

CABINET 8 July 2020

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

Also in attendance: - Councillors Bentley, Bourne,
Dundas, Hazell, B. Oxford, G, Oxford and Warnes

469. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

Councillor King (in respect of being a director of North Essex Garden Communities Ltd) and Councillor J. Young (in respect of being a substitute director of North Garden Communities Ltd) declared a non-pecuniary interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

470. Urgent item – North Essex Garden Communities Ltd

The Chairman announced that he had agreed to take an urgent item on North Essex Garden Communities Ltd. A report by the Strategic Director, Policy and Place, had been circulated to each member. The urgency arose as the Council as shareholder needed to confirm along with Essex Council, Braintree District Council and Tendring District Council its agreement to the recommendation of NEGC Ltd to commence the winding up of the company. Any delay would mean that the Council would incur additional costs if the item were to be delayed to the next meeting of the Cabinet.

Councillor Dundas attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. He explained that he supported the recommendation, but raised a number of detailed financial queries.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, indicated that he would respond in writing to the detailed questions. However, he stressed that the Council had a moral duty to pay its outstanding contribution towards NEGC Ltd and he remained confident that issues could be resolved without the need for legal action.

Ian Vipond, Strategic Director of Policy and Place, introduced the background to the report and explained that NEGC Ltd would stop trading from 31 August 2020. It was hoped that issues could be resolved without the appointment of a liquidator.

Councillor Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Customers indicated that the Council

needed at some point to review the performance of NEGC Ltd and the value for money it had provided and learn from the experience.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture, explained that the administration had been open and transparent on issues relating to NEGC Ltd and had kept members well informed as matters developed.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) the recommendation of the North Essex Garden Communities Ltd Board on 6th July 2020 to take all necessary steps to wind up the three Local Delivery Vehicles, namely Colchester Braintree Borders Ltd, Tendring Colchester Borders Ltd and West of Braintree Ltd, as set out in paragraph 4.29 of the Strategic Director's report, be noted.

(b) The Council, as Shareholder, take all necessary steps to wind up North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.

471. Have Your Say!

Richard Piatkowski addressed Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Remote Meetings Procedure Rules. He explained his concern about the speed with which the new "Garden Club" was being progressed. No residents had been consulted, and no notice was provided. The first most residents knew about this was via local forums and hearsay. This should not be a fait accompli. The proposals should be properly evaluated and considered alongside other proposals. Currently the plans were incomplete and therefore could not be properly considered. No agreement to proceed should be possible without making a robust plan available for consideration and scrutiny.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, and Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation, thanked him for his comments and explained that the proposals had been subject to detailed scrutiny. The administration had a good record of communicating with residents, particularly during the Covid 19 emergency.

Fabian Green addressed Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Remote Meetings Procedure Rules. He explained that the Roman Wall was a cherished part of Colchester's rich heritage and was one of the most significant features of the town centre. Not only was it a key asset to the tourism sector, but it was one of the few remaining Roman structures within the country and brought investment in many other ways. No one in Colchester wanted to see the Roman Wall put at risk in any way. However, leaving it in the hands of a private investor had so far proven that this could happen. Already the Middleborough part of the wall had been put at risk already, with billboards erected on stilts on top of the wall. Fortunately, however, the owners were recently told they had to take them down. The current owners of this section of the wall were selling it and providing the Council with an extremely generous offer which presented the Council with the opportunity to provide a cast-iron guarantee on its future protection and preservation. This would bring with it more opportunities, such as the chance to complete the lighting up of the whole of the Roman Wall.

He asked whether the Council given serious considerations to purchasing the section of the wall from the current owners, and if not what safeguards have been put in place to ensure that the wall will not ever be ruined or harmed in any way in the future?

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, explained that the Council had looked after the Roman Wall and would continue to do so. The Council had been speaking to the owners of this part of the wall and he hoped to be in a position to make an announcement soon.

