

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 10 March 2021 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Monday 22 March 2021 at 5.00pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Leader), Shane Hebb (Deputy Leader), Mark Coxshall, James Halden, Deborah Huelin, Andrew Jefferies, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney, Allen Mayes and Aaron Watkins

Councillor Fraser Massey, Chair of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) Task Force

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Julie Rogers, Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud
Ian Wake, Director of Public Health
Lucy Tricker, Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded and live-streamed to the Council's website.

108. Minutes

Councillor Hebb highlighted page 8 of the agenda and stated that Thurrock had received £14million in government funding, rather than £140million as written in the minutes.

With this amendment, the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 February 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

109. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

110. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

111. Statements by the Leader

The Leader began his statement by discussing the government's roadmap to recovery as children returned to school this week for face-to-face lessons; care home residents could now receive one nominated visitor; and residents could now meet with one person outside their homes, as long as social

distancing remained in place. He then stated that 39,000 first dose vaccines had been given in Thurrock this week, and 1,300 second dose vaccines had also been given. He explained that the number of positive COVID cases had dropped by 96% in Thurrock from early January, and numbers were now returning to levels that had not been seen since October. He felt that although the numbers were moving in the right direction, people still needed to follow the guidelines. He described how the next step of the roadmap could not be carried out unless certain criteria, such as reduced rates of infection, continued vaccine deployment and a lower risk to the NHS, had been met, and urged residents to follow the rules and guidance to ensure the next step of the roadmap could take place when due.

The Leader stated that Thurrock needed to be prepared for the next step of the roadmap by continuing to get tested regularly, particularly working-age men who could not work from home. He explained that there were many locations across the borough where tests could be accessed, which included walk-through centres, drive-thru centres and a new drop in testing centre in South Ockendon. He urged residents to continue to take care as the next stage of the roadmap occurred, including parents on the school run maintaining social distancing and not forming crowds during drop-off and pick-up times. The Leader added that the Prime Minister would be assessing the data before moving on to the next roadmap step, and felt that this allowed Thurrock time to prepare for the next step of rule relaxation. He stated that Thurrock were working with pubs, restaurants and other hospitality venues to ensure they can open safely outdoors, in a COVID secure way, on 12 April, as well as working with other non-essential retailers who were due to open. He urged residents to continue to follow the guidance of 'hands, face, space' and felt that if residents continued with their hard work, the ultimate goal of leaving lockdown for good would be achieved.

The Leader then outlined the COVID figures for Thurrock and stated that between 26 February and 4 March, there had been 15 positive COVID cases for those under 18, which had decreased from 26 cases the previous week; 60 positive cases for those aged between 18-49, which had decreased from 98 cases the previous week; 8 positive cases for those aged between 50-59; which had decreased from 21 cases the previous week; and 6 positive cases for those aged over 70, which had decreased from 10 the previous week. He stated that therefore there had been a drop in positive cases from 170 to 97 last week. The Leader then stated that 5,526 tests had been carried out in the previous seven days, which had increased from 4,964 the week before, which meant that there was currently a positive test rate of 55.6 per 100,000, which had again dropped from 97.5 per 100,000 the week before. He stated that Thurrock currently had the 82nd highest number of COVID cases across 149 local authorities, and this had decreased from 70th the week before.

The Leader moved on and outlined the success of the Thames Freeport bid, which had been agreed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer as part of his budget, and meant that Thurrock would be one of eight new Freeports across the country. He felt that the Freeport would deliver transformational change across the borough, as well as creating thousands of new jobs and high levels

of investment. He stated that Thames Freeport would contain 1,700 acres of development land, much of which already had planning consent due to previous industrial sites on the land. He felt that the Freeport would provide new opportunities for those who lived and worked in Thurrock, and would attract billions in private investment over the next 25 years. He added that over 25,000 direct jobs and up to 20,000 indirect jobs would be created across industries such as aerospace, automotive, manufacturing and processing across the borough.

