

**Statutory report of the Chief Financial (s151) Officer**

10. That, as required by section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the report of the Chief Financial (s151) Officer set out in section 12 of the accompanying report in respect of robustness of the estimates is noted.
11. That, as required by section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the report of the Chief Financial (s151) Officer set out in section 6 of the accompanying report in respect of the adequacy of proposed financial reserves is noted.

**Statutory calculations in respect of the budget requirement & Council Tax as required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (“the Act”)**

12. That, as set out in section 3 of the accompanying report, it is noted that acting under delegated authority and in consultation with the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance, the Chief Financial (s151) Officer has calculated:
  - A tax base for the Borough of Castle Point of 31,417 being the amount “T” required by section 31B of the Act; and

- A tax base for Canvey Island to which a Town Council precept applies as **12,136**.

13. That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with sections 31 to 36 of the Act:

Ref	Amount £	Item
(a)	<b>60,303,723</b>	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish (Town) Councils.
(b)	<b>51,162,376</b>	being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
(c)	<b>9,141,347</b>	being the amount by which the aggregate at 14(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 14(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item "R" in the formula in Section 31B of the act)
(d)	<b>290.97</b>	being the amount at 14(c) above (item "R"), divided by item "T" (14(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish (Town) precepts).
(e)	<b>288,351</b>	being the aggregate amount of the (Parish (Town) precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
(f)	<b>281.79</b>	being the amount at 14(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 14(e) above by item "T" (14(a) above), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.

14. That the Cabinet recommends that Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, sets the aggregate amounts shown in the tables below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2024/25 for each part of its area and for each category of dwelling. This information is included within section 13 of the accompanying report.

Castle Point Borough Council Tax 2024/25, including and excluding Town Council precept, for each of the following categories of dwelling:

Council Tax			
Band	Ratio in 9ths	Canvey Residents Council Tax Including Town Council	Mainland Residents Council Tax Excluding Town Council
A	6	203.70	187.86
B	7	237.65	219.17
C	8	271.60	250.48
D	9	305.55	281.79
E	11	373.45	344.41
F	13	441.35	407.03
G	15	509.25	469.65
H	18	611.10	563.58

15. To note that the County Council, the Police Authority and the Fire Authority have issued precepts to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwelling in the Council's area, as indicated in the table below:

Council Tax for each band							
Band	Castle Point Borough Council	Essex County Council	Essex PFCC - Fire and Rescue Authority	Essex PFCC - Policing and Community Safety	Total excluding Town Council	Canvey Island Town Council	Total including Town Council
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
A	187.86	1,015.02	55.08	164.28	1,422.24	15.84	1,438.08
B	219.17	1,184.19	64.26	191.66	1,659.28	18.48	1,677.76
C	250.48	1,353.36	73.44	219.04	1,896.32	21.12	1,917.44
D	281.79	1,522.53	82.62	246.42	2,133.36	23.76	2,157.12
E	344.41	1,860.87	100.98	301.18	2,607.44	29.04	2,636.48
F	407.03	2,199.21	119.34	355.94	3,081.52	34.32	3,115.84
G	469.65	2,537.55	137.70	410.70	3,555.60	39.60	3,595.20
H	563.58	3,045.06	165.24	492.84	4,266.72	47.52	4,314.24

16. To note that, in accordance with the requirements of section 52ZC of the Act, the Council has determined whether its Relevant Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is excessive.
17. For 2024/25, the relevant basic amount of Council Tax for Castle Point would be deemed excessive if the authority's relevant basic amount of Council Tax is:

- (a) 3%, or more than 3%, greater than its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2023/24; and
- (b) More than **£5.00** greater than its relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2023/24.

Ref	Amount £	Item
(a)	281.79	being the Relevant Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2023/24, excluding local precepts.
(b)	3.0%	being the percentage increase above which the Secretary of State has determined the Relevant Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 would be excessive.
(c)	290.24	being the amount above which the Relevant Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2024/25, excluding local precepts, would be excessive (rounded down to the nearest penny).
(d)	281.79	being the Relevant Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2024/25, excluding local precepts.
(e)	0%	being the percentage increase in Council Tax for 2024/25, excluding local precepts.

The Relevant Basic Amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is therefore not excessive and the duty to make substitute calculations and hold a referendum does not apply (Chapter 4ZA of Part 1 of the Act).

**84. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM/TO THE STANDING COMMITTEES**

There were no matters.

**85. MATTERS TO BE REFERRED FROM/TO POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES -**

There were no matters.

**Chairman**