

The Leader's Report of Cabinet Issues

1. Education Transport Contract

Cabinet considered proposals in relation to the extension and procurement of education transport contracts totalling £15.8m due to expire in July 2016. These contracts represent 66% of the total value of home to school transport contracts currently in place.

Cabinet approved the carrying out of 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.

2. Long term options for the Meals on Wheels Service

Agreement was sought 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.

In 2015 the Council carried out a successful pilot exercise under which a significant number of service users has been transferred to alternative provision. Service users were enabled to choose the right provider for them.

Cabinet agreed 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 and authorised the Director for Integrated Commissioning and Vulnerable People to create and operate the accredited list of providers.

All service users of the current Meals on Wheels service will be assessed to ensure that they are provided with an equivalent service via community alternatives or domiciliary care.

3. Garden Settlements in North Essex

In the work being carried by Tendring District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Braintree District Council on their respective Local Plans, the potential for new major developments in the form of new 'garden settlements' has been identified as a possible means of meeting future growth requirements. Cabinet considered the proposals for 'garden settlements' in North Essex and gave its on-going support, working together with the district councils to progress the idea. It agreed in principle that the Council should participate in a legal entity

created for the purpose of delivering garden settlements and authorised the Cabinet Member to approve the final form of such an entity.

Cabinet was pleased to note the successful outcome of the recent bid for grant funding from the Department of Communities and Local Government in the sum of £640,000, which will enable the Garden Settlements concept to be progressed and 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. The grant funding is being held by Colchester Borough Council on behalf of the North Essex Garden Settlements Project.

This proposal does not yet have financial implications for the Council and by supporting this project the Council is not committing to any financial obligations.

4. Installation of LED Lanterns

Cabinet agreed a proposal to invest £9.222m which would be spent on the replacement of approximately 19,000 sodium street lanterns with more efficient LED lanterns. These lanterns are those which are lit all night under the Council's part night lighting scheme. The proposal will save the Council an estimated £24m in energy, maintenance and carbon taxes over a 20-year period. Part of this investment, £4.350m would be forward funded by an interest free Salix loan under a Government scheme.

Cabinet also agreed that the work would be directly awarded to Ringway Jacobs.

5. Lower Thames Crossing 2016 Consultation Response

Cabinet approved the response to the public consultation by Highways England on the Lower Thames Crossing Route Options and authorised the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure to approve the final terms of the submission. The basis of the response is that the County Council strongly agrees with the proposal for a new Crossing at Location C, east of Gravesend and Tilbury.

6. Procurement of a Substance Misuse Recovery Management Service

Cabinet has agreed to procure seven year contracts, to commence on 1 April 2017, for a Countywide Integrated Recovery Management Service and a Countywide combined Community Rehabilitation and Psychosocial Interventions Service for people with substance misuse issues.

7. Essex Better Care Fund Submission

Cabinet approved the draft Essex Better Care Fund (BCF) submission to NHS England for 2016/17 for £98.909m and authorised the Executive Director of People Commissioning to agree the final document.

The BCF was announced by NHS England in June 2013. Health and Wellbeing Boards were obliged to submit a BCF Plan to cover the 2015/16 financial year that met mandated minimum financial values and demonstrated achievement of a series of NHS England National Conditions. Similarly to the previous BCF,

investment must be made into NHS Community Services, Provision of Social Care, Reablement, Support for Carers, the Care Act and Disabled Facilities Grants.

Councillor David Finch
Leader of the Council