The Leader stated that the successful Freeport bid also meant that new specialist training centres would be developed to ensure that residents could up-skill and secure better-paid roles in brand new sectors, which would help local communities. He mentioned that using the river for transport and freight, as well as increasing rail capacity, would also have a positive impact as it would reduce the use of road haulage and improve air quality. The Leader explained that the Free Port would also help Thurrock reach its goal of a net zero carbon footprint, as Thurrock would become a centre for clean energy innovation and transformation. He felt that Thurrock would become more attractive to investors, businesses and entrepreneurs, and would help improve the lives of residents. He welcomed the successful bid of the Thames Freeport and felt that it would reinforce Thurrock as the ports capital of the UK.

The Leader then discussed recent enforcement success, and highlighted how the Council were willing to take action on those that blighted the boroughs landscape and were a nuisance for their neighbours. He highlighted a man from West Thurrock who had to pay over £3,500 after allowing his rear garden to become a dumping ground, which had a negative impact on his neighbours. He felt that all residents had a right to enjoy their gardens, and stated that the Council would take action when incidents similar to this were reported by residents. He added that the Council would also take action against people who dropped cigarette ends, rubbish and undertook other anti-social behaviour. He stated that the best way to avoid a fine or fixed penalty notice was to take your rubbish home or use a litter bin. The Leader stated that since April 2020, over 3,800 fixed penalty notices had been issued for offences such as spitting, littering and dropping cigarette ends, as well as 166 fixed penalty notices for fly-tipping. The Leader commented that the Council had prosecuted 524 people who did not pay their fixed penalty notices. He mentioned that the Council had also attended every dumped vehicle within the borough within 24 hours, and removed all those which the Council had been instructed to move within 48 hours.

The Leader summarised and stated that this was the last Cabinet meeting that Roger Harris, the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health would attend. He stated that Roger had had a distinguished 40 year career in health and social care, and had spent the last 13 years at Thurrock. He commented that Roger had been highly regarded by officers and Members, and would be missed by Cabinet colleagues, and officers at all levels. The Leader wished him well for his retirement and thanked him for all his hard and thoughtful work throughout the years.

Councillor Halden added that he had been a Councillor for 11 years, and a Portfolio Holder for 7 of those years, and had worked very closely with Roger. He felt that Roger had been an excellent director, and had been very supportive during the early stages of his Portfolio Holder career. He stated that Roger had helped to build a resilient care system and had helped to protect the most vulnerable residents. Councillor Halden thanked him for his hard work, and wished him well in his retirement. He welcomed the new Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health, Ian Wake, into the role and felt the good work would continue under his leadership. Councillor Huelin also gave her personal thanks to Roger, as he had helped her over the past six years as Portfolio Holder. She felt that Roger should be proud of his achievements and wished him well in the future.

Councillor Hebb added his personal thanks to Roger for all his hard work, and felt he had been authentic and visible throughout his time as director. He added that Roger had managed to achieve good outcomes for the service, and had been an excellent leader during the COVID-19 crisis. He mentioned that Roger had also built a fantastic team, and felt pleased that Ian would continue this work. Councillor Mayes commented that although he had not worked with Roger as long as others, he was pleased to have worked with him for the 13 months he had been Portfolio Holder. He stated that they had only worked together for six weeks before the COVID-19 pandemic, but despite that they had still managed to push forward with the Integrated Medical Centres and other projects. He thanked Roger for all his guidance and support, and wished him the best of luck for the future.

Councillor Watkins reiterated the thanks that had already been given and added that Roger had been a particular help to him personally during his time on the Health and Wellbeing Board and Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. He felt that Roger had always listened to his ideas, and had supported him in his Cabinet role. Councillor Johnson summarised and thanked Roger for his hard work in the Housing directorate. He felt Roger had continually worked hard and provided invaluable knowledge. He stated that both Roger and Carol Hinvest, the Housing Assistant Director, would be missed.

112. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

There were no briefings on policy, budget or other issues.

113. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

No petitions had been submitted by members of the public.

114. Questions from Non-Executive Members

No questions had been submitted by non-Executive Members.

Councillor Jefferies stated that two questions had been received at Full Council, which could have been asked at Cabinet. He wished to highlight that any Councillor could ask a question at Cabinet and would receive an answer from the Portfolio Holder.

115. Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Other than those items already included in the agenda, no matters had been referred to Cabinet for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

116. Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Update Report (Decision: 110557)

The Leader stated that Councillor Massey would be presenting the report in his role as Chair of the LTC Task Force.

