

EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL CABINET MINUTES

Committee: Cabinet **Date:** 7 December 2017

Place: Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping **Time:** 7.00 - 9.10 pm

Members Present: C Whitbread (Chairman), A Grigg, H Kane, A Lion, J Philip, G Mohindra and S Kane

Other Councillors: R Baldwin, R Brookes, G Chambers, R Jennings, S Neville, A Patel, M Sartin, H Whitbread and J M Whitehouse

Apologies: S Stavrou and W Breare-Hall

Officers Present: G Chipp (Chief Executive), D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), R Palmer (Director of Resources), D Bailey (Head of Transformation), J Chandler (Assistant Director (Community Services)), S Hill (Assistant Director (Governance)), R Ray (Assistant Director (Private Sector Housing & Communities Support)), J Twinn (Assistant Director (Benefits)), R Wilson (Assistant Director (Housing Operations)), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), G J Woodhall (Senior Democratic Services Officer) and A Rose (Marketing & Digital Content Officer)

76. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Leader of Council made a short address to remind everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet, and would be capable of repeated viewing, which could infringe their human and data protection rights.

77. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Deputy Leader, the Leader requested nominations for the role of Vice-Chairman for the meeting.

Resolved:

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

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Pursuant to the Council's Member Code of Conduct, Councillor R Jennings declared an interest in agenda item 13, People Strategy Common Operating Model Budget Provision, as the Councillor was a Deputy Chairman of a Local Government Association Board. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

(b) Pursuant to the Council's Member Code of Conduct, Councillor R Jennings declared an interest in agenda item 20, Behavioural Insights Project, as the Councillor was a Deputy Chairman of a Local Government Association Board. The Councillor had determined that his interest was non-pecuniary and would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

(c) Pursuant to the Council's Code of Officer Conduct, the Chief Executive declared an interest on behalf of all Officers present at the meeting in agenda item 13, People Strategy Common Operating Model Budget Provision, as the proposals could directly affect one or more Officers in attendance in the future. The Chief Executive had determined that, as no decisions had yet been reached regarding particular post holders, the interest was non-pecuniary and Officers would remain in the meeting for the consideration of the issue.

79. MINUTES

Resolved:

(1) That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet, held on 9 November 2017, be taken as read and signed by the Leader as a correct record.

80. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Assets & Economic Development

The Portfolio Holder reported that a number of safety issues had been raised at Townmead Depot in Waltham Abbey, following the completion of a Fire Risk Assessment, and Officers had been working to resolve these issues. At its meeting last week, the Audit & Governance Committee had requested that the Cabinet be notified of this, and the Director of Neighbourhoods would be reporting back to the Audit & Governance Committee on the progress made in February 2018.

81. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS TO ADDRESS THE CABINET

The Cabinet heard from Ms R Fricker, who made representations regarding the reinstatement of the Crèche at Loughton Leisure Centre.

Ms Fricker felt that the Crèche offered a vital service to primary carers in the area, and was always full when she herself had used the facilities while her children were young. The current users of the Crèche were disappointed with the way that the closure was being handled, and it was a surprise to learn that Loughton Leisure Centre would not have a Crèche facility in the future when the other three Leisure Centres would. Ms Fricker felt that a Crèche at Loughton Leisure Centre would be a real benefit to the area, especially with the growth targets outlined by the draft Local Plan.

82. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

The Chairman of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee reported that there had not been a meeting of the Committee since the last meeting of the Cabinet. It was highlighted that the next meeting of the Committee, scheduled for 9 January 2018, would have representatives from Transport for London (TfL) present to discuss bus services in the District. Therefore, if Members had any questions that they would like answered by TfL regarding their bus services within the District then could they please forward them to the Democratic Services Manager.

83. FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CABINET COMMITTEE - 16 NOVEMBER 2017

The Finance Portfolio Holder presented the minutes from the meeting of the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee meeting, held on 16 November

2017.

The Cabinet Committee had made recommendations to the Cabinet concerning the level of fees and charges to be levied for services in 2018/19. Other issues considered by the Cabinet Committee included: the performance of the Council's Key Performance Indicators during Quarter 2 of 2017/18; the Annual Audit Letter; the mid-year report for 2017/18 on Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators; the Quarterly Financial Monitoring reports; and the draft Continuing Services Budget, District Development Fund, and Invest To Save lists and savings updates.

The Finance Portfolio Holder highlighted the advice given to the Cabinet Committee that far more bulk commercial waste was fly-tipped than residential waste. The Director of Neighbourhoods confirmed that the vast majority of waste fly-tipped was commercial waste, although there were instances of residential waste being disposed of by contractors not licensed to do so.

Cllr Jennings expressed some concern over the increase in the Council's fee for a M.O.T. Test to £54.85; although the service at the Council Depot was excellent, Halfords were currently only charging £35 for a M.O.T. Test. The Finance Portfolio Holder explained that the relocation of the M.O.T. Test Centre to Oakwood Hill Depot had cost the Council money, hence a small increase (£5.85) had been levied to recoup some of the costs without harming the Service. The Council would review the situation for 2019/20.

Decision:

Fees and Charges 2018/19

- (1) That the value of the Consumer Prices Index as at November 2017 of 3% be used as a guide for any proposed increases of the Council's Fees and Charges for 2018/19;
- (2) That the proposed Fees and Charges for 2018/19, as set out in the Appendices to the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee held on 16 November 2017, be approved;
- (3) That the proposed schedule of Housing Revenue Account Fees and Charges for 2018/19 be approved;
- (4) That the Council's fee for a MOT vehicle test be increased to the maximum permitted VOSA charge, currently at £54.85;
- (5) That the discount rate of 50% for the Council's fees for bulk waste be applied to residents on housing benefits and those of pensionable age; and
- (6) That the long stay car parking charges in the Council-owned car parks be reviewed, in light of the changes to the charges levied by Transport for London at their car parks within the District.

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.

84. PROVISION OF A CRECHE AT LOUGHTON LEISURE CENTRE

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Community Services presented a report concerning the provision of a Crèche and the refurbishment of the Changing Village at Loughton Leisure Centre.

The Portfolio Holder reminded the Cabinet that there had never been a requirement for the Council's Leisure Management Contractor to provide a Crèche facility at Loughton Leisure Centre. There had also never been a purpose built Crèche at the Centre, and Crèche facilities had been provided in the small Hall, which was being redeveloped. Although the demand for the Crèche was not high, there were a small number of regular users, and it had always been made clear by Places for People Leisure (the Council's Leisure Contractor) that the Crèche provision would cease when the redevelopment of the Centre started.