John Akker addressed the Cabinet pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 5(1) of the Remote Meetings Procedure Rules to request that the Cabinet refer concerns about the Planning Committee's consideration of a planning application relating to development on Mersea to the Local Government Ombudsman. There was considerable concern that three members of the Committee who expressed strong objections to the application during the course of the debate had abstained in the vote. If they had voted against the application it would have been rejected. There was also concern about the way the Committee had been conducted and that misleading information had been provided. There was speculation that the Committee may have further information supplied to it in private and been put under immense pressure behind the scenes. Also, a legal opinion had been referred to but was not placed before the Committee for itself to consider. The Cabinet should refer these issues arising to the National Local Government Ombudsman for an investigation and report. This independent investigation would help restore public trust.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety responded and explained that members of the Planning Committee considered applications on the merits of the case and reached their own individual views on applications. Votes were not taken on party political lines. If there was evidence that other information had been given to the Committee improperly then this should be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

472. Housing Revenue Account: Financial Model and New Council Housebuilding Programme Updates

The Assistant Directors of Place and Client Services and Corporate and Improvement Services submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

Councillor Fox introduced the report which set out a £250 million investment in a new Council housebuilding programme over the next three years. This was based on the sound management of the Housing Revenue Account and the current low interest rates. It would lead to the development of 350 additional affordable homes across the borough and the redevelopment of Elfreda House. Other sheltered housing schemes were in the pipeline for redevelopment.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance expressed her support for the proposals and stressed the benefits to residents of the redevelopment of sheltered housing schemes.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The positive changes to the 30-year HRA financial model since the commencement of the 2019 “New Council Housebuilding Programme” as set out in the Assistant Directors’ report be noted.
- (b) Given the improved position of the HRA, additional proposals to increase and extend the “New Council Housebuilding Programme” that are described broadly in the Assistant Director’s report be explored through provisional feasibility work in the manner that is described in the report, in order to sample test the viability of different affordable housing delivery methods.
- (c) The more specific options identified for further phases of the “garage sites” and “sheltered housing”, “targeted acquisition(s)”, “town centre site” and “acquisitions” be actively pursued and taken forwards as soon as practicable; and through to their completion and future occupation wherever they remain considered viable.
- (d) Financial provision be made in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) New Council Housebuilding budget for 2020/21, up to £4.585million as set out in Section 10 of the Assistant Directors’ report and the accompanying not for publication Part B Report; and that future financial provisions should be included within the annual budget setting processes as required to continue to drive forwards the viable proposals and create a “pipeline” of housing development from 1 April 2021 onwards.
- (e) Work commence on a new HRA Asset Management Strategy and 30-year HRA Business Plan in 2021, which any progressed options will form a part of, and that these plans will come into effect from 1 April 2022.
- (f) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Place and Client Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing to appoint Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd (CAHL) and Colchester Borough Homes (CBH), where required, to help the Council progress any housing projects as set out herein.
- (g) Additional HRA expenditure in 2020/21 of up to £4.585million be approved as set out in paragraph 2.4, section 10 of the Assistant Directors’ report and the accompanying not for publication Part B Report, and authority be delegated to the section151 Officer to determine the split of funding of this additional expenditure between additional HRA borrowing and HRA revenue funding, which will be reported to Councillors as part of the regular financial monitoring of the HRA and Housing Investment Programme throughout the financial year.

REASONS

There is a national housing crisis and Colchester is no different to anywhere else in requiring more homes, especially with regard to affordable homes. The Council is already starting to tackle this issue directly through its housing company, Colchester Amphora Homes Ltd, and through borrowing within the HRA to deliver the “New Council Housebuilding Programme” (NCHP), both of which are beginning to deliver homes for local residents in 2020. The Council appears on course to meet its ambition to deliver 350 new affordable homes over 5 years set in 2019. However, this decision is required in order to make further progress in advancing more schemes; continuing to provide a pipeline of affordable housing delivery that will run over a longer period.

The proposals to increase housebuilding considers the positive changes to the borrowing rates available to the HRA that have improved its current business modelling for the NHCP. With the improved business model position, additional borrowing is affordable and more attractive, being absorbed prudently in financial terms. The budget provisions need to be made for any meaningful work to be undertaken before April 2021, in order to explore options, with only those that are then assessed to be viable to be taken forwards to planning and construction phases.

