

Minutes

Cabinet

17th May 2021



These minutes principally record decisions taken and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions. A recording of the meeting is available at <http://www.braintree.gov.uk/youtube>

Present:

Portfolio	Cabinet Member	Present
Overall Strategy	Councillor G Butland (Leader of the Council)	Yes
Innovative Environment		
Finance and Corporate Transformation	Councillor J McKee	Yes
The Environment	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt	Yes
Connecting People, Places and Prosperity		
Economic Growth	Councillor T Cunningham (Deputy Leader)	Yes
Housing, Assets and Skills	Councillor K Bowers	Yes
Planning and Infrastructure	Councillor Mrs G Spray	Yes
Supporting Our Communities		
Health and Wellbeing	Councillor P Tattersley	Yes
Communities	Councillor F Ricci	Yes

Present as Cabinet Support Members: Councillor I Pritchard (Innovative Environment), Councillor J Wrench (Connecting People, Places and Prosperity) and Councillor Mrs I Parker (Supporting Our Communities).

Present as invitees of the Leader: Councillor D Mann, Leader of the Labour Group.

(Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs J Pell, Leader of the Halstead Residents Association, and Councillor J Abbott, Leader of the Green and Independent Group.)

1 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:-

Councillor G Butland, Leader of the Council, declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest in Agenda Item 7a, 'Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document – Open Spaces

Action Plan,' as an Elected Member at Essex County Council (ECC), and "open spaces" fell within the remit of his ECC Cabinet Portfolio.

Councillor T Cunningham declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest as an Elected Member at ECC.

2 **MINUTES**

DECISION: The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8th March 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked or statements made.

4 **APPOINTMENTS TO CABINET COMMITTEES**

INFORMATION: Members were advised that under Article 6 of the Constitution, the Leader may at their discretion establish any Sub- Committee, Working Group or Reference Group to discharge the executive functions delegated to them. Only Cabinet Sub-Committees held decision making authority. In making any such changes, the Leader was required to report these to the Cabinet, and was not required to seek approval of the Cabinet or the Council.

Accordingly, the Cabinet Sub-Committees, Working Groups or Reference Groups were not subject to the rules of political proportionality. The Changes as set out in the report would come into effect on 18th May 2021.

In respect of the Local Plan Sub-Committee, it was reported that although the size of the Committee remained unchanged with a total membership of 12 Members, the membership had been amended as Councillor Patrick Horner was due to step down. Councillor Horner would be replaced by Councillor Mrs Charley Dervish.

The size of the Developing Democracy Group also remained unchanged, with the total membership at nine Members. However, the membership of the Developing Democracy Group had been amended following Councillor David Bebb's retirement as a Councillor in March 2021. Councillor Bebb would therefore be replaced by Councillor John McKee.

DECISION: That Cabinet:-

- a) Noted the appointments to the Local Plan Sub-Committee as set out in paragraph 3.6;
- b) Noted the appointments to the Developing Democracy Group as set out in paragraph 3.9; and
- c) Noted that the Reference Groups set out in paragraph 3.11 had been abolished, and that the Leader had delegated authority to Cabinet Members to establish any Reference Group necessary for the management of a project falling within their Portfolio.

REASON FOR DECISION: To establish a Sub-Committee and Working Groups which exercised those executive functions delegated to the Leader on 21st May 2019, and to outline the changes the Leader had made to the Membership of the Local Plan Sub-Committee and the Developing Democracy Working Group, and the abolishing of the Reference Groups.

5 **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

INFORMATION: Members were advised that under Article 5, the Council was permitted to make appointments to Outside Bodies unless the appointment was an executive function, in which case those appointments were for the determination of Cabinet.

There were two changes highlighted in respect of Appendix B to the report; these were in relation to the appointments to the Great Notley Country Park – Joint Governance with Essex County Council (Partnership Board) and the Superfast Essex Steering Board. Members were advised that Councillor F Ricci was to join Councillor Mrs W Schmitt on the Partnership Board, as Councillor G Butland was to attend future meetings of the Board in his capacity as County Councillor. Accordingly, Councillor T Cunningham was also to step down from his appointment on the Superfast Essex Steering Board due to his capacity as a Deputy Cabinet Member at Essex County Council.

Members were advised that on 8th July 2019, Cabinet made an appointment to the Community Housing Investment Partnership Board. Since that time, the partnership had been dissolved and replaced with the Braintree District and Eastlight Community Grant Panel, to which the Council made appointments at its Annual General Meeting on 19th April 2021. As a result, the Partnership had been removed from the list of Cabinet appointments to Outside Bodies.