Following concerns expressed by existing Crèche users at Loughton Leisure Centre, the Portfolio Holder had requested Places for People Leisure to provide a cost estimate for the provision of crèche facilities as part of the redevelopment of the existing site at Loughton Leisure Centre. It had been concluded that the only option was to provide a further extension to the building and this would cost approximately £325,000; there would be a further operational cost of £25,000 per annum to cover staffing. Given the relatively few users of the Crèche facilities at the Leisure Centre, the Portfolio Holder was reluctantly recommending that Crèche facilities not be provided in the future, as it simply was not cost effective.

The Cabinet had sympathy with the Mothers who had been using the Crèche, but the Council was not under a statutory obligation to provide this service and it would not represent good value for the Council to provide a Crèche facility for seven regular users. The Portfolio Holder informed the Cabinet that Loughton Library and Loughton Town Hall were considered as alternative venues for the Crèche, but neither venue was owned by the Council so there was no jurisdiction. The Director of Neighbourhoods added that Places for People and Officers had gone to considerable lengths to consider alternative venues, but none could be identified.

In response to questions from various Members, the Director of Neighbourhoods stated that the level of subsidy required from the Council would increase if the number of places available at the Crèche increased. However, the evidence indicated that it was the same parents who had used the previous Crèche each time. Places for People had agreed that the consultation exercise could have been performed better, and they were putting steps in place to improve their communication with users generally. Members concurred that the communication from Places for People to users of the Leisure Centre on this issue had been poor. Cllr Chambers, a local Member for Buckhurst Hill West, agreed that it would not be appropriate for the Council to fund a Crèche used by only seven parents, and that the Portfolio Holder had examined every option for an alternative venue.

Cllr Patel, also a local member for Buckhurst Hill West, expressed concern about the estimate within the report to provide Crèche facilities as he felt that some of the costs could have been absorbed as part of the redevelopment. Cllr Patel pointed out that Epping Sports Centre had a Crèche, and wanted to know why Loughton Leisure Centre could not also have a Crèche facility. The Director of Neighbourhoods

explained that certain key objectives had been set out for the new Leisure Management contract, which included the improvement of the existing facilities, and Places for People had put forward proposals for Loughton Leisure Centre which did not include a Crèche facility. There had never been a purpose built Crèche at Loughton Leisure Centre, it had been held in the small Hall next to the Sports Hall, and it was not possible to use any of the new purpose built utility spaces for a Crèche. Epping Leisure Centre was an old Drill Hall; there was space within the building to provide a Crèche facility but, again, it had not been purpose built. Loughton Leisure Centre had been built on a slope, so therefore it was not an easy location to redevelop, and advice had been taken from the Quantity Surveyors involved in the Project for the cost estimates that had been provided.

Cllr Patel was of the opinion that Places for People did not wish to provide a Crèche facility at Loughton Leisure Centre. Cllr Patel accepted that the Council had subsidised the charges for the relatively few users of the Crèche, but Places for People could have examined how the provision of a Crèche could have increased usage of the Leisure Centre; there was nothing in the report to illustrate this. The new draft Local Plan also referred to making provision to alleviate mental health issues – a Crèche could have been useful for this. The Director of Neighbourhoods commented that Places for People were a not-for-profit organisation who also had to face commercial realities. There had been no intention from Places for People to include a Crèche facility in the redeveloped Loughton Leisure Centre as they felt it would not make a financial return; it was unfortunate that a Crèche facility could no longer be provided. The Director acknowledged that a Crèche facility could benefit residents' health and wellbeing, but there would be an opportunity for many more residents to benefit from the new facilities being provided at the redeveloped Loughton Leisure Centre.

Cllr Brookes, a local Member for Loughton Roding, felt that a room should have been provided for use as a Crèche during the daytime and for other activities at other times. She emphasised the "This Girl Can" campaign being run by Sport England to encourage more women to regularly participate in active sport, and cited that a major reason discouraging women was the lack of childcare facilities available. The provision of a Crèche facility at Loughton Leisure Centre would have helped to alleviate this problem and would be a low cost intervention. The Cabinet was urged to take a longer term view over the twenty years of the current Leisure Management contract.

Cllr Philip (Planning & Governance) reminded the Cabinet that different centres had different facilities, and the Council could not guarantee that all facilities would be available at all of the different venues. It had not been an easy decision but it did not make financial sense nor was it worthwhile to provide a facility used by so few residents. Cllr Mohindra (Finance) added that the return on investment from providing a Crèche facility at Loughton Leisure Centre would be very low when only seven families used the facility on a regular basis.

The Portfolio Holder added that, as part of the health and fitness extension scheme at the Centre, Places for People were seeking a financial contribution to a major refurbishment of the Changing Village at the Centre, which would assist users with disabilities in particular. The continued high use of the Changing Village since its opening in 1999, and the lack of availability of spares, had meant that a longer term solution was now required. The capital cost of the Changing Village refurbishment would be £324,000, for which no revenue contribution would be sought from the Council.

The Cabinet welcomed the upgrade and refurbishment of the facilities for the Changing Village, which would also improve the facilities available for disabled people. However, the Finance Portfolio Holder cautioned the Cabinet that the Council's Capital budget was now restrained, and any further requests for Capital funding would deplete the available funds.

Decision:

(1) That, given the level of ongoing subsidy required for a relatively small number of customers and the alternative new opportunities being provided by Places for People, the provision of a crèche at Loughton Leisure Centre be not supported; and

(2) That provision be made in the Capital Programme in the sum of £324,000 for 2018/19 to fund the refurbishment of the Changing Village at Loughton Leisure Centre.

Reasons for Decision:

Any proposed provision of new Crèche facilities or investment in the Changing Village at Loughton Leisure Centre would have potential capital and revenue implications for the Council outside of the existing agreed budgetary framework.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

With respect to the provision of a Crèche, no other available suitable location had been identified either in or close to the centre.

To not refurbish the Changing Village; however, this could lead to a drop-off in participation as customer dissatisfaction increased and the condition of the area was such that it would require work in the medium term.

85. LOCAL COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2018/19

The Finance Portfolio Holder presented a report on the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19.

