

<p style="text-align: center;">CABINET 23 November 2020</p>

Present: - Councillor Cory (Chairman)
Councillors Fox, Goss, Higgins, King, Lilley and J. Young.

Also in attendance: - Councillors Barlow, Dundas, G. Oxford and Scordis

515. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

516. Have Your Say

Alan Short addressed Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Remote Meetings Procedure Rules. The Cabinet decision on 3 June 2020 was not to appropriate land at Queen Street, but for officers and the Portfolio Holder to negotiate with rights holders. Despite this, Colchester Amphora subsequently made an announcement that it would appropriate the land, which was contrary to the Cabinet decision. Appropriation of rights was a very serious decision and should be taken by Councillors. The Council had refused to publish the objections that were made or make them available to ward councillors. This should be done with any sensitive information redacted. Concern was also expressed that the Mayor Making meeting on 21 October 2020 went ahead, despite the Covid 19 restrictions in place at the time. He queried why the Cabinet nominated Councillor T. Young to be Mayor when he had lost the confidence of his Group.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, stressed that the Alumno scheme needed to be seen in the context of the economic benefits and significant inward investment it would bring, at a time when this was badly needed. The process needed to be as open as possible, but the Council had to consider the constraints imposed through GDPR. The Council would share what it could at the appropriate time.

Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, explained that she considered being Mayor of the Borough of Colchester was a great privilege. The process for nominating a Mayor was set out in a protocol, and the key consideration was length of service. Under the protocol, it was Councillor T. Young's turn to be Mayor and he had indicated that he understood the responsibilities of the Mayoralty, and he had been supported on that basis.

Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive, was invited to respond on the issues raised about the arrangements for the Mayor Making meeting. The Mayor, the Mayor Elect and the Deputy

Mayor Elect had attended with partners from their family bubbles, together with three officers. Appropriate social distancing had been maintained throughout the meeting. The regulations provided for Covid secure business meetings to continue. He was satisfied that the meeting had been Covid secure and the meeting was therefore permissible in accordance with the regulations.

Nick Chilvers addressed Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Remote Meetings Procedure Rules. Colchester had seen considerable levels of new housing development, some of which were high value. Consideration needed to be given to how to engage with these new residents and entice them into the town centre. The Council needed to look at issues such as the convenience and frequency of bus services, Park and Ride and car parking prices. If new residents were not made to feel welcome or barriers were put up, they would take their spending power elsewhere. In order to thrive improved road capacity was needed and the town centre car parks needed to be full. There needed to be better connectivity and a sense of belonging generated.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, explained that the Council was seeking to make the town centre an attractive environment. It was accepted that car use was an important issue to many and the Council's policies were not anti-car. Sustainable transport links were being improved. The Council was working with businesses and the BID to market and promote the town centre and it was hoped that over the next couple of years, a greener and more attractive town centre would develop.

Councillor Scordis attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. He reported different standards in the delivery of recycling equipment between Zones 5 and 6. Given the closure of Paxmans, what steps were being undertaken to attract green companies to Colchester so it could become a hub of innovation again.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation, explained that he would look into the issue on the delivery of recycling equipment. Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that the terms of reference of the Environment and Sustainability Panel included working towards being a beacon and leader in the region on green initiatives and ensuring business and government were aware of the Council's willingness to work on green initiatives. He would like the Panel to look at an Industrial Strategy based on green initiatives. Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, acknowledged that the loss of Paxmans was a blow. It was important that Colchester remained an attractive place to invest and marketed itself properly to government and business and to show it had the necessary skills and support for businesses to flourish.

Councillor Dundas attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet to request further information about the reasons for the transfer of £800K from Colchester Northern Gateway South to Colchester Northern Gateway North. He also sought further information around the details of procurement of replacement vehicles. It was noted that some of these vehicles would be used Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd and sought a reassurance that this was done through a proper commercial arrangement and charged at a commercial rate. It was important that options around leasing such vehicles were looked at properly and full account was taken of maintenance costs.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that

these points would be responded to fully when the items were considered later in the meeting.