Councillor Massey introduced the report and stated that this presented an update on the work of the Task Force since November 2020, and highlighted that the Council remained principally opposed to the scheme. He explained that since the Development Consent Order (DCO) had been withdrawn and a new Highways England team had been appointed, communications had improved and the Council were receiving greater levels of detail regarding the proposed scheme. He stated that DCO had been withdrawn due to issues relating to consultations and although no new consultation had been officially announced, another one might take place before the next DCO submission.

Councillor Massey explained that at the December Task Force meeting, the Committee had focussed on the next steps post-DCO withdrawal, and had considered the 49 page Planning Inspectorate letter, which outlined why DCO had been withdrawn, for example the impact on local road networks, lack of air quality data and lack of information regarding working hours during construction. He stated that the Committee had also considered the economic mitigation list, and had received a verbal update on the A303 project, which could have an effect on other national road schemes such as the LTC.

Councillor Massey commented that the Executive Director of Highways England, Matt Palmer, had attended the January LTC Task Force meeting, as well as the Highways England Technical Leads, and they had discussed numerous items of mitigation, such as a bridge over the Tilbury loop line; 5G connectivity; improved Public Rights of Way; and the 2 Forts Way path. He added that the Highways England team had also given a detailed presentation on design aspects of the scheme, such as viaducts and felt that this presentation was the best visual that the Committee had seen in terms of detail. Councillor Massey added that the detail of the March meeting was not included in this report, due to publication timing, but the Task Force had spoken about mitigation, such as green spaces around Chadwell St Mary. Councillor Massey summarised and urged residents and local businesses to participate in any potential future consultations, and also make representations to the Planning Inspectorate, after DCO submission.

Councillor Coxshall thanked Councillor Massey for his report and questioned the published mitigation list, which included 57 items of mitigation. He asked whether or not the Task Force felt this was enough mitigation, or if they would like to see more. Councillor Massey replied that the Task Force always pushed for additional mitigation, but felt that due to DCO withdrawal, there was now more time to have detailed discussions. He stated that the Task Force would continue to work towards the agreement of the 57 mitigation areas, as well as any additional mitigation necessary. Councillor Coxshall stated that it was good to hear the Task Force's thoughts. He questioned if the Task Force had considered the route tolls. He stated that at the Dartford Crossing a reduced toll for residents had been agreed, rather than £1.5million of funding directly to the Council, and questioned if this was something the Task Force wished for the LTC. Councillor Massey replied that the Task Force had only briefly considered the tolls for the scheme and monies this could bring to the Council, but this could be added to the Work Programme.

The Leader summarised and felt it would be good to hear the Task Force's thoughts regarding tolls and funding. He also welcomed the news that Highways England were being more responsive and communicative, as this meant the Council could now have more open dialogue with Highways England.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the work of the Task Force.

*Reason for decision: as outlined in report.
This decision is subject to call-in.*

Councillor Massey left the meeting at 7.34

117. Memorandum of Understanding - Local Government Reorganisation (Decision: 110558)

The Leader introduced the report and stated that any proposed merger between Thurrock and Basildon Council's would not be undertaken immediately or in the near future, and highlighted that this Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) only opened the conversation to consider potential opportunities or risks from a merger, and to be as open and transparent as possible. He explained that Basildon Council was not a unitary authority, and therefore did not have control over some services, such as Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, or strategic highways; in comparison to Thurrock Council who were a unitary authority and had control over all income and expenditure. He added that as both Councils had two different styles of governance, all aspects of every service would have to be explored before a merger could be agreed, and this would take time and input from a variety of people. He described how this report was driven by central government, and their proposal for local government reform and devolution. He stated that in between the two lockdowns in 2020, central government had brought forward

regulations for local government reform, in line with their manifesto commitments, and although this had now slowed due to the pandemic, other authorities such as Essex County Council were pushing forward their plans for reorganisation, which included Thurrock. He felt that as Thurrock had been a unitary authority since 1998, Essex County Council could not design Thurrock's future, and felt this highlighted why Thurrock needed to be at the forefront of any local government reform.

