

Minutes

Cabinet

27th November 2023



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
Deputy Cabinet Member to the Leader	Councillor B Taylor	Yes
Deputy Cabinet Member to the Leader	Councillor R van Dulken	Yes
Transformation, Performance and Delivery		
Resources and Performance	Councillor K Bowers	Yes
Transformation, the Environment and Customer Services	Councillor T Cunningham (Deputy Leader)	Yes
Deputy Cabinet Member	Councillor P Schwier	Yes
Connecting People, Places and Prosperity		
Economic Growth and Inward Investment	Councillor F Ricci	Yes
Planning and Infrastructure	Councillor G Spray	Yes
Deputy Cabinet Member	Councillor J Coleridge	Yes
Supporting Communities		
Housing, Health and Wellbeing	Councillor L Bowers-Flint	Yes
Health and Wellbeing	Councillor M Cunningham	Yes
Deputy Cabinet Member	Councillor C Dervish	Yes

Present as Invitees of the Leader:

Councillor L Jefferis (Leader of the Labour Group) and Councillor J Beavis (Leader of the Independent and Green Group) were present as invitees of the Leader.

29. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:-

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Councillor L Bowers-Flint declared a non-pecuniary interest as an Elected Member of Essex County Council (ECC) as ECC was referred to in various items throughout the Agenda.

Councillor G Butland declared a non-pecuniary interest as an Elected Member of Essex County Council (ECC) as ECC was referred to in various items throughout the Agenda.

Councillor T Cunningham declared a non-pecuniary interest as an Elected Member of Essex County Council (ECC) as ECC was referred to in various items throughout the Agenda.

Councillor P Schwier declared a non-pecuniary interest as an Elected Member of Essex County Council (ECC) as ECC was referred to in various items throughout the Agenda.

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.

30. **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 25th September 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31. **QUESTION TIME**

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

32. **** HOME UPGRADE GRANT 2 FUNDING FOR DOMESTIC PROPERTIES IN OFF GAS AREAS**

Minutes Published: 5th December 2023 Call-in Expires: 12th December 2023

INFORMATION: This report informed Members of the Home Upgrade Grant 2 (HUG 2) scheme that Braintree District Council had successfully bid for as part of a wider Local Authority Consortia.

Members were informed that in September 2022 the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) invited bids from local authorities to fund improvements to energy performance and heating systems in off gas grid homes in England via the Home Upgrade Grant (Phase 2) - (HUG 2). DESNZ stated that up to a total of £630million of grant funding would be made available nationally and allocated to the local authorities that were successful in bidding against this fund.

It was added that in November 2022 Essex local authorities became part of a wider 48 local authority consortium who submitted a joint bid to DESNZ for a proportion of the grant funding. In February 2023 DESNZ confirmed that the consortia bid was successful and in April 2023 the Council was advised that they had been allocated up to £3.66m of HUG2 funding aimed at supporting over 200 local households. It was

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noted that Braintree District Council's allocation was the second highest of the 48 Authorities in the Consortia.

It was reported that the funding of £3.66m was initially to be distributed within the financial year 2023/2024. DESNZ recognised that their delays in clarifying the specification for HUG2 combined with complexity of the scheme had impacted on the deliverability of the scheme for all local authority partners in the remainder of financial year. Accordingly, DESNZ had reduced the delivery target in 2023/2024 for the Council to £2.466m with the opportunity for the Council to increase year 2 delivery numbers and seek the remaining £3.66m of funding. The scheme would commence in November 2023 once the grant funding agreement had been signed and would run until March 2025.

DECISION: That Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the award of £2.466m in 2023/24 with the opportunity to increase to up to £3.6m in 2024/2025 of new Home Upgrade Grant 2(HUG2) Scheme funding to the Council.
2. To note that the funding would be allocated in accordance with the provisions set out in section 4 of this report.
3. That the Council would enter into the Home Upgrade Grant 2 Agreement.

33. **** COURTAULD SPORTS GROUND, HALSTEAD**

Minutes Published: 5th December 2023 Call-in Expires: 12th December 2023

INFORMATION: Members gave consideration to the report which sought approval for the allocation of Section 106 monies totalling the sum of £210,216.46, for the construction of a tennis court and associated facilities at the Courtauld Sports Ground, Halstead.