Councillor G. Oxford attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. He expressed concern that at the junction of the Boulevard with Mill Road, It had been discovered that because of pipe work, the junction would need to be raised by 1-2 metres which would have an impact on the Rugby Club building which was due to be converted into a Community Centre. Concerns were also raised about the potential impact of the increase in car parking charges on those with disabilities. It was also noted that in the recommendations relating to heritage there was no reference to Colchester as Britain's 1st City.

Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, explained that the change in levels would not have an impact on the Community Centre. The different levels would be incorporated into the building which would be compliant with equalities legislation.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety, explained that the provisions in respect of disabled parking had not changed.

517. Review of Management Agreement with Colchester Borough Homes (CBH)

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Fox, Portfolio holder for Housing, introduced the report and made a presentation to Cabinet. The recommendation to renew the management agreement with Colchester Borough Homes followed a very rigorous process, which had included tenant engagement and workshops with Colchester Borough Councillors. The presentation highlighted the excellent performance and value for money provided by Colchester Borough Homes in comparison with other housing companies in the region, and the key contribution it had played in the community response to the Covid 19 pandemic. Since 2007 it had provided excellent service and value for money for Colchester's residents

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, and Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance, expressed their support for the recommendation, Colchester Borough Homes had demonstrated outstanding leadership and the Decent Homes programme had made a huge difference to the quality of residents' lives.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) The management agreement dated 9th August 2013 and made between Colchester Borough Council and Colchester Borough Homes Limited be extended in accordance with its terms for a further 5 years beyond the end of the current 10-year term, taking the termination date to 8th August 2028.

(b) The next scheduled review of the Management Agreement will be due in 2026.

REASONS

The Council has good governance arrangement in place to manage the relationship with Colchester Borough Homes. CBH also has an effective Board which further strengthens the governance arrangements. This has contributed to improvements in performance over the last 7 years. The review of the agreement at this time has provided further evidence of this, including feedback from tenants and Councillors, confirming that CBH are performing well and achieving value for money. Performance is mostly in the top quartile when compared to other social housing providers, including local authorities. CBH's costs of service delivery is also low compared to its peers. Therefore, the option to extend the term is a positive response and allows CBH and Colchester Borough Council (CBC) to plan for the medium term based on the evidenced provision of good services at low cost.

A contract extension will enable CBC and CBH to undertake longer term planning such as setting the Capital Investment Programme (as part of the Asset Management Strategy which is due for review in 2021) and re-setting service delivery targets for a further five years to 2027, with the current targets set out in the Medium Term Delivery Plan expiring in March 2022.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to extend the Management Agreement; leaving the current agreement to expire in August 2023 would require the Council to immediately start planning for alternative models such as bringing the operations back "in-house". There is no clear benefit to drafting a new agreement within the next 12 to 18 months or conducting a full options appraisal on alternative service delivery models.

To only agree to an extension period of less than five years; given the strong performance of CBH, and that the current management agreement is operating well, a shorter extension period would not provide stability and opportunity for longer term planning. The Management Agreement also stipulates that a further review will take place 2 years prior to the end of any extension period granted. So, an extension of, say, 3 years would mean that a further review would start after only 1 year of the extended term having elapsed.

518. Climate Emergency Response: Housing Investment Programme Works

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, highlighted that it was proposed to invest £4.4 million in Council homes to help deliver on the Council's commitment to the climate emergency. Hundreds of properties across the borough would benefit from a range of measures including more energy efficient heating systems, better insulation and air source heating pumps. The work would be managed by Colchester Borough Homes. There would be benefits to residents as homes would be cheaper to heat. The programme would also help stimulate the local economy and help the recovery from Covid 19 by providing work for local contractors.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, and Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance, expressed their support for the recommendation. The programme was a demonstration of the administration's

commitment and leadership in tackling climate change. The reduction in tenants fuel bills would help provide real economic benefits to the most vulnerable residents.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The additional budget estimate of £4.4m (actual cost subject to procurement) for “HIP Climate Emergency Response Works” be initially approved in order to improve energy performance of existing affordable homes as outlined and that provision be included in the HRA and HIP annual budget reports to be considered by Cabinet in January.
- (b) The new HRA Asset Management Strategy and HRA Business Plan, due in 2021, should seek to include a continuing commitment towards energy efficiency works over a longer period of time.
- (c) It be noted that the Climate Emergency Response HIP Package of Works would be managed by Colchester Borough Homes.

