

Report of	Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate	Author	Richard Clifford
Title	Call in of Cabinet Decision on the Recommendation of the Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group		☎ 507832
Wards affected	All Wards		

## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the background for the review of the decision taken by the Cabinet at its meeting on 30 January 2019 on the recommendation of the Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group in respect of the new strapline.

## 2. Action Required

- 2.1 The Panel is asked to review the decision set out in minute 329 of the Cabinet meeting on 30 January 2019, and to consider the options set out in paragraph 4.5 below.

## 3. Reason for Scrutiny

- 3.1 The Constitution provides for the Scrutiny Panel to review or scrutinise executive decisions made by the Cabinet but not implemented pursuant to the Call-In Procedure.

#### **4. Background Information**

- 4.1 At its meeting on 30 January 2019, the Cabinet considered a recommendation from the Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group on a new strapline for Colchester. The minute reference considered by Cabinet is at Appendix A. The decision taken by Cabinet is set out in minute 329 of the Cabinet meeting which is at Appendix B.
- 4.2 The decision was called in by Councillor Lewis Barber, supported by four other Councillors. The call-in form, which includes the reasons for the call-in is at Appendix C. The text that is struck out was not deemed a valid reason by the Monitoring Officer.
- 4.3 In accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 13(6) an informal meeting was arranged with the Chair of the Scrutiny Panel, Councillor Tim Young, Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, and Councillor Lewis Barber, where it was agreed by all parties that the call-in should be considered by the Scrutiny Panel. This would provide an opportunity for Councillors and members of the public to make representations on the issue. The debate at the meeting should be confined to the reasons stated for the call in.
- 4.4 The Council has received a number of written submissions from members of the public. A summary of these will be published before the meeting.

#### **Options available to the Panel**

- 4.5 The Panel may:
  - confirm the decision, which may then be implemented immediately, or
  - refer the decision back to the Decision Taker for further consideration setting out in writing the nature of its concerns, or
  - refer the decision to full Council in the event that the Panel considers the decision to be contrary to the Policy Framework of the Council or contrary to, or not wholly in accordance with the Budget.

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE  
HERITAGE AND TOURISM TASK AND FINISH GROUP  
HELD ON 20 NOVEMBER 2018**

**8. First Capital of Roman Britain / Britain's First Roman City**

Officers provided a presentation to the Group on Branding and the importance of a tourism brand/strapline.

Officers also assisted the Group in their discussions on a potential change to the current strap line 'Britain's Oldest Recorded Town'. Officers considered that it was important not to narrow down Colchester's appeal given Colchester had a lot to offer beyond its heritage, and many tourism stakeholders with non-heritage related businesses whilst many potential visitors were not engaged by history or the Romans. Officers were of the view that a strapline shouldn't be too long and should flow well when written down or read.

The Chairman welcomed the suggestion to test a potential change in strapline by starting an online public consultation and proposed recommending to Cabinet that 'Britain's First Roman City' be adopted for this purpose.

Philip Crummy was of the opinion that a change to the use of the term First Capital would be open to challenge from London but he welcomed the use 'Roman' within any new strapline as he considered it was this characteristic of the town which set it apart from others. He commented on the Visit Colchester use of the term 'More than Britain's Oldest Recorded Town' and was of the view that it would be more appropriate for this term to be 'Britain's Oldest Recorded Town and more'.

Councillor Barton explained that she had exchanged emails with Jonathan Pearsall who had first suggested the idea of a change in strapline, and he had confirmed his support for 'Britain's First Roman City' whilst Councillor Scordis indicated his preference for 'Britain's Oldest Recorded Town and more'.

The Group agreed to recommend to Cabinet that consideration be given to undertaking an online public consultation on a change to Colchester's strapline from 'Britain's Oldest Recorded Town' to 'Britain's First Roman City and more'.

**Extract from the draft minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 30 January 2019**

**329. Recommendation from Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group //First Capital of Roman Britain / Britain's First Roman City**

Cabinet considered minute 8 from the Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group.

Councillor G. Oxford attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. As part of his mayoral legacy, a number of signs had received planning permission recently. He was content that the wording of "Colchester, Britain's First City" be used on these signs, as it was important a consistent and uniform approach was taken.

Councillor Laws, Chairman of the Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group, attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. He stressed that he had an open mind on the wording of the strapline, and that it did not have to include a Roman reference. However, in the challenging retail environment, Colchester should play to its strengths and make the most of its Roman heritage, as York did with its Viking history.

Councillor T. Young, Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, explained that the new strapline for Colchester; was "Colchester, Britain's First City". and he unveiled the new design for the logo. There was no need for further consultation and this would be used going forward. Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation, and Councillor Barlow, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, expressed their support and their thanks to the Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group.

*RESOLVED* that Colchester's new strapline be "Colchester, Britain's First City" and this be used going forward without further consultation.

*REASONS*

A new strapline for Colchester was needed and the preferred wording reflected Colchester's heritage.

No further consultation on the issue was required.

*ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

Cabinet could have proceeded with the recommendation from the Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group.

## COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

REQUEST FOR CALL IN OF  
DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE CABINET  
OR UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

## Explanatory Note

This form may be used to request a call in of any decision (except urgent decisions) taken by the Cabinet or by a Cabinet Member acting under delegated powers or a Key Decision taken by an Officer under delegated powers.

This form must be signed by at least five Councillors (or by one Councillor and supported by four other Councillors via e-mail) and must be delivered to the Proper Officer within five working days of publication of the decision.

We, the undersigned, request that the following decision be scrutinised by the Scrutiny Panel for the reasons set out below: -

The decision of the Cabinet on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2019, item 10(ii)

Reason(s) for call in:

- a) Failure to consider all options available: The Cabinet failed to discuss or consider the **recommendation** from the Heritage Task and Finish group was not properly discussed or considered at the Cabinet meeting on 30/1/19. The minutes of that meeting make no reference to a discussion of the options. No other options were considered, of which there are many.
- b) Failure to have regard to due consultation: There is a decision which impacts the whole borough. The minutes of the Cabinet meeting state "no consultation is needed." It is a statement repeated twice more and subsequently since by cabinet members. We do not agree with this statement and consider that this is an issue where consultation is imperative. The importance of consultation is reflected in comments made by the public since.
- d) Lack of clarity of aims and desired outcomes: No justification is given for Cabinet's belief that "a new strapline for Colchester was needed."
- g) Lack of presumption for openness: It is clear, especially given point a) and b), that this was a pre-determined decision. ~~This is further demonstrated by the fact the signs had already been designed and ordered prior to the decision.~~
- j) Proper procedures were not followed: The Heritage Task and Finish Group was invited to look into this issue and a well-respected list of local people were invited to feed into the process. They spent some time discussing the issue and making recommendations, which were not taken into account. Recommendations included consultation. Therefore, we do not consider proper procedures have been followed.

## Signatures

1. Lewis Barber

## Names in Capital Letters

LEWIS BARBER



2. Dennis Willetts DENNIS WILLETTS  
E-mail of support received on 6 February 2019  
3. Andrew Ellis ANDREW ELLIS  
E-mail of support received on 6 February 2019  
4. Simon Crow SIMON CROW  
E-mail of support received on 6 February 2019  
5. Jackie Maclean JACKIE MACLEAN  
E-mail of support received on 6 February 2019

<input type="checkbox"/>
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**NB** Please tick representative to attend and present case at the Scrutiny Panel meeting.

For Office Use:

Date and time of Receipt: 6 February 2018, 8.30am Action: