

Minutes

Cabinet

15th December 2025

These Minutes principally record decisions taken and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions.

Present:

Portfolio	Cabinet Member	Present
Overall Strategy	Councillor G Butland (Leader of the Council)	Apologies
Deputy Cabinet Member to the Leader	Councillor J Edwards	Yes
Transformation, Performance and Delivery		
Finance, Resources and Performance	Councillor K Bowers	Yes
Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services	Councillor T Cunningham (Deputy Leader)	Yes
Deputy Cabinet Member	Councillor R van Dulken	Yes
Connecting People, Places and Prosperity		
Economic Growth and Infrastructure	Councillor F Ricci	Yes
Planning	Councillor G Spray	Yes
Deputy Cabinet Member	Councillor P Schwier	Yes
Supporting Communities		
Housing, Health and Wellbeing	Councillor L Bowers-Flint	Yes
Deputy Cabinet Member	Councillor T Williams	Yes
Stronger Communities	Councillor M Cunningham	Yes
Deputy Cabinet Member	Councillor C Dervish	Yes

Present as Invitees of the Leader: Councillor J Beavis (Leader of the Independent and Green Group), Councillor J Bond (Leader of the Halstead Residents' Association), Councillor P Heath (Chairman of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee) and Councillor L Jefferis (Leader of the Labour Group).

Before beginning with the main items of business, Councillor T Cunningham, Deputy Leader, wished to extend a warm welcome to Councillor Bond for his attendance at the Cabinet meeting, which marked his first as Leader of the Halstead Residents' Association.

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The Cabinet also expressed their gratitude and appreciation to Councillor Pell for her participation over the years at Cabinet meetings during her time as the Leader of the Halstead Residents' Association.

43. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following Interest was declared:-

Councillor T Cunningham, Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services, declared a Non-Registerable Interest as an Elected Member of Essex County Council (ECC). ECC was referred to in a number of reports in respect of funding.

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.

44. **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 27th November 2025 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45. **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no registered speakers.

46. ****DISPOSAL OF LAND, 4 CRITTALL DRIVE AND CRITTALL DRIVE, SPRINGWOOD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, BRAINTREE, ESSEX**

Minutes Published: 19 th December 2025 Call-in Expires: 30 th December 2025
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INFORMATION: Members were reminded that this Item included a Confidential Appendix which contained exempt information that fell within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. If any Members wished to refer to the private information within the Appendix, it would be necessary for the meeting to be moved into Private Session.

DECISION: That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting if it was necessary to discuss the Confidential Appendix on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

This item was considered entirely in the Public Session of the meeting. There was no discussion in Private Session, nor disclosure of information contained within the Confidential Appendix. Cabinet also resolved that the Confidential Appendix remained confidential and exempt from disclosure.

INFORMATION: Members considered a report which regarded the status and future of industrial land at 4 Crittall Drive, located within Springwood Industrial Estate (the Site).

The Site currently contained no property following the demolition of the previous industrial

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unit in 2023 due to poor condition. The land was currently leased for temporary storage, but both the lease and planning permission were due to expire in July 2026. Access to the Site was via an unadopted road, Crittall Drive, which the Council had covenanted to maintain, although there was no mechanism to recover the cost from users. The Council's Asset Management Team ensured that access and egress rights for the industrial unit remained protected, regardless of future ownership.

With the end of the temporary storage use approaching and no opportunity to extend this arrangement, options had been explored for the Site, including industrial units and/or a potential sale of the site. Feasibility studies to explore the potential of developing smaller energy efficient industrial units were commissioned in 2024. The feasibility for the chosen designs confirmed budget build costs of £1.9million, a project build programme of three years for delivery of completed units. Agency confirmed rental incomes estimated for these at circa £125,000 per annum with an additional service charge recovery. However, during the review, Greenshields JCB Ltd presented a conditional offer to purchase both the Site and the adjoining road. After careful consideration, including an RICS Red Book Market Valuation, it was confirmed that their offer represented best consideration for the Council.

Given the imminent expiry of the permitted use, the significant capital investment required for redevelopment and the Council's preparations for devolution and Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), it was recommended that the Council proceed with the sale of the Site.