REASONS

These Climate Emergency Response Works will contribute to the Council's wider ambitions for carbon reduction. It aims to make properties more energy efficient, producing less carbon, and make it cheaper for tenants to heat their homes.

The Council's housing is better than most comparative stock both regionally and nationally, having an average “C” rating EPC. However, the Council housing stock is identified as the top producing carbon emitter within the Council. In the portfolio of homes, there are some older and poorer performing homes that can be improved to make a significant difference that will contribute towards the Council becoming carbon neutral by 2030, but more importantly improve the quality of life and affordability for tenants in those homes.

This package of works will also provide another opportunity to create more local employment and assist with the economic recovery of the town post Covid-19 by encouraging local contractors to bid and using social value within the tender process.

Ongoing work, including the planned review of the HRA Asset Management Strategy and the 30-year Business Plan that will take place throughout 2021, will build on the model of work through this initiative with improvements

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Do nothing: However, this would not take an opportunity to improve the current affordable homes, benefit tenants, contribute towards the Council's climate emergency declaration targets or help create local employment to aid economic recovery.

Increase existing planned HIP works instead of creating new works: Initially consideration was given to accelerating delivery of the coming four years Housing Investment Programme over the next two years. However, the long-term consequences of skewing

the Council's cyclical investment programme and creating a peak of investment which would then reoccur into the future were considered too significant and would also not contribute towards the climate emergency response.

Undertake more works: However, this package has been created as additional investment, whereby it would be more sustainable and balanced to consider more works over a wider scale and longer term incorporated into the planned HRA Asset Management Strategy and Business Plan starting in 2021.

519. The Northern Gateway Heat Network: Project and Finance Update

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The good progress made to date, as well as the ongoing risk implications for the Council arising from the updated project be noted.
- (b) Authority for the appointment of a contractor for the Energy Centre and related Heat Network infrastructure (as well as any consequential financial, legal, contractual or other related matters for the completion of the project) be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services and Assistant Director for Place and Client Services provided that returned construction tenders are within the budget update estimates in the not for publication Appendix in Part B of the agenda.

REASONS

To provide Cabinet with an update on the progress of the project and future issues, illustrating how this project provides a major focus for delivery on the Council's Climate Change and Sustainability ambitions.

To ensure that contracts are delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services and the Assistant Director to allow awards to be made without delay to the project.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

To allow the requirements to award the contract to be subject to our current arrangements, which would mean having to bring the decision to award a contract to a meeting of Cabinet. This could delay the award of the contract and negatively affect the project timeline.

520. Colchester Commercial Stadium Limited

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Barlow attended in his capacity as the Council's representative on the Board of Colchester Community Stadium Ltd. He explained that when the stadium was originally built it had been envisaged that there would be a large number of different users, so there had been a need for an umbrella management company. However, it had developed in a more linear way with Colchester United Football Club as the key tenant. Notwithstanding this, the stadium was a very useful community asset. However, it would now be more appropriate to close Colchester Commercial Stadium Ltd and move into a more direct relationship with Colchester United as tenants. There would also be a small financial saving from the closure of the company.

Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, indicated her support for the recommendation and thanked Councillor Barlow for his comments and service on the Board of Colchester Community Stadium Ltd.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The Council, as shareholder, approves taking the necessary steps to close Colchester Commercial Stadium Limited (CCSL).
- (b) Delegated authority be given to the Strategic Governance Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources to finalise all the necessary actions required to close CCSL.

REASONS

A more proportionate vehicle of property management is now appropriate given that CCSL was established 12 years ago for the specific reason of providing governance during the critical early years of development and occupation of the Stadium.

The saving in Company overheads will mean additional income for Colchester Borough Council. This is particularly important in the context of falling income streams.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Do nothing and allow CCSL to continue. This is not recommended for the reasons stated in the Assistant Director's report.

521. Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2021 – 2022

The Assistant Director, Customer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, stressed the importance of the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. It was one of the most generous schemes in Essex and helped over 9000 residents in the borough. In view of the economic consequences of the Covid 19 pandemic it would help even more residents in 2021-22. It was a demonstration of the administration's commitment to the most vulnerable, in the line with its Strategic Priorities.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) The current working age entitlement be maintained for the fiscal year effective from 1 April 2021.

(b) It be noted that the only amendments from the current scheme are the prescribed regulations and mandated national legislative amendments.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme be approved and adopted.

REASONS

Legislation requires that the scheme, effective from 1 April 2021, is agreed by March 2021.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Changes could be made to the scheme. However, stability to the scheme is being recommended as this will provide residents with support and consistency within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic and the resultant financial instability.

522. Officer Pay Policy Statement for 2021/22

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, stressed the importance of the Officer Pay Policy Statement in terms of transparency. He drew particular attention to the pay multiplier, which demonstrated that pay to senior staff was either in line or slightly below that of peer organisations. In view of the size of the borough and the scale of the challenges faced this demonstrated good value for money. The gender pay gap was in favour of women. The Council's commitment to the Living Wage for its employers and contractors made a real difference to living standards.

Concern was expressed about the impact of the £95,000 cap on public sector exit payments which would effectively penalise long serving staff on mid-range salaries.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services and Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, supported the Officer Pay Policy Statement and noted in particular the gender pay gap, and reiterated the concerns around the exit gap.

Cabinet expressed its thanks to all officers for their hard work throughout the year dealing with the challenges of the Covid 19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Officer Pay Policy Statement 2021/22 be approved and adopted.

REASONS

The Localism Act requires “authorities to prepare, approve and publish pay policy statements articulating their policies towards a range of issues relating to the pay of its workforce, which must be approved by full Council annually. An authority’s pay policy statement must be approved by a resolution of that authority before it comes into force”.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The only alternative would be to not recommend the approval of the Pay Policy Statement, but that would be contrary to the requirements of the Localism Act.

523. Capital Expenditure Progress and Programme Update

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, introduced the report, which met the Council’s obligation to report on the capital programme and was the precursor to a more detailed report on the programme later in the municipal year. In response to Councillor Dundas’ question about the transfer of funding from Colchester Northern Gateway South to Northern Gateway North, this needed to be seen in the context of a complex project, It was not uncommon on projects of this scale for there to be cost adjustments towards the end of the project and this adjustment was less than 3% of the total value of the work. Covid 19 had had a large impact on the Northern Gateway North project, leading to an elongation of the work and therefore some increased costs. There had also been delays in the gaining section 278 approvals for the works around Junction 28 of the A12 and some issues with power supply and connectivity.

The capital programme was an ambitious and significant programme which would help boost local employment and businesses and help make Colchester a significant destination.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance, and Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, echoed Councillor King’s comments and stressed the importance of the capital programme in delivering on the Council’s strategic priorities. No other district Council in Essex was pursuing such ambitious projects.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Progress on the capital programme as set out in the Assistant Director’s report be noted.
- (b) The new capital schemes set out in Section 4.1 of the Assistant Director’s report for inclusion in the capital programme be approved.
- (c) The budget transfers and funding requirements set out in Section 4.2 of the Assistant Director’s be approved.

REASONS

The capital programme is monitored for spend and progress throughout the year and is revised and updated annually. This year's update and resubmission will take account of the new schemes noted within this report and the impacts of the coronavirus on contractors, their supply chain, and the resultant costs and target dates for project delivery.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were proposed.

524. Fees and Charges 2021 – 22

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, stressed the importance of fees and charges in funding and supporting high quality services. Given the budgetary challenges facing the Council as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, it was necessary to increase some fees and charges. Not all fees and charges were increasing, and some increases were statutory rather than being imposed by the Council. The administration had looked at other options for addressing the budgetary challenges it faced and had held a series of workshops with Councillors to explore other approaches. There was no realistic alternative to increasing some fees and charges.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) Fees and charges for 2021/22 as set out in the Appendix to the Assistant Director's report be approved.
- (b) The fees and charges setting mechanism for later years of the Medium-Term Financial Forecast as set out in Section 5.5 of the Assistant Director's report be approved.

