

## **EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MINUTES**

**Committee:** Cabinet **Date:** 12 October 2017

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 7.55 pm

**Members Present:** C Whitbread (Chairman), W Breare-Hall, A Grigg, H Kane, J Philip, G Mohindra and S Kane

**Other Councillors:** R Baldwin, R Brookes, L Hughes and M Sartin

**Apologies:** S Stavrou and A Lion

**Officers Present:** G Chipp (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), C O'Boyle (Director of Governance), R Palmer (Director of Resources), D Bailey (Head of Transformation), S Hill (Assistant Director (Governance)), D Newton (Assistant Director (ICT and Facilities Management)), R Pavey (Assistant Director (Revenues)), P Pledger (Assistant Director (Housing Property)), R Wilson (Assistant Director (Housing Operations)), A Blom-Cooper (Interim Assistant Director (Planning Policy)), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), S Devine (Private Sector Housing Manager), G J Woodhall (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and J Leither (Webcasting Officer)

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### **45. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Leader of Council made a short address to remind all present that the meeting would be broadcast on the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

### **46. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Vice-Chairman, who had tendered her apologies for the meeting, the Leader of Council requested nominations for the role of Vice-Chairman.

**Resolved:**

(1) That Councillor J Philip be elected Vice-Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

### **47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Member Code of Conduct, Councillors C Whitbread, J Philip, W Breare-Hall, H Kane, A Grigg, G Mohindra and S Kane declared an interest in agenda item 6, Public Questions & Requests to Address the Cabinet, as one of the public speakers was a known supporter of the Conservative Party. The Councillors had determined that their interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

**48. MINUTES****Resolved:**

(1) That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet, held on 7 September 2017, be taken as read and signed by the Leader as a correct record.

**49. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

There were no verbal reports made by members of the Cabinet on current issues affecting their areas of responsibility.

**50. PUBLIC QUESTIONS & REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET**

The Cabinet heard from Mr M Quinn, Development Director at Quinn Estates, who made representations concerning the progress report on the Epping Forest District Local Plan.

Mr Quinn stated that his company had put forward a well thought out proposal for a stand alone Garden Village, including the provision of 40% affordable housing, at Memorial Park in North Weald Bassett. There was the possibility for many local residents to benefit from this proposal, as sports and recreation facilities were included as part of the plans and the site had excellent transport links. It was acknowledged that some local residents were concerned about the possible negative effects of the development on North Weald Airfield, but an independent assessment had discounted this as the site was not located in a rural area. Quinn Estates had a proven track record for the delivery of such projects, and the provision of community benefits as part of the developments. This proposal would enable the Council to address local needs, and would have significant support from local residents and sports clubs.

The Cabinet heard from Mr C Gossan, Chairman of Epping Youth Football Club, who made representations concerning the progress report on the Epping Forest District Local Plan.

Mr Gossan stated that he was supporting Quinn Estates and their proposal for a stand alone Garden Village at Memorial Park in North Weald Bassett. Epping Youth Football Club was currently faced with the situation whereby training sessions were being held at Upper Clacton Rugby Club, Thornwood, matches were held at the Recreation Ground on Stonnards Hill, Epping and the Clubhouse was in Lindsay Street, Epping. The Club aimed to keep children and teenagers off the streets and provide professional level football coaching for them. The proposal put forward by Quinn Estates for Memorial Park would improve the facilities available for the youth of Epping and ensure the future of the Football Club for a hundred years or more.

**51. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee reported that the Committee had not met since the last meeting of the Cabinet had been taken place. The next meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for 31 October 2017, where further scrutiny would be undertaken of the services provided by Barts Health NHS Trust at Whipps Cross Hospital, and Members were requested to submit questions for representatives of the Trust to answer at the meeting.

**52. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CABINET COMMITTEE - 14 SEPTEMBER 2017**

The Finance Portfolio Holder presented the minutes of the meeting from the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee, held on 14 September 2017.

The Cabinet Committee had made recommendations to the Cabinet concerning the quarterly update of the Corporate Risk Register. Other issues considered by the Cabinet Committee included: monitoring of the Key Performance Indicators during Quarter 1 of 2017/18; the Annual Outturn report on the Council's Treasury Management function and Prudential Indicators for 2016/17; the Revenue and Capital Financial Monitoring reports for Quarter 1 of 2017/18; and the Annual Governance Report from the Council's External Auditors.

