

CABINET
2 DECEMBER 2009

Present :- Councillor Anne Turrell (Chairman)
Councillors Lyn Barton, Tina Dopson, Martin Hunt,
Nigel Offen, Beverley Oxford, Paul Smith and
Tim Young

Also in Attendance :- Councillor Christopher Arnold
Councillor Nick Barlow
Councillor Kevin Bentley
Councillor Mary Blandon
Councillor Elizabeth Blundell
Councillor John Bouckley
Councillor Nigel Chapman
Councillor Peter Chillingworth
Councillor Barrie Cook
Councillor Nick Cope
Councillor Mark Cory
Councillor Wyn Foster
Councillor Christopher Garnett
Councillor Chris Hall
Councillor Mike Hardy
Councillor Dave Harris
Councillor Pauline Hazell
Councillor Michael Lilley
Councillor Sonia Lewis
Councillor Sue Lissimore
Councillor Jackie Maclean
Councillor Kim Naish
Councillor Gerard Oxford
Councillor Ann Quarrie
Councillor Laura Sykes
Councillor Dennis Willetts
Councillor Julie Young

Date draft minutes published: 3 December 2009

Date when decisions may be implemented if not called in: 10 December 2009

All decisions except urgent decisions and those recommended to Council may be subject to call in. Requests for scrutiny of decisions by the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel must be signed by at least one Councillor and counter-signed by four other Councillors (or alternatively support may be indicated). All such requests must be delivered to the Proper Officer by no later than 5pm on: 10 December 2009

42. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

43. Have Your Say!

Mr Hamilton addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2) about the provision of storage for mobility scooters at the bus park. He suggested that a secure container near the coffee shop could be a way of providing such storage. He was receiving support from disabled residents who would welcome such a scheme. He was still awaiting a response to a letter he had written to the Chief Executive of the Council on 17 November 2009 and Shopmobility had also not responded to his enquires.

Councillor Turrell, Leader of the Council and Portfolio for Strategy, advised that a response would be sent in due course once a decision had been made on his proposal.

Councillor Lyn Barton and Councillor Anne Turrell (in respect of her membership of Essex County Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

Councillor Tim Young (in respect of his spouse being a member of Essex County Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

Councillor Nick Cope and Councillor Martin Hunt (in respect of in respect of his long standing campaigning against the extension of Norman Way and the loss of open space that would result from such an extension) declared a personal interest in the following item which is also a prejudicial interest pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(10) and made representations in accordance with paragraph 12(2) of the Code of Conduct for Members and then left the meeting during the Cabinet's consideration and determination of the item.

44. Request for Transfer of Land at Norman Way

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix A to these minutes in the Minute Book together with a letter from the Department of Children, Schools and Families dated 23 November 2009 and a letter dated 2 December 2009 from the Minister of State for Schools and Learners.

Essex County Councillor Stephen Castle addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). In the course of his comments and in response to questions from Cabinet members, he made the following points:-

- There had been a long and difficult process to reach this decision. In order to persuade the government to invest heavily in secondary education in Colchester it had been necessary to reorganise secondary school provision. There was now an opportunity to gain from this process. If this opportunity was lost, Colchester would suffer the worst of both worlds in that it would have undergone the reorganisation without receiving the investment to improve its secondary schools.
- Delaying a decision on the transfer of the land was potentially jeopardising the investment. In order to secure funding from Wave 6 of BSF a business case for Essex needed to be finalised quickly. Given the state of public finances it was unlikely that an incoming government would be able to proceed with Wave 7. Whilst the business case would not explicitly make reference to public opposition to the scheme, the Department for Children, Schools and Families would be aware of residents concerns.
- The concerns of local residents were understood but thousands of school children and their families would benefit in the long run, both at Philip Morant and also throughout the borough.
- It would be unreasonable to ask Philip Morant to take additional children without delivering an improved access.
- He was willing to support ways of ensuring the remaining open space could be protected in perpetuity.
- The issue had become overly politicised.
- The access road to Philip Morant had already been given planning permission.