Members were advised that the S106 Agreement set out that the funding was for the 'Provision of a new tennis court and associated facilities at Courtauld Sports Ground, Colchester Road, Halstead'. It was a requirement of the Section 106 Agreement, that these funds were spent by August 2024.

It was added that the installation of tennis courts and associated facilities would diversify the sporting offer at the Courtauld Sports Ground, which was owned and operated by Halstead Town Council. The sports currently provided at the ground included football, rugby, bowls and an outdoor gym, all with grass surfacing. The tennis courts would be constructed from porous tarmac thereby being accessible to those in wheelchairs and the intention was for the courts to be floodlit, subject to planning permission, which would allow for them to be used for extended periods of time over the autumn and winter seasons.

It was reported that consultation had been undertaken with members of Halstead Town Council and that there would be follow up engagement on receipt of the detailed

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proposals and maintenance obligations. Details of the consultation were set out in the report.

Members were advised that the Council would seek a contract for the design and construction of the tennis court and associated facilities, which would be tendered through an open process via Delta e-sourcing. The award criteria had been set on a 60/40 quality/price split. Whilst this project was on land owned by Halstead Town Council, Braintree District Council was delivering this project as Halstead Town Council had advised that they did not have the resources or experience to deliver a project of this type.

DECISION: That Cabinet agreed:

1. The allocation of £210,216.46 of Section 106 funding from the P.0649 Land East of Sudbury Road, Halstead for the provision of a tennis court and associated facilities at Courtauld Sports Ground, Halstead.
2. To approve the procurement of a suitable contractor to design and install the tennis court, with associated facilities including floodlighting.
3. To authorise the Corporate Director (Growth) to award a contract to the winning bidder following the conclusion of the procurement exercise, and provided it is with budget.

34. **** FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR CLEANING AND HYGIENE SUPPLIES**

Minutes Published: 5th December 2023 Call-in Expires: 12th December 2023

INFORMATION: Members were advised that the purpose of the report was to obtain delegated authority to award the Cleaning Hygiene Supplies national framework agreement for a period of 4 years from 1st February 2024 until 31st January 2028.

It was reported that Braintree District Council, as lead authority of the Essex Procurement Hub (EPH), procured framework agreements for a range of goods and services. This would both meet the Council's own supply needs and generate income for the hub members to offset the cost of the procurement function and this would continue as the Council joined the Essex Procurement Partnership, with rebates reserved from the contract for the original three members of the EPH.

Members were advised that the current framework agreement for Janitorial Supplies, which was a Sole Supplier framework, had expired in August 2023. The income from the framework had increased over the last two periods with a £50,709.30 rebate from 2015 to 2019 and a £108,583.33 from 2019 to 2023.

The Council had published a notice inviting companies to tender for a place in a National Framework Agreement available to all UK public Sector Bodies for the supply of a range of Cleaning and Hygiene products. The Framework would be for a period of 4 years from 1st February 2024 until 31st January 2028. The total value of the

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framework would be advertised at £10 million. This had been calculated based on the spend of £2.2 million per year based on the average spend through the framework over the last 2 years.

It was added that the framework agreement would consist of 2 Lots which were Lot 1 – National (including Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland) and Lot 2 – Regional (England only) and 4 Sub-lots, as listed in the report. It was envisaged that the framework agreement would be awarded to up to three suppliers on Lot 1 and up to two suppliers in each Sub-lot, able to deliver all aspects of Cleaning and Hygiene Supplies.

Members were advised that frameworks of this nature usually consisted of 1 National Lot, so the Council's approach to create a framework which included Regional Lots was innovative. The expectation was for this approach to lead to increased competition from suppliers and for the framework to be more accessible to SME's and local companies. As a result, the usage by public sector bodies around the UK should grow further adding to the rebate income and increasing the Council's reputation as a creditable framework provider.

DECISION: For delegated authority to be given to the Corporate Director (Support Services) to award the framework agreement once the tender process has concluded and enter into associated contracts.