**Decision:**Risk Management – Corporate Risk Register

- (1) That the revised Effectiveness of Controls / Actions and Required Further Management Action for Risk 2, Strategic Sites, be updated;
- (2) That the revised Key Date for Risk 4, Finance Income, be updated;
- (3) That the revised Existing Controls / Actions for Risk 5, Economic Development, be updated;
- (4) That the revised Required Further Management Action and Key Date for Risk 6, Data / Information, be updated;
- (5) That the amended Corporate Risk Register be approved;
- (6) That the revised Risk Management Strategy be adopted; and
- (7) That the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and subsequent Select Committees be requested to review the Corporate Risk Register at the start of each municipal year to ascertain whether all of the relevant risks had been identified and scored appropriately.

**Reasons for Decision:**

The Cabinet was satisfied that the Cabinet Committee had fully addressed all of the relevant issues.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

The Cabinet were content that the Cabinet Committee had considered all of the relevant options and that there were no further options to consider.

**53. HOUSING STRATEGY 2017-2022**

In the absence of the Housing Portfolio Holder, who had tendered her apologies for the meeting, the Leader of Council presented a report on an updated Housing Strategy for the period 2017 – 22.

The Leader stated that the Council's current Housing Strategy was out of date; a new Housing Strategy covering the period 2017 - 22 had been produced and was

attached as an Appendix to the report. Previously, production of the new Housing Strategy had been delayed pending the publication of the draft Local Plan but an annual Housing Strategy Key Action Plan had continued to be produced, with progress monitored by the Communities Select Committee. However, following the publication of the draft Local Plan, the completion of the first stage of the Housing Revenue Account Financial Options Review, and publication of the Government's Housing White Paper, now was an expedient time to update the Housing Strategy,

The Leader reported that the purpose of the Strategy was to assess the District's current and future housing needs and to set out the Council's approach to meeting those needs. The Strategy also set out the an overall vision for housing in the District, the Council's key housing objectives, and the aims and objectives relating to individual housing issues. The new Housing Strategy also included a Key Action Plan for the first year of the Strategy, which would be updated on an annual basis. It was proposed that progress with the Key Action Plan should continue to be reviewed by the Communities Select Committee every six months. The Communities Select Committee had been consulted on the Draft Housing Strategy, which they felt was a good quality and useful document, and therefore agreed to endorse and support its adoption.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning & Governance welcomed the new Strategy, and stated that it was a compliment to, and not in conflict with, the draft Local Plan. The Cabinet agreed that the Housing Strategy did require revising and fully supported the updated Strategy for the period 2017 – 22.

**Decision:**

(1) That, following the support and endorsement of the Communities Select Committee, the new Housing Strategy 2017-22 (attached at Appendix 1 to the report) be adopted; and

(2) That the Communities Select Committee be requested to continue to review future Annual Key Action Plans for the Housing Strategy prior to approval each year, and to review progress with Key Action Plans every 6 months, in accordance with its previous practice.

**Reasons for Decision:**

The current Housing Strategy was in need of updating, since the current Housing Strategy was produced 8 years ago, and it was accepted good housing and Local Government practice to have an up-to-date Housing Strategy.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To not produce an updated Housing Strategy;

To further defer production of an updated Housing Strategy; or

To have a different Housing Strategy to the one proposed.

**54. FLEXIBLE HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT GRANT**

In the absence of the Housing Portfolio Holder, who had tended her apologies for the meeting, the Leader of Council presented a report concerning the remainder of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant received from the Government.

The Leader reminded the Cabinet that the Council had received a new Government Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (the Grant), which was required to be ring fenced to be used on homelessness services, in the sum of £277,000 for 2017/2018 and would receive £313,000 in 2018/2019. The Cabinet had previously agreed a number of initiatives for the initial use of the Grant at its meeting held on 15 June 2017 (minute 10 refers). The Housing Portfolio Holder had held initial discussions with Officers and was now making further recommendations for the use of the remainder of the Grant. These included: reintroducing the Preventing Repossession Fund; providing additional placements at the Zinc Arts Project for homeless families; expanding the existing Housing Association Leasing Direct Scheme; and the appointment of an external company to provide specialist services to rough sleepers within the District.