Mr Barrow addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2) and explained that the proposals for the reorganisation of secondary education in Colchester had not taken into account EERA's proposals for substantial extra housing in Colchester to be delivered by 2031. There would no funding left for new schools to meet the demand resulting from the new housing. The access road should be refused. There should be an independent inquiry into the logistical problems that would

arise from the future provision of secondary education.

John Loxley addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). The campaign to keep this area of open land was not political. He sought confirmation that Philip Morant had confirmed that it wanted this access road and that it was essential to its future plans. He believed that the first condition the Cabinet had set at its previous meeting had not been met. In respect of the second condition, 79% of respondents to the consultation had opposed the transfer and the outcome of the consultation should be respected.

David Kennedy of the Irvine Road Residents Association addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). The access road was not needed and other solutions to reduce congestion in the area should be explored. The Association was not political and supported the best possible education provision for local children. Essex County Council sought to minimise the importance of the land and portrayed any opposition as NIMBYism. The Cabinet should respect the views of local residents and refuse to transfer the land.

Richard Pettit of the Painters Corner Residents Association addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2) in opposition to the loss of open space. The consultation had revealed overwhelming opposition to the loss of the open space. It was inconceivable that Essex County Council would jeopardise the investment by requiring the access road to be built, but if the investment were lost, the fault would lie with Essex County Council. Colchester Borough Council should adhere to borough policies to protect open space.

Paula Whitney addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2) to indicate her support for the retention of the open space. Not only were there sound environmental reasons for retaining the open space, she also supported smaller and more sustainable schools. If the land was transferred, this would be contrary to the results of the consultation.

Nigel Hildreth, the Chair of the Governors at the Gilbert School, addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). Philip Morant had made it clear since the start of the reorganisation process that that if it were to expand, it would need better access arrangements. The current access was dangerous. Whilst he would prefer smaller more sustainable schools, this would not happen and the Council had to deal with the realities of the situation. It would be illogical to block the investment in Colchester's schools.

Tim Oxtan addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). The closure of the secondary schools in south Colchester was not irreversible. If the proposals for reorganisation went through, Philip Morant would be so large as to be unmanageable. The investment promised was for buildings and good schools were made by teachers, rather than buildings. The Cabinet should hold firm to its principles and respect public opinion as revealed by the public consultation.

Martin Hunt addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). He expressed concern that Philip Morant had never explained why it wanted the access road. It would not address the problem of congestion or make access to the school safer, because parents would not be able to use it. The proposed access would be for teachers, delivery, construction and emergency vehicles only. Once the school had expanded congestion would be even worse. The correspondence from Essex County Council showed that a deal about the road had been agreed between Essex County Council and Philip Morant without consulting the Borough Council, who owned the land. A summit meeting should be held between officials of Colchester Borough Council, Essex County Council, Philip Morant School and representatives of the two residents association to see if another solution to the issues of access could be found.

Nick Cope addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). If the land was transferred for the construction of the access road this would be contrary to the Council's own policies on the protection of open space. As a ward councillor, no constituent had ever approached him in support of the access road. There was no point consulting residents if their views were then ignored. The bullying approach of the County Council should be resisted.

Councillor Cook attended and addressed the Cabinet. The access road would not relieve congestion on local roads. Essex County Council was putting the investment in jeopardy by tying the investment to the access road. The Cabinet should not ignore the results of the public consultation. If the investment was not forthcoming at his point, further investment would be made later.

Councillor Gerard Oxford attended and addressed the Cabinet. A motion in support of the investment and access road had been passed by full Council. The conditions set by Cabinet previously had been met. Refusing the request to transfer the land would harm the life opportunities of school children in the borough.

