

Cabinet

Wednesday, 20 November 2019

Attendees: Councillor Mark Cory, Councillor Adam Fox, Councillor Theresa Higgins, Councillor David King , Councillor Michael Lilley, Councillor Julie Young

No. Publication and Call In Arrangements

Date Published 21 November 2019

Date when decisions may be implemented (unless 'called in') 5pm 28 November 2019

NB All decisions except urgent decisions, those subject to pre-scrutiny and those recommended to Council may be subject to the Call-in Procedure.

Requests for the scrutiny of relevant decisions by the Scrutiny Panel must be signed by at least ONE Councillor AND FOUR other Councillors to countersign the call-in form OR to indicate support by e-mail. All such requests must be delivered to the Proper Officer by no later than 5pm on Thursday 28 November 2019.

393 Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of 9 October 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

394 Have Your Say!

Victoria Weaver addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) to express her support for the motion on Building Council Houses. There was a national housing crisis, to which Right to Buy contributed by allowing Council houses to be sold without provision for their replacement. The housing crisis had a significant impact on mental health and the motion provided hope that council housing would be provided in Colchester which would lead to a healthier and better society.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy thanked her for her comments and indicated that he would support the motion.

Alan Short addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(1) about the site of the Cultural Quarter. Concern was expressed that the cost benefit analysis of the alternative options for the site had not been released, contrary to assurances, and that the lease had not been published despite it

being agreed. The lease to Alumno gave a poor return for the value of the site. Concern was also expressed that planning officers involved in the presentation to the Planning Committee attended parts of the appeal hearing.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, and Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety, responded. The administration had done due diligence on the options for the site. The administration would look again at the information that had been provided to see if there was further information that could be released. Officers had followed their instructions to defend the Planning Committee decision, and the decision had been robustly defended.

Councillor Barber attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet to urge them to ensure ward councillors were kept informed of decisions or events relevant to their wards. This would help ensure that they could advise on local issues and ensure events were appropriately publicised locally.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, and Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety, responded. The administration was committed to involving ward councillors but would look at how this could be improved. It was committed to working in a mature and collegiate way and this was demonstrated in its approach on Garden Communities and the Climate Emergency. However, it was important that ward councillors engaged when consulted.

Councillor Goacher attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet to express his concern about the reduction in funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). The CAB supported the most vulnerable people in society. Information was requested about the other charities that would be receiving funding and whether an impact assessment had been completed.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, and Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety, responded and explained that the CAB would receive approximately £70,000 from the Council and Colchester Borough Homes. It was also providing support in other ways, such as shared premises. The CAB was now delivering its services in different ways, such as online or by appointment. Information would be provided about the other groups that were being supported, but that they were organisations that supported the most distressed and vulnerable groups in society.

395 2020/21 Revenue Budget, New Strategic Priorities and Medium Term Financial Forecast

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

Dan Gascoyne, Chief Operating Officer, presented information about the new Strategic Priorities. These were grouped into the themes of Environment, Place, Commercial and Opportunity, although there were significant crossovers and common

themes. The Council would work closely with its partners to deliver the priorities. Brief details of the priorities and the proposed timeline were highlighted.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, explained that the Council's response to the financial pressures had put it in a position where it was now able to support significant regeneration and growth. Cabinet had identified a number of new Strategic Priorities which would enable it to deal with the major challenges facing residents. This would be partly funded through the prudent use of reserves. In terms of the budget, whilst there was currently an over spend forecast for the current year, he was confident that the budget would be balanced and whilst significant pressures had been identified for 2020-21, a budget surplus was forecast, based on reasonable assumptions.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance, highlighted the development of a new cultural strategy, which would be a visionary document and would enrich the lives of local residents.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The New Strategic Priorities be approved.
- (b) The Period 6 2019/20 revenue forecast be noted, and the one-off use of balances be approved.
- (c) The savings proposals set out in the Assistant Director's report be agreed for inclusion in the MTF and the forecast budget position for 2020/21 be noted.
- (d) The amendments to the capital programme as set out in Appendix E of the Assistant Director's report be approved.
- (e) Membership of the Essex Business Rates Pool continue.
- (g) The 2020/21 council tax base be agreed by the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources
- (h) Changes to Council Fees and Charges as set out in Appendices F and H of the Assistant Director's report be agreed.
- (i) £58k feasibility costs for North Colchester BID be advanced from the strategic New Homes Bonus Allocation.

