



Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17 July 2024 when there were present:-

Chair: Cllr D Blackwell

Cllr W Gibson
Cllr B Palmer
Cllr M Fuller
Cllr T Gibson

Cllr R Lillis
Cllr S Mountford
Cllr R Savage

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs T Copsey and L McCarthy-Calvert

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Hutchings	- Chief Executive
C Adlem	- Director, Corporate & Customer
I Butt	- Director, Place & Communities
M Harwood-White	- Director, Commercial & Assets
B Brook	- Assistant Director, Policy Performance & Customer
D Ghela	- Assistant Director, Housing, Health & Partnerships
M Jones	- Interim Assistant Director, Waste & Recycling
A Law	- Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services
D McLoughlin	- Assistant Director, Estates
A Parrott	- Assistant Director, Climate & Growth
L Wosko	- Assistant Director, Finance & Procurement
S Worthington	- Democratic Services Manager

104 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

105 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

106 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE SCORECARD Q4 2023/2024

The Portfolio Holder for Resources presented the report setting out the

performance figures for the Corporate Performance Scorecard for quarter 4 2023/2024.

Of the 47 indicators reported it was noted that 21 were above target, 15 were below target and 11 were data only indicators with no target set.

The Scorecard was in a new format and produced using an IT system which speeds up production time with less manual manipulation of data. There was one indicator per page to show more detail about performance.

Areas of good performance that were noted included:

- Leisure memberships – there were 4,683 members at the end of quarter 4 2023/24; this bucked the usual trend in the run up to Christmas as the number of memberships remained the same rather than dropping off as was usually the case.
- Void turnaround – there was an average of 11.9 days to get Council properties ready for re-letting; this was good for the Council as rent then starts to come in and it's also good for those on the housing register as they can get into their new home sooner.
- Satisfaction with the local area – the Essex Resident Survey 2023 showed 73% of respondents in Castle Point were satisfied with the local area, which was above the Essex average of 70%.

Potential issues highlighted included:

- Homelessness prevention – 45% of those who approached the Council threatened with homelessness were supported into accommodation against a target of 65%. This was as a result of the impact of the withdrawal of landlords from the private rent sector.
- Feeling safe after dark – the Essex Resident Survey 2023 showed 43% of respondents in Castle Point feeling safe after dark compared to the Essex average of 51%. Work was currently ongoing to resurrect the Community Safety Partnership.
- Participation in physical activity – the Sport England Active Lives Survey showed a fall from 61% doing at least 150 minutes of physical activity a week in 2022/23 to 54% in 2024/24. The Council had invested in sports facilities across the borough, ensuring its parks and open spaces were well maintained and accessible and there was Sport England funding of £2million in place over three years to raise activity levels in the borough.
- Net new homes – this had fallen from 200 in 2022/23 to -53 in 2023/24 as a result of the removal of large numbers of mobile homes offsetting new dwellings being built.

- Major planning applications – shown on a two year rolling basis, progress made over the year was back towards the minimum standard set by Government with a quarter 4 performance of 50% against a target of 60%. Performance over the quarter was 100% so the rolling average had brought this down.
- Long term sickness absence – the year ended with 5.7 average days per FTE employee. A HR resource had been allocated to work closely with managers to support staff on long term sickness and proactively manage these cases.

No areas of performance were identified for referral to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It was noted that Members should provide feedback outside the meeting on the new format of the Scorecard report.

Resolved

That Cabinet notes the report and continues to monitor performance.

107 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Portfolio Holder for People & Community presented the report providing an update on future plans for the delivery of community safety functions by the Council and its ongoing strategic work with partners.

He stated that the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed a statutory duty on the Police and Local Authorities to work together in partnership with key partners and agencies to formulate and implement local crime reduction strategies. The partners were required to:

- identify, through local crime and disorder audits and consultation, key local crime and disorder priorities;
- formulate strategies to assist in tackling these key priorities and reduce crime at the local level; and
- monitor and evaluate those strategies.

Against the backdrop of staffing losses affecting both Castle Point and Rochford Councils, the recently arrived Assistant Director, Housing, Health and Partnerships had begun a more detailed review of the Council's community safety workstream. The key focus was to continue developing the Council's partnership links and to ensure the Council was resourced to meet its obligations under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The Assistant Director for Housing, Health and Partnerships met with the PFCC to reaffirm the Council's commitment to the Community Safety Partnership. Cllr R Savage was pleased to confirm that the Council had been allocated £15,000 for use in community safety projects across the borough.

In addition, the Council was recently awarded a £1m investment to upgrade our CCTV infrastructure across the Borough. This upgrade will include installation of new cameras as well as improving digital access to others. Cllr Savage and officers visited the Southend City Council CCTV hub to look at their set up and were shown the comprehensive CCTV system which acts as an essential source of information for preventing, managing and controlling community safety across Southend. There was a discussion on the Council's existing CCTV systems, the opportunities for improvement, and regional and local benefits of a shared system which could both track and target anti-social elements moving across local authorities' boundaries.