Even when the 350 homes target was set in 2019, the current NHCP was agreed on the basis that these may not be the only steps that were taken over the next few years, and this decision to pursue further schemes again demonstrates the Council's commitment to delivering high quality affordable homes for the local communities that would otherwise remain on our housing needs register.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Council could decide not to pursue individual projects, or not to pursue any of the projects at all; however this would not make the maximum use of the borrowing capacity that the Council has, consequently missing an excellent opportunity to provide even more affordable housing for those most in need; which is a key priority of the Council as set out in the Strategic Plan. Whilst not all of the ideas may prove to be feasible or viable, it is too early to make an informed decision on this without undertaking some investigative work.

473. The Award of Three Contracts for the Construction, Delivery 24 New Affordable Housing at Four Sites Across Colchester

The Assistant Director of 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 stressed the benefits to the local economy that would result from the award of these contracts. The Council had engaged positively with local firms and provided a pipeline of construction work as such firms emerged from lockdown,

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) To award a contract for the construction of 4 homes at Hardings Close, Aldham to the top-scoring contract at the value set out in the not for publication Appendix A.
- (b) In the event of any issues with the top-scoring contractor in decision (a) above, to award the contract to the next best-scoring contractor, at the value set out in the not for publication Appendix A.
- (c) Authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Housing to award a contract for the construction of 8 affordable homes at Military Road.
- (d) Authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Housing to award a contract for the construction of 12 affordable homes at Scarfe Way (6 homes) and Buffett Way (6

homes), Greenstead.

(e) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Place and Client Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to agree and implement all consequential contractual, legal, financial or other related matters for each of the above contracts once awarded and through to completion and occupation of the new homes.

(f) The (previously agreed) budget provisions required in 2020/21 and 2021/22 to deliver all 3 of the construction contracts and deliver the 24 new affordable homes be committed too.

REASONS

The Council has committed to deliver 350 new affordable homes over 5 years between 2019 and 2024 and these contracts deliver part of that commitment. The first contract has been through the full tender evaluation process and should be awarded to allow the works to commence in a timely manner, in line with milestones and project delivery objectives previously agreed by the Council. The subsequent contracts are still within the tender process but will shortly be ready to award.

The design and specification of each of the sites has met the required planning regulations and planning approval has been granted. They have then undergone detailed technical design phases prior to procurement. The contracts deliver much needed affordable homes to an agreed budget that is sustainable within the Housing Revenue Account.

The first contract will be awarded to a local company after a fair and open tender process. The Council has not delayed its procurement for the housing contracts in order to ensure it plays a leadership role in timely opportunity to offer employment to the local economy that is particularly important at this time due to the impact of Covid-19.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to agree the first contract and/or the request for delegated authority to appoint the forthcoming contractors; however, this would delay any award of a contract, which would in turn introduce delays to the project and delivery of affordable homes. This would not be consistent with previous intentions, or the strategic priorities of the Council and would result in more people remaining on the housing needs register, waiting for high quality affordable homes.

474. Waste and Recycling New Strategic Priority

The Chief Operating Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member together with the recommendation from the Scrutiny Panel meeting of 7 July 2020.

Councillor Goss, Portfolio Holder for Waste, Environment and Transportation, introduced the report. The proposals had been brought forward against the backdrop of a significant loss of income from revenue generating services. This had forced the Council to look at other ways of generating income. The collection of garden waste was a non-statutory service and 65% of Councils charged for its collection. In addition it had been proposed to

introduce wheeled bins where appropriate for the collection of garden waste only, due to the number of muscular-skeletal injuries suffered by waste collection staff handling garden waste in sacks. The administration had actively sought pre-scrutiny on the proposals. Whilst the administration did not want to introduce charges for the service, in view of the financial position difficult decisions needed to be taken. However, the administration was content to accept the recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel and not proceed with the recommended decisions in the Chief Operating Officer's report.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, stressed that the Council did need to look at alternative sources of income. The support received from government to help deal with loss of income from the Covid 19 emergency had been less than anticipated. The Panel's recommendations were welcomed although it was considered that they should be reordered.

Councillor Bentley, Chair of Scrutiny Panel, attended and addressed Cabinet to present the recommendations from the Scrutiny Panel. The Panel had welcomed the opportunity to pre-scrutinise the proposals and had given them very careful consideration. Some inaccuracies in the report had been highlighted and the Panel had put forward a considered set of recommendations for Cabinet to consider.