REASONS

To move forward the Council's strategic priorities, including responding to the Climate Emergency, and further develop the 2020/21 budget.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

A range of different options could be considered to meet the budget strategy

requirements and the proposals in the report will be consulted on through the budget setting process.

396

Colchester Local Full Fibre Network Fund - Implementation 2019-21

The Strategic Director submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Holly Brett, Head of Development, Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd, made a presentation to the Cabinet explaining that the Council had secured £3.5 million of Government funding which would be used to deliver the Council's Digital Strategy, and which aimed to make Colchester the best-connected town in the East of England. Information was provided about the scale of the project and what would be delivered and the timescales involved.

Councillor Willetts attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. Whilst the improvements to Colchester's digital infrastructure were to be welcomed, it was noted that the improvements were concentrated in the town centre and parts of urban Colchester. The rural areas of the borough had to rely on the services of other providers which were not supported by large government funding and therefore would receive a poorer service. In addition Tollgate, where several technology and IT firms were located would not be covered by the full fibre network.

Holly Brett explained that there would be a further round of funding from government for a rollout of full fibre to rural areas. The Council would bid for funding, and its success in this round of funding would help in any future bid.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, and Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance, welcomed the proposals. There were clear and compelling reasons for starting the roll out of full fibre in the town centre, as it was using existing ducting. Improved digital infrastructure would also help with the care of the vulnerable and elderly and enable them to continue living in their own homes.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The deployment proposals as described in the Assistant Director's report be agreed.
- (b) £3.45 million be provided in forward funding for the project implementation, which will be reclaimed from DCMS in full.
- (c) Authority be delegated to the Strategic Director Policy and Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources for the award of contract to contractors for the design and deployments works

REASONS

The opportunities presented to the Council and the Borough by the DCMS funding are unique and are unlikely to be repeated. They represent an opportunity to make a very

significant improvement to the Borough's infrastructure that will have a positive benefit for residents, business, the Council and its businesses, for many years to come.

The project team has confirmed that the major telecoms operators (BT, Virgin media, as well as the newer builders of fibre networks, including CityFibre) have no plans to deploy fibre at scale in urban Colchester. However, the creation of a market-disruptive infrastructure is likely to accelerate such plans and will have a beneficial effect on competition, customer choice and the Borough's overall economic position. Suffolk, Chelmsford and Norwich have impending large-scale fibre deployment plans and it is essential that Colchester does not fall behind them in the creation of this infrastructure.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd (CATL) has engaged over the past two years with the major telecoms operators, including the builders of urban fibre optic networks, such as City Fibre, Hyperoptic and Gigaclear. Colchester does not offer the scale required for their deployments, although Gigaclear will be working to deliver ultrafast connectivity in the rural parts and is already connecting a small number of customers in them. This means the only viable solution is for the borough to take the lead in deploying the infrastructure

Broadband provision in Colchester remains poor, although it has improved since 2015, when a benchmarking study by the Centre for Cities scored Colchester 57th of the largest 65 towns and cities in the UK for broadband speeds. Nonetheless, with the likely deployment of fibre networks in the neighbouring towns in the coming years, it is essential that Colchester maintains its 3-year lead in the deployment of this type of infrastructure. Fewer than 1% of connections in Colchester are "pure-fibre" capable of delivering gigabit speeds; this compares with 8% across the UK (the level in Chelmsford and Norwich is near-zero). The LFFN project will facilitate up to 20,000 connections within the first five years, some 25% of all addressable buildings (business and residential).

397 North Essex Economic Strategy

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

Councillor Willetts, attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. The Strategy had clear links to the Local Plan. The Strategy was welcomed as it would help generate higher value employment and counter the pull of London.

Colchester provided the bulk of the housing growth in the area covered by the Strategy. This concentration on housing had meant that it had fewer industrial sites. Therefore it was only fair for Colchester to receive a higher proportion of the economic benefits resulting from the Strategy.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources and Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, expressed their support for the Strategy.