The Leader reported that, furthermore, following the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 receiving Royal Assent on 27 April 2017, Officers had been informally advised that the Government was working towards a commencement date of April 2018. Under the Act, there would be considerable additional duties placed upon local authorities nationally to prevent and reduce homelessness. Due to the additional duties and the burdens being placed on authorities, the Government had announced that it would be providing further financial support to help meet with these new duties. Therefore, a further report would be submitted to the Cabinet should any additional grant be received from Government in order to provide financial support to help meet the new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The Cabinet felt that this was an excellent report which illustrated how the Council was proactive in dealing with the most vulnerable individuals within the Community. The proposal to place additional single child homeless family groups with the Zinc Arts Project was particularly welcomed.

**Decision:**

(1) That the remainder of the Government's Flexible Homelessness Support Grant be used as follows:

- (a) an additional £80,000 in 2017/18 and £80,000 in 2018/19 for further rental and damage deposit guarantee loans;
- (b) the re-introduction of the Preventing Repossession Fund with a budget of £40,000 in 2017/18 and £65,000 in 2018/19;
- (c) three additional single homeless applicant (or parent or couples with one child) placements at the Zinc Arts Project at a cost of around £3,000 for the remainder of 2017/18, and providing there were no concerns, a further 3 placements be made from April 2018 (making nine in total) at a cost of around £6,000 in 2018/19;
- (d) a budget of £8,000 in 2017/18 and £8,000 in 2018/19 to provide landlord incentive payments, in partnership with Genesis Housing Association, of £2,000 per property, paid on the basis that the property was available to the Council's homeless applicant for a minimum period of 2 years; and
- (e) an additional budget of £8,000 in 2018/19 to enable the appointment of an external company to provide specialist services to rough sleepers in the District; and

(2) That a further report be submitted to the Cabinet should any additional grant be received from the Government in order to provide financial support to help meet new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To consider the use for the remainder of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant received from the Government and agree initiatives for implementation.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To not consider the use of the remainder of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant received from the Government.

To agree alternative options for the use of the remainder of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant.

To not receive a further report on the use of any further Government Grant funding received as a result of the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

**55. EPPING FOREST CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU - EXTENSION OF FUNDING FOR DEBT ADVISORS**

In the absence of the Housing Portfolio Holder, who had tendered her apologies for the meeting, the Leader of Council presented a report to extend the funding of two Debt Advisors with the Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).

The Leader reminded the Cabinet that, at its meeting on 19 January 2017 (Minute 39 refers), the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee had agreed the funding of the Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau's two Debt Advisors for 2017/2018. The Bureau made a presentation to the Communities Select Committee in January this year on the use and outcomes of all the Council's grant funding. The Bureau had been due to make a further presentation at the Communities Select Committee on 7 November 2017 but were now unable to do so due to the resignation of their District Manager. Both the Housing Portfolio Holder and the Communities Select Committee agreed that a report should be submitted directly to the Cabinet in order to ensure budget provision was made in the next financial year for the two Debt Advisors.

The Leader stated that, bearing in mind the reductions in the overall national Welfare Budget, there was an increased need for residents to receive continued support around personal budgeting and debt advice. Such advice was very valuable to the Council in both keeping rent arrears low and preventing homelessness. It was therefore recommended that the Citizens Advice Bureau's Debt Advisors service should be extended for a further year from 1 April 2018, with funding of £37,800 from the Housing Revenue Account and £4,200 from the District Development Fund.

The Cabinet welcomed and supported the proposal, as the Council had supported the Citizens Advice Bureau in the District for a number of years now.

**Decision:**

(1) That the funding of the Epping Forest Citizens Advice Bureau's (CAB) two existing Debt Advisors for a further year be agreed from 1 April 2018 and funded as follows:

- (a) £37,800 from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA); and
- (b) £4,200 from the General Fund District Development Fund (DDF).

**Reasons for Decision:**

The funding of the Citizens Advice Bureau's two existing Debt Advisors for a further year from 1 April 2018 would provide support to residents with personal budgeting and debt advice, and assist the Council in controlling rent arrears and preventing homelessness.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To not agree to extend the funding of the Citizens Advice Bureau's two existing Debt Advisors for a further year from 1 April 2018.

To only extend the funding for one Citizens Advice Bureau Debt Advisor.

To provide funding for more than two Citizens Advice Bureau Debt Advisors.

**56. BUSINESS RATES REVALUATION 2017 - DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF SCHEME**

The Finance Portfolio Holder presented a report on the Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme for Business Rates, and the possibility of the Council participating in a pilot scheme for 100% Business Rates retention.

