

The Leader's Report of Cabinet Issues

To Leader for comments/approval 21/6

This report details the main issues considered by the Cabinet at its meetings on 23 May and 20 June 2017.

The Essex Organisation Strategy and the Waste Local Plan have also been considered by the Cabinet, and are the subject of separate items on the agenda for this meeting.

1. Installation of LED Street Lighting Phase 3

Following a successful pilot undertaken by the Council in 2015/2016 to evaluate the use of LED street light technology, work began to convert the 19,292 lights in the County which are currently lit all night. The Cabinet has agreed to implement a further phase of this project, focussing on the high wattage lights which are subject to part night lighting, at a cost of £9.1m. The work will be commissioned from Ringway Jacobs Ltd (RJ), in accordance with the existing long term highways partnership agreement, and authority to agree the technical specification and to issue an order to RJ has been delegated to the Director, Highways and Transportation.

This phase of the project will commence in September 2017, for completion in January 2019. The entire project is expected to save the Council an estimated £21.7m in energy, maintenance costs and carbon tax reduction over 20 years, and to generate other non-financial benefits, including a reduction in carbon emissions.

2. 2016-17 Provisional Outturn Report

The Cabinet has received a commentary upon and noted the provisional outturn position for 2016/17 prior to formal closure of the accounts. An over spend on revenue of £3.785m was reported, after adjusting for proposals to carry forward under spends for use in 2017/18 and other reserve movements. This was a slight improvement on the position reported at the Third Quarter stage.

An over spend on capital of £1.435m against the final approved budget of £224.614m was also reported.

The Cabinet noted that changes to the current position may follow as a result of the external audit of the Council's 2016/17 Statement of Accounts, due to be carried out during the summer. The results of the external audit will be reported to the Audit Committee on 18 September 2017, at which stage the Committee is expected to approve the 2016/17 Statement of Accounts for publication.

3. Supported Living Scheme in Braintree

In 2013, a Concordat placed additional responsibilities on local authorities and clinical commissioning groups to reduce the number of people with learning disabilities and/or autism inappropriately placed in long term hospital placements. Related to this, the Council is part of a 'Transforming Care' partnership comprising clinical commissioning groups and local authorities in Essex, Southend and Thurrock, which has a clear target for reducing the number of people in hospital. In response to this target, the Council has purchased two properties situated next to each other in Braintree to provide housing for ten adults with learning disabilities and/or autism with behaviours that can be challenging.

In order to secure the care, support and housing management for this supported living scheme, the Cabinet has approved the procurement of a contract by inviting bids from care and support providers who can partner with housing organisations. The contract will commence on 1 November 2017 for a duration of five years, with the potential to extend for a further two years.

4. Review of Falls Service

The Cabinet has agreed to decommission the falls prevention service as soon as possible.

The Service is not mandatory and has been found not to be delivering the level of benefits originally anticipated. This, coupled with a reduction in public health grant receivable from the Department of Health and the need to respond to pressures in other areas, has made it essential to review current service provision. As the notice periods for early termination of the relevant contracts vary between 6 and 12 months, this will allow sufficient time to work with partners to develop a redesigned model of service provision.

Councillor David Finch
Leader of the Council