Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet that took place in the Council Chamber at County Hall on Wednesday 24 November 2021

Present:

Councillor	Cabinet Member Responsibility
Councillor K Bentley	Leader of the Council (Chairman)
Councillor L McKinlay	Deputy Leader and Community, Equality, Partnerships and Performance
Councillor T Ball	Education Excellence, Life-Long Learning and Employability
Councillor M Buckley	Waste Reduction and Recycling
Councillor G Butland	Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture
Councillor B Egan	Children's Services and Early Years
Councillor L Scott	Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport
Councillor J Spence	Health and Adult Social Care
Councillor L Wagland	Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning

Councillors M Durham, I Henderson, D King, M Mackrory, M Platt, and P Schwier were also present. Councillor C Pond also participated via Zoom link.

1. **Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest.**

The report of Membership, Apologies and Declarations was received and the following were noted:

1. There had been no changes of membership since the last report.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Whitbread, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs.

3. There were no declarations of interest.

2. **Minutes of Previous Meetings**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Questions from the public**

Representations were heard from Prof. Jules Pretty and Mr S Lyster speaking in support of Agenda item no. 4 – Action Plan in Response to Essex Climate Action Commission's Report.

4. **Action Plan in Response to Essex Climate Action Commission's Report (FP/177/10/21)**

The Cabinet received a report setting out a number of matters in relation to the action plan developed in response to the Essex Climate Action Commission's report for their consideration and approval.

The Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport, the Cabinet Member for Economic Renewal, Infrastructure and Planning, the Cabinet Member for Devolution, the Arts, Heritage and Culture, and Councillor Schwier responded to questions from Councillors Henderson, King and Pond regarding:

- The distribution of initiatives throughout the County;
- The finances required to deliver the plan, and the reliance on central government for this;
- The Council's amount of influence in respect of bus routes and fares;
- The delivery of Active Travel and funding for Public Rights of Way and cycle paths;
- The emerging timeline delivery of the plan and the resources, both financial and human, that would be required;
- A 'responsible investment' approach for the Essex Pension Fund;
- The strength of the Developers' Charter;
- Plans to increase the number of School Streets;
- The implementation of the Essex Housing pilot scheme.

Councillor Schwier would additionally provide a written answer to Councillor King with regard to the implementation of the Greening our Streets scheme.

Resolved:

1. That Essex County Council fully supports the recommendations in the Commission's report Net Zero: making Essex Carbon Neutral.

2. That ECC will work with partners across Essex to play its part in the delivery of the Commission's vision for a net zero, climate resilient county and that it will establish a climate action group with the anchor institutions to drive collective action across Essex on the climate agenda and help Essex deliver the Commission recommendations.

3. To agree the action plan at appendix A to this report.

4. To agree to earmark reserves funding to deliver the action plan as follows and note that the Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Corporate Affairs will be asked to approve drawdowns when detailed business cases have been completed:

    - Everyone's Essex Plan Reserve £6.23m,
    - Climate Change Reserve £2.265m,
    - Transformation Reserve £695,000

5. To agree that ECC work to develop a zero landfill by 2030 policy, subject to an affordability and deliverability review, for all waste it is responsible for as the Waste Disposal Authority. ECC will develop a new Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy in partnership with District, Borough and City authorities which will put greenhouse gas emission considerations at its heart.

6. That within the Everyone's Essex Plan Reserve, agree to request that Essex Housing Development LLP develops proposals to for the proposed residential units on the Hargrave House development to be a pilot scheme to be net zero in construction and net zero in use, as well as climate resilient for flooding, overheating and water scarcity. This requirement will be reflected in the development appraisal which is used to inform the value at which the site is transferred to Essex Housing LLP.

7. To recognise new burdens of £1.151m for consideration for approval within future years' Medium Term Resource Strategy (MTRS) and future budget planning requirements.

8. To note that cabinet members are committed to bringing updates, on a rolling rota basis, progress made in their own portfolios to address the climate challenge.

9. To instruct officers to report annually to Cabinet on the Council's greenhouse gas emissions and climate resilience measures. The first report will be for financial year 2021/22 and will be published in 2022.