The Leader stated that by signing the MOU, Thurrock and Basildon could find out all the necessary information before making a merger decision, and could find out the risks and opportunities. He added that the report had been seen by the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and they had questioned if residents would be involved in the decision. He reassured the Committee that the MOU would begin to evaluate the risks and opportunities, so residents and the Council were able to make an informed decision. He stated that once the costs and benefits had been evaluated, residents would be consulted. He thanked the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their comments and was pleased that they had agreed the recommendations. He added the Committee had also questioned the need for a merger, as some Members had felt that as Thurrock continued to grow, particularly with the recent announcement of the Freeport, the Council may not need to merge with Basildon. The Leader stated that all options would be considered as part of the MOU, including maintaining current ways of working. He felt that Thurrock needed to be prepared for all eventualities, including if central government legislation for local government reform was agreed, as was planned for summer 2021.

The Leader summarised and stated that he had spoken in detail with the Leader of Basildon Council, and they both felt that although this would not be a quick process, the MOU needed to be signed so both Councils could evaluate all options. He stated that Basildon had a large manufacturing base, such as the largest tractor factory in Europe, as well as aerospace and defence industries, which would need goods delivered from the Freeport and could therefore benefit Thurrock.

Councillor Coxshall thanked the Leader for his report and felt it was good to see Thurrock being as open and honest as possible. He felt that the MOU would let Thurrock decide what the best option was, and be on the front foot when decisions were made at central government level. Councillor Halden added that he felt it would be good to have the conversation with Basildon to find out the positives and negatives of a potential merger. He stated that the MOU was still at the non-committal stage, but felt it was good to hear overview and scrutiny comments, and that they had agreed all recommendations.

The Leader echoed these comments and felt that residents should not be concerned, as the MOU was simply to open a fact-finding conversation. He stated that the detail of any potential merger needed to be right, before residents were consulted, and this report provided openness and transparency. He stated that as Basildon were not a unitary authority, some of

their council tax income was sent to Essex County Council as a precept to pay for services such as Adult Social Care, and Thurrock needed to consider this financial aspect through the fact-finding that would be undertaken in the MOU. He summarised and stated that the MOU would be going to the relevant Committee in Basildon tomorrow, but highlighted that the MOU did not agree any merger, and simply opened the conversation.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Agreed to enter into a Memorandum in the form at Appendix 1 with Basildon Borough Council.

*Reason for decision: as outlined in report.
This decision is subject to call-in.*

118. Financial Update - Quarter 3 2020/21 (Decision: 110559)

Councillor Hebb introduced the report and stated that this provided the outturn figures at quarter 3. He stated that the Council were predicting a balanced in-year budget, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore would not have to bring an emergency in-year budget to Full Council. He thanked all officers across every service for their hard work this year, and felt that officers had been adaptive and reactive to the issues that COVID-19 had caused. He also thanked all service managers, and the Chief Executive, for considering resources and for being financially prudent during these difficult times. He also thanked central government for their £14million of COVID support, which had helped to offset the £17million of COVID-19 pressures the Council had faced. He felt grateful that the Council had been in surplus, and although this surplus had originally been designated for discretionary service spending, could now be used to help balance the budget.

Councillor Hebb highlighted that Adult's Social Care was currently slightly under-budget, due to excellent management and government funding support. He stated that Adult's Social Care still needed support, particularly around the care market, which had seen increased pressure due to COVID-19. He stated that the Council planned to inject £2.5million into Adult Social Care in the future, as the majority of residents or their loved ones, would have to access this service at some point in their lives, and therefore the service needed to be secure. He then described the £1.8million of pressure currently being experienced by Children's Social Care and explained that this was due to a number of high-need, high-cost placements. He stated that lots of work was going on surrounding this issue, to ensure the highest quality of care as well as prudent financial spending occurred. He stated that Children's Social Care was a financial issue across the UK, but that Thurrock had worked hard to improve the quality of the service and decrease spending. He thanked the other services for balancing their budgets, and expressed his appreciation to all officers for their hard work on this.

Councillor Hebb summarised and highlighted the capital programme, detailed

in appendix 3 of the report, which showed that some of the larger schemes in the programme had been re-profiled. He stated that this meant a £16million under-spend, highlighted in section 16 of the report, which could be utilised elsewhere.