In discussion members of the Cabinet made the following points:-

- Those members who opposed the road wanted to secure the investment in secondary investment in Colchester: the issue was whether the access road was necessary to secure the investment.
- The whole approach to the schools reorganisation was flawed. It was not too late to reverse the school closures and to seek a solution based on a federation model.
- It was inconceivable that the options were all or none of the investment. If the land was not transferred and the access road not built, then some elements of the reorganisation would still be funded.
- The funding for the rebuild of Charles Lucas was secure no matter what the outcome of the issue about the transfer of the land.
- The access road would not address the congestion issue.
- If the consultation was to be meaningful then the outcome must not be ignored.
- Other solutions to the access problems for Philip Morant existed and should be investigated further by a summit meeting of the interested parties.
- This was an opportunity to improve the life chances of a generation of school children. The concerns of residents were acknowledged but had to be balanced against the benefits for thousands of schoolchildren.
- There had been no objection or appeal against the decisions to close schools by their governing bodies.
- This was the last chance to secure this investment.
- Other secondary schools in the borough badly needed the investment and the opportunity to expand.
- It was appreciated that the investment would be in buildings and facilities rather than teachers. However the provision of new buildings in schools would help provide a better education for school children and would provide an environment in which good teachers would thrive.
- No councillors had voted against the motion at Council and thirty two councillors, representing thousands of residents, had supported the motion

It was *PROPOSED* that part of the public open space situated at Norman Way be released for a new vehicular access to the Philip Morant School subject to the following conditions:-

- (i) No work to commence on the access road until the Wave 6 funding was received by Essex County Council;
- (ii) A land swap should be pursued as the first option, and the sale or lease of the land should only be proceed if a satisfactory land swap could not be achieved;
- (iii) All the remaining open space to be protected in perpetuity from any construction or building work;
- (iv) The boundary of the road be protected by means of bunding, fence or

other such measure;

(v) A 20mph speed limit on the access road should be sought.

On being put to the vote, the proposal was *LOST* (three voted for, four voted against).

A named vote having been requested pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 15(3) the voting was as follows:

Those who voted *FOR* were:

Councillors Dopson, B Oxford and T. Young

Those who voted *AGAINST* were:-

Councillors Barton, Offen, Smith and Turrell

RESOLVED that:-

(i) The Council should invite representatives of Essex County Council, Philip Morant School and Painters Corner and Irvine Road residents associations to a meeting to consider alternative methods to improve access to Philip Morant School without building the access road.

(ii) Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council to be represented at the meeting by officers only.

(iii) The meeting to be held before the meeting of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 9 December 2009;

REASONS

A Motion was passed by Council at its meeting on 14 October 2009 that requested that the decision (to consider disposing of the land to the School) be made as "expeditiously as possible.

In the light of the responses received from Essex County Council and the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the outcome of the statutory public consultation it was not necessary to release part of the public open space for a new vehicular access to Philip Morant School.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

An alternative option would be to approve the transfer of the land, not to make a decision and to put in place further series of actions to obtain additional information to inform a decision to be made at a later date.

45. 2010 - 2011 Revenue Budget, Financial Reserves and Capital Programme

The Head of Resource Management submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix B to these minutes in the Minute Book.

Elizabeth Hall, Chair of the Mercury Theatre Board, addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). She thanked Colchester Borough Council for the significant investment made in the arts in Colchester, in partnership with the Arts Council and Essex County Council. A consequence of the proposed cut in the Borough Council funding would be that other partners may then consider cutting their funding also. If this were to happen, it would have serious consequences for the ongoing viability of the Mercury Theatre. She requested that the cut in funding be reviewed after the forthcoming partnership meeting.

Nigel Hildreth, Chair of the Arts Centre Board, addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). The Arts Centre worked in partnership with other arts providers to provide valuable outreach work. These services would be at risk if there was a cut in funding. A cut in funding from Colchester Borough Council could put other funding at risk. No final decision on funding should be made until after the forthcoming partnership meeting. He was happy to meet with the Council to discuss funding at any time.

Anthony Roberts addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(2). Arts organisations were fragile and precarious and the support of the Borough Council was the bedrock of the Arts Centre. The funding from the Council enabled the Arts Centre to secure £291,000 of other public funding. Much work was done to measure the benefits this produced but it was very difficult to effectively quantify the value the arts provided.

In response, Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Diversity, stressed that the Council would take account of the work of the Arts Centre and Mercury Theatre towards the objectives in the Strategic Plan. Whilst cuts in funding were regretted, the Council was receiving no support from the Arts Council or Essex County Council in respect of the legal costs for the Visual Arts Facility. Councillor T. Young responded that given the economic circumstances, the Council needed to concentrate on its resources on key frontline services. He was concerned that outreach work might be the first

victim of cuts by arts organisations as this was among the most valuable work they did. The Council may need to look at the Service Level Agreements with the arts organisations to address this issue.

