

# Minutes

## Cabinet

### 25th July 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
<b>Innovative Environment</b>		
Finance and Corporate Transformation	Councillor J McKee	No
Climate Change and the Environment	Councillor Mrs W Schmitt	Yes
Operations and Commercialisation	Councillor R van Dulken	Yes
<b>Connecting People, Places and Prosperity</b>		
Economic Growth	Councillor T Cunningham (Deputy Leader)	Yes
Housing, Assets and Skills	Councillor K Bowers	Apologies
Planning and Infrastructure	Councillor Mrs G Spray	Yes
<b>Supporting Our Communities</b>		
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).

At the start of the meeting, Councillor G Butland the Leader of the Council was pleased to welcome Mr D Gascoyne, who had been appointed as the Council's new Chief Executive with effect from 26th September 2022. Mr Gascoyne observed the meeting.

#### 21. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**INFORMATION:** The following interests were declared:-

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](mailto:governance@braintree.gov.uk)

Councillor G Butland declared a Non-Pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5a – ‘Shared Prosperity Fund – Investment Plan’ as an Elected Member of Essex County Council.

Councillor T Cunningham declared a Non-Pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5a – ‘Shared Prosperity Fund – Investment Plan’ 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 Item was considered.

22. **MINUTES**

**DECISION:** The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11th July 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23. **QUESTION TIME**

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

24. **SHARED PROSPERITY FUND – INVESTMENT PLAN**

**INFORMATION:** Consideration was given to a report on the Council's proposed Investment Plan and project areas for the expenditure of funding from the Government via the Shared Prosperity Fund.

As part of its ‘Levelling Up the United Kingdom’ policy, which had been published in February 2022, the Government was seeking to boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards by growing the private sector; to spread opportunities and improve public services; to restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging; and to empower local leaders and communities. In order to support this work, the Government had launched its Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF) on 13th April 2022 amounting to £2.6 billion.

Braintree District Council would be allocated a specific sum from the fund over a period of three financial years, including both capital and revenue, amounting to £125,786 in 2022/23; £251,574 in 2023/24; and £659,123 in 2024/25. The allocation had to be spent in each financial year. In order to access the funds, the Council was required to submit an Investment Plan to the Government by 1st August 2022 broadly setting out how the money would be spent and the outcomes and outputs which would result.

The Council was required to spend the allocated sum on a number of specific matters, the details of which had been published alongside the SPF. These matters were divided between three categories, namely ‘communities and place’, ‘supporting local businesses’ and ‘people and skills,’ which were linked to the aspirations of the ‘levelling up’ White Paper. The Council could choose to allocate its expenditure to one matter or category, or to a number of different matters/categories. However, expenditure on matters relating to the ‘people and skills’ category could only take place in the third financial year.

The matters referred to in the SPF had been compared to the priorities outlined within the Council's Annual Plan entitled 'Bouncing Back Together' and its Corporate Priorities and a wide range of project areas had been identified. A workshop had also taken place on 5th July 2022 at which representatives of Braintree District Council, community groups, local businesses, cultural institutions, the education sector, and rural communities had discussed 'levelling up' in general and the SPF in particular. The representatives had considered whether priorities for 'levelling up' in the Braintree District matched the draft project areas which had been identified in the draft Investment Plan. In general, it was felt that they did, with the exception of transport accessibility which was considered to be a major 'levelling up' issue for the District. In response, a further project area had been added to the third year of the draft Investment Plan, which would require a rural transport feasibility study to be undertaken.

It was noted that the SPF was not the only fund which was available to Local Authorities for expenditure on 'levelling up' matters and that there were a number of other Government funded programmes in place. The Council would continue to monitor these programmes and it would submit bids if considered appropriate.

Braintree District Council would also be working with Essex County Council on its local 'levelling up' strategy entitled 'Everyone's Essex: Our Plan for Levelling up the County 2021 – 2025', which included 20 commitments divided between the categories of the economy; the environment; health; and the family.

It was considered that the District Council's main priorities for the SPF allocation should be to support residents through the cost of living crisis; to empower and support local communities to work together to deliver; to support local businesses to start, grow and expand; to deliver skills that residents need; and to decarbonise the economy. The project areas which the Council proposed to pursue, the interventions of the SPF which they supported and the estimated costs, outputs and outcomes for each were set out in a table attached at Appendix 1 to the Agenda report. The proposed project areas would support all three categories of the SPF and they would be delivered across the District. Businesses, residents and communities from all parts of the District would have the opportunity to get involved with these projects and to access support.

The project areas would be implemented in various ways including working with partners, and they would have different funding mechanisms. Furthermore, each project would be carefully managed in respect of annual expenditure, outcomes, outputs and risks and it was proposed that a part-time Programme Manager should be employed to carry out this work. This post would be funded from a 4% allowance within the SPF for administration and a sum of £20,000, which would be made available to each Local Authority when producing their Investment Plan.

In discussing this report, Councillors acknowledged the excellent work of Council Officers who, in consultation with community partners, had drawn the proposed Investment Plan together in a short period of time.

**DECISION:**

- (1) That the proposed project areas and Investment Plan, which will enable the Council to access its allocation from the Shared Prosperity Fund, be approved for submission to the Government.
- (2) That the Corporate Director for Growth, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to approve the wording of the final version of the Investment Plan prior to submission to the Government.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To approve the project areas for inclusion in the Council's Shared Prosperity Fund - Investment Plan.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 5.18pm

COUNCILLOR G BUTLAND  
(Leader of the Council)