

Minutes

Cabinet

10th October 2022



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
Climate Change and the Environment	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt	Yes
Operations and Commercialisation	Councillor R van Dulken	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		
Communities	Councillor F Ricci	Yes
Health and Wellbeing	Councillor P Tattersley	Yes

Present as Invitees of the Leader:

Councillor J Abbott (Leader of the Green and Independent Group), Councillor D Mann (Leader of the Labour Group) and Councillor Mrs J Pell (Leader of Halstead Residents' Association).

The start of the meeting was delayed by five minutes due to a technical problem. The meeting commenced at 5.05pm.

Those minutes identified by the prefix ** may be the subject of the "call-in" provisions of the Constitution within 5 working days of the publication of these minutes. Any decisions made and not "called in" by this date and time will become effective. For further information regarding these minutes please contact the Governance and Members Team, on 01376 552525 or email governance@braintree.gov.uk

35. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:-

Councillor G Butland declared a Non-Pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5a – ‘Review of Bouncing Back Together – Our Plan for the District October 2021 to March 2023’ and Agenda Item 6a – ‘First Quarter Performance Report 2022/23’ as an Elected Member of Essex County Council.

Councillor T Cunningham declared a Non-Pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5a – ‘Review of Bouncing Back Together – Our Plan for the District October 2021 to March 2023’ and Agenda Item 6a – ‘First Quarter Performance Report 2022/23’ as an Elected Member of Essex County Council.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Councillors remained in the meeting, unless stated otherwise, and took part in the discussion when the Items were considered.

36. **MINUTES**

DECISION: It was reported that the Minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 5th October 2022 and 10th October 2022 would be considered at the next meeting of Cabinet to be held on 28th November 2022.

37. **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked, or statements made.

38. **‘BOUNCING BACK TOGETHER – OUR PLAN FOR THE DISTRICT OCTOBER 2021 TO MARCH 2023’ - REVIEW**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on the Council’s Annual Plan entitled ‘Bouncing Back Together’, which covered the period from October 2021 to March 2023. The Plan set out the actions and performance measures, which were required to support the delivery of the Council’s Corporate Strategy for 2020 – 2024. The Plan had been reviewed for a second time to take account of changes to Council budgets, new legislation and new challenges and opportunities facing the District.

The Cabinet had approved the ‘Bouncing Back Together’ Plan in October 2021 when it had also been agreed that the Plan should be reviewed periodically to take account of any changes required and to include any additional actions. The first review had taken place in April 2022.

Under the ‘Connecting People and Places’ section of the Plan, an action point had been amended to include strategic infrastructure schemes as well as highway schemes so that updates could be submitted for schemes such as solar farms and

overhead powerlines. An action point had been added under the 'Enhancing our Environment' section, to consider opportunities to re-wild open spaces and verges in the District in partnership with Town and Parish Councils. The 'Supporting our Communities' section had been amended to include an action point in respect of the support being provided to residents and businesses in response to the cost-of-living crisis. An action point had also been included in this section relating to the safer streets programme of works. In addition, three actions relating to volunteers and/or volunteering had been amalgamated into one action. Under the 'Delivering and Innovating' section, the wording for the 'Levelling Up' action had been amended to reflect a wider area of work around the delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund and Rural Prosperity Fund projects, as well as Essex County Council's rural pilot.

In discussing this Item, Councillor Mrs J Pell referred to a photograph of The Causeway, Halstead, which had been included in the Plan to promote the attractiveness of the District. However, the photograph also showed the poor state of the adjacent River Colne which was congested by overgrown vegetation. Although the river was the responsibility of the Environment Agency, the Agency had declined requests to clear it. Councillor Mrs Pell asked if Braintree District Council could take action. Councillor G Butland, Leader of the Council, stated that he would submit a representation to the Environment Agency.

Councillor G Butland, Leader of the Council, thanked Ms T Headford, Business Solutions Manager, for her work in compiling and updating the Annual Plan.

DECISION: That Braintree District Council's revised Annual Plan entitled 'Bouncing Back Together' for the period up to March 2023 be approved.

REASON FOR DECISION: To approve a revised version of Braintree District Council's Annual Plan entitled 'Bouncing Back Together' for the period up to March 2023.

39. **FIRST QUARTER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT 2022/23**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to the Council's First Quarter Performance Management Report for the period 1st April 2022 to 30th June 2022.

It was noted that at the end of June 2022, a total of ten projects had been completed, 51 projects were on track and progressing well, and three projects had an amber status. One project had been closed and it would be reconsidered as part of the budget preparations for a future year.

Targets had not been set for all performance indicators due to the disproportionate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, for those that remained nine performance indicators had met or exceeded their target and three performance indicators had missed their target by more than 5%. These were in relation to recycling rates; the

average waiting time for disabled facility grants; and the time taken to process housing benefit claim changes.

The key achievements for the first quarter were highlighted at the meeting.

The out-turn financial position for the first quarter showed that the net budget position forecast for the year was an adverse variance of £721,000 after providing for the National Employers' pay award offer, which if agreed, would be effective from 1st April 2022. As a result of the forecast, managers had reviewed their service budgets and had identified significant savings and potential additional income that would address the projected revenue gap, and which would be reflected in an updated projection for the second quarter. The projected change in General Fund unallocated balances was currently a reduction of £358,000. Expenditure on capital projects had amounted to £2.8m, which related mainly to expenditure on the Horizon 120 Enterprise Centre ('The Plaza') and the Manor Street, Braintree regeneration scheme.

In discussing this Item, Members of the Cabinet thanked all members of staff for their continued good work during difficult times. Members thanked Ms T Headford, Business Solutions Manager, for her work in compiling the Performance Management Report.

DECISION: That the performance of the Council for the first quarter (April 2022 to June 2022) be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To note the performance of Braintree District Council at the end of the first quarter (April 2022 to June 2022).

The meeting commenced at 5.05pm and closed at 5.37pm.

COUNCILLOR G BUTLAND
(Leader of the Council)