The Leader felt pleased to see an in-year balanced budget, which had been helped by surpluses made in previous years. He thanked central government for their £14.2million of support to deal with COVID-19 pressures, but highlighted that this money would be paid by national taxpayers in future years to pay off this deficit. He added that Children's Social Care was a demand-led service, and a few high-need, high-cost placements could push the Children's Social Care budget outside their budget envelope. He stated that Thurrock was committed to ensuring every child's wellbeing and would continue to work on this service. He felt that Thurrock had also been fortunate to have high levels of surpluses and reserves, which had helped offset COVID-19 financial pressures. He summarised and thanked the Corporate Director Finance, Governance and Property, the finance team, and Councillor Hebb for their hard work on this report.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Commented on the MTFFS and the forecast outturn position for 2020/21.

*Reason for decision: as outlined in report.
This decision is subject to call-in.*

119. Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme 2021/22 and Highways Maintenance Allocation and Programme 2021/22 (Decision: 110560)

Councillor Maney introduced the report and stated that this was an annual report which outlined the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) programme and highways maintenance allocation programme. He stated that Thurrock would receive £971,000 from the Department for Transport (DfT) for the ITB programme, which would help deliver services and schemes across the borough. He added that Thurrock would also receive over £1million for the highways maintenance allocation programme, which would help with the upkeep of highways across the borough. He highlighted the appendices of the report that detailed every scheme included in this funding. He stated that previously the DfT funding had been used to fund road and pedestrian safety schemes, particularly near schools and on routes in/out of the borough. He stated that this policy had been successful, and these routes were now much safer than in previous years. Councillor Maney explained that therefore this years' funding would be used on a new area intervention programme, which would focus on residential roads and move away from the ad-hoc approach previously used. He stated that in previous years, the team could not accommodate requests from residents regarding residential roads, as this did not fit the road safety scheme, but the team had listened to residents, and residential roads would now be the focus of the funding. He thanked the team

for their hard work on this report, and for delivering the scheme last year during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the ITB Capital Programme, policy and prioritisation direction for the DfT ITB Block funding under the key policy areas of Road Safety Engineering, Safer Routes to School, Area Intervention Programme and EV charging programme.

2. Approved the Highways Maintenance Block Allocation Programme (as detailed in Appendix 4) for 2021/22.

3. Approved delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to the ITB programme (and additional funding allocations that may arise) taking into account local views and priorities.

4. Approved delegated authority to the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to the DfT Maintenance Block Allocation programme.

Reason for decision: as outlined in report.

This decision is subject to call-in.

120. Contract Renewal for Litter Enforcement (Decision: 110561)

The Leader introduced the report and stated that following an initial trial period in 2016, the Council had entered into a contract with Kingdom for litter enforcement, and this contract was now due for renewal. He explained that the Council had introduced enforcement notices for issues such as littering, as residents had often raised issue with the amount of litter and dropped cigarette ends in their communities. He added that this problem also looked terrible and cost the Council money. The Leader mentioned that since 2016 when the contract had begun, Thurrock's Keep Britain Tidy (KBT) scores had continually improved, partly due to the enforcement notices, and also due to the hard work of the street cleaning and highways teams.

The Leader stated that enforcement notices were handed out for offences such as littering, dropping cigarette ends, spitting and other anti-social behaviour, and the Council had kept the maximum level of fine. He stated that the Council averaged 3000 tickets per year, and if people chose not to pay their tickets, Thurrock would take those people to court. He stated that Thurrock had taken approximately 520 people to court last year for failure to pay their enforcement fines. The Leader explained that there was a number of options for contract renewal, which included bringing the service in-house and procuring the contract on the open market. He stated that if the service was brought in-house this could increase risks such as increased staffing cost and

recruitment costs. He stated that the current contract did not cost the taxpayer money, as all money raised through enforcement fines paid for the service, and any surplus allowed the team to pursue additional activities, such as late night patrolling of car parks for nitrous oxide users, and late night fly-tipping patrols.

The Leader stated that the Council had received a good service from the current provider, and although enforcement of offences such as littering had been paused during the pandemic, Kingdom officers had continued their work by ensuring local residents were adhering to social distancing measures, and essential shops were COVID compliant. He stated that Kingdom officers also patrolled street drinking in Grays, and had reduced the number of people street drinking since 2019.

