

## Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 November 2017 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Monday 20 November 2017 at 5.00pm

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<b>Present:</b>	Councillors Shane Hebb (Chair), Mark Coxshall, James Halden, Deborah Huelin, Brian Little, Susan Little and Aaron Watkins
<b>Apologies:</b>	Councillor Robert Gledhill
<b>In attendance:</b>	Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive Sharon Bayliss, Director of Commercial Services Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Place Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service David Lawson, Assistant Director of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer Kenna-Victoria Martin, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

### **48. Minutes**

The Minutes of Cabinet, held on 11 October 2017, were approved as a correct record.

### **49. Items of Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

### **50. Declaration of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **51. Statements by the Leader**

The Deputy Leader addressed Portfolio Holders updating them on Clean it, Cut it, Fill it in that from April to date:

- 1,100 tons of rubbish and litter had been collected, this was equivalent to one-tenth of the weight of The Eiffel Tower;

- 9,250 acres of grass had been cut, equivalent to two-fifths of the size of Disney World, Florida and;
- 4,250 potholes had been filled and the summer resurfacing works had been completed. This meant that more than 65,000 square metres of Thurrock's roads had been upgraded.

Councillor Hebb notified Members 10 Big Belly Bins had been installed across the borough, continuing the investment in front-line environment services. The results of this pilot will be fed into the Bin Review which was announced by Councillor Watkins a few weeks ago to see if the bins currently used were fit for purpose.

He further commented that 329 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued in October, these included:

- 289 for dropping cigarettes
- 13 alcohol-related PSPO offences
- 5 PSPO offensive for being abusive
- 3 fly-tipping offenses
- 2 fly-posting offenses

The Deputy Leader congratulated Councillor Sue Little for receiving the Health and Care award at the LGIU and CCLA Councillor Achievement awards. He also mentioned that Councillor James Halden had been nominated and shortlisted for the Young Councillor of the year award. This was a true testament nationally about the hard work, effort and passion these Councillors committed as they represented the residents of Thurrock.

It was commented Highways England had released details about the red line boundary change. It was understood this was likely to affect around 200 landowners. The Deputy Leader stated it was important to be clear, the information received so far was woefully vague, lacking detail, rationale or explanation. He further stated it would of course be challenged not only by the Council but also discussed at the upcoming LTC task force meeting.

The Deputy Leader mentioned Thurrock First was launched last Thursday, 2 November, and thanked Councillors Sue Little and Halden for their hard work in developing a joint offer for the betterment and ease of Thurrock's most vulnerable residents.

Members heard £200,000 had been given to 10 projects across the borough for environmental causes as part of the Community Environmental Development fund. Details of all projects could be found on the Council's website.

Councillor Hebb commented that he was pleased to see the Council's housing enforcement officers continuing to work hard, a recent case saw a landlord fined £11,000.

Cabinet were notified that Give a Gift was back again this year and this Christmas it was to be even bigger. He commented that the Council was looking for lots of help including donations of decorations, wrapping paper and all that would go with it.

Finally, Councillor Hebb, reminded all present that Sunday was Remembrance Sunday and services would be held all over the borough to mark respect to those who had fought and lost their lives.

## **52. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues**

There were no updates on the Policy, Budget and Other Issues.

## **53. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public**

There were no petitions submitted.

## **54. Questions from Non-Executive Members**

The Deputy Leader of the Council advised that one question had been submitted; he invited Councillor Gerrish to read his question:

*“What financial modelling has been completed on the proposed changes to the Civic Offices?”*

In response Councillor Coxshall advised *“Thank you. The refurbishment of the Council civic offices project started in 2013 with the changes to floors in CO2. Funding was identified at the time for the major changes on the ground floor, including the reception area, with £3.7million already spent to date on floors 1 to 4 with £4.8million remaining of the capital programme set aside for the ground floor.*

*On this basis and the cost options for C01 a further £380,000 would be needed to fund the project we’re discussing tonight. This will make a huge contribution to our agenda of the regeneration of the town centre, also coming tonight. We would have thought that the revamp of the Council offices for residents and the ability to interact with them on the ground floor would be put at the heart of the refurbishment, but under the last administration this was not, so the residents of the first to fourth floors got better facilities but the residents that actually knock on and come through the door at the front didn’t. Again, this plan was approved by your administration and saw millions of pounds of tax-payers’ money spent on these refurbishments, and it fell short of the mark by far. In fact, this office was used to film for the 80s because it looked so much like the 80s because it was out of date and that was only recently. So, despite these negative assumptions, £7million is in total, but it is only £380,000 that we are talking about tonight, in extra spending.”*

Councillor Gerrish was offered a supplementary question in which he asked:

*“Thank you. Yes, the scheme has, perhaps understandably, provoked strong response among residents, questioning whether or not it’s the right priority for continued work given the other urgent calls on Council funds. I think what’s important from a scrutiny point of view is that as these additional plans move forward there’s the ability to make sure that we’re absolutely confident of what they deliver, both for the Council and the community. So, will the Portfolio Holder commit before any final decision is taken there’ll be an opportunity for Corporate Overview and Scrutiny to fully review this scheme, including costings and business plans?”*

Councillor Coxshall responded *“As we go through, everything goes through Overview and Scrutiny, that was Councillor Gledhill’s item on the manifesto when we first met last year. Every decision, before it comes to any Cabinet decision, goes to Overview and Scrutiny first and that will carry on as long as this Conservative Administration is here.”*

Councillor Hebb thanked Councillor Gerrish for his question.