The Portfolio Holder reminded the Cabinet that, as part of the major changes to the Welfare Benefits system, from 31 March 2013 Council Tax Benefit was replaced by a scheme called Local Council Tax Support (LCTS). The LCTS Scheme had to be reviewed annually by the Council. A key principle of the scheme was the protection of people who were of an age where they could claim Pension Credit, and the Government had regulations in place to ensure that pensioners continued to receive the same level of assistance as they would have done if the Council Tax Benefit scheme was still in place. The Council could therefore only make amendments to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for people of working age.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the Pan Essex LCTS project group, comprising of all the billing authorities and the unitary authorities in Essex, was created in January 2012 to devise a modular approach upon which all Essex authorities could base their Local Schemes according to local needs. The precepting authorities of Essex County Council, Essex Fire Authority and Essex Police had been involved from the beginning of the project. The project was managed by the Benefit Managers under guidance from the Essex Finance Officers Association.

The Portfolio Holder reported that on 11 July 2017, the Cabinet had approved the general principle that the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19 should aim

to be cost neutral for the Council and that public consultation should be undertaken on the following three elements of the Scheme:

- (a) the introduction of six-month fixed period assessments for recipients of Universal Credit;
- (b) the disregard of Bereavement Support Payments to bring the Scheme in line with other welfare benefits and the Scheme's eligibility for people of pension age; and
- (c) to allow a decision made by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) concerning other benefits to be disregarded when it was clear that their decision was incorrect.

The Portfolio Holder advised the Cabinet that the consultation on the 2018/19 scheme was undertaken from 18 August 2017 to 27 October 2017. A total of 96 responses was received which, although disappointing, was an improvement on the 58 responses received the previous year, due to the advertising of the Consultation on social media. Overall, the responses received to the Consultation did not highlight any issues to give cause to reconsider the three proposed changes listed above. Following the consultation period, the Scheme now needed to be approved for 2018/19 and the Cabinet was requested to recommend the amended Scheme to the Council for approval.

The Cabinet noted that Uttlesford District Council always achieved a much higher number of responses to their consultation and it was enquired as to the reason for this. The Assistant Director of Resources (Benefits) stated that the consultation undertaken by Uttlesford District Council always coincided with one of their residents' Newsletters, which seemed to generate a higher response. The level of responses received by this Council to its consultation was at least on a par with, or better than, other Essex authorities.

Decision:

- (1) That the responses to the consultation on the scheme for 2018/19 be noted;
- (2) That the Scheme be amended to set six-monthly fixed period assessments for people receiving Universal Credit;
- (3) That the Scheme be amended to disregard Bereavement Support Payments in line with other welfare benefits and the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for people of pension age;
- (4) That the Scheme be amended to allow a decision made by the DWP concerning other benefits to be disregarded when it was clear that their decision was incorrect; and
- (5) That the amended Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2018/19 be recommended to Council for approval.

Reasons for Decision:

Due to various welfare reform changes that the Government had introduced, and also changes in Local Council Tax Support for people of pension age, it was proposed to make changes to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for people of working age from 1 April 2018. This would make the administration of the Scheme

easier, and in particular for people receiving Universal Credit, and it would align the Council's Scheme with other welfare benefits and the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for people of pension age.

If any changes were to be made to the current Scheme either for financial or other reasons, the Council needed to approve the final Scheme on 21 December 2017.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To not agree and recommend the revised Scheme to the Council for approval; however, if the Council did not approve any amendments to the Scheme by 31 January 2018, then the existing Scheme would continue in operation for 2018/19.

86. HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION ACT 2017 - GRANT FUNDING

In the absence of the Housing Portfolio Holder, who had tendered her apologies for the meeting, the Leader of Council presented a report on the use of further funding received as part of the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant from the Government.

The Leader reminded the Cabinet that, due to the additional burdens being placed on Local Authorities under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the associated Homelessness Code of Guidance, the Government had now provided Local Authorities with financial support to help meet with the consequences of the new duties. The Council had been informed that it would be receiving approximately £134,000 in Government Grant over a three-year period.

The Leader reported that it was recommended a new post of Homelessness Strategy Officer (1 FTE) should be created on a temporary contract for 2 years and 8 months from April 2018, funded from the total amount of the Homelessness Reduction Act Grant. The duties of the post would include:

- responsibility for undertaking some statutory homelessness reviews subject to the capacity of the previously appointed external company;
- reviews on other homelessness cases;
- dealing with the increasing number of MP's and Member enquiries on homelessness casework;
- liaising with the Customer Relationship Officer on the legal aspects of Step 1 and Step 2 Complaints and cases referred to the Ombudsman Service around homelessness;
- reviewing the Council's Homelessness Strategy and monitoring its Action Plan;
- training the Council's Homelessness Team on changes in legislation and policy; and
- managing contract arrangements with Bed & Breakfast Hotels and other organisations providing temporary accommodation to homeless applicants.

The Cabinet welcomed the proposals as it illustrated the Council was making full use of the Government grants available to it, and being proactive in providing assistance to those residents who needed help.

Decision:

(1) That in order to assist with meeting the additional duties introduced under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, a new Post of (1 FTE) Homelessness Strategy Officer be created on a temporary contract for 2 years and 8 months from April 2018

at a cost of approximately £134,000 (£50,300 per annum) based on Grade 9 of the Council's Pay Structure at mid-point subject to Job Evaluation including on-costs, funded from the total amount of the Government's Homelessness Reduction Act Grant.

Reasons for Decision:

To consider the use of the Government's Homelessness Reduction Act Grant funding which had been provided to assist the Council with meeting the new duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the associated Homelessness Code of Guidance, which would commence in April 2018.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To not consider the use of the Government's Homelessness Reduction Act Grant funding, or to consider alternative options, in order to assist the Council with meeting the new duties, under the new Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which will commence from April 2018.

87. CORPORATE PLAN 2018-23

The Leader of Council presented a report on the proposed new Corporate Plan for the period 2018 – 23.

The Leader stated that the Corporate Plan 2015-20 was the Council's current key strategic planning document. This Plan was based around the Council's medium term priorities for that period. The Plan had been reviewed and updated in response to feedback from customers, local businesses, partners, Officers, Local Councils and Councillors. This new Corporate Plan would run from 2018/19 to 2022/23 and set out the journey the Council would take to transform the organisation to be 'Ready for the Future'. This Plan sought to link the key external drivers influencing Council services, with a set of corporate aims and objectives, grouped under three corporate ambitions.

The Leader explained that the success of the new Corporate Plan would be assessed through the achievement of a set of benefits, focused on what the Council achieved for its customers. These benefits in turn were evidenced through a set of performance measures. A Corporate Specification for each year detailed how the Corporate Plan was being delivered through operational objectives, with these in turn linked to annual business plans.