Councillor Watkins echoed the Leader's comments and felt that Kingdom had undertaken good work throughout their contract period. He thanked the street cleaning teams for their hard work across the borough. He stated that Thurrock had undertaken lots of work to ensure there were more bins across in Thurrock that were located in the right places, and urged residents to use these bins. He summarised and thanked the street cleaning team and Kingdom officers for their hard work every day, including during the pandemic.

Councillor Maney supported the recommendations made in the report and felt that the KBT scores, and Thurrock's Clean It, Cut It, Fill It policies had been one of the biggest success stories. He stated that residents often raised the issue of environmental crime, such as littering, to Councillors and felt it was good to see these issues were being addressed and enforced. The Leader agreed and felt that although it would be difficult to achieve litter-free streets, this was what Thurrock should aim for.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the content contained within the report.**
- 2. Agreed to delegate the authority for the tender and subsequent award of a new contract for Environmental Enforcement Services on a payment by results basis to the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud in conjunction with the Director of Finance, Governance and Property, and the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour, based on Option 3 (3.3 of the report) as recommended by Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee.**

*Reason for decision: as outlined in report.
This decision is subject to call-in.*

121. Procurement of Housing Capital Programme Delivery

Councillor Johnson drew Cabinet's attention to page 104, point 6.1 of the report and stated that the contract commencement date should be September

2021, and not September 2020 as written in the report. He introduced the report and stated that it set out the proposals for a new contract within the 3 Chadwell St Mary high-rise flats, which would introduce a new heating solution for the 273 homes in these buildings. He stated that a new ground source heat pump would be installed, and completed surveys had shown this would be the best and most efficient way forward, as it would help the environment and reduce people's heating bills. He stated that this proposal was subject to two rounds of consultation, the first being in April 2021 and the second that would begin in August 2021, before contract commencement in September 2021. He commented that the recommendations had been supported by the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, who had sought reassurance regarding resident consultation. He added that the Tenants Excellence Panel would be included in the tender process.

Councillor Johnson stated that the second part of this report covered the refurbishment of non-traditional properties across the borough, which would improve thermal efficiency and reduce mould problems within properties. He stated that a survey would be undertaken to identify the properties most in need, who would then be prioritised to improve residents comfort and the safety of buildings. He explained that these schemes would be paid for out of the HRA budget, but external funding would also be sought. He stated that if additional funding was found, the HRA monies originally designated for these schemes would be released to fund other proposals.

The Leader felt pleased to see that the Council was focussing on the renovation of older properties, as well as ensuring new builds were thermally efficient. He stated that this report would benefit residents living in older council stock, and also felt pleased to see that these schemes would improve residents' lives and reduce fuel poverty. He stated that although this would be a complicated rollout, it would also help the Council meet their target of net zero carbon emissions.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Approved the procurement of two new contracts for major works delivery programmes.**
- 2. Approved delegated authority for award of the above contracts to the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.**

122. Housing Re-Procurement of Concierge Contract (Decision: 110562)

The Leader sought confirmation that that this report did not relate to the concierge contract currently in place in Tilbury. Councillor Johnson confirmed that it did not relate to Tilbury, and therefore the Leader stated that he did not have an interest to declare and could vote on this item.

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and stated that the report also

included the Brook House temporary accommodation in Grays, which had been brought into the contract since its last renewal. He stated that this report included properties in Chadwell St Mary, Godman Road and Piggs Corner, as well as Brook House, and provided 24/7 monitoring, CCTV services, anti-social behaviour reporting, and fire safety monitoring. He felt that the concierge contract provided a safe and secure service for residents, and 65% had wanted the service to continue and provide better value for money, when they had been consulted. He stated that there were three options for the contract, but these were time-limited to September 2021. He explained that the option to bring the service in-house would be expensive, and re-procurement of the current contract was the preferred option.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the available options as set out in section 3 of the report.**
- 2. Agreed the re-procurement of the Housing concierge contract for a period of up to 3 years (2 years plus 1 year extension subject to performance and funding).**
- 3. Approved delegation to award the contract to the Corporate Director Adults, Housing and Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing in order to ensure service continuity.**

Reason for decision: as outlined in report.