REASONS

To respond to the significant budget gap created by corona virus lockdown and the associated recession and the impact of both on Council income

To make reasonable increases in fees and charges that help fund and support Council services.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to update fees and charges. This would reduce the funding available for Council services and necessitate additional savings or service reductions.

525. Positive Parking Strategy

The Assistant Director, Environment submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety, explained that that Positive Parking Strategy took account of the green agenda and was aimed at supporting the economic recovery from Covid 19. It encouraged the use of car parks outside the town centre. It made use of new technology and, working with the BID, a number of promotions and discounts with local businesses had been developed.

Richard Walker, Parking Partnership Group Manger, presented the Positive Parking Strategy to the Cabinet highlighting the detailed preparatory work that had been undertaken, including a discussion at the Scrutiny Panel. The Strategy would be published as an e-booklet. Environmental issues were a top priority within the Strategy, but it also focused on themes of Growing a Better Economy, Providing Social and Financial Value and Supporting Wellbeing and Social Inclusion.

Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, expressed her support for the Strategy. Given the constraints of the ancient town centre and air quality problems it was important to focus on parking outside of the town centre and for residents to plan their trips. Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, paid tribute to Councillor Lilley's leadership on the issue of parking, which had struck the right balance in protecting the environment and the rights of those with disabilities whilst supporting town centre businesses.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation, stressed the role that bus companies had to play in reducing town centre congestion. They needed to offer family friendly pricing policies and cleaner and greener buses. It was important that the Strategy was marketed effectively so that residents were aware of the offers and discounts available. It was also important that pricing was benchmarked against other towns in the region.

Councillor Lilley confirmed that benchmarking was undertaken regularly and that Colchester's offer was not more expensive than Ipswich or Chelmsford.

RESOLVED that the Positive Parking Strategy for Colchester be adopted

REASONS

For good governance and to support measures to help mitigate the effects of the Climate Emergency.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet.

526. Request for Delegated Authority for the Procurement of Fleet for Helpline, Neighbourhood Services and Pest Control.

The Assistant Director, Environment submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation, introduced the report. The vehicles the Council was seeking to replace were coming to the end of their useful life and were increasingly expensive to maintain. The technology around electric vehicles was now maturing so this was an opportune time to procure. Advice was being taken from the Energy Saving Trust, who had advised on the importance of learning from other authorities, and not to procure electric vehicles for the sake of it. An appropriate procurement route would be selected, although in general terms it was considered that purchasing offered better value than leasing. The cost would be met through existing budgets.

Adrian Pritchard, Chief Executive, explained that the Council provided a number of services to Colchester Amphora, including procurement. It paid approximately £650,000 to the Council for these support services. Helpline would use a number of the vehicles that were subject to this procurement exercise, but would pay the full costs of any such use, as if they were being leased through a private commercial dealer.

RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation to purchase or contract hire twenty one vehicles, including electric and or hybrid for the reasons set out in the Assistant Director's report, and providing the costs can be met from within agreed budgets.

REASONS

The current fleet is coming to the end of the existing lease hire so for operational reasons the Council will need to purchase/lease replacement vehicles.

Due to the types of vehicles and stages within the timescale for procurement in 2020 it is recommended to delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transport, to purchase or contract hire the twenty one vehicles, to ensure that there is no risk to the delivery of core Council services.

The Council will carry out a procurement exercise through a specialised framework to determine whether the option to purchase or contract hire is the most cost-effective option.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Council could continue to extend the lease hire for existing vehicles, however the extended hire agreement will include conditions relating to damage or failure of any major vehicle components (e.g. engines, gear boxes etc). Due to the age, wear and tear of vehicles such component failure is likely and presents additional risk in terms of finance and operational resilience.

527. Heritage Interpretation – Summary of Previous Work and Suggestions for the Future

Minute 66 of the Policy Panel meeting of 23 September 2020 was submitted to Cabinet a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor J. Young made a presentation to the Cabinet of the work being undertaken by the Council in respect of interpretation of historical assets and how the Council markets the borough through heritage. The Council was continuing to look at how it could improve interpretation at a number of sites, including Hilly Fields, St Botolphs and Holy Trinity Church. There was an increased emphasis on digital interpretation and walking trails, and the Visitor Information Centre was introducing a number of new trails and apps this year. The Ancient Colchester app had been developed as part of the refurbishment of the Castle. It was still relevant but she shared the desire to update it. However this would require additional resource, which would be difficult at the current time. The Council looked to link with partners, initiatives such as the Town Fund and section 106 contribution to help secure funding for interpretation.