Councillor Willetts attended in his capacity as Deputy Leader of the Conservative Group and addressed the Cabinet to express his concern about the budget gap identified in the Head of Resource Management's report. He hoped the generous Housing and Planning Delivery Grant would mean that the cuts in arts funding would not be necessary. He expressed concern about the way investments, interest earnings and corporate targets had been managed. Conservative Party policy was to seek a 0% rise in Council tax. No reference was made to the Haven Gateway funding in the capital programme parts of the report.

Councillor Arnold attended and addressed the Cabinet in his capacity as the Chairman of Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel. He drew attention to the decision of the Strategic Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 3 November 2009 to support the inclusion of a growth item in the 2010/11 budget for a "clean all" policy in relation to graffiti, which was not referred to in the report.

Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Diversity, explained that the Council was taking positive action to address the difficult budget position. The announcement of a more generous than expected Housing and Planning Delivery Grant was welcomed.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) The current 2010/11 revenue budget forecast which at this stage showed a budget gap of £1,793,000 and the forecast variables and risks be noted.

(b) The action being taken to close the budget gap including the ongoing development of savings delivery plans and proposed consideration of use of reserves and balances be noted.

(c) The recommended level of revenue balances be set at £1.5m for 2010/11 as set out in the Risk Analysis subject to consideration of outstanding issues as part of the final budget report in January 2010.

(d) The current budget forecast for 2009/10 be noted as set out at paragraph 11.7 of the Head of Resource Management's report.

(e) The release of funds for capital schemes set out at section 13 of the Head of Resource management's report be agreed and in addition the release of £95,000 provided to the Council in the form of Housing Capital Grant to fund Private Sector Housing renewal commitments be agreed.

(f) In respect of second homes the Council Tax discount applied be retained at 10% as set out at paragraph 14.5 of the Head of Resource Management's report.

(g) In respect of long term empty properties the discount be retained at nil as set out at paragraph 14.5 of the Head of Resource Management's report.

RECOMMENDED to Council that: £250,000 be released from balances to fund additional legal costs in respect of the Visual Arts Facility (VAF) as set out paragraph 7.9 of the Head of Resource Management's report.

REASONS

The reasons for the decisions were set out in detail in the Head of Resource Management's report

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were presented to the Cabinet.

46. Introduction of 20 mph areas in Colchester

Minute 17 of the Policy Review and Development Panel meeting of 9 November 2009 was submitted, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix C to these minutes in the Minute Book.

Councillor Willetts attended and addressed the Cabinet. He considered that the approach proposed by the Policy Review and Development Panel was timid and over-cautious. He believed most communities had a clear idea of their views on 20 mph zones and believed that the proposed consultation should not be too involved or protracted. The requirement that 20 mph zones be based on Parish Plans and Village Design Statements should be relaxed to include any area that was supported by a valid parish council or residents association resolution.

The Cabinet noted that this was an interim report and that a final report would follow in due course. Some concern was expressed that some residential areas had been identified in the recommendations as this had raised expectations among those communities.

RESOLVED that the recommendation contained in minute 17 of Policy Review and Development Panel's meeting of 9 November 2009 be agreed.

REASONS

The recommendation from Policy Review and Development Panel was based on the work of the 20mph Task and Finish Group who had examined the issues relating to the introduction of 20m mph areas in detail.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to agree to the recommendation of the Policy Review and Development Panel or to partially agree the recommendations of the Policy Review and Development Panel.

47. Transforming Colchester's Housing Services

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix F to these minutes in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) In principle, Colchester Borough Council pursue affordable housing development as a local authority, including developing in its own right, subject to the financial resources being available to do so.
- (b) A range of development models be considered on land owned by Colchester Borough Council on a site by site basis, including facilitating development by Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) through the use of prudential borrowing.
- (c) Colchester Borough Council pursue, as a local authority, obtaining investment partner status with the Homes and Communities Agency and Registered Provider status with the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) .
- (d) Colchester Borough Homes be supported to secure Registered Provider Status with the TSA.
- (e) The services of a developer agent be procured to undertake development services on behalf of the Council, using the appropriate selection process.
- (f) Authority be delegated to the relevant Portfolio Holders to agree a policy and selection criteria to enable Portfolio Holders to make decisions about the selection of the best affordable housing provider for each site that becomes available for development.