This decision is subject to call-in.

123. A Fresh Start for our Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services - Re-Procurement Outline (Decision: 110563)

Councillor Halden introduced the report and stated that this was the first step to improve mental health services for children and young people across the borough. He felt the current process was slow to respond and focussed on formal therapy and the use of pharmaceuticals, which made the service too clinical and focussed on those with more severe mental health needs. He added that the current offer was not locally accountable and Thurrock lacked the ability to measure success. He explained that this report would maintain Thurrock's current place in the commissioning group, alongside Council's such as Southend, but would give Thurrock better value for money and a more local arrangement. He stated that it would allow seconded workers from Thurrock Council to work on the contract and would break down silo working patterns. He added that the Brighter Futures team would also provide a local prevention offer as part of the Essex County Council contract, but would be accountable to Thurrock. He stated that these proposals had been accepted by the wider partnership and would ensure that Thurrock's voice was heard. He thanked Teresa Salami-Oru, Catherine Wilson and Michele Lucas for their hard work on this report, and felt it was the first step in changing the service and providing a solution for Thurrock.

Councillor Mayes echoed Councillor Halden's comments and stated that his

first conversation as Portfolio Holder had been regarding mental health, and how to improve the service and support young people. He highlighted the new Mental Health Group which had been set up under the Health and Wellbeing Board to work on mental health transformation for young people, and would in turn support schools. He thanked officers and NHS partners for their support on this scheme and felt that the proposals would help children and young people, particularly post-COVID, when young people could experience an increased number of mental health crises.

The Leader thanked Councillors Halden and Mayes for their work on the report, and felt they had worked tirelessly to implement this change and help the service work better for Thurrock. He agreed that children and young people could experience mental health crises post-COVID and felt this report aimed the service in the right direction, by providing early intervention support. Councillor Jefferies supported the recommendations within the report as he felt children and young people would need additional mental health support in the coming months.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Agreed to the continuation of the collaborative commissioning arrangements and supported the financial contribution from Thurrock Council as set out in the report.

2. Agreed to the re-procurement of the tier two and tier three Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service through the collaborative commissioning arrangements.

3. Agreed the development of a local service response through the Brighter Futures strategy to address the mental health and emotional needs of young people in Thurrock, in collaboration with partners and the Collaborative Commissioning Forum, encompassing the core elements of the Thurrock specific plan listed above.

4. Agreed that the contract award be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Adult Social Care, in line with current procedures.

*Reason for decision: as outlined in report.
This decision is subject to call-in.*

124. Backing Thurrock: A Roadmap for Economic Recovery, Resilience and a Return to Growth (Decision: 110564)

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report and stated that it provided the roadmap to recovery, resilience and a return to growth, to improve residents lives post-COVID. He stated that the report would work alongside the Local Plan to improve infrastructure and would provide a community focus through

the action plan, which set out the Council's priorities. He explained that since the report had been published, the Thames Freeport bid had been successful, which would cement Thurrock's place as the ports capital of the UK, and would make the report much easier to deliver. He felt there was lots of civic pride in Thurrock and urged all Members to push the 'work, live, play' message to residents and to celebrate Thurrock's achievements.

Councillor Halden thanked the Director and Assistant Director for their work on this report, as he felt it would help to support the economy. He felt pleased to see that the most vulnerable residents were included in the report, particularly in terms of jobs, and improving opportunities to re-skill. Councillor Coxshall replied and agreed that the report was community driven and would help benefit all residents. He also felt the report delivered on the 'work' and 'play' aspect of the Council's priorities as it provided jobs and living opportunities for all.

The Leader felt it was good to see the report was community led and infrastructure focussed, as this would improve resident's lives. He felt the Thames Freeport would also be a game changer for Thurrock and that it would help to deliver the actions outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the outcome of the consultation on the Backing Thurrock Roadmap.**
- 2. Approved the final version of the Backing Thurrock Roadmap.**
- 3. Approved the draft Backing Thurrock Action Plan, which will be a live document subject to further engagement with anchor public, private and voluntary organisations to refine actions and agree delivery mechanisms.**

*Reason for decision: as outlined in report.
This decision is subject to call-in.*