Furthermore, it was reported that although Councillor F Ricci remained a Trustee on the Braintree Museum Trust (the Trust), the Council had been working with the Trust to simplify the arrangements for managing the relationship. Accordingly, the Trust were in the process of updating their Memorandum and Articles of Association, and the Council would no longer fill a Trustee position. The Council and Trust would continue to manage the relationship through regular meetings and the Funding Management Agreement, and the Cabinet was requested to delegate authority to the Corporate Director (Operational) for the finalisation and approval of the necessary documentation at the appropriate time. Following this, the Council would no longer be a corporate trustee represented by Councillor Ricci, who would step down, and the Trust would be removed from the list of Outside Bodies.

DECISION: That Cabinet:-

- a) Approved the changes to the appointments to the identified Outside Bodies set out in Appendix A, and that these appointments were until July 2023;
- b) Noted that all other appointments made on 8th July 2019, subject to the two amendments, as set out in Appendix B remained in place until July 2023; and
- c) Approved the delegation to the Corporate Director (Operational) to agree the Funding Management Agreement and any other associated documentation

necessary for the removal of the requirement for Cabinet to appoint a Trustee to the Braintree Museum Trust, and any necessary Agreements for the ongoing management of the Council's relationship with Braintree Museum Trust.

REASON FOR DECISION: On 8th July 2019, Cabinet approved the appointment of Members as its representatives on a number of Outside Bodies. Whilst those appointments were for a period of four years, it was now necessary to make changes to those appointments in order to ensure that there remained appropriate representation of Braintree District Council (the Council) views on the identified Outside Bodies.

6

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND CYCLING STRATEGY ENGAGEMENT APPROACH

INFORMATION: The Leader invited Councillor F Ricci, Cabinet Member for Communities and Councillor Mrs W Schmitt, Cabinet Member for Environment to introduce the report, which regarded a proposed extension in the engagement to be undertaken on the Draft Climate Change Strategy and Draft Cycling Strategy.

It was reported that the current scheduled timetable for engagement did not allow time for informal discussion with the Climate Change Working Group and Cycling Steering Group before the updated strategies were to be considered at the Council meeting on 26th July 2021. As such, it was proposed that the engagement period be extended from six to eight weeks, with an amended deadline of 6th July 2021 in order to ensure that there was effective engagement with all relevant stakeholders and, with the anticipated easing of Covid-19 restrictions, the option for face-to-face engagement towards the end of the period in order to encompass those unable to communicate as successfully through online channels. It was added that more time should also be allocated for the Climate Change Working Group and the Cycling Steering Group to review each strategy ahead of consideration through formal governance channels.

In order to provide a sufficient timescale for the consideration of the Climate Change Strategy and Cycling Strategy, it was proposed that the current date for consideration by Council be changed, and that an extra meeting date for Council be established through the Chairman of the Council, to take place on 20th September 2021 as an Extraordinary Council Meeting. It was stressed that the change in timescales would not impact adversely on the progress of the Council's work in respect of its climate change and cycling objectives.

DECISION: That Cabinet:-

- a) Approved the extension of the engagement period for the Draft Climate Change Strategy and the Cycling Strategy be extended from six to eight weeks to allow for increased participation and use of all available channels;
- b) Agreed that the Climate Change Working Group and the Cycling Working Group were given the opportunity to review the updated strategies following completion of the engagement period; and
- c) Agreed that the Chairman of the Council be requested to call an Extraordinary Council meeting on 20th September 2021 to consider both strategies.

REASON FOR DECISION: To approve an increase in the engagement to be undertaken for the Draft Climate Change Strategy and Draft Cycling Strategy to allow for maximum participation in informing and developing the Strategies ahead of Council's final consideration of both Strategies.

7

OPEN SPACES SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – OPEN SPACES ACTION PLAN

INFORMATION: Members gave consideration to a report that was introduced by Councillor Mrs G Spray, Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure.

Members were advised that the consultation period for the 2021 Open Spaces Action Plan (OSAP) was extended by several weeks, from 3rd December 2020 to 1st February 2021 in order to ensure that all consultees responsible for the provision of enhancements of open space within the District received adequate opportunity to respond should they wish to do so, particularly in light of the impacts of the Covid-19 restrictions at that time. Gratitude was expressed towards Mr Alex Evans, Planning Policy Officer at the Council, for his assembly of the Plan and the advice he provided for the Parish and Town Councils, which had been greatly appreciated. It was noted by a Member that a number of Parish Councils had similarly expressed their gratitude for the extension to the consultation.

With regard to the level of response to the consultation, it was reported that responses from 45 Parish and Town Councils, four Ward Members, two sports clubs, four sport non-governing bodies and internal consultees had been received. For clarification, it was highlighted that many District Councillors regularly attended their local Parish and/or Town Council meetings and contributed towards OSAP discussions in this way, as opposed to responding directly to the consultation individually. The responses received were given due consideration by Officers and, where appropriate and suitable, amendments and updates were subsequently added to the 2021 OSAP. The Cabinet Member also noted that a full list of main changes from the 2020 version of the OSAP had been provided in Appendix 2 to the report; this included details of the entries that had been received but were not considered suitable for inclusion within the OSAP.