**55. Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Deputy Leader of the Council informed Members that no matters had been referred to the Cabinet by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**56. Grays Town Centre: Civic Offices Project (Decision 0110442)**

Councillor Coxshall, Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, introduced the report which set out options for the refurbishment and development of the Civic Offices in Grays.

He continued by explaining the project had been delayed and halted since 2013 thus now showing commitment as a Council to the overall Grays Regeneration Project. It would also give the Council an enhanced presence in the High Street, which he felt was badly needed in the Grays South area.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted a key point of the report which was the new entrance of the Civic Offices, to be located on the High Street instead of where it was currently. Councillor Coxshall described the current entrance as poor, inappropriate and outdated like something from the 1980s which had not kept up-to-date. He continued by stating once complete the new entrance would give a fantastic welcome to residents and out of town visitors leaving the train station.

Members heard that the Council had received £11million in funding from the Government towards the regeneration of the new station area and foot crossing. The restoration of the Civic Offices enabled a single point of customer related services for residents, along with the possibility of a new library which was expected to be heavily used by students of South Essex College. It was further commented that the Police and Job Centre Plus had expressed interest in working from the new building which would assist in

reducing the cost to the tax payer in the long term and therefore offering a better service to residents.

Councillor Coxshall finally commented that by relooking at the budget and finding an extra £380,000 the customer serving areas could be updated, giving the Council more for less.

Councillor Halden commented it was encouraging to see the regeneration of so many of the overlooked communities in the borough coming forward. Within the last six months Members had seen the Purfleet Regeneration project confirm a new partner was in place; Tilbury had a completed Master Plan to provide holistic regeneration to the whole of Tilbury and the regeneration of Grays, which had been stalled since 2013, was now beginning to take place. He stated this was regeneration across the borough, getting results.

Councillor Coxshall replied that for the last 18 months he had been unable to announce anything and now month after month he was finally able to confirm updates within the different projects.

The Deputy Leader echoed the thoughts of Members and mentioned the project was started in 2013 under the previous Chief Executive where £3.7million had been spent on the inside of the Civic Offices rather than the resident used services, such as the reception area. This was now being completed and in addition could offer accommodation to key public sectors.

**Resolved that Cabinet were requested to:**

- 1. Authorise officers to proceed to the detailed design stage of an extension to CO2 and the refurbishment of the ground floor of CO2**
- 2. Authorise officers to prepare detailed plans for the redevelopment of CO1 and consider delivery options.**
- 3. Note the high level costings in paragraph 4.2 and that a detailed business plan for the CO2 extension and redevelopment of CO1 will be prepared as part of the detailed design stage.**

Reason for Decision – as stated in the report  
This decision is subject to call-in

#### **57. Grays Master Plan (Decision 0110443)**

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration addressed Cabinet notifying them the plan was a good idea suggested under the last administration and was now being delivered. He commented that not much had changed and the project had moved at a good pace, however it required refreshing for that very reason.

Councillor Coxshall remarked the refresh would identify a set of clear principles for Grays, which could be circulated to public services and the private sector across Grays to show them why the Council was convincing people to invest into Grays, just as the Council was committed to do.

Members were made aware the report recognised significant developments and opportunities, on which the Council would take a lead. They were further notified that officers had secured funding for the pedestrian crossing, which would provide key access to residents living in the south of Grays to the high street.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration observed new commercial developments had been identified which would assist in increasing activity in the town centre. He continued to state that by looking forward it was possible to develop more living spaces and more properties in the middle of Grays to work alongside the Local Plan in the long term.

Councillor Hebb, Deputy Leader, commented that residents deserved a better Grays experience. He thanked the Portfolio Holder and the Regeneration Team for the report and all their hard work.

**Resolved that Cabinet:**

- 1. Approve the proposed Grays Town Centre Framework Refresh appended to this report.**
- 2. Recommend to planning committee that this Framework is integrated into the new Local Plan for Thurrock.**
- 3. Noted that a strategy would be prepared to publicise progress on implementing the refreshed Grays Town Centre Framework.**

Reason for Decision – as stated in the report  
This decision is subject to call-in

**The meeting finished at 7.25 pm**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)**