REASONS

(a) The restrictions and barriers to Council's building new homes were being removed. Council's have been positively encouraged to develop new affordable housing for rent through the opportunity to bid for grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. Colchester Borough Council has the chance to take advantage of this opportunity.

(b) One of the Council's strategic priorities is to increase the supply of affordable housing and Members have expressed their desire, through the Council's Strategic Plan to, make use of Council owned land to build new affordable housing and contribute to achieving their targets.

(c) Colchester Borough Council's ALMO, Colchester Borough Homes, were keen to develop new homes. To do so they would require financial support, strategic direction and the agreement of the Council.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

(a) Not to pursue affordable housing development. If the Council decided not to pursue development the opportunity to secure additional funding for affordable housing would be lost.

(b) Not to facilitate development by the Council's ALMO, through the use of prudential borrowing. This would prevent Colchester Borough Council's ALMO, Colchester Borough Homes, pursuing affordable housing development as they were reliant on the Council to provide the finance required to develop new homes.

(c) Not to consider the use of Council owned land for affordable housing development. This would restrict the Council's ability to meet its Strategic Plan targets. In addition, some of the funding opportunities would not be open to the Council (such as Local Authority Social Housing Grant which requires Councils to use their own land to provide affordable housing).

48. Review of Temporary Accommodation

The Head of Life Opportunities submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix E to these minutes in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that:-

Agreement be granted in principle to the following decisions, enabling officers to proceed with detailed work and further negotiation:-

- (a) the existing temporary accommodation site at Ascott House and Gardens be redeveloped to create a purpose built 30 unit temporary accommodation scheme;
- (b) the appointment of Family Mosaic Housing Association as the Registered Social Landlord (RSL) to redevelop the site at Ascott House;
- (c) the leasing of the buildings at John Bird Court, Friars Court and Gothic House to Family Mosaic Housing Association for them to manage.
- (d) the disposal of the buildings at 93/95 Military Road, 95 Winnock Road, 60 Creffield Road and Bardfield House on the open market and the potential for the redevelopment of the site at Military Court be explored;
- (e) the capital receipts from the sale of these buildings be used to support the development of the site at Ascott House and contribute to upgrading the buildings at John Bird Court, Friars Court and Gothic House if required.

Following work to specify the detail of the financial package and implementation plans for this project, further decisions to be taken jointly by the Portfolio Holders for Neighbourhoods, Culture and Diversity and Resources and Business under delegated powers.

REASONS

- (a) A Portfolio Holder report of the review of temporary accommodation was taken to Finance and Scrutiny Panel in January 2008. The decision made required officers to implement the finding of the review of temporary accommodation and bring back a further report to Portfolio Holders.
- (b) The implementation of the proposals set out in the Head of Life Opportunities report, would deliver the following outcomes:-
 - Improvement in the stock of temporary accommodation for those in need of short-term housing
 - Improvement in the support provided for the tenants of temporary accommodation
 - Better outcomes for these tenants
 - Recurring revenue savings for the Council
 - The potential for surplus capital receipts

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- (a) The Council could retain all of its current temporary accommodation and carry out the necessary works needed to convert it into self contained accommodation where tenants have access to their own kitchen and

bathroom. This option was not considered viable due to the capital cost that would be incurred by the Council compared to the value of the asset.

(b) The Council could dispose of the non self-contained units (where kitchens or bathrooms are shared between tenants on a communal basis), get an RSL to build and manage its replacement and the Council retain and manage the self contained units. This option was not considered viable as it would not provide the level and quality of support the Council desired.

(c) A developing RSL could provide the new build and the housing management function for it and a separate RSL could provide the support. This option was dismissed as the Council wanted to achieve a holistic and consistent approach to the management and support of tenants which gave the best possible opportunity for sustaining their tenancies.