He advised that the Council had partnered with Southend Council, not just to help deliver and monitor an upgraded and expanded CCTV system, but also to assist us in fulfilling our community safety functions. Southend City Council would be carrying out a Section 17 Audit, which will look at a range of Castle Point community safety policies, processes and activities. The outcome of the audit will help set the Community Safety Plan for the Council.

The Portfolio Holder for People & Community extended thanks to Essex Police, Southend City Council and the PFCC who had been instrumental in helping Castle Point Council with its community safety endeavours. He drew attention to the officer's comments within the report on matters relating to the Rochford and Castle Point Community Safety Partnership ahead of further updates which would set out the future direction of Community Safety across the Borough. He also thanked Castle Point officers for all their hard work.

In response to a Member question as to how different the new CCTV cameras were to the old ones, the Portfolio Holder gave an example of a CCTV camera on Southend Pier that allowed individuals to be tracked for long distances along the seafront with their faces clearly displayed on screen.

A Member observed that the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in force for Roscommon Way had been effective although there had been a recent increase in cars racing along there. In response to a question as to whether there was a programme in place to identify priorities for CCTV, Cllr Savage advised that a CCTV working group that had met once should be restarted.

Resolved

To note the update on matters relating to the Rochford and Castle Point Community Safety Partnership.

108 **AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT AND BROWNFIELD LAND REGISTER**

The Deputy Leader presented the report on the findings of the Authority Monitoring Report and Brownfield Land Register and the implications of these findings for decision making in respect of planning applications.

The Deputy Leader stated:

“The Authority Monitoring Report is prepared to meet requirements in legislation and sets out:

- How plan making work is being progressed
- Key information on the delivery of homes and economic development in the area
- The infrastructure funding statement

The report paints a mixed picture.

- It demonstrates that as a Council we concluded work on the withdrawn local plan in line with the programme for that work and have commenced work and stuck to the timetable for the Castle Point Plan.
- It demonstrates that we have been strong on the delivery of employment floor space and commercial floor space.
- It demonstrates that we have taken action to put in place a Community Infrastructure Levy.
- It also demonstrates that we have taken action to ensure that a significant proportion of the monies we have collected for health under S106 Agreements are not committed to the delivery of a health care scheme in Thundersley.

However,

- It shows that our housing delivery is poor. We have only delivered 36% of the housing we are required to deliver under the standard methodology over the last 3 years. This is in part due to the removal of caravans registered for Council tax purposes at Thorney Bay, although this does not account for the entire under provision.
- It also shows that our housing land supply position is poor, with a supply of the order of 2.46 years against a requirement for a 5-year housing land supply.
- Additionally, we have delivered just 9 affordable homes over the last 2 years – all on Council owned sites.
- Our S106 and CIL receipts were also low in 2023/24, affecting our ability to secure local infrastructure improvements.

This is a challenge for our Development Management Service and our Development Management Committee in terms of dealing with speculative development proposals, as the presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the national policy applies, with a tilted balance in favour of housing proposals.

This report highlights how important it is that we get a local plan in place as quickly as possible that sets out how we will secure the right homes in the

right places, so that we protect the parts of the borough we wish to protect from speculative development.

The update to the Brownfield Land Register is also included within this report. We are required to update the Brownfield Land Register annually.

At this time a minor update has been made to the Brownfield Land Register to reflect the changing circumstances of sites within the development management system.

A full review is planned to reflect the work underway on the Castle Point Plan. This will be reported in 2025.”

In response to a Member question as to why the standard method had been used to calculate the five year housing land supply, the Deputy Leader advised that national planning practice required the Council to use the standard method where there is not an up to date Plan in place. It was recognised that this did not align with our own local evidence, but the Council cannot use the figure arising from our own local evidence until this is embedded in the Castle Point Plan that the Plan has been examined and found sound, as it departs from the national position. This issue highlights the importance of progressing the Castle Point Plan as quickly as possible in line with the programme agreed by the Council at its meeting in January 2024.

In response to a Member question as to why the Brownfield Land Register didn't include all the sites identified in the Castle Point Plan Issues and Options Document, the Deputy Leader stated that all the sites identified in the Issues and Options Document were only potential sites currently. The engagement that the Council undertakes over the summer will help us decide if they should be included in the Castle Point Plan or not. Where we decide to include them in the Plan we will look to update the Brownfield Land Register to include them and it was likely that the next Brownfield Land Register would include additional sites from that process.

Resolved

- (1) To note the findings of the Authority Monitoring Report 2022 – 2024 and the implications that has for decision making in respect of planning applications.
- (2) To note the updates to the Part 1 Brownfield Register dated April 2024.