For ease, the financial implications of the report were also summarised. The lease was due to expire in July 2026 and would result in a loss of revenue of £60,000 per annum; however, this had already been factored into the proposed budget for 2026/27 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). In addition, the sale of the site would incur professional fees, including the RICS valuation, surveyors and legal fees, the expenses of which would be deducted from the capital receipt generated by the sale. Crucially, the capital receipt itself would provide an increase in capital resources that could be allocated for any future capital investment and support the Council's ongoing commitment to prudent financial management.

DECISION: That Cabinet agreed:-

1. That Braintree District Council (the Council) declared the industrial land site at 4 Crittall Drive and the unadopted road Crittall Drive as surplus and progressed these sites for disposal;
2. To grant delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Growth), to progress the conditional sale of industrial land site at 4 Crittall Road and the unadopted road, Crittall Drive, to Greenshields JCB Ltd at the best consideration price documented in the confidential appendix.
3. To grant delegated authority to the Corporate Director (Growth) to progress the sale on the open market for best consideration if the sale to Greenshields JCB Ltd did not complete.

47. ****PLANT EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT 2025-2026**

Minutes Published: 19th December 2025
Call-in Expires: 30th December 2025

INFORMATION: Members considered a report which regarded the purchase of new plant equipment for the Operations Service, including two tractors, two (4x4 utility vehicles), two tow along mowers and 12 ride-on mowers.

The current plant equipment was supplied on a lease basis. In 2024, these leases were extended for a further year; due to the low operating hours of many of the machines and condition of the tractors at that time, the decision was taken to review their replacement in 2025. As the plant equipment had started to deteriorate, it had the potential to adversely impact on providing essential services to maintain parks and open spaces.

The plant equipment was utilised by the Horticultural and Open Spaces Teams to deliver both statutory and commercial services of grounds maintenance, such as cutting the grass on the Council's land, land occupied by the local assets and schools. Should the plant equipment not be replaced in this service area, it could have a significant impact on the Council's reputation, and an effect on the income currently received for commercial activities.

The plant equipment recommended for replacement was beyond economical use and posed a risk to business continuity. In addition, the equipment would likely require substantial work and investment to continue delivering the expected standards of service, which would impact on customers and residents. Furthermore, the equipment was not considered suitable for replacement with an alternative fuel product. Whilst an Alternative Fuel Vehicle (AFV) existed or was being developed, the technology, pricing and vehicle capabilities did not meet with the Council's requirements at the current time. It was therefore recommended that the Council opted for Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) models for the equipment.

DECISION: That Cabinet agreed:-

- 1) To delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Transformation, The Environment and Customer Services, in consultation with the Corporate Director (Operational), to award all associated contracts following the procurement of 18 pieces of plant equipment as follows: two tractors, two (4x4 utility vehicles), two tow along mowers and 12 ride-on mowers; and
- 2) To delegate to the S151 Officer the decision to determine the most appropriate method of financing the procured plant equipment in line with the Council's capital and treasury management practices

48. ****PROCUREMENT OF PLASTIC SACKS**

Minutes Published: 19th December 2025
Call-in Expires: 30th December 2025

INFORMATION: Members were reminded that this Item included a Confidential Appendix which contained exempt information that fell within Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. If any Members wished to refer to the private information within the Appendix, it would be necessary for the meeting to be moved into Private Session.

DECISION: That, under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting if it was necessary to discuss the Confidential Appendix on the grounds that it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act.

This item was considered entirely in the Public Session of the meeting. There was no discussion in Private Session, nor disclosure of information contained within the Confidential Appendix. Cabinet also resolved that the Confidential Appendix remained confidential and exempt from disclosure.

INFORMATION: Members considered a report which sought approval for the Council to award two contracts: one contract for the procurement of plastic sacks and one for the award of a contract for compostable sacks.

Due to upcoming changes in the method of collecting kerbside dry mixed recycling from June 2026, the Council's requirement for domestic clear dry mixed recycling sacks would cease. Accordingly, on 2nd June 2025, the Council sought a short-term contract to satisfy its current and known business as usual requirements to ensure sufficient stocks until a longer-term contract had been established.

