

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, AT 10.00AM ON 16 FEBRUARY 2016

Present:

Councillors	Cabinet Member responsibility
D M Finch	Leader of the Council (Chairman)
R Bass	Infrastructure
A Brown	Corporate, Communities and Customers
G Butland	Health
R Gooding	Education and Lifelong Learning
E Johnson	Highways and Transport Delivery
D Madden	Adults and Children
J Spence	Finance

Councillors J Young, M Mackrory, S Walsh, M Buckley, M Page, R Hirst, M Danvers, K Bobbin, J Knapman, M Maddocks, R Howard, J Aldridge and A Naylor also attended.

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Cllr Kevin Bentley

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Graham Butland to Cabinet following his appointment as Cabinet Member for Health.

2. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Declarations of Interest

Councillors Graham Butland, Anne Brown, Julie Young and Simon Walsh declared a personal interest in item 7, Decision as to whether ECC should participate in a new entity to deliver Garden Settlements in North Essex (minute 7 below refers).

Councillor Butland informed Members that as Leader of Braintree District Council he would also leave the room during the presentation of that item.

4. Public Questions

No members of the public had registered an interest in asking a question or making a statement on any of the items to be considered at the meeting.

5. Education Transport Contract Extensions and Awards 2016

The Cabinet received report FP/331/12/15 by the Cabinet Member for Education and Lifelong Learning which outlined the proposals in relation to the extension and procurement of education transport contracts totalling £15.8m which are due to expire in July 2016. These contracts represent 66% of the total value of home to school transport contracts currently in place. Authority was also sought to carry out the necessary contractual and procurement processes to ensure that suitable transport arrangements are in place for September 2016 onwards, to fulfil the Council's statutory and policy based obligations to provide transport to school for children.

The following information was provided in response to questions raised from Councillors Young, Mackrory and Danvers.

- This is an annual process to ensure contractors are in place to provide the statutory service for which the County Council is responsible.
- Recent policy changes have impacted on the requirements of the service such as the cessation of transport to faith schools.
- This package meets the statutory responsibility of providing free school transport to those who are eligible to receive it.

Resolved:

1. Agree that the Director for Commissioning: Education and Lifelong Learning is authorised to extend any home to school transport contracts which expire in July 2016 and where extension is permitted.
2. Agree that the Director for Commissioning: Education and Lifelong Learning is authorised to enter into new contracts to replace any home to school transport contracts which expire in July 2016 and where extension is not permitted or considered to be in the Council's best interests. Any such new contract is to be for one year and give the Council the right to extend.

6. Long term options for Meals on Wheels Service

The Cabinet received report FP/264/10/15 by the Cabinet Member for Adults and Children which sought agreement from Cabinet on the future of the Meals on Wheels service in Essex. The current contract for the Meals on Wheels service expires on 30 September 2016 and cannot be extended beyond this date.

The following information was provided in response to questions raised from Councillors Young, Mackrory and Danvers.

- This proposal is to extend the pilot scheme throughout the county and create an accredited list of providers to ensure the quality of the meals service.
- Feedback from families through the pilot has been very positive.
- Scrutiny has been fully involved in the process to date and Members will be kept fully appraised prior to the contract going live on 1 October 2016.
- The decline in meal take is likely to be as a result of social change and far greater choice and opportunities for individuals.

Resolved:

1. Agree that with effect from 1 October 2016 the council will support residents who require a hot meal by operating an accredited list of providers in Essex in place of a commissioned Meals on Wheels service.
2. Assess all service users of the current Meals on Wheels service and ensure that they are provided with an equivalent service via community alternatives or domiciliary care.
3. Agree that the Director for Integrated Commissioning and Vulnerable People is authorised to create and operate the accredited list of providers.

10.22am – Cllr Graham Butland left the room

7. Decision as to whether ECC should participate in a new entity to deliver Garden Settlements in North Essex

Councillors Butland, Brown, Walsh and Young declared a personal interest in this item (minute 3 above refers).

The Cabinet received report FP/376/01/16 by the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and the Environment which explained the proposals for 'garden settlements' in North Essex and sought Cabinet's on-going support, working together with the district councils of Braintree, Colchester and Tendring, to progress the idea.

The award of £640,000 of grant assistance from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the establishment of a Joint Shadow Delivery Board to oversee delivery of the project were noted.

Agreement in principle was sought for the Council to participate in a legal entity created for the purpose of delivering garden settlements ('a special purpose vehicle'). Cabinet was asked to agree that the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and the Environment may approve the final form of such an entity.

Members noted that this proposal does not yet have financial implications for the Council and that, by approving the recommendations in the report, they were not committing the Council to any financial obligations.

The following information was provided in response to questions raised from Councillors Young, Mackrory and Walsh.

- Members were assured the objectivity and assessment process for the A120 preferred route status is a separate issue which may be influenced but not be directly affected by this process.
- The housing strategy continues to be developed and supports the District/Borough Councils who have the primary responsibility for housing.

- There is the need to ensure there are sufficient houses across Essex for the people who wish to live in the County and support economic growth ambitions.

Resolved:

1. That Cabinet notes the successful outcome of the recent bid for grant funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government which will enable the Garden Settlements concept to be progressed and which will provide on-going support for partnership working between Colchester Borough Council, Braintree District Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council to deliver the project.
2. Agree that the Cabinet Member for Planning Transport and the Environment or their deputy will represent the Council, in accordance with the Council's Constitution, on the Joint Delivery Board in accordance with the Governance Structure, set out in Appendix A to report FP/376/01/16.
3. To note that the grant funding is being held by Colchester Borough Council on behalf of the North Essex Garden Settlements Project.
4. Agree that the Cabinet Member for Planning Transport and the Environment be authorised to agree to establish and participate in a special purpose vehicle for delivery of the project.
5. Agree that the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and The Environment will determine officer and member representation on the special purpose vehicle.
6. Note that, should there be any material changes or substantial financial investment by the Council is required, further requests will be made in accordance with the Constitution.

8. Cabinet Decisions Report

The Cabinet received report FP/373/01/16 by the Secretary to the Cabinet setting out the decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members since the last meeting.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting of the Cabinet would take place on Tuesday 22 March 2016 at 10.00am.

The meeting closed at 10.31am.