In terms of marketing through heritage, considerable work was already underway. Heritage was already threaded through the Council's core marketing, such as the Visitor Guide and through one off campaigns such as the "If Only Our Walls Could Talk" campaign. The Sky TV advert played heavily on Colchester's heritage and was utilised heavily in promotion of Colchester. For example it had featured in the tie in with the popular Horrible Histories film and the University of Essex used it as part of its international marketing. The Roman Invasion of Liverpool Street Station used Colchester's heritage to promote Colchester and had reached approximately 2.3 million users over the course of the promotion.

The Visit Colchester website had undergone a significant revamp and Visitor Guides had been revised. New leaflets to promote walking tours had also been produced. A new Liverpool Street advertising campaign scheduled for April 2020 had been postponed until footfall returns. However, the most cost effective marketing was done via social media, particularly Facebook.

She was not in favour of the Policy Panel spending more time looking into this. The Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group had spent considerable time looking at these issues and officers were still busy taking forward their proposals. It was now best to let officers get on and deliver the plans already in place. It was also necessary to be mindful of the budget constraints currently in place.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that he agreed with Councillor Young's conclusions. In light of the budget position, it was important that the administration was very careful in how it allocated resource. However, it would be useful if the presentation to Cabinet could also be delivered to the Policy Panel to highlight the work that was underway.

Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, and Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, expressed their support for this approach. The presentation explained clearly the commitment of the administration to heritage issues and that they

were used heavily to promote Colchester. It was also important to acknowledge the importance of using heritage to support businesses, and it was vital that the source material was made available to businesses and the BID to help in marketing and promotion.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The recommendations of the Policy Panel not be approved.
- (b) The presentation made by the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance to Cabinet also be made to the Policy Panel.

REASONS

Considerable work to support the interpretation of historical assets and to promote Colchester through heritage was already being undertaken. Heritage issues had also been thoroughly explored by the Heritage and Tourism Task and Finish Group and it was more appropriate to let officers carry on implementing existing plans than to devote further resource to looking at these issues again, particularly given the budget constraints currently facing the Council.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to Cabinet to approve the recommendations from the Policy Panel.

528. Calendar of meetings 2021-2022

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The draft Calendar of Meetings for the next municipal year from May 2021 to April 2022 be approved.
- (b) Authority be delegated to cancel meetings to the Chairman of the relevant Committee/Panel in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement.

REASONS

The Calendar of Meetings needs to be determined so that decisions for the year can be timetabled into the respective work programmes and the Forward Plan.

Advance notice of the Calendar of Meetings needs to be made available to Councillors and to external organisations, parish councils and other bodies with which the Council works in partnership and to those members of the public who may wish to attend meetings of the Council and make representations.

Dependant on the form meetings will take in the next municipal year, meeting rooms may also need to be reserved as soon as possible so that room bookings can be made for private functions by private individuals, external organisations and internal Council groups.

A formal arrangement needs to be in place for the cancellation of meetings that no longer need to be held.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

This proposal has been largely devised based on the current meeting structure and frequency. It would be possible to devise alternative proposals using different criteria.

529. Progress of Responses to the Public

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services submitted a progress sheet a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Progress Sheet be noted.

REASONS

The progress sheet was a mechanism by which the Cabinet could ensure that public statements and questions were responded to appropriately and promptly.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet.

The Cabinet resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

530. Northern Gateway Heat Network: Project and Finance Update

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, submitted an Appendix to the report in Part A of the agenda, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the appendix to the report be noted.

REASONS

As set out at minute 519.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

As set out at minute 519.

The Cabinet resolved under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 and the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 to exclude the public from the meeting for the following item as it involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

531. Colchester Commercial Stadium Limited

The Assistant Director, Place and Client Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted.

REASONS

As set out in minute 520

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

As set out in minute 520.