Colchester's position at the heart of North Essex was understood and respected by the partner authorities. There was a need for high value jobs in the economy of North Essex and Colchester was well placed to generate such opportunities through the University and the Knowledge Gateway. Members of Cabinet stressed the importance of health and wellbeing issues being considered along economic factors.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The North Essex Economic Strategy be approved
- (b) It be noted that that the Strategy's priorities will contribute to the Essex Prosperity Prospectus and the SELEP Local Industrial Strategy;
- (c) The partnership structures which are in place to facilitate the Strategy be noted;
- (d) It be noted that an Action Plan will be developed to guide delivery of key actions;
- (e) It be noted that a process for reporting progress will be established by the partners.

REASONS

Approval of the Strategy will enable the 4 North Essex Local Authorities with Essex County Council to maximise their capability to influence national government for the support and investment this sub-region needs to deliver its economic development ambitions, whilst providing a framework which will guide the development of specific economic development interventions at a locality level, ensuring these are strategically linked and have the highest possible impact.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative approaches were proposed.

398 Local Council Tax Support 2020-2021

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, explained that 9000 residents benefited from the Local Council Tax Support Scheme. The scheme provided help and stability to vulnerable residents. This support to vulnerable residents was also reflected by the excellent service provided by the Council's award winning benefit team who had a record of paying benefits quickly.

Councillor King also expressed the Cabinet's thanks to Councillors Gerard and Beverley Oxford for the leadership they had provided on such issues in their role as

Portfolio Holder for Customers.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The current working age entitlement be maintained for the financial year effective 1 April 2020 to maximise ongoing support for residents. The only changes from the current scheme are the prescribed regulation changes, mandated national legislative uprating, and to disregard Windrush Compensation payments from any relevant calculation.
- (b) Continued consideration be given to progress of Universal Credit, its impact on Local Council Tax Support and banded income schemes, and other alternatives.
- (c) *RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL* that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2020-2021 be approved and adopted.

REASONS

Legislation requires that the scheme, effective from 1 April 2020, be agreed by March 2020.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Changes could be made to the scheme. However, stability to the scheme is being recommended due to the introduction of Universal Credit. This will provide residents with some consistency within the context of a fundamental change to other forms of benefit and support.

399 Officer Pay Policy Statement for 2020-2021

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

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, explained that the Council had a legal duty to publish an officer pay policy statement on an annual basis. This was part of its commitment to transparency. This demonstrated the Council's good practice in respect of pay and benefits. In particular the Council had paid the Living Wage as set by the Living wage Foundation since 2013, and required contracted staff and suppliers working on Council business to be paid the Living Wage.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that the Officer Pay Policy Statement 2020-21 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.

400 Health and Safety Report 2019/20

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

RESOLVED that 2018/19 annual report and the Health and Safety Policy for 2019/20 be noted.

REASONS

The Leader of the Council has the ultimate responsibility for the management and monitoring of health and safety provision across all the Council’s undertakings. Cabinet are jointly and severally the primary duty holders for health and safety across the Council’s undertakings.

The Health and Safety Policy is an integral part of the risk management process, which forms part of the policy framework. As such it is appropriate to provide an annual report on Health and Safety to the Governance and Audit Committee, to assist with the Committee’s responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of risk management.

Therefore, this report was presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 29 October 2019 and the Committee recommended that the report was also submitted to Cabinet, to fulfil the Leader of the Council’s and Portfolio Holders responsibilities for Health and Safety.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Health and Safety policy sets out the Council’s commitment to managing health and safety risks, organisation structure and the individual responsibilities, at all levels of the organisation. The only changes to the policy in 2019 are minor (moving responsibilities from Strategic Director to Chief Operating Officer now responsible for health and safety and removing Commercial department (now CCHL/Amphora) from the Organisation Structure).

The policy is supported by a set of arrangements that detail what the Council will do in practice to achieve the aims set out in the health and safety policy and successfully manage health and safety.