The Cabinet felt that this was a very good and very important document for the Council. Cllr Philip (Planning & Governance) was pleased to note the improvements arising from the Plan being reviewed by each of the Select Committees, and felt the Benefit Maps were a useful addition. It was hoped that this Plan would run for the full five years.

Cllr Baldwin queried the figure quoted on page 4 of the Plan that 15,600 residents were happy with the condition of local roads; surely, this meant that almost 115,000 residents were not happy with the condition of local roads, and that perhaps this statistic should not be highlighted. The Head of Transformation responded that these figures had been obtained from Essex County Council.

The Leader of Council commended the Corporate Plan to the Cabinet and highlighted that the key elements were those sections which outlined what the Council was looking to achieve in the future. Cllr Mohindra added that a number of

these activities were not statutory requirements, and they were provided as a result of the Council being well run.

Decision:

- (1) That the Council's proposed new Corporate Plan for the period 2018/19 to 2022/23 be agreed, superseding the Corporate Plan 2015-20;
- (2) That the proposed Corporate Specification for 2018/19 be agreed;
- (3) That the Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and the Corporate Specification for 2018/19 be recommended to the Council for adoption;
- (4) That the Leader of the Council, in consultation with the Chief Executive, be authorised to agree any further changes to the Corporate Plan and Corporate Specification following its approval by the Council;
- (5) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees be requested to review the key benefits and performance indicator set; and
- (6) That, following consultation with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Select Committees, the Finance and Performance Management Cabinet Committee in consultation with the Head of Transformation, be authorised to agree further changes to the key benefits and performance indicator set.

Reasons for Decision:

The Council had ambitious plans for the future and a clear Corporate Plan was essential. This new Corporate Plan had reviewed and built upon the achievements of the previous Plan, and sought to set out a clear and cohesive view from strategic drivers, through aims and objectives, to benefits which measured real improvements for customers. This Plan would enable the Council to focus on what was most important to our stakeholders and sought to lay this out as a set of related performance measures, which collectively indicated how well the Council was delivering benefits to its customers.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To not agree the new Corporate Plan 2018-2023 and to maintain the previous Corporate Plan 2015-2020; however, the review of this Plan showed that it was now out-of-date, had key gaps and lacked clarity around linkages between drivers, objectives, outputs and benefits which would mean that the potential to make progress was not being taken forward and that opportunities for improvement were lost.

To request specific elements of the new Corporate Plan to be further reviewed, amended or removed, or new elements to be considered and included.

88. PEOPLE STRATEGY COMMON OPERATING MODEL BUDGET PROVISION

The Leader of Council presented a report on the budget provision required to implement the Common Operating Model, as part of the People Strategy.

The Leader reminded the Cabinet that the Work Streams included in the recently agreed People Strategy included reviews of the Council's current management structures and the overall structure of the workforce – known as the Common

Operating Model. Work had started on these projects and the Local Government Association (LGA) had been commissioned to recommend changes in the management structures using a tool called Decision Making Accountability.

The Leader stated that, in order to implement the new Common Operating Model, additional resources would be required and the Cabinet was being requested to approve the recommended budget provisions relating to redundancy and pension strain costs, as well as costs associated with the necessary recruit to stay assessments and appointment activity. There would also be associated costs with supporting employees to equip them with the best chance of finding employment and/or making the transition into retirement.

The Leader informed the Cabinet that the estimated redundancy and pension costs ranged between £1.77 million and £2.75 million which would achieve a reduction in the salary budget of £2.53 million. This range of numbers indicated that if all the changes were to take place at once the combined payback period would be between 8.4 months and 13.0 months. However, the actual costs and payback period would only be possible when the leavers had been identified and their dates of leaving agreed. Recruitment assessments and appointment costs were based on internal recruitment; if external recruitment were to take place for all or some of these roles then these costs were likely to increase.

Cllr Philip (Planning & Governance) commented that the Council valued its staff, and it was important to treat them with respect and consideration. The implementation of the Common Operating Model would make the Council more responsive to residents, a better place to work for staff, and this was the right thing to be doing. Cllr Mohindra added that the Council was seeking a culture change within the organisation, not cost savings.

The Leader also highlighted that the functions performed by the Council in the future would change, and the future capacity would need to be examined; the Council would need to build on the partnership working that it was currently involved with. Transformation was an ongoing project. The Chief Executive emphasised that there were eight Directors when he joined, and now there were five. There was no intention to cut services, the Council would look to use technology to better respond to the needs of residents, and reduce the current number of management levels. The report before the Cabinet simply requested that provision be made in the budget for 2018/19, further reports on the new structure would come forward in the future.

Cllr Brookes expressed some concern that not all of the redundancies would be voluntary, and enquired as to why Aylesbury Vale District Council was being procured for advice on the 'recruit to stay' process. The Chief Executive advised that Aylesbury Vale District Council had already successfully gone through this process in a proactive way, and their advice was being sought, not their particular structure. The Cabinet endorsed this approach of using another Council to provide advice and expertise rather than a more expensive private sector company.

Decision:

(1) That a provision of £2million be included in the Budget for 2018/2019 for redundancy and pension strain costs, as well as support for recruitment activity and outplacement services to facilitate the implementation of the Common Operating Model;

(2) That Section 10 of the Council's Procurement Rules be waived to enable Aylesbury Vale District Council to be the Council's Nominated Supplier for the

provision of advice on the 'recruit to stay' process and necessary assessments;

(3) That Solace be appointed as the Council's Nominated Supplier for the provision of recruitment advice to the Senior Management Selection Panel;

(4) That Section 10 of the Council's Procurement Rules be waived to enable Hays to be the Council's Nominated Supplier for the provision of outplacement services;

(5) That a detailed report setting out proposals for the senior management structure be submitted to Cabinet in March 2018 by the Chief Executive; and

(6) That a Portfolio Holder Advisory Group be established for overseeing the Common Operating Model.

Reasons for Decision:

To approve the associated funds for the 2018/19 Council budget for redundancy and pension strain costs, as well as the recruit to stay programme and outplacement costs to facilitate the implementation of the Council's new Common Operating Model.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To delay the allocation of funds until the detailed model was agreed. However, this would mean that the allocation of financial resources would be fragmented and inefficient as several reports would be required through the process, potentially causing time delays to fit with the Committee cycle.

89. TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME MONITORING REPORT - OCTOBER 2017 AND TRANSFORMATION BUDGET

The Leader of Council presented a report outlining the progress made by the Transformation Programme during October 2017, alongside the planned actions for November 2017, and to make budgetary provision for the Transformation Programme in 2018/19.