The Portfolio Holder informed the Cabinet that, in March 2017, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had announced a £300million funding package for Local Authorities to each devise a local discretionary business rate relief scheme for those facing an increase in their bills following the 2017 Business Rates Revaluation. The relief would be funded by the Government via a Section 31 grant under the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The Council's scheme targeted local businesses and applied a 65% reduction in the increase in bills for those businesses in 2017/18, with future amounts of relief reducing in the future in line with the Section 31 grant the Council would receive.

The Portfolio Holder stated that, on 1 September 2017, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) published an Invitation to Local Authorities in England to pilot 100% business rates retention in 2018/19. A possible application was currently being explored with other Essex authorities but the deadline for applications was 27 October 2017. As it would not be possible to seek approval for the detailed application from either the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee or the Cabinet before the deadline, delegated authority was requested for the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder, to determine this Council's participation in any Essex-wide application.

In response to questions from the Members present, the Portfolio Holder stated that there was currently no payback of Business Rates to the Government proposed as part of the 100% Business Rates Retention pilot, but consultation with the Government regarding the operation of the scheme was still in progress. The Council was also discussing the proposed split of Business Rates collected with the other Essex Authorities.

**Decision:**

(1) That, in accordance with section 47 of the 1988 Local Government Finance Act, the Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme be approved following the 2017 Revaluation as shown in Appendix 1 of the report; and

(2) That authority be delegated to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Finance Portfolio Holder, to enter into any Essex-wide application to become a pilot for 100% business rates retention.

**Reasons for Decision:**

A Discretionary Rate Relief Scheme had to be approved to enable the Business Rates relief to be awarded.

To provide a mechanism that would allow the Council to participate in an Essex-wide pilot for 100% Business Rates retention.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To vary the criteria for relief.

To not approve a policy and not award any relief.

To decide now that this Council did not want to participate in a business rates retention pilot.

**57. MODERN SLAVERY & HUMAN TRAFFICKING - TRANSPARENCY STATEMENT AND POLICY**

The Portfolio Holder for Safer, Greener & Transport presented a report on the Modern Slavery & Human Trafficking Transparency Statement and Policy.

The Portfolio Holder stated that modern slavery was prevalent across the United Kingdom (UK) and was a growing safeguarding concern for all local authorities due to its serious and often brutal criminality, in which people were treated as commodities and exploited for criminal gain. The true extent of modern slavery in the UK was unknown, but human trafficking particularly was an international problem and victims might have entered the UK legally, on forged documentation, although they could also be British citizens living in the UK.

The Portfolio Holder reported that there had already been a range of Modern Slavery cases identified within the District, including a recent and very serious case of slavery and child sexual exploitation, where the Council had worked with Essex Police and this had resulted in the arrest and conviction of several perpetrators. The Cabinet was, therefore, requested to adopt the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for the Council and the associated Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy in order for the Council to meet its legal obligations.

The Cabinet was appalled that these activities could happen within the District. However, it was acknowledged that this did happen and it was important for any suspicious behaviour to be reported to the right authorities. Therefore, it was essential for the Council to adopt the proposed Transparency Statement and Policy. It was noted that a training programme on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking for Members was being prepared by Officers, and the Leader of Council agreed to



include this item in his report to the Council at its next meeting on 1 November 2017 to further raise awareness of this issue throughout the Council.

**Decision:**

(1) That, in order to meet legal and moral safeguarding obligations, the Modern Slavery Transparency Statement for the Council be adopted, along with the associated Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Policy; and

(2) That this item be included in the Leader's Report to Council at the next Council meeting, scheduled for 1 November 2017, in order to raise awareness of this issue throughout the Council.

**Reasons for Decision:**

It was a legislative requirement for all organisations with a turnover of £36 million or more to have a Modern Slavery Transparency Statement.

As part of Section 11 Children's Safeguarding Audits and inspection of safeguarding relating to the Care Act 2014, all local authorities were required to have a range of policies in place which related directly to district level safeguarding. This included Modern Slavery, as it affected children, young people and adults of all ages and abilities.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

None, as this was a statutory requirement that the Council had to comply with.

**58. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME - HIGHLIGHT REPORT (AUGUST 2017)**

The Leader of Council presented a report outlining the progress made by the Transformation Programme during August 2017, and the planned actions for September 2017.