The current contract was for three products only:-

- Domestic Residual Sacks (black)
- Domestic Residual Sacks (clear)
- Commercial Recycling Sacks (clear)

The contract was due to expire on 3rd September 2026 and was for a period of 15 months; however, all the requirements had now been called off and the contract was now complete.

It was recommended that the contract be awarded to Cromwell Polythene Limited as they provided the most advantageous quote based on quality, price and social value.

DECISION: That Cabinet agreed:-

1. To approve the award of a contract to Cromwell Polythene for the procurement of plastic sacks for a contract term of 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years in 1-year increments. The contract value is expected to be £317,613.35 plus VAT over a five-year contract term.

2. To approve the award of a contract to Cromwell Polythene for the procurement of compostable sacks for a contract term of 3 years with the option to extend for a further 2 years in 1-year increments. The contract value is expected to be £26,387.62 plus VAT over a five-year contract term.

49. ****TO AWARD A CONTRACT FOR RECYCLING BOXES AND LIDS**

Minutes Published: 19 th December 2025 Call-in Expires: 30 th December 2025
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INFORMATION: Members considered a report which sought approval for the Council to award a contract for the provision of recycling boxes and lids.

As a result of the changes to the way in which the Council collected waste and recycling from June 2026, the receptacles used by residents to store and present recycling for collection would need to change from single use plastics bags to wheeled bins, or recycling boxes. Whilst the majority of households would receive new wheeled bins for their recycling, those who were assessed as requiring an alternative receptacle would be provided with 55 litre recycling boxes instead. Such households were known as needing a Non-Standard Waste Collection Service and would include either 4 or 8 boxes to provide the same capacity as wheeled bins. Through the work undertaken in the months since May, it was expected that approximately 5% of households (3,500) would require these alternative receptacles.

Prior to the Cabinet decisions in May, a procurement exercise was conducted with the recommendation to award the contract to facilitate the delivery of bins and boxes from February 2026. However, as the procurement process continued, the winning manufacturer listed within the May report was unable to continue with the procurement process, and it subsequently ended without a successful award. Since 13th June 2025, the Council had worked with colleagues in the Essex Procurement Partnership to find alternative ways to procure and award a new contract. This included an unsuccessful attempt to award from a framework before going to tender again on 1st October 2025.

The recommendation was therefore to award a contract to IPL Ltd for a period of three years, with the option to extend for two years in 12-month increments. The contract value was expected to be £295,465.28 over the 5-year period.

DECISION: That Cabinet approved the award of a contract to provide recycling boxes and lids to IPL Ltd for a period of 3 years with the option to extend for 2 years, in 12-month increments. The contract value of the contract was expected to be £295,465.28 over the 5-year period.

50. **COMMERCIAL WASTE SERVICE REVIEW INCLUDING TRADE WASTE 2026/27 FEES AND CHARGES**

INFORMATION: Members considered a report which sought approval for the Council to introduce a new garden waste commercial collection service from 1st April 2026 which formed part of a package of waste collection services for businesses and supported compliance with Simpler Recycling. The report also sought approval for delegated

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authority to be given to the Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services to approve the charges for the Commercial (Trade) Waste Service for 2026/27.

The Council, as a Waste Collection Authority (WCA), had a duty under Section 45(1)(b) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to arrange the collection of commercial waste where requested to do so. The Council provided a competitively priced service; however, businesses were not obliged to use the service and could procure their own collection requirements via any other third-party supplier. The Commercial (Trade) Waste Service generated income of £1.2million, covering operational and disposal costs, and contributing towards management and overhead costs. Charges were inclusive of disposal costs which were payable to Essex County Council (ECC).

When developing the proposed charges for financial year 2026/27, the following considerations were made:-

- Inflationary and other changes in the Council's operational costs relating to the service; and
- Changes in the processing and disposal costs of the waste as controlled by ECC.

Using this analysis, a recommendation to increase charges would be made; however, the disposal costs were yet to be confirmed by ECC. As such, the Council was unable to recommend the fees for 2026/27 at the current time and was therefore seeking a delegation.

DECISION: That Cabinet approved:-

1. The introduction of a garden waste collection service for commercial (Trade) waste customers from 1st April 2026; and
2. Delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services to approve the 2026/27 Commercial (Trade) Waste charges once all applicable costs are available.