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 October 2017 and covered the progress made for all chartered projects of Medium and High Risk Potential, as well as key aspects of the Transformation Programme. The Cabinet noted that, overall, progress indicators for 'cost' and 'benefits' were Green for this period. The status indicator for 'time' was reported as Red to highlight that 3 actions (from a total of 94) were overdue and 1 project was overdue on its deadline, 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.

The Leader stated that the Corporate Plan for 2018-23 described the Council's ambitious plans for the next five years, including transforming the way the Council conducted its business, and interdependent programmes to transform the Council's use of technology, accommodation, people and customer service. Consequently, budgetary provision for the ongoing work of the Transformation Team needed to be set for 2018/19. The Team supported and co-ordinated these programmes and around 45 projects across the organisation. The recent final report of the Transformation Programme Task and Finish Scrutiny Panel had concluded that the

work of the team had contributed to significant improvements to the successful delivery of change for the Council. A top-up of the funding available for process mapping and organisational redesign was recommended as, without continued support, the Council risked being unable to deliver on the ambition expounded by the Corporate Plan.

The Leader reported that it was important to track any changes to customer satisfaction from the established baseline, in order to assess the impact of the Transformation Programme and in particular the Customer Services Programme on our residents. Undertaking an annual customer satisfaction survey would enable the Council to measure its performance against the key benefit of the Corporate Plan to put the customer at the heart of the Council's services. In addition, the current Senior Project Improvement Officer had resigned from the Council's employ and a replacement would be required. In the event that an internal secondment was not possible then it was intended to advertise the role externally on a two-year fixed term contract.

Finally, the Leader added that the Invest to Save reserve was established within the General Fund in 2015/16 to support innovation, where business cases would reduce the Continuing Services Budget (CSB) in future years following an investment to 'do things differently' or generate income. So as to present a coordinated approach to managing change, remove unnecessary duplication and effectively manage the delivery of benefits, it was recommended that the Invest to Save funding be realigned and brought within the auspices of the Transformation Programme.

The Cabinet agreed that it was sensible to incorporate the 'Invest To Save' fund within the Transformation Programme and to align it with the aim and objectives of the new Corporate Plan. The Director of Resources advised that the projected £1.1million annual saving in Building Maintenance costs would be generated by the overall reduction in the size of the Council's estate.

Decision:

- (1) That the progress of the Projects and Programmes within the Transformation Programme for October 2017 be noted, alongside the planned actions for November 2017;
- (2) That a District Development Fund bid in the sum of £135,000 be made to support process mapping and organisational redesign activity within Transformation projects;
- (3) That a Continuing Services Budget growth bid in the sum of £20,000 be made to commission the annual customer satisfaction survey, with the understanding that appropriate compensatory savings within the Continuing Services Budget would be found;
- (4) That a District Development Fund bid in the sum of £59,000 be made to re-establish the Senior Project Improvement Officer, 24 months fixed-term at Grade 9, if an internal secondment exercise was not successful at filling the forthcoming vacancy; and
- (5) That the Council's Invest to Save fund be brought within the auspices of the Transformation Programme and realigned to match the aims and objectives of the Corporate Plan.

Reasons for Decision:

To inform the Cabinet of the progress with the Transformation Programme, including work streams, programmes and projects.

The ambition of the Council for its Transformation Programme was large and complex, and the delivery of the programme would continue to progress apace through 2018 and 2019, with the need to undertake detailed analysis and implement change to business processes. Therefore, there was a continuing need for the current resource within the Transformation and Customer Service Teams as well as for fixed-term dedicated resources to complete specific work.

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.

To undertake satisfaction monitoring in-house. However, to ensure that the evidence base was robust, the survey had to be conducted with a demographically representative group of residents. The Council did not hold the necessary customer data in order to achieve this; the data that was held was fragmented across numerous systems and without gaining resident's permission to use their information for this type of work, under the Data Protection Act or forthcoming General Data Protection Regulation, the Council was prevented from accessing it for the purpose of surveying.

90. CAPITAL REVIEW 2017/18 - 2021/22

The Finance Portfolio Holder presented a report on the Capital Review for the period 2017/18 to 2021/22.

The Portfolio Holder outlined the Council's Capital Programme for the five year period 2017/18 to 2021/22. It included the forecast capital investment in Council owned assets; estimates of capital loans to be made for private housing initiatives; and projected levels of revenue expenditure funded from capital under statute. The Capital Programme had been prepared by updating the Programme approved in February 2017, amended for any slippage and re-phasing approved in June 2017, as well as new schemes and allocations approved by the Cabinet subsequently.

The Portfolio Holder stated that the allocations included in 2017/18 and 2018/19 represented approved sums for capital schemes which the Council was committed to deliver. Allocations given for the years 2019/20 to 2021/22 represented forecast sums as a guide to future capital investment, and the schemes to which they related would require Cabinet approval before going ahead. The projects already approved within the Capital Programme had been reviewed and Spending Control Officers had reassessed the estimated final costs and the phasing of expenditure profiles for each scheme as part of the Capital Review. Recommendations had been made to make amendments as appropriate.

The Portfolio Holder reported that the Council's overall programme of capital expenditure was summarised for each Directorate in Appendix 1 of the report and forecasted an investment of £111,663,000 in Council-owned assets over the five year period. Details of individual schemes or groups of projects were shown at Appendix 2 of the report for the General Fund Capital Programme and an analysis of works into

specific categories was shown at Appendix 3 of the report for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme. Appendix 1 also disclosed the Council's forecast to finance capital loans of £14,803,000 and planned expenditure of £735,000 - which was classified as revenue expenditure but which could be financed from capital resources, over the five year period. Analyses of these figures were given in Appendices 4 and 5 of the report respectively.

The Portfolio Holder informed the Cabinet that Appendix 1 of the report also detailed the proposed sources of funding for the Capital Programme over the five-year period from 2017/18 to 2021/22, based on maximising the funding available to finance each scheme. Estimated external funding from grants and private sources of £1,011,000 had been identified, and it was proposed that capital receipts of an estimated £20,193,000 and direct revenue funding of an estimated £77,614,000 be applied to finance the Capital Programme over the next five years. It was forecast that external borrowing of an estimated £28,382,000 would be necessary to support the Council's investments in new developments within the General Fund. The estimated level of capital resources available now and in the future were given in Appendix 6 of the report.

The Portfolio Holder concluded that, in summary, the balance of capital receipts was expected to increase from £0 as at 1 April 2017 to £2,069,000 by 31 March 2022, and the balance on the Major Repairs Fund was expected to decrease from £12,705,000 as at 1 April 2017 to £5,882,000 by 31 March 2022.