Further to the report, it was added that Feering Parish Council had been in contact with Mr Evans in respect of some minor changes they wished to make to their initial entries, as well as inaccuracies they had identified within the OSAP. It was highlighted that even after the OSAP was published, Officers would refer back to all submitted entries to the consultation in order to gain a wider context when considering published comments. As such, although the comments of Feering Parish Council would not appear in the final version of the OSAP, they would nonetheless be taken into account in future, should any Section 106 monies emerge for the area. In light of this, the recommendations within the report for approval by Cabinet had been amended slightly to acknowledge the receipt of the comments from Feering Parish Council, which would be reviewed.

In response to a question regarding the potential acquisition of future community woodland sites, Members were informed that although community woodlands currently fell outside the scope of the OSAP, a review of the Plan was expected to be undertaken at a later, undetermined date, with a view to its expansion, and could encompass such sites. The Cabinet Member agreed to note the suggestion for future

consideration. It was also noted that the report produced further to the Scrutiny Review into Community Woodlands was due for presentation at the upcoming meeting of Full Council on 7th June 2021, and would include comments and recommendations.

DECISION: That Cabinet:

1. Delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure to review the late representations received from Feering Parish Council and determine any amendments to the OSAP as necessary; and
2. Adopt the OSAP as presented to Cabinet, subject to any amendments brought forward by the Cabinet Member for Planning and Infrastructure.

REASON FOR DECISION: This report introduces the 2021 edition of the Open Spaces Action Plan (OSAP). The OSAP is a table of outline proposals for the provision and enhancement of open spaces in Braintree District. Its purpose is to demonstrate the need for these and enables Council Officers to identify where financial contributions (being sought from Developers under the Open Spaces Supplementary Planning Document) will be spent.

The Plan forms part of Braintree District Council (the Council) evidence base for securing planning obligations from Developers to enhance existing open spaces, or provide new ones. Adopting the Open Spaces Action Plan 2021 supplants the 2020 edition, updating the currently adopted information.

8 **APPOINTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPION**

INFORMATION: Councillor P Tattersley, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, was invited to introduce the report and move the recommendations.

It was reported that Local Authorities had a key role in promoting wellbeing and improving mental health in their communities. The mental health challenge for Local Authorities (the Challenge) sought to support and encourage Local Authorities to undertake a proactive approach towards addressing this crucial issue. The Council acknowledged that mental health should be a priority across its areas of responsibility, which included housing, community safety and planning, and that all Councillors of the Council could play a positive role in championing mental health on an individual and strategic basis.

By signing up to the Challenge, the Council would adhere to the following principles:

- a) Support positive mental health in its community, including in local schools, neighbourhoods and workplaces;
- b) Would look to reduce inequalities in mental health in our community;
- c) Work with local partners to offer effective support for people with mental health needs;
- d) Tackle discrimination on the grounds of mental health in our community; and
- e) Proactively listen to people of all ages and backgrounds about what they need for better mental health.

The role of the Member Champion required those appointed to the role to support the Council's activities and responsibilities through key activities, which included:

- a) Advocating for mental health issues in Council Meetings and policy development;
- b) Reaching out to the Local Community (eg via schools, businesses, faith groups) to raise awareness and challenge stigma;
- c) Listening to people with personal experiences of mental ill health to get their perspectives on local needs and priorities;
- d) Fostering local partnerships between agencies to support people with mental health problems more effectively; and
- e) Encouraging the Council to support the mental health of its own workforce and those of its contractors.

In undertaking these key activities, Member Champions would provide a presence for mental health within the Council, working respectively and sensitively with Members and responding to requests from the Challenge Organisers on the work undertaken. The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing would continue to retain oversight for emotional health and wellbeing. Alongside this, the Member Champions would be required to ensure that the Cabinet Member was kept up to date throughout the course of their roles.

DECISION: That Cabinet agreed:-

- a) To sign up to the Local Authorities Mental Health Challenge run by Centre for Mental Health, Mental Health Foundation, AMHP, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds; and
- b) To appoint Councillor Diana Garrod and Councillor Andrew Hensman as the Council's Member Champions.

REASON FOR DECISION: The mental health challenge for Local Authorities (the Challenge) is an initiative led jointly by Centre for Mental Health, the Mental Health Foundation, the Mental Health Providers Forum, Mind, Rethink Mental Illness, the Royal College of Psychiatrists and YoungMinds, and was launched in 2013.

The aim of the challenge is to encourage and support local leadership for mental health and wellbeing through Local Authority Elected Members, and asks Local Authorities to appoint a 'Member Champion' for mental health.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 7.43pm.

COUNCILLOR G BUTLAND
(Leader of the Council)