401 Colchester's Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2020-2025)

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

Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, introduced the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025. This was built on the existing strategy, but also took account of the additional duties placed on the Council by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The Strategy had been developed in conjunction with partners and key stakeholders. The four key aims of the Strategy were:-

- Increasing access to accommodation and providing settled homes.
- Helping people to sustain their accommodation.
- Improving the health and wellbeing of people that experience homelessness.
- Improving communication and challenging the perception and culture of homelessness.

To address homelessness and rough sleeping the Council was committed to building Council housing, but despite the council's best efforts homelessness was rising. The Council had worked with Colchester Borough Homes to secure over £600,000 of funding to reduce rough sleeping and it had appointed a Rough Sleeping Co-ordinator and Outreach workers. As a result the Council was making progress in tackling rough sleeping.

Councillor Fox thanked officers and partners for their work in bringing forward this significant piece of work.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety paid tribute to the work of Colchester Borough Homes Outreach workers for their valuable work in tackling rough sleeping.

RESOLVED that the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Colchester for 2020 to 2025 be approved.

RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL that the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy be adopted as part of the Council's Policy Framework.

REASONS

The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on a homelessness review every five years.

The new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for Colchester takes account of national guidance and local priorities arising from the homelessness review and consultation responses. A corporate commitment to preventing homelessness is fundamental to achieving the main objectives of the Strategy.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

To not adopt the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. However, it is a legal requirement to have a Homelessness Strategy and no alternatives exist to a review of homelessness and the development of a new strategy and delivery plan. The Council

would not be fulfilling its legal duty if it did not produce a strategy.

402 Building Council Houses

The motion on Building Council Houses, which stood referred direct to Cabinet was considered by Cabinet. A copy of the motion had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Warnes attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. Colchester was in the midst of a housing crisis and there was an acute need for affordable social housing. This was exacerbated by the Right to Buy Scheme. In the last year, Colchester had sold 38 properties under the scheme, with only eight being replaced, and over 3000 properties in Colchester had been sold under the scheme since right to buy was introduced. This was a significant loss to the available stock of Council housing. It was important the borough's MPs lobbied government to encourage Council house building on a large scale. Whilst housing associations were the current main providers of affordable housing, the future security and viability of housing associations was threatened by proposed changes in tenure. As well as addressing housing need, large scale Council housing would provide a significant income stream to local authorities.

Councillor Willetts attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet to express his support for the general tenor of the motion. However, it was a paradox that Colchester faced issues of homelessness and housing need in view of the scale housing growth in the borough. The main tool to secure affordable housing was through the Council's policy requiring developers to provide 30% affordable housing on new developments. This had not been properly enforced and therefore the failure to secure enough affordable housing was the responsibility of the Council.

Councillor Bourne attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet to stress the important difference between affordable housing and Council housing. Council housing had a secure tenure and was considerably cheaper than affordable housing. The Council had a three year rolling target for the provision of affordable housing and this had been met. Those in the private rented sector were often supported with housing benefit, which directed tax payer's money towards private landlords, when it could be used more effectively and efficiently to provide Council housing.

Councillor Fox, Portfolio Holder for Housing, expressed his support for the motion. The private sector had not delivered sufficient affordable housing, and the 30% policy did not apply to all sites. Council housing sold under right to buy could not be replaced as the Council did not receive the full value of the house. It was important that the Council continued to invest in new and existing housing stock. He noted that in view of the forthcoming General Election, the wording of the motion should be amended so that it was sent to those MPs elected to represent the borough of Colchester on 12 December.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated his support for the motion. He suggested that it should also include a further bullet point calling on government to review the Right to Buy Scheme.

RESOLVED that the motion on Building Council Houses be approved and adopted subject the following amendments:

- The replacement of the named MPs with a reference to those MPs elected to represent the Borough of Colchester in the General Election on 12 December;
- An additional bullet point calling on the government to review the Right to Buy scheme.