When questioned by Cllr Baldwin regarding the delay of the Torrington Drive Off-Street Parking Scheme, and in particular that the spaces might not be required after the completion of the Debden Parking Review, the Portfolio Holder stated that he would provide a written reply to the Councillor after the meeting. The Cabinet welcomed the report.

Decision:

- (1) That the latest five-year forecast of capital receipts be noted;
- (2) That the intention to spend all usable capital receipts in their year of receipt, where possible, be approved;
- (3) That external borrowing of an estimated £28,382,000, necessary to support the General Fund Capital Programme, be noted;
- (4) That the following amendments to the Capital Programme be recommended to the Council for approval:
 - (a) a supplementary capital estimate in the sum of £741,000 for the Epping Forest Shopping Park development;
 - (b) a supplementary capital estimate in the sum of £52,000 for the surrender of a lease by Glyn Hopkins Ltd in Waltham Abbey; and
 - (c) a supplementary capital estimate in the sum of £20,000 for the installation of CCTV systems in Council-owned car parks during 2017/18;
- (5) That the following additional amendments to the Capital Programme be approved:

- (a) an additional allocation in the sum of £161,000 for Grounds Maintenance vehicles in 2018/19;
- (b) an additional allocation in the sum of £13,000 for Flood Alleviation Schemes in 2018/19;
- (c) an additional allocation in the sum of £350,000 for further investment in the superfast broadband network in 2019/20, subject to a further report to the Cabinet upon completion of the tender process;
- (d) the identified savings in the sum of £308,000 for 2017/18 and in the sum of £24,000 for 2018/19 for General Fund projects;
- (e) virements in 2017/18 in respect of:
- (i) £48,000 within the General Fund Car Parking allocation to upgrade to LED lights from the Lee Valley Car Park and 4G Pay-and-Display installation budgets; and
 - (ii) £15,000 to CCTV systems from Planned Maintenance and Flood Alleviation Schemes budgets;
- (f) the identified additional allocations, savings and virements in respect of the Council's Housebuilding and Conversion Programme and other Housing Revenue Account capital schemes;
- (g) carry forwards totalling £1,956,000 from 2017/18 to 2018/19 in respect of the General Fund Capital schemes listed below:
- | | | |
|--------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| (i) | Planned Maintenance | £583,000; |
| (ii) | General ICT | £101,000; |
| (iii) | Hillhouse Development | £130,000; |
| (iv) | Town Mead Depot | £130,000; |
| (v) | Car Parking Schemes | £161,000; |
| (vi) | NWA Vehicle Compound | £12,000; |
| (vii) | Flood Alleviations Schemes | £19,000; |
| (viii) | CCTV Systems | £57,000; |
| (ix) | Housing Estate Parking Schemes | £510,000; and |
| (x) | Parking Review Schemes | £253,000; |
- (h) carry forwards totalling £5,553,000 from 2017/18 to 2018/19 in respect of the Housing Revenue Account Capital schemes listed below:
- | | | |
|------|--------------------|-------------|
| (i) | New Housebuilding | £3,207,000; |
| (ii) | Structural Schemes | £475,000; |

- (iii) Housing Estate Parking Schemes £431,000;
- (iv) Oakwood Hill Estate £200,000;
- (v) Oakwood Hill Depot £1,090,000; and
- (vi) Front Door Replacements £150,000; and

(i) in respect of Ground Maintenance vehicles within the General Fund, a sum of £10,000 to be brought forward to 2017/18.

Reasons for Decision:

The Capital Programme was based on decisions already approved by the Cabinet. The expenditure profiles were based on Member agreed timescales and practical considerations. The proposed decisions were intended to make the best use of the capital resources currently available and forecast to become available for capital schemes to 2021/22.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To reduce the General Fund and/or Housing Revenue Account Capital Programmes by re-considering the inclusion of some new schemes or re-assessing the inclusion of some existing schemes. However, the revenue consequence of reducing the level of capital and revenue balances over the next five years would be to reduce investment income, whilst at the same time external borrowing would result in increased revenue costs in the form of interest charges.

With regard to financing the General Fund and HRA Capital Programmes, there were a number of options available; however, the level of direct revenue funding had been set at a high enough level to reduce the need for external borrowing. These contributions could be reduced by increasing the levels of external borrowing, but the suggested revenue contributions were affordable within the General Fund and HRA, according to current predictions, and the cost of increased borrowing would ultimately result in higher net interest charges.

91. RESOURCING THE DELIVERY OF THE LOCAL PLAN

The Portfolio Holder for Planning & Governance presented a report on resourcing the delivery of the Local Plan.

The Portfolio Holder reminded the Cabinet that, as a result of the publication of the Government's proposed standardised methodology for the assessment of housing need, the Council had decided to bring forward the publication of the Regulation 19 Plan to December 2017, in order to ensure submission of the final Plan for Examination in Public before the end of March 2018.

The Portfolio Holder stated that, in order for the new Local Plan to be found sound at the Examination in Public, the Planning Inspector would need to be assured that the Plan was capable of being practically delivered. Key to this was the partnership approach for the development of major sites through masterplanning. This was an approach that the Council had previously agreed. Arising from a skills audit of the Council's current capacity, a need for additional resources had been identified in order that personnel with the appropriate skills and experience could be recruited to commence this important work. It was proposed that a new Strategic Sites

Implementation Team be recruited, consisting of the following roles with the indicative grades being subject to job evaluation:

- (i) Implementation Manager – Grade 10;
- (ii) Principal Planning Officer – Grade 9;
- (iii) Development Surveyor – Grade 9;
- (iv) Urban Designer – Grade 9;
- (v) Land Drainage Engineer – Grade 8; and
- (vi) Countryside/Conservation Assistant – Grade 5.

The Portfolio Holder proposed that the location of the new team within the Council's management structure be determined during the implementation of the recently agreed People Strategy.

Cllr J M Whitehouse commented that having a team in place at the Council would be a better alternative than having to rely on Consultants to perform the work, although there could be recruitment difficulties if these posts were for a two-year fixed term. The Portfolio Holder responded that the process of implementing the Local Plan would not cease after two years, and it was expected that more staff would be needed in the future. However, this was the best estimate of the resources required at the current time by the Council to implement the Local Plan. The Cabinet could expect a report to be submitted to a future meeting to revise the Team when it was clearer what resources were required, and for the team to ultimately be cost neutral to the Council.