Councillor Bourne attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. The proposed charges were unpopular and residents would not want to pay for a service which had previously been provided for free. What was of particular concern was that the lack of support for vulnerable residents and residents with low income and therefore the Panel considered the proposal needed a fundamental review. Closing the budget gap was a tough challenge which would require difficult choices. All Councillors had a responsibility to join in a mature debate about the future of Council services.

Councillor G. Oxford attended and with the consent of the Chairman addressed the Cabinet. In order for the proposed Task and Finish Group to undertake its task properly and for Councillors to take the necessary decisions it was important for Councillors to be provided with a detailed costed list of all statutory services and a detailed costed list of all the discretionary services the Council provides. This would help inform the debate and allow for a mature debate.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, indicated that this information was being collated by the Council's finance team. Councillor Cory indicated that all groups would be represented on the Task and Finish Group, which would report to Cabinet.

Councillor Lissimore attended and with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet to highlight her concerns about the proposals. She considered this was the introduction of wheeled bins by stealth. The IT systems used by the waste and recycling service needed further development before such proposals could be effectively introduced. It would also increase fly-tipping and bonfires, which was contrary to the Council's climate emergency resolution. In addition, the recycling site at Shrub End needed reorganising before such proposals could be introduced. Confirmation of future timescales was also sought.

Councillor Cory indicated that the Council had been seeking to work with Essex County

Council on improvements to the Shrub End site, but co-operation had not been forthcoming.

Councillor Cory and Councillor Goss responded to stress that the Task and Finish Group would include all parties. It would need to work quickly, and it was hoped it would be able to report within a month. It would need to look at all options and make a recommendation to Cabinet. The information on services that would underpin its work would be shared with all Councillors.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The recommendations set out in paragraphs 2.1 –2.3 of the Chief Operating Officer's report be withdrawn.
- (b) The following recommendations made by the Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 7 July 2020 be accepted:
 - (i) A pause be taken on the proposal to introduce changes to the garden waste collection service;
 - (ii) A cross-party Task and Finish Group be set up to review waste service costs and implications and to include representatives of all party groups;
 - (iii) Ward councillors be consulted on any proposed changes to the use of wheelie bins and specifically as to the identification of geographical areas where wheelie bin usage would or would not be appropriate.
 - (iv) Further exploration be made of the five-point response to Budget Recovery agreed at the June Scrutiny Panel meeting, including the forensic understanding of statutory and non-statutory service provision by the Council;
 - (v) Cabinet continue to lobby central government for a long-term financial settlement for the benefit of this council's finances and its residents.

REASONS

Cabinet had referred the proposals for pre-scrutiny and gave considerable weight to the recommendation from the Scrutiny Panel.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

To proceed with the proposals set out in the Chief Operating Officer's report or to proceed with the alternative options set out in the Chief Operating Officer's report, which were:-

Retain the current garden waste collection service. To continue as per the existing operating model. This will increase the Medium-Term Financial Forecast pressure in 2022/23 by a further £1.050m and this option provides no additional income or efficiency opportunities. The Council will accept the limited ability to improve performance and retain current levels of risk associated with staff wellbeing, financial sustainability, and service

resilience to external factors such as Covid-19.

Stop the collection of garden waste for all residents. Garden waste collection is a non-statutory service. Stopping the service would reduce expenditure by approximately £1m and will contribute to balancing the Medium-Term Financial Forecast. However, the Council will see a decrease in the recorded amount of recycling that the Borough produces, as residents look to either dispose of the garden waste within residual waste (black bags/bins) ending in landfill; an increased risk of fly tipping; and or an increased level of garden waste taken to the Household Waste Recycling Centres. It will also not provide any additional income opportunity and there may be increased revenue costs required to manage any increase in fly-tipped waste.

Provide a Garden Waste Collection Service. As set out in the report, but with no additional offers, services or added value. This option would be to provide a simple chargeable garden waste collection service only, for those wishing to use the service, which would be renewable annually, as set out in the report

475. Stanway Western Approach Community Facility

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

Councillor Dundas attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Cabinet. He welcomed the proposals to bring forward a new community facility in Stanway. It was badly needed as the current parish hall at Villa Road was permanently booked. It would be an impressive landmark building. The key issue would be finding a tenant for the building. Many of the potential tenants had been badly affected by loss of income in the Covid 19 emergency. Whilst Stanway Parish Council had indicated it may be prepared to take on the role, it would only do so if it had full control of the building and input into the final design. The Council needed to engage with the Parish Council urgently as they needed certainty as they began to plan and budget for the future, and so the Council could explore other options if necessary.

