

**Extract from the draft minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 31 January 2018**

**230. Strategic Plan 2018-2021**

The Assistant Director Policy and Corporate submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with minute 149 of the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 30 January 2018.

Mike Hardy addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1). It was noted that one of the priorities under the “Opportunities” theme was to “Promote Colchester’s heritage and visitor attractions to increase in visitor numbers and to support job creation”. He provided a brief history of the management of the Gosbecks site and the use of Gosbecks reserve fund. Concerns had previously been raised about an unexplained overspend and about the use of funds from the reserve for heritage at the Castle which was not specifically related to the management of the Gosbecks site.

Councillor Hazell attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet about the Gosbecks site. She explained the original intentions behind the management of the site. Whilst the land management of the site had been good, very little work had been done on the archaeological interpretation of the site, as had been the original intention. For example in 1996 the Council obtained planning permission for portakabins to be used for exhibitions and interpretation, but this had never been progressed. There were only three simple interpretation boards on the site, which were now in a poor state. The full story of the history of the site, which was of national and international importance, was not told. The Gosbecks fund would be exhausted in seven years time and it was essential that a wide ranging look at the future management and funding of the site be undertaken. This would be best achieved by the creation of a Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Laws attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. He suggested that the wording of the first point of the Opportunity theme should be amended to read “To promote and enhance Colchester’s heritage and visitor attractions...” which would demonstrate the Council’s commitment to developing Colchester’s heritage further. Also it was incorrect to say that the “Fixing the Link” project had been completed. He urged the Cabinet to be bold on the Growth theme and consider how Colchester should develop up to 2043.

Councillor Smith, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, thanked Councillor Laws for his comments and indicated he accepted his suggested amendment to the “Opportunity” theme. The suggestions from the Scrutiny Panel were also welcomed and accepted. The Strategic Plan set out a bold and exciting vision and he hoped it would be approved and adopted unanimously at Council. The

only alternative to the growth it set out was decline and stagnation.

*RESOLVED* that:-

(a) The Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 be agreed subject to the inclusion of the suggestions of the Scrutiny Panel and the first sub-paragraph of the Opportunity theme being amended to read:-

“Promote and enhance Colchester borough’s heritage and visitor attractions to increase visitor numbers and to support job creation”.

(b) Officers be asked to prepare an action plan to achieve its aims and priorities.

*RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL* that the Strategic Plan 2018 - 2021 be adopted and included in the Policy Framework.

#### *REASONS*

The Strategic Plan sets the framework for the Council's three-year Medium Term Financial Forecast and its Capital Programme.

This new Strategic Plan addresses the key challenges facing the Borough by describing 20 priorities organised into four key themes: Growth, Responsibility, Opportunity and Wellbeing.

#### *ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS*

The current Strategic Plan expires at the end of the financial year. A new plan is required and needs to be adopted by full Council. The absence of a Strategic Plan would create a significant risk of the Council failing to identify and deliver on its core priorities.

**The final version of the Strategic Plan 2018 – 2021 including the amendments agreed at Cabinet is attached immediately after this minute extract.**