36. **MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024-25 TO 2027-28**

INFORMATION: Members were asked to consider the report which set out details of the progress in updating of the General Fund Financial Profile and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2024-25 to 2027-28. The report also provided an update on the Capital Programme and proposed financing, including details of the proposed additions to the programme from the capital bids received for 2024/25.

It was noted that the report had been written ahead of the Autumn Statement that was due to be announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 22nd November 2023; and prior to receipt of the Local Government Finance Settlement which was not expected to be announced until late December/ early January.

It was reported that Braintree District Council's Budget Strategy had been focused on being a low council tax authority, having plans to deliver a balanced budget over the medium-term; and to maintain a minimum level of General Fund unallocated balances currently set at £3m. The approach to achieving a balanced budget had been to deliver cost reductions and additional income whilst minimising the impact on customers and service delivery and using prudent levels of reserves and balances.

Members were provided with an update on the MTFS. It was reported that in February 2023, the MTFS identified an ongoing budget gap across the four-year period totalling over £2m, profiled £1.477m in 2024-25, £0.406m in 2025-26, and £0.151m in 2026-27. The assumptions and estimates underpinning the MTFS had been reviewed considering the latest information available and by applying best estimates. Services had also reviewed their budgets identifying where there were cost pressures, areas of proposed budget growth, and opportunities for savings and additional income.

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Changes to the position for 2024-25 and the remaining period of the MTFS since February 2023 were summarised in the report.

It was reported that the annual staff pay award, with effect from April 2023, covering National Joint Council (NJC) staff had now been confirmed which resulted in an uplift of £1,925 or 3.88%, whichever was the higher, on all pay points. Chief Officers on Joint National Council terms had agreed 3.5%, an offer which had also been accepted by Chief Executives. The combined increase to the Council's pay bill was around 6%, which was an extra 3% or £605k more than was originally allowed in the 2023-24 budget. The additional in-year cost was being covered through one-off income; however, this meant an increase in the pay provision required to the base budget for 2024-25 onwards.

DECISION: That Cabinet agreed the General Fund Revenue and Capital Programme items as presented in the report, constituted the initial proposals on the 2024-25 Budget and updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the period 2024-25 to 2027-28, for the purposes of consultation.

37. **CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY UPDATE 2023**

INFORMATION: The report provided Members with an update on the progress of the Climate Change Strategy and associated Climate Action Plan (CAP).

Members were reminded that in July 2019, Braintree District Council declared a Climate Emergency with the aim to make the Council activities, as far as practical, carbon neutral by 2030. In September 2021 at Full Council the Climate Change Strategy and its associated initial Climate Action Plan was adopted. This was followed up in July 2022, where the Council considered the KPI's and a monitoring and reporting plan. In September 2022, the Council established an internal Officer Climate Change Delivery Board to oversee and support the delivery of the Council's commitment to climate change both within the Council and across the district. In March 2023 an update on the Climate Actions undertaken and progress made was presented at Full Council.

It was reported that the Council's initial Climate Action Plan had 73 actions identified to progress across 7 key themes. Of the 73 original actions, 10 actions targeted increasing biodiversity, 26 at reducing carbon emissions, 16 changing behaviours towards climate change, 13 mitigating the effects of climate change and 8 developing the local green economy. In 2022/2023, 37 climate actions were completed.

It was added that some highlights of the progress made on the Strategy via the actions undertaken to date included:

- A reduction in the organisational carbon emissions by 354 metric tonnes against the Strategy's baseline year of 2019/2020.
- 6% of the Council's energy was now derived from renewable/green sources.
- 86% of the Council managed lighting was now LED.
- All Council managed car parks now had a minimum of 4 EV charging stations Installed.
- An additional 4,500 trees, 18,700 whips, 73,000 bulbs had been planted in the district

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- A district wide tree canopy survey had been commissioned.
- The Council's Planning department had now published a new Local Plan and an accompanying Sustainable Statement/checklist and a Sustainable Supplementary Planning Document.

DECISION: That Cabinet noted:

1. The Annual Climate Action Plan Year End report 2022/23, as set out in Appendix A and;
2. The Climate Change Action Plan 2022-23 Annual Communication and Engagement Report, as set out in Appendix B.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.15pm.

COUNCILLOR G BUTLAND
(Leader of the Council)