Councillor Lilley, Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety, indicated that the Council was keen for the Parish Council to take on the management of the facility and discussions with them would continue.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) Authority be delegated on this project to authorise spend, and make decisions related to procurement and the award of contract to the Assistant Director of Community in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety subject to confirmation that all the section106 funding are received, and the successful tender remains within budget.

(b) **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the estimated cost of the facility totaling £1.8m is included in the Council's capital programme.

(c) Approval is given to release the s106 funding detailed in Appendix 1 of the Assistant Director's report for this project once all sums are received.

REASONS

To shorten the decision-making process relating to section 106 spend on delivering a new community facility at Western Approach, Stanway.

To ensure the capital costs are included in the Council's capital programme.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

If delegated authority is not assigned, the project could fall behind timescales resulting in the loss of section 106 funds.

476. Request for Delegated Authority for the Award of the Contract for Parking Bay Sensors

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

RESOLVED that authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Communities, Wellbeing and Public Safety for the award of the contract set out in this report, for the supply, installation and maintenance of parking bay sensors at various locations in Colchester and Clacton.

REASONS

Initial funding for this project, which is coming from the North Essex Parking Partnership surplus funds, was approved by the Joint Parking Committee in January 2020.

The Council was unable to bring the decision to this meeting of Cabinet as there are more details to be finalised with Essex Highways. Traffic management will be a requirement and it is expected that being able to award this contract and to proceed with the project as quickly as possible will be beneficial in the current climate.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to delegate the powers requested as this would delay the decision and impact the ability to commence the scheme. The time/benefit balance would therefore suggest that delegation to the Portfolio Holder would be more effective and efficient use of Council resources, without introducing risks.

477. Review of Governance Arrangements

The Monitoring Officer submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Monitoring Officer's report be agreed.

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

(a) the proposals contained in paragraphs 5.1 (b), 5.3, 5.4 and 5.7 of the Monitoring Officer's report; and

(b) that in accordance with the provisions of Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 the appointments to the Governance and Audit Committee and the Environmental and Sustainability Panel for the remainder of the municipal year shall not be on a Group basis and membership shall be as detailed in the Monitoring Officer's report.

REASONS

The reasons for the decisions were as set out in the Monitoring Officer's report.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Not to make the changes suggested in this report however this is not recommended.

478. COVID 19 Finance Update

The Assistant Director, Corporate and Improvement Services, submitted a report a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and the recommendation in the draft minutes of the Governance and Audit Committee.

Councillor King, Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources, introduced the report and updated Cabinet on further funding that had been announced by the government. The Income Support Scheme would reimburse the Council for two-thirds of its lost income for this year. Whilst this welcome, it was less than initially promised. The potential losses in income from car parking, commercial rents and sport and leisure were highlighted. The scale of the challenge in terms of closing the budget gap needed to be recognised. The Council's strategy was to try and remain as a low tax authority and to avoid impact on the vulnerable. It was very difficult to raise income significantly at this point.

Councillor Cory, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, stressed that the human cost of the Covid 19 emergency must not be forgotten and highlighted the excellent community work that had helped Colchester deal with the crisis, He would continue to lobby central government for continued and better support for local government.

Councillor Luxford Vaughan, Portfolio Holder for Customers, drew attention to paragraph 8.2 and considered that the reference to the development of a Strategic Growth Development Plan Document was premature in advance of the Local Plan meeting on 14 July 2020. Councillor King responded and explained that it was appropriate for a financial report to work on the basis of assumptions and there was no question of the decision prejudging or prejudicing future decisions of the Local Plan Committee.

Councillor Higgins, Portfolio Holder for Customers, drew attention to the recommendation from the Governance and Audit Committee in respect of forecast dividend for Colchester

Commercial Holdings Ltd. This was forecast at £226,000, which was significantly lower than the previous year, as a consequence of the impact of the Covid 19 emergency on its income streams.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) The likely income impact on 2020/21 as set out in Table 1 of the Assistant Director's report be noted.
- (b) The revised 2020/21 Amphora dividend forecast of £226k as set out in Section 6.1 of the Assistant Director's report and as recommended by the Governance and Audit Committee be agreed.
- (c) To agree the use of £0.250m New Homes Bonus in 2020/21 to cover the Council's Planning Policy development costs as set out in Section 8 of the Assistant Director's report and *RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL* the release of £250k of the 2020/21 contribution for internal purposes, not to be transferred to NEGC Ltd, but for the Planning Policy team
- (d) Progress on the Budget Strategy for 2021/22 as set out in Section 9 of the Assistant Director's report be approved.

REASONS

The Assistant Director's report enables the Council to address the forecast budget pressure in 2020/21 and continue the 2021/22 budget process.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Council is obliged to balance its budget on an annual basis. There are no alternatives.

479. Financial Monitoring Report – Year End 2019-20

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 and highlighted the small deficits on the General Fund budget and the Housing Revenue Account. These were acceptable in relation to the scale of the budgets and considering the challenges brought out by the Covid 19 emergency at the end of the financial year. He offered his thanks to the Council's Finance team for their hard work and the quality of service they provided.

RESOLVED that the financial performance of General Fund Services and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the year 2019/20 be noted.

REASONS

The Assistant Director's report enables Cabinet to review the outturn position.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were proposed as the Council is obliged to report its outturn position.

480. Capital Outturn 2019-20

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 and highlighted a number of schemes of regional and national significance that were funded through the capital programme such as Northern Gateway.

RESOLVED that the 2019/20 capital outturn be approved.

REASONS

The capital programme is a key element of service delivery.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No alternative options were proposed.

481. Member Development Group Annual Report 2019-20 and Renewal of Member Charter Status

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 and stressed the importance of member development and the benefits that would accrue from the modest investment in member development. It was important that Councillors continued to invest some of their time in development, so they were better able to fulfill their duties and represent their residents effectively.

RESOLVED that:-

(a) The report of the Member Development Group on the work of the Group in the 2019-20 municipal year be received and noted.

(b) Reaccreditation for Charter Status for Elected Member Development be sought when the current period of accreditation ends in July 2021, but not to pursue Charter Plus at this stage.

REASONS

The Member Development Group is required to report to Cabinet on an annual basis. This provides Cabinet with an opportunity to review the work of the Group and the provision of

member development.

The benefits of Charter Status are that it demonstrates that the Council's member development processes are in line with good practice. This provides reassurance to current and potential members, and to other external inspections such as Peer Reviews. It also provides a reassurance to residents that their elected representatives are provided with effective support to enable them to undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

Cabinet could decide not to seek reaccreditation for Charter Status or to do so at the Charter Plus level.

482. Public Initiatives

Cabinet considered draft minute of the meeting of the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel meeting of 17 June 2020.

Councillor J. Young, Portfolio Holder for Culture and Performance, welcomed the proposal from the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel. It was sensible that the Panel look at the issue but any resulting proposals would have to be considered against other priorities in terms of resources. Tribute was paid to the work of Alderman Spyvee in providing interpretation boards for the Roman Wall.

RESOLVED that approval be given for the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel to explore the possible provision of additional information boards at heritage assets and sites of interest to visitors across the entire area of Colchester Borough.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

It was open to Cabinet not to agree the recommendation from the Policy and Public Initiatives Panel.

483. Amended Approach to Supply of IT Equipment

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

RESOLVED that the change from leasing ICT equipment to buying ICT equipment in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules be approved.

REASONS

The Council needs to invest to replace aging desktop and laptops and the market now dictates that buying is preferable to leasing whilst maintaining the benefits outlined in the previous Cabinet paper. The proposed approach continues to enable the council to refresh and standardise equipment within ongoing revenue budgets; ensuring always up to date, secure devices that are managed and secure, and support the Council's stated ways of digital working.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Council could lease new devices rather than buy outright, however this approach would now be prohibitive in terms of cost.

484. 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.

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.

485. Minutes – Not for Publication Extract

The not for publication extract from the minutes of the meeting of 3 June 2020 were confirmed as a correct record.

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.

486. Housing Revenue Account: Financial Model and New Council Housebuilding Programme Updates

This minute is not for publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person, including the authority holding the information).

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defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

487. The Award of Three Contracts for the Construction, Delivery 24 New Affordable Housing at Four Sites Across Colchester

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