The Cabinet fully supported the proposals, especially as there was a need to develop a number of masterplans to implement certain elements of the Local Plan. The Portfolio Holder explained that Planning Officers were becoming available; however, a future request for market supplements could not be ruled out as commercial companies paid higher rates, as did companies and authorities based in London, which was adjacent to the District. It was reiterated that the recruitment of these resources would assist the Council in having its draft Local Plan being found as 'sound' at the Examination in Public, as it would demonstrate that the Council was capable of implementing the Local Plan.

Decision:

- (1) That the establishment of a Strategic Sites Implementation Team be agreed to ensure the effective delivery of the required growth in housing and employment with supporting infrastructure, as proposed in the new Local Plan;
- (2) That a District Development Fund bid be made for two years in the sum of £278,010 per annum for 2018/19 budget, subject to review in 2019/20 for the 2020/21 budget once the ongoing revenue requirements were fully established, taking into consideration income streams realised;
- (3) That suitable Job Descriptions be developed and Job Evaluation undertaken to enable recruitment to commence for the new roles as soon as possible after resourcing agreed, in order to demonstrate commitment and progress at the Examination in Public; and

(4) That the location of the new Strategic Sites Implementation Team within the Council's management structure be determined as part of the Council's new People Strategy.

Reasons for Decision:

Up until this point, the Council's resources had been focused on the production of the policies and proposals which formed the Draft Local Plan. It was now necessary to prepare for how the Plan would be delivered once it was approved, and this would need to be commenced in advance of the proposed Examination In Public to provide assurance to the Planning Inspector that the Council could deliver growth and supporting infrastructure in the timescales indicated.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To utilise external consultants as an alternative approach to the recruitment of in-house expertise. However, this approach would be more expensive, less flexible and tie up scarce resource in the management and procurement of the work.

92. PROPOSAL FOR INCREASED POLICING OR UNIFORMED PRESENCE IN THE DISTRICT

The Portfolio Holder for Safer, Greener & Transport introduced a report on a proposal for increased Policing or a uniformed presence in the District.

The Portfolio Holder stated that, over the last 18 months, the Council had seen a significant increase in the number of youth nuisance incidents in the District and cases of general anti-social behaviour (ASB) amounting to 10% more than in the previous year. In addition, the level of recorded crime and violence had increased. It appeared that this had been as a result of the reduction in Essex Police resources from 2015/16, which had seen the number of Community Police Officers in the Epping Forest District reduced by about 50%; as well as the sale of Waltham Abbey police station and the proposed sale of Epping and Ongar police stations, along with the closure of custody and front office facilities at Loughton Police Station.

The Portfolio Holder reported that recent examples of the escalation in serious youth nuisance and ASB problems included incidents over Halloween in Waltham Abbey and Epping, where large groups of young people had behaved in intimidating and threatening ways, which had led to the Council's Community Safety Team using a range of powers including closure orders, injunctions and Community Protection Notices (CPNs). Although these particular issues had been addressed very well by the Council's Community Safety Team, working closely with the Community Policing Team, there was a real problem across the whole of the District and this had caused unrest and concern amongst many of the District's communities.

The Portfolio Holder and the Leader of Council had requested that potential options to address these ongoing issues in the District be investigated and the following potential options had been identified:

- (i) to commission a private security company who were accredited by the local Police Service under the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme (CSAS) (Uniformed Organisation) to undertake regular patrolling and targeted work;

- (ii) to pay for a number of additional Police Officers for the District, who would be employed by Essex Police, but tasked through the Council's Community Safety Team in conjunction with the local Police Inspector; and
- (iii) a hybrid of options (i) & (ii) above, plus provision of a range of youth engagement work.

The Cabinet was requested to agree that further discussions be undertaken with Essex Police to determine the implications of the Council funding additional Police Officers for the District, and that as a short term measure Parkguard security company be engaged to provide regular, uniformed patrolling of the District during January, February and March 2018. This would require the Council to agree a supplementary estimate from the District Development Fund for £25,000 and further budgetary provision to be made for 2018/19.

The Cabinet generally supported the proposed measures, and although it was accepted that this was not an ideal solution, it was accepted that something had to be done to counter the problems currently being experienced. It was highlighted that Parkguard, when employed at Limes Farm in Chigwell, had not only patrolled the streets but had also supported the local youth. They had also provided reassurance to residents when they had patrolled the streets of Waltham Abbey. The temporary employment of Parkguard would also give Officers further time to discuss longer-term measures with Essex Police. There was clearly a demand for such measures throughout the District, and residents might even be happy to pay a little extra Council Tax for the increased peace of mind.

There were some concerns expressed that Essex Police would reduce its own provision of resources throughout the District if the Council started to fund additional Policing, and that the Council could be inadvertently committing itself to the long-term funding of Policing within the District. It was also pointed out that the level of engagement between Youth Officers at Essex County Council and young people had reduced in recent years. The Portfolio Holder explained that the problem was there had been a lack of funding for youth projects by Essex County Council. The Portfolio Holder also acknowledged that Parkguard had limited enforcement powers, but they were excellent at engaging with the public to prevent problems escalating. It was also highlighted that there was a lack of regular Police patrolling in the modern era.

The Assistant Director of Communities (Community Services & Safety) agreed that the use of Parkguard within the District would be a deterrent rather than an enforcement measure. Parkguard had provided an excellent Youth engagement service for Broxbourne Borough Council for the last 11 years, through building a rapport with young people, and were also happy to advise residents on anti-burglary measures which the Police did not have the resources to do. And although the Council could not use Parkguard to directly engage with and in Schools, there were other methods of engaging with Secondary School children such as the very successful Crucial Crew and Reality Roadshow initiatives.

The Portfolio Holder emphasised that Parkguard would not be a Council Police force, but would bolster the available Police resources and the excellent work being performed by the Council's Community Safety Team. The Leader added that the Council did need to take action to counter the impact from anti-social behaviour; there were problems on the High Streets and Estates throughout the District and the Council needed to plan for the future. If the Council was paying for these additional measures then it would be a service for the Epping Forest District.

Decision:

- (1) That further discussion be undertaken with Essex Police to fully determine the options and implications of the Council funding Police Officers as part of a hybrid model of operation to improve levels of policing in the District;
- (2) That, as a short term measure, Parkguard security company be appointed to provide regular uniformed patrolling of the District during the period 2 January 2018 to March 31 2018, subject to further review, and that Sections 5 and 10 of the Council's Procurement Rules be waived accordingly;
- (3) That a District Development Fund supplementary estimate in the sum of £25,000 for 2017/18 be recommended to the Council for approval to cover the costs for the appointment of Parkguard security company; and
- (4) That appropriate budget provision be made for the commissioning of a service on a longer-term basis from 2018/19.