51. **SECOND QUARTER PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT 2025/26**

INFORMATION: Members received a report which summarised the performance of the Council in the second quarter of the year (July 2025 to September 2025).

Overall, the performance of the Council remained broadly in line with expectations, with most projects underway and progressing well. As at the end of the second quarter, 29 projects were on track and progressing well. Key achievements were highlighted, including the completion of five projects: the successful conclusion of the Safer Streets Programme in Halstead; the agreement of a sale for plots 5 to 8 at Horizon 120; arrangements made to sell the soil with the plots at Horizon 120; the publication of the North Essex Councils Climate Partnership's risk register, and the publication and promotion of the Essex Flood Guide by the Council.

It was noted that four projects had an amber status: the development of a renewable energy supplementary planning document; the development of a waste supplementary planning document; the delivery of the Green Skills programme, and the support of school access to university open days. One project had a red status, where the

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regeneration works to Witham and Halstead town centres were still under discussion with Essex Highways to agree all aspects of adoptable works before a programme of works was agreed.

In respect of performance indicators, seven performance indicators had either met or exceeded target, whilst nine had not met target. For the performance indicators which had not met target, five had missed target by less than 5% and four had missed target by more than 5%. Performance indicators which had missed target by less than 5% were: the percentage of household waste sent for recycling; the kilograms of residual waste per household; the percentage of fly tips cleared within 24 hours; council tax collection rate, where minor variations against last year had resulted in a reduced outturn, and the reduction of business rates collection rate against target. The following performance indicators had missed target by more than 5%: the number of affordable homes delivered; the percentage of Disabled Facilities Grants approved within timescales; the percentage of enquiries resolved at first point of contact in the customer service centre, and the time taken to process housing benefit claim changes.

In respect of financial performance, the projection for the year as at the second quarter showed an overall positive variance of £1.5 million, compared to £1.1 million reported at the first quarter. The main reason for the change in forecast was due to projected increases in income and extended periods of staffing vacancies across services. Treasury management income was projected to outperform budget due to higher cash balances and higher-for-longer interest rates. Sustainable Development was also projecting a positive variance, which was mainly due to staffing vacancies but also from an overachievement of planning related income. There were also positive variances within the Operations and ICT services; these had arisen primarily due to staff vacancies and an increase in operational income.

The services of Asset Management, Environment, Housing, and Strategic Investment were all projecting adverse positions greater than 5% of their budget. Both Asset Management and Environment were forecasting a shortfall in income, and additional staffing costs were anticipated in Environment due to ongoing interim staffing in Building Control. Housing was projecting an overspend on staffing related costs due to service demand pressures and the need to cover unplanned absences through agency staff. Cost pressures in relation to temporary housing and nightly lets were being met from government grants and subsidy. Strategic Investment was projecting an overspend due to increased staffing costs and a reduction in service costs rechargeable to capital projects as the team supported a wider range of project delivery.

Capital expenditure to the end of the second quarter was £2.6 million, with the main expenditure being on the Witham Community Centre, a new 3G artificial pitch in Witham, planned maintenance on Council owned property and community assets. There were several projects where budgeted spend was now expected to slip into next year, as well as several areas where projects were progressing faster than originally assumed, bringing forward spend against budgets originally profiled into 2026/27. An underspend on the Causeway House refresh project had been included in forecasting available capital resources for the 2026/27 budget, along with the other additional capital resources generated in the reporting period.

Further to the report, Cabinet Members were invited to raise any updates they had regarding performance within their portfolios. Matters raised related to: the delivery of affordable homes, where the target might not be reached in the current year; decisions

relating to major and minor planning applications being completed within desired timescales and targets being exceeded; positive progress made regarding projects in Witham and Halstead, although there had been some slight delays to works in Halstead, and positive outcomes of the Councillor Community Grant Scheme.

During the wider discussion with Members in respect of the report, some concerns were raised in respect of staff sickness levels, which had increased, as well as the “red status” against the number of calls resolved at the point of first contact in respect of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

DECISION: That Cabinet noted the performance of the Council for the second quarter (July 2025 to September 2025).

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.06pm.

COUNCILLOR T CUNNINGHAM
(Deputy Leader)