125. Asset Disposals (Decision: 110565)

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report and stated that assets had now been characterised as operational; community; or other and were being decided for disposal based on the 3Rs policy of reuse, release or retain. He stated that asset disposals had wider implications for local communities, and gave the Council an opportunity to deliver affordable homes and community assets. He stated that the report had been presented to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny for transparency, and the Committee had agreed with recommendations and comments they had made would be taken on-board, for example the protection of open spaces and parks. The Leader felt this was a good report, and meant the Council would not repeat past issues, by ensuring assets were disposed of appropriately and at the right price. He felt

pleased to hear that scrutiny's comments would be taken on-board and agreed that this report provided transparency.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Approved the disposal policy as proposed in Appendix 1.**
- 2. Approved the immediate release and declare surplus the properties as shown in Appendix 2.**
- 3. Delegated authority of the disposal to the Corporate Director of Finance, Governance and Property, in consultation with the Leader and the completion of a delegated authority decision report to permit disposal.**
- 4. Noted the approach towards identifying the route to additional housing as set out in Appendix 3.**

*Reason for decision: as outlined in report.
This decision is subject to call-in.*

126. Quarter 3 (April-December 2020) Corporate Performance Report 2020/21

Councillor Huelin introduced the report and stated that it highlighted the impact that COVID-19 had had on services, many of which had been shut, had changed working practices, or experienced high levels of sickness or COVID isolation amongst staff. She stated that in quarter 3, 66% of key performance indicators (KPIs) had met target, and this was similar to quarter 1, which had occurred during the first lockdown. She mentioned that during quarter two, when restrictions had been eased, 75% of KPIs had met their target. She felt that all services were working hard, and introducing new ways of remote working, for example the number of apprenticeships being undertaken by the Council had decreased, but the team were introducing new virtual processes to improve the KPI. She mentioned that the report had gone to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny, who had understood that the report reflected the impact of COVID, rather than service performance. She summarised and thanked officers and external organisations for their hard work.

Councillor Watkins highlighted the KPI regarding the rate of recycling, which had been affected by COVID and had dropped to 25.9% in December. He thanked waste collection crews for their hard work throughout the pandemic, and thanked residents for their patience with the service. He stated that the team were doing lots of work to improve recycling rates, including with a new 'back to basics' programme and a 'Getting Thurrock Recycling' programme that would highlight the positives of recycling. He stated that feedback from the communal recycling programme had been positive, and this feedback would be included in the new campaigns. He added that the team were also working hard to understand why residents were not recycling, and how the

Council could improve the recycling figure. He added that garden waste collection had been re-introduced this week, as the weather warmed and people began working on their gardens, and again thanked residents for their patience as the service got back on track.

Councillor Watkins added that this would be his last meeting on Cabinet, and thanked the Director, officers, and other Portfolio Holders for their hard work, and felt success had been proven with the continually improving KBT scores.

The Leader thanked Councillor Watkins for his hard work as a Portfolio Holder, particularly with his success on the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It scheme. He felt the team had gone from strength to strength under his leadership, and thanked him for his service.

Councillor Halden felt pleased to see that the amber measure had been removed, and now KPIs either met or did not meet their targets, which made it easier for residents to understand. He thanked Councillor Watkins for his hard work and stated that he would be missed as a Cabinet Member. Councillor Hebb added that the removal of the amber KPI measure also made the report more transparent. He thanked officers across the Council for their hard work on all the KPIs, particularly during such a difficult year, and thanked Councillor Watkins for his work as a Portfolio Holder.

The Leader highlighted page 210 of the agenda and the KPI relating to payment of fixed penalty notices, which had not met its target. He stated that this was because officers were being more lenient during COVID and offering payment extensions. He stated that those who refused to pay would still be taken to court, but the courts were experiencing delays due to COVID, and this could take some time. He commented that this KPI showed the Council were being adaptive and reflective during the pandemic, and were trying to help people who had received a fixed penalty notice. He reflected on Councillor Huelin's comments and felt that although the KPI had not met its target, it showed the Council were being sympathetic to residents during this difficult time.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted and commented upon the performance of the key corporate performance indicators, in particular those areas which are off target and the impact of COVID-19.**
- 2. Identified any areas which required additional consideration.**

The meeting finished at 9.07 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**