Reasons for Decision:

With an evident lack of visible policing within local communities in the District, groups of young people and other adult individuals were gaining confidence in their ability to disrupt communities, intimidate other local residents and commit crime. It was recognised that these problems would continue to escalate unless action was taken to engage with perpetrators and challenge anti-social behaviour with the ability to impose enforcement sanctions when necessary.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To do nothing, or for the Council to lobby the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner to provide additional policing from funds accumulated through the sale of Police Stations in the Epping Forest District.

93. YOUTH COUNCIL PROJECT BUDGET

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Community Services presented a report on the Youth Council Project Budget for 2018/19.

The Portfolio Holder reminded the Cabinet that one of the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Task & Finish Review of Youth Engagement in 2015/16 was that the Youth Council be granted £8,000 project funding from the District Development Fund, for the purpose of providing targeted project work for young people in the District and that this opportunity of securing funding would be available in subsequent years. In 2016/17, this initial funding was used for the development of an adolescent mental and emotional health and wellbeing project, which was designed around concerns raised by local young people.

The Portfolio Holder stated that this project, which was named MiLife, had been very successful since it was introduced and had actively helped 328 pupils to receive support following their attendance at a MiLife session in their school over the last year. It's success had also been highlighted by health colleagues across Essex; so much so, that the project was now available through a website, to enable it to be of benefit to other schools across Essex. In its first year, MiLife was nominated for the National Crime Beat Awards by the High Sheriff of Essex at that time, Lorna Rolfe and the project was due for further nomination in 2018 by the new High Sheriff, Simon Hall, after he attended a Youth Council presentation about the project.

The Portfolio Holder requested the Cabinet to agree further funding to enable MiLife to be rolled out to all new Year 7 students in local schools, to provide refresher assemblies to young people who had already attended a session and delivery of MiLife lunchtime sessions in all schools. In addition, the funding would support the roll out of the Primary School MiLife programme, which had recently been developed with the support of Public Health Funding.

The Cabinet felt that this was an excellent scheme that should be fully supported, and the Leader of Council commented that it was good to see the Youth Council engaging with the other elements of the Council.

Decision:

(1) That a District Development Fund bid in the sum of £8,000 be made to enable the Epping Forest Youth Council to deliver targeted projects during 2018/19, including the MiLife emotional health & wellbeing programme, refresher workshops and assemblies in all local secondary schools within the District.

Reasons for Decision:

To comply with the recommendation of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Review of Youth Engagement in 2015/16, that £8,000 project funding be available from the District Development Fund for the Youth Council to bid for to develop and deliver activities and events for young people.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To not provide any funding for Youth Council project work, or to reduce the amount of funding allocated; however, if funding was reduced then it would not be possible to provide MiLife work in local schools.

94. CORPORATE PLAN KEY ACTION PLAN 2017/18 - QUARTER 2 PROGRESS

The Leader of Council introduced a report on the progress with the achievement of the Council's Key Action Plan during the second quarter of 2017/18.

The Leader stated that the Corporate Plan was the Council's key strategic planning document, setting out its priorities over the five-year period from 2015/16 to 2019/20. The priorities or Corporate Aims were supported by Key Objectives, which provided a clear statement of the Council's overall intentions for these five years. The Key Objectives were delivered by an annual Action Plan, with each year building upon the progress against the achievement of the Key Objectives for previous years. The annual Action Plans contained a range of actions designed to achieve specific outcomes and were working documents, therefore subject to change and development to ensure the actions remained relevant and appropriate, and to identify opportunities to secure further progress or improvement.

The Leader reported that at the end of the quarter: 42 actions (84%) had been achieved or were on target; two actions (4%) were under control; six actions (12%) were behind schedule; and no actions were pending. The Key Action Plan for 2017/18 had been adopted by the Council at its meeting on 27 September 2016, and progress in relation to individual actions was reviewed by the Cabinet, and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, on a quarterly and outturn basis.

Decision:

(1) That, as part of the Council's Corporate Plan for the period 2015/16 – 2019/20, the progress made with the achievement of the Council's Key Action Plan for 2017/18 at the end of Quarter 2 be noted.

Reasons for Decision:

It was important that relevant performance management processes were in place to review progress against the key objectives, to ensure their continued achievability and relevance, and to identify proposals for appropriate corrective action in areas of slippage or under-performance.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

No other options were appropriate in this respect. Failure to monitor and review performance against the key objectives, 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. The Council had previously agreed arrangements for the review of progress against the key objectives.

95. BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS PROJECT

The Leader of Council presented a report on the Behavioural Insights Project.

The Leader reported that traditional thinking was people made logical decisions based on the information available to them at the time. In reality, decision making was in part influenced by the unconscious, meaning they did not always make rational choices. Behavioural science could help to predict and influence this behaviour. Each year the Council sent thousands of letters, bills, reminders and legal notices to its residents and businesses. A great deal of this correspondence had no impact on the recipient despite the fact that it was in their own interests to respond to or act upon its content. By making seemingly small changes to the way choices and information was presented, the Council could make a significant impact on the response and create better outcomes for the Council, its residents and businesses.

The Leader stated that, to help fund this project, a bid in the sum of £25,000 had been made to the Local Government Association (LGA), and approval was requested for this bid to be match funded by the Council from the 'Invest to Save' fund if it was successful. If the bid was unsuccessful, or the conditions imposed by the LGA were considered unacceptable, then consideration should be given to the full cost of the Project - £50,000 – being funded from the 'Invest to Save' fund.

Decision:

(1) That a bid in the sum of £25,000 to the Local Government Association for a Behavioural Insights Programme be supported by match funding from the 'Invest to Save' fund; and

(2) That, in the event the bid to the Local Government Association was unsuccessful, the full sum of £50,000 for the Behavioural Insights Programme be funded from the 'Invest to Save' fund.

Reasons for Decision:

Behavioural insights were already employed across the Council to a limited degree,

including with debt collection; this project was to build upon this work and introduce them more broadly across all Council functions. The resources and specialist knowledge required to do this did not currently exist within the Council (along with the funding from the LGA), so this bid would allow for this work to take place with the overarching aim to manage service demand and achieve efficiencies.

Other Options Considered and Rejected:

To not proceed with the project; however, if the LGA bid was not approved or the conditions of the grant were not acceptable then consideration should be given to the Council fully funding the project.

96. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

It was noted that there was no other urgent business for consideration by the Cabinet.

97. 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