The Leader reminded the Cabinet that regular highlight reports on the progress of the Transformation Programme were presented to each meeting of the Cabinet. This was the monitoring report for August 2017 and covered progress for all chartered projects of Medium and High Risk Potential, as well as the key aspects of the Transformation Programme. Overall, progress indicators for 'cost', 'delivery / outcome / output' and 'benefits' were Green for this period. The status indicator for 'time' was reported as Amber to highlight that five actions (from a total of 71) were overdue when compared with planned timelines. Project and Programme Managers had actions in place to deal with any potential negative effects. Progress would be kept under review and it was anticipated that the status of the majority of these items would return to Green in the next report.

**Decision:**

(1) That the progress of the Projects and Programmes within the Transformation Programme for August 2017 be noted, alongside the planned actions for September 2017.

**Reasons for Decision:**

To inform the Cabinet of progress on the Transformation Programme, including workstreams, programmes and projects.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

No other options were available, as failure to monitor and review progress of the Transformation Programme and to consider corrective action where necessary, could have negative implications for the Council's reputation, and might mean that opportunities for improvement were lost.

**59. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning & Governance presented a report updating Members on progress with the preparation of the Epping Forest District Local Plan.

The Portfolio Holder informed Members of the housing need figure published by the Government for the District of 923 homes per annum, which was almost double the 514 homes per annum currently within the draft Local plan for the District. It had been proposed by the Government that this figure would be required if the Council's Local Plan had not been submitted for Examination in Public by 31 March 2018. Consequently, agreement was sought from the Cabinet for an updated Local Development Scheme, the high level project plan for the preparation of the Epping Forest District Local Plan. The proposed new scheme would supersede the earlier Local Development Scheme agreed in March 2017, with the preparation of the single District-wide Local Plan scheduled for submission to the Secretary of State for examination in March 2018.

In addition, the Cabinet was requested to authorise the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Governance to report directly to a special meeting of the Council in December 2017 on the proposed Regulation 19 Pre Submission Plan for publication. The Portfolio Holder stated that it was not clear at the present time exactly when the Examination in Public would be held, but it was expected to be in the Autumn of 2018. If all went well, then the Council would be looking to adopt the final Local Plan for the District in May 2019.

In order to meet this accelerated timetable, the Portfolio Holder stated that further funding of £706,440 in 2018/19 and £400,180 in 2019/20 would be required, and the Cabinet was requested to agree the necessary growth bids from the District Development Fund to be considered as part of the forthcoming budget setting process. This would amount to an additional £1,106,620 of funding over and above the estimated expenditure of £1,226,710 in 2017/18 and the previously agreed budget of £237,000 for 2018/19.

In response to comments and questions from the Members present, the Portfolio Holder stated that it would be possible for the Council to develop a sound Local Plan within the accelerated timetable; however, some non-essential elements would not get completed or would be completed in parallel with the essential elements. The Portfolio Holder assured the Cabinet that he would not bring forward a draft Local Plan for approval that was neither sound nor capable of being found sound by the Planning Inspector at the Examination in Public.

The Cabinet agreed that this was the right course of action for the Council to take in order to avoid the requirement for additional houses having to be built in the District.

**Decision:**

- (1) That the progress made in the production of the Local Plan be noted;

- (2) That the updated Local Development Scheme, included at Appendix 1 of the report, be agreed and published on the Council's website;
- (3) That expenditure from the Local Plan budget to date in 2017/18 be noted;
- (4) That District Development Fund growth bids be made in the sums of:
  - (a) £706,440 for 2018/19; and
  - (b) £400,180 for 2019/20 (£1,106,620 in total over the two financial years); and
- (5) That the Planning and Governance Portfolio Holder be authorised to report directly to the full Council at a special meeting in December 2017 on the proposed Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Local Plan for publication.

**Reasons for Decision:**

The Council was obliged under the Localism Act 2011 to prepare and publish a Local Development Scheme so that the public and stakeholders were aware of the likely timing of key stages of the plan making process.

The Council had to ensure that the Local Plan was sound and deliverable to meet the requirements of legislation and national planning policy, and also to ensure that future development was plan-led, sustainable and of a high quality. To ensure that the Local Plan would be sound and deliverable, it was vital that the production and implementation process was adequately resourced.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To not provide an update on the preparation of the Local Plan.

To not agree to amend the Local Development Scheme.

To not agree the additional funding identified for the Local Plan from the District Development Fund.

**60. OPERATIONAL & COMMERCIAL PROPERTY - PLANNED MAINTENANCE PROGRAMME 2016/17 - 2020/21**

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Technology & Support Services, who had tendered his apologies for the meeting, the Leader of Council presented a report on the Planned Maintenance Programme for Operational & Commercial Property for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21.

The Leader reminded the Cabinet that the Planned Maintenance programme for the Civic Offices, Other Operational Buildings and Commercial Property for the period 2016/17 to 2020/21 was approved in November 2016. Following this, the Council began its Transformation Programme which included a major service accommodation review. Consequently, an internal review of all proposed works on all properties that could potentially be affected by the review was carried out. Subsequently, a large number of proposed projects, especially relating to the Civic Offices complex, were deferred until the situation concerning transformation had been clarified. The report provided a summary of the major projects scheduled for this financial year, with more detailed specifics contained within Appendix 1 of the

report. All projects were within agreed budgets, although there could be an impact on future budgets due to increased ad-hoc repairs.

**Decision:**

(1) That the progress with the Facilities Management projects during 2017/18 be noted.

**Reasons for Decision:**

A report was regularly submitted to the Cabinet showing the status of planned and preventative maintenance at the Civic Offices complex and all operational buildings and commercial properties.

The Planned Maintenance Programme provided a structured way of ensuring that the Council's property assets were properly maintained and improved to meet Health and Safety requirements, statutory regulations, contractual obligations in respect of leases for commercial premises, customer demands and the long term protection and value of the authority's assets.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

To request further detailed information on any of the schemes summarised within the report.

**61. OAKWOOD HILL DEPOT, LOUGHTON - OUTTURN REPORT**

The Portfolio Holder for Asset Management & Economic Development presented an outturn report for the construction of the Oakwood Hill Depot in Loughton.

The Portfolio Holder reminded the Cabinet that, in order to achieve a vacant site to facilitate the construction of the Epping Forest Shopping Park, a number of the Council's operational services had to be relocated from Langston Road. This was achieved primarily through the construction of a new Depot on Council owned land at Oakwood Hill. The new Depot was commissioned in August 2016. As the defects liability period had now elapsed, and in accordance with the Council's financial Regulations, this outturn report advised Members that the final account for the construction of the Depot was in the sum of £2,590,043.64, which was in excess of the Tendered Sum, and any learning points for future capital projects.

With respect to lessons learned on the project, the Portfolio Holder stated that it was felt more consistency with respect to client requirements as a result of changing personnel, would have been beneficial. Similarly, whilst Stace PLC undertook the project management aspect, a client Clerk of Works on site might have been able to problem solve with the contractor more effectively, particularly with respect to a number of Health and Safety issues which, if unresolved, would have affected the safe operation of the depot once commissioned.

The Director of Neighbourhoods highlighted the major overspends associated with the project, which were listed in paragraph 12 of the report, of which the biggest was the additional £67,000 spent to provide an out-of-hours security presence. The contract to construct the Depot was let on a Design-and-Build basis, and there had been issues concerning ground protection and contamination. The changing of the Client Officers had been a far from ideal situation during the project, which would have been offset by the Council employing a client Clerk of Works on site. The

Portfolio Holder added that the Council originally thought that it had sufficient expertise in-house when the project began.

The Cabinet accepted that lessons could always be learnt from undertaking projects of this size, and the Council had gained an excellent building for use in the years to come.

**Decision:**

(1) That the final account for the construction of Oakwood Hill Depot in the sum of £2,590,043.64 be noted.

**Reasons for Decision:**

The Council's Constitution required that reports were prepared and submitted to the Cabinet on completion of all contracts where the final expenditure exceeded the approved contract sum by more than the lesser of 10% or £25,000. The increased cost of the construction of the Depot was £204,867, which represented an increased cost of 8.5% over the original tender agreed by the Council.

**Other Options Considered and Rejected:**

As the final contract sum exceeded the original agreed Tender by more than £25,000 (£204,867) then there was no other option under the Council's Constitution than to report the overspend to the Cabinet.

**62. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

It was noted that there was no other urgent business or consideration.

**63. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

The Cabinet noted that there was no business which necessitated the exclusion of the public and press from the meeting.

**CHAIRMAN**