403 Climate Emergency Update

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

Councillor Willetts attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. He welcomed the work of the Conservation and Environmental Task and Finish Group in addressing the Climate Emergency. However, it did not address the issue of emissions from the Council's vehicle fleet. The fleet contract was due to be retendered shortly and that would provide the opportunity to replace the existing fleet with electric vehicles.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, indicated that the Council was looking at all forms of energy use, and this would include the vehicle fleet. The Carbon Trust had been commissioned to review the Council's activities and prepare recommendations on how carbon emissions could be tackled, and their work would include the vehicle fleet. A more detailed Action Plan on how the Council would move towards being carbon neutral by 2030 would be brought to the next Cabinet meeting. However, it was clear that difficult decisions would need to be taken.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder Business and Resources, explained that officers had been directed to ensure that the environmental and sustainability implications of all decisions must be considered and included in future reports. This would ensure that the carbon impact of all decisions and how this could be offset, would be considered. This approach had been taken in the budget paper considered earlier in the agenda.

Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services stressed the need for the Council to take the lead and set an example for other authorities and organisations in the borough.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The actions taken and the progress made by the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group be noted.
- (b) Environmental and Carbon Management issues should be considered in all future decisions taken by the Council.

REASONS

To ensure Cabinet has oversight of the steps being taken to respond to the Climate

Emergency and the future proposed timetable for bringing more detailed proposals back to Cabinet and full Council.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were proposed.

404 Use of Glyphosate Herbicides - Recommendation from the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group

An extract of the minutes of the meeting of the Conservation and Environmental Sustainability Task and Finish Group on 8 October 2019 relating to the use of glyphosate herbicides, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member, was considered by Cabinet.

Councillor Cory introduced the recommendations from the Conservation and Environmental Task and Finish Group, of which he was the Chairman. It proposed a clear commitment to end the use of glyphosate herbicides, and using an appropriate alternative solution, depending on the location. This could be an alternative form of weed killer, or in some locations an alternative approach such as not removing weeds. It also proposed working with other authorities and users to stop their use across the borough.

Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Commercial Services, highlighted how the Friends of the Recreation Ground had worked with Idverde to reduce the use of glyphosates. The proposals would ensure the Council took the lead on the issue and would influence other users.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) Colchester Council commits to cease the use of glyphosate herbicides, by a phased approach based on the nature of the sites where herbicides are used, the need to encourage biodiversity where possible, and the availability of alternative sustainable practices.

(b) Colchester Borough Council will work with other authorities, organisations and companies who use glyphosate herbicides within the borough to encourage them to cease their use of them.

REASONS

Cabinet considered that the recommendations from the Conservation and Environmental Task and Finish Group were a practical approach to ceasing the use of glyphosate herbicides.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to the Cabinet not to approve the recommendation from the Conservation and Environmental Task and Finish Group.

405 Highway Ranger Service

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

RESOLVED that Colchester Borough Council operates the Highway Ranger Service on behalf of Essex County Council for as long as they continue to provide current levels of funding for the Service as detailed in the Assistant Director's report.

REASONS

This would demonstrate progress against the Alliance Action Plan Priority of taking on services and budgets from Essex County Council.

By having greater control of the service it could be better integrated with other activities undertaken by the Council's Neighbourhood Services team.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

To not take on the service. This would make it more difficult to demonstrate progress against the Alliance Action Plan Priority of taking on services and budgets from Essex County Council. It would also be difficult to integrate the Highway Ranger Service with other activities in Neighbourhood Services.

406 Nomination for Deputy Mayor 2020-21

Consideration was given to the nomination for the appointment of the Deputy Mayor for the Borough of Colchester for the 2020-21 Municipal Year.

Councillor Barber proposed Councillor Robert Davidson for appointment as Deputy Mayor for the Borough of Colchester for the 2020-21 Municipal Year. He had served on Council since his election in 1998 and his collaborative approach to leadership would make him an ideal Mayor.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio for Strategy, and Councillor J. Young, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance, expressed their support for the nomination.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that Councillor Robert Davidson be nominated for appointment as Deputy Mayor for the Borough of Colchester for the 2020-21 Municipal Year.

407 Calendar of Meetings 2020-21

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

RESOLVED that:-

The draft Calendar of Meetings for the next municipal year from May 2020 to April 2021 be approved.

Authority to cancel meetings be delegated to the Chairman of the relevant Committee/Panel in conjunction with the Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate.

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.

The meeting rooms 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.

408 Progress of Responses to the Public

The Assistant Director, Policy and Corporate 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.