109 CASTLE POINT BOROUGH COUNCIL DRAFT WASTE AND RECYCLING STRATEGY AND ISSUES AND OPTIONS REVIEW

The Portfolio Holder for Environment presented the report setting out the process for reviewing the Council's approach to waste collection and recycling. This was necessary due to legislative changes and the need to modernise the Council's waste vehicles and buildings.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the former Environment Policy & Scrutiny Committee had been tasked previously with evaluating potential waste collection options and recommending its preferred collection option to Cabinet for approval. This was reported to Cabinet in June 2023. However, public consultation on the preferred collection following that Cabinet meeting was paused due to the publication of new guidance from the Government on recycling.

As a result of the publication by Defra of the Simpler Recycling Guidance it was necessary to reconsider all waste collection options to take into consideration changes within the guidance and how these might affect the current provision of waste and recycling services by the Council.

The Portfolio Holder emphasised that waste was a service used by all residents and that any changes would impact on all of them. It was therefore of key importance to engage with the local community and to listen to the views of its residents on the draft waste and recycling strategy for 2024-2029.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr M Fuller, that the recommendations set out at paragraph 3.1 of the report be approved and this was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.

Resolved

- (1) That in respect of its previous decision on 21 June 2023:
 - a. To revoke its endorsement of option 6b as its preferred collection option as set out in the report to Cabinet dated 21 June 2023;
 - b. To revoke the requirement to undertake public consultation on that preferred option; and
 - c. To revoke the requirement to undertake detailed financial costings of that preferred option.
- (2) To note the Castle Point Borough Council draft Waste and Recycling Strategy 2024-2029 (Appendix 1).
- (3) To approve the undertaking of a public consultation on the Council's draft Waste and Recycling Strategy (2024-2029) and future considerations of the waste and recycling service in order to meet legislative and operational demands.
- (4) To delegate the preparation, curation, methodology, commissioning and delivery of the public consultation to the Assistant Director Waste & Recycling, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment.
- (5) To approve the draw down from the General Reserve of up to £25,000 to be spent on the public consultation process.

- (6) To refer the results of the public consultation to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee for its review and consideration of any recommendations to Cabinet.

110 ASSET REVIEW BOARD QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Portfolio Holder for Special Projects and Assets presented an update report on the work of the Asset Review Board. He emphasised that the Council keeps under review the sufficiency, suitability and cost of retaining the property that it owns. In order to ensure a transparent and consistent approach to the acquisition and disposal of Council owned land and buildings the Council approved a new Acquisition and Disposal Policy in February 2024.

The Asset Review Board is a Member Working Group of the Cabinet and applies the Council's Acquisition and Disposal Policy in order to discharge its functions. Officers collate and update the work to explore the potential acquisitions and disposal of assets and provide information to the Board for consideration. One such disposal relates to the proposed lease of a section of the Kiln Road office to USP College. This is the subject of item 10 of this agenda. The Portfolio Holder extended thanks to officers for their diligent work in applying a new strategic approach to the management of the Council's assets which is already delivering benefits for our local community.

Resolved

To note the contents of the report.

111 LEASE OF PART OF THE COUNCIL OFFICES AT KILN ROAD, THUNDERSLEY TO USP COLLEGE

The Portfolio Holder for Special Projects and Assets presented a report seeking approval to lease a part of the Council offices at Kiln Road, Thundersley to USP College. He drew attention to the Council's operation of a hybrid working environment, enabling staff to work remotely, as well as at the Council office in Kiln Road. This change in the way officers work has resulted in the Council having under utilised space within the Kiln Road offices. This presents an opportunity for the Council to make for more efficient use of this asset and for the proposed lease to support the Council's medium term financial strategy while at the same time crucially ensuring that the college can continue to flourish and provide services to an increased number of students.

In response to a Member question as to whether there were any residual areas other than the west wing that could also be leased, or whether this lease could inhibit leasing by other organisations, officers confirmed that the proposed lease allowed for 24 USP College staff to work within the west wing. However, there was capacity for additional USP staff in the future, if needed, as there were a further 5 rooms in the west wing that could be leased. It was also noted that there were other spaces within the Council office that could

potentially be leased by other organisations in the future.

Cllr D Blackwell moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr T Gibson, that the recommendations set out at paragraph 3.1 of the report be approved and this was agreed unanimously on a show of hands.

Resolved

- (1) To approve the Head of Terms (Appendix 1) and grant a lease of part of the Council Offices to the USP College.
- (2) To delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Estates, in consultation with the Section 151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder for Special Projects and Assets, to negotiate and agree the final detailed lease terms.

The meeting closed at 6.38 pm.

Chair

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, Braille or another language please contact 0207 520 1431 or email translations@languageline.co.uk .