10. To agree that an updated action plan should come back to Cabinet following publication of these emission reports.

5. Better Care Fund Plan 2020/21 (FP/180/10/21)

The Cabinet received a report containing matters related to the Better Care Fund Plan 2020/21 for their consideration and approval.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care responded to questions and comments from Councillors Mackrory, Henderson and King in respect of the need to keep hospital patients mobile to improve outcomes on their release, the reasons for readmittances post release, the resources required to deliver the plan, and the importance of high quality end of life care.

Resolved:

1. To agree the Better Care Fund Plan for Essex in the form appended to this report.

2. To agree to authorise the Executive Director for Adult Social Care to vary the section 75 agreements to reflect the agreed Plan.

6. Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2022 (FP/178/10/21)

The Cabinet received a report containing matters related to the Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2022 for their consideration and approval.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Early Years would provide written answers to Councillors Mackrory and Henderson with regard to the £4.7m funding block surplus and the number of Family Hub Networks in the County.

Resolved:

1. To adopt the Essex Early Years and Childcare Strategy 2022 as appended to this report.

2. To agree that implementation of the Strategy will start in January 2022.

7. Extension and Tender of Local Bus Services (FP/136/08/21)

The Cabinet received a report containing matters related to the extension and tender of local bus services for their consideration and approval.

The Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport responded to questions from Councillors Pond and Mackrory in respect of operators' pricing models and options for including emissions standards within the tendering process.

Resolved:

1. To agree that, subject to 2.2, arrangements are made to continue the local bus network in its current form until 31 July 2024 by:

   (a) undertaking a procurement exercise using the ECC Dynamic Purchasing System to competitively tender 47 contracts (set out in Appendix A, Part I);
   (b) Extending those contracts which allow for extension until 31 July 2024;
   (c) Undertaking a procurement exercise using the ECC dynamic purchasing system for those contracts which cannot lawfully be extended or where the operator will not agree to them being extended.

2. To agree that the contracts for services in the Uttlesford area as listed in part (iv) of Appendix A are consulted on and re-tendered, commencing on 31 January 2023 with the possibility of extension for up to two years in total.

3. To agree that nothing in this decision allows the cost of the local bus network to exceed the budget as set out in the medium term resource strategy, or the sum in the confidential appendix.

4. To agree that the Director, Highways and Transportation is authorised to extend contracts where possible, retender if extension is not possible and award contracts is delegated to the Director, Highways and Transportation.

8. Concessionary Fares Settlement 2022/23 (FP/138/08/21)

The Cabinet received a report containing matters related to the Concessionary Fares Settlement 2022/23 for their consideration and approval.

1. To agree to proceed as in option 3 below and that for 2022/23 we will keep the same discretionary elements of concessionary fares in as for 2021/22.

2. To authorise the publication of a draft reimbursement scheme for concessionary bus fares in 2022/23 based on the DfT default Calculator Scheme on or before 1 December 2021.

3. To agree that ECC's preference is to agree a fixed cost scheme that is consistent with Government advice, subject to this being lawful.

4. To agree that a further report be made to the Cabinet Member for Highways Maintenance and Sustainable Transport with respect to negotiation of reimbursement arrangements once the Department for Transport guidance on concessionary fares payments for 2022/23 has been assessed in order to set out our negotiating parameters for the scheme.

5. To agree that if the Cabinet Member authorises negotiations with operators and a final negotiated scheme is recommended and it meets the terms set out in Option 3 then he is authorised to make a final decision on issuing the final scheme.

9. Decisions taken by or in consultation with Cabinet Members (FP/176/10/21)

The report was noted.

10. Dates of Future meetings

The dates of future meetings for 2022 were noted as:

18 January
15 February
15 March
19 April
24 May
21 June
19 July
13 September
18 October

15 November
15 December (Thursday)

(all Tuesdays, except 15 December)

11. **Date of the next meeting**

The next meeting of the Cabinet would take place on Tuesday 21 December 2021 in the Council Chamber at County Hall, Chelmsford.

12. **Urgent Business**

There was no urgent business.

13. **Confidential Appendix: Extension and Tender of Local Bus Services (FP/136/08/21) (Public and press excluded)**

The confidential appendix to report FP/136/08/21, to which minute 7, above, refers was agreed.

14. **Urgent exempt business (Public and press excluded)**

There was no urgent exempt business.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 3.40pm