(d) The Council could decide not to dispose of the sites identified in paragraph 1.4 of the Head of Life Opportunities report and use them to develop new affordable housing. This option was not considered viable following planning advice on the sites for 60 Creffield Road, 95 Winnock Road and 93/95 Military Road. Each of these sites fell within a conservation area and the advice given was that these buildings be retained. The receipts from the sale of these sites would also need to be used to support the redevelopment of Ascott House and improvements needed at the retained sites specified in paragraph 1.3 of the Head of Life Opportunities report

Councillor Tim Young (in respect of in respect of his previous membership of the Board of Colchester Borough Homes and his spouse's membership of the Board of Colchester Borough Homes) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)

49. Moving into New Affordable Housing Development

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix F to these minutes in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) In principle, Colchester Borough Council pursue affordable housing development as a local authority, including developing in its own right, subject to the financial resources being available to do so.

(b) A range of development models be considered on land owned by Colchester Borough Council on a site by site basis, including facilitating development by Colchester Borough Homes (CBH) through the use of prudential borrowing.

(c) Colchester Borough Council pursue, as a local authority, obtaining investment partner status with the Homes and Communities Agency and Registered Provider status with the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) .

(d) Colchester Borough Homes be supported to secure Registered Provider Status with the TSA.

(e) The services of a developer agent be procured to undertake development services on behalf of the Council, using the appropriate selection process.

(f) Authority be delegated to the relevant Portfolio Holders to agree a policy and selection criteria to enable Portfolio Holders to make decisions about the selection of the best affordable housing provider for each site that becomes available for development.

REASONS

(a) The restrictions and barriers to Council's building new homes were being removed. Council's have been positively encouraged to develop new affordable housing for rent through the opportunity to bid for grant funding from the Homes and Communities Agency. Colchester Borough Council has the chance to take advantage of this opportunity.

(b) One of the Council's strategic priorities is to increase the supply of affordable housing and Members have expressed their desire, through the Council's Strategic Plan to, make use of Council owned land to build new affordable housing and contribute to achieving their targets.

(c) Colchester Borough Council's ALMO, Colchester Borough Homes, were keen to develop new homes. To do so they would require financial support, strategic direction and the agreement of the Council.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

(a) Not to pursue affordable housing development. If the Council decided not to pursue development the opportunity to secure additional funding for affordable housing would be lost.

(b) Not to facilitate development by the Council's ALMO, through the use of prudential borrowing. This would prevent Colchester Borough Council's ALMO, Colchester Borough Homes, pursuing affordable housing development as they

were reliant on the Council to provide the finance required to develop new homes.

(c) Not to consider the use of Council owned land for affordable housing development. This would restrict the Council's ability to meet its Strategic Plan targets. In addition, some of the funding opportunities would not be open to the Council (such as Local Authority Social Housing Grant which requires Councils to use their own land to provide affordable housing).

50. Calendar of Meetings 2010-2011

The Head of Corporate Management submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix G to these minutes in the Minute Book.

RESOLVED that: the Calendar of Meetings for 2010/11 be agreed.

REASONS

(a) The Calendar of Meetings needed to be determined so that decisions for the year could be timetabled into the respective work programmes and the Forward Plan.

(b) Advance notice of the Calendar of Meetings needed to be made available 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.

(c) The meeting rooms also need to be reserved as soon as possible so that room bookings could be made for private functions by private individuals, external organisations and internal Council groups.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The proposed calendar of meetings had been devised based on the current meeting structure and frequency. It would be possible to devise alternative proposals using different criteria.

51. Appointment of Deputy Mayor 2010-2011

Consideration was given to the appointment of the Deputy Mayor for the Municipal Year 2010-11.

Councillor Hunt nominated Councillor Chuah as Deputy Mayor for the 2010-11 Municipal Year. Councillor T. Young endorsed the nomination of Councillor Chuah.

RECOMMENDED to Council that Councillor Chuah be nominated for appointment as Deputy Mayor for the Borough of Colchester 2010-11 Municipal Year.

52. Progress of Responses to the Public

The Head of Corporate Management submitted a progress sheet a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix H to these minutes in the Minute Book.

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.