



**MINUTES of
COUNCIL (EXTRAORDINARY)
30 JUNE 2021**

PRESENT

Vice-Chairman Councillor C Mayes
(in the chair)

Councillors M G Bassenger, Miss A M Beale, B S Beale MBE, V J Bell,
Mrs P A Channer, M F L Durham, CC, M R Edwards,
B B Heubner, A L Hull, K W Jarvis, J V Keyes, K M H Lagan,
C P Morley, C Morris, S P Nunn, N G F Shaughnessy,
R H Siddall, W Stamp, CC, E L Stephens, Mrs J C Stilts,
C Swain, Mrs M E Thompson and Miss S White

119. CHAIRMAN'S NOTICES

The Chairman welcome everyone to the Council meeting and went through some general housekeeping arrangements, including the need to wear masks (unless exempt), remaining seated, using hand gel and waiting for the microphone before speaking.

120. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R G Boyce MBE, R P F Dewick, Mrs J L Fleming, A S Fluker, M S Heard, M W Helm and N J Skeens.

121. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Councillor S P Nunn declared a non-pecuniary interest as he sat on the Stow Maries Consultative Committee on behalf of the Council.

Councillor W Stamp declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Essex County Council where were consultees on a number of items on the agenda, but she did not have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest in matters before the Council at this meeting.

Councillor M F L Durham declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Member of Essex County Council.

At this point, Councillor C Morris raised a query regarding the sound at the meeting and this was addressed by the Chairman.

Councillor E L Stephens declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 16 Outstanding Loan - Financial Arrangements and advised that she would not vote on this item of business.

Councillor K M H Lagan declared a non-pecuniary interest in any items of business relating to Stow Maries Aerodrome.

Councillor K W Jarvis declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 11 Making of the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan as he was a Wickham Bishops Parish Councillor.

Councillors C Mayes declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 17 Leisure Contract Update.

122. MINUTES OF THE STATUTORY ANNUAL COUNCIL - 20 MAY 2021

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Minutes of the Statutory Annual Council meeting held on 20 May 2021 be received.

Minute 16 – Leaders and Composition of Political Groups

It was noted that reference to R G F Shaughnessy should be *NG F* Shaughnessy.

Minute 21 – Appointment of Representatives to Local Government and Outside Bodies

It was noted that on Appendix 1 (related to this item of business) contained a typographical error and reference to Councillor C Swan in respect of the Plume Educational Trust should be Councillor *C Swain*.

RESOLVED

- (ii) that subject to the above amendments, the Minutes of the Statutory Annual Council meeting held on 20 May 2021 be agreed.

123. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

There were none.

124. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman referred to attending a recent service of evensong at Chelmsford Cathedral.

125. PERFORMANCE, GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE - 10 JUNE 2021

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Performance, Governance and Audit Committee held on 10 June 2021 be agreed.

126. STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 15 JUNE 2021

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee held on 15 June 2021 be received.

The Council considered the following recommendation set out in the Minutes:

Minute 102 - Information Communication Technology Strategy 2021 – 2026

RESOLVED

- (ii) that the Maldon District Council ICT Strategy 2021 – 2026 (attached at Appendix 1 to the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee) for distribution to all staff giving support and guidance to Management on future ICT projects and planning be agreed.

RESOLVED

- (iii) that subject to the above decision the Minutes of the Strategy and Resources Committee be agreed.

127. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council noted the list of Committees that had met before and since the last meeting of the Council, up until Tuesday 22 June 2021 for which Minutes had been published.

128. STATEMENT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor W Stamp, Leader of the Council (the Leader) made a statement (attached at **APPENDIX 1** to these Minutes) setting out the Council's report and programme for the remainder of the municipal year. The statement referred to a number of areas, including:

- the updated Corporate Plan;
- commitment to climate action;
- supporting businesses;
- building the excellent partnerships the Council had and working with the community;
- the Local Development Plan review.

The Leader thanked Officers for their hard work through the pandemic, all members of the Independent Group for their support and referred to the continued work with all Political Parties and Groups in the future. She finished presentation of her statement to the Council advising of her sincere belief and a determination to do the right thing for the Maldon District.

In her response to the statement from the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Mrs P A Channer referred to the current pandemic extending heartfelt sympathies to all who had lost friends and loved ones, praised the NHS and the vaccination programme and raised concerns regarding mental health and the longer term impact. She commented on other aspects of the Leaders' speech including:

- how it was important to ensure that residents shared their views with the Council and Councillor Mrs Channer suggested that a consultation could be a way forward to capture this information.

- Corporate Plan – Councillor Mrs Channer agreed with the Leader on the work of the communities during the pandemic across a number of areas and felt the Council had responsibilities to continue to take this forward.
- Climate Action – She commented on the Council's passion in relation to this topic and the involvement of young people. It was important for the Council to review all opportunities to take steps towards being carbon net zero and working across organisations to establish a framework for climate emergencies and biodiversity loss.
- Maldon District Investment prospectus – She referred to how the Covid Reset and Recovery Group were looking into this and ensuring that businesses and other areas were supported, giving strength back to the District as it came out of the pandemic.
- Maldon One District was one of the initiatives the Council was working on and highlighted the excellent partnership it had with other organisations. A number of initiatives had come forward during the pandemic and had helped engagement, resources and delivery of outcomes.
- The Council through the Local Development Plan Review would be able to ensure it had everything the District required without compromising its beauty.
- Councillor Mrs Channer offered her thanks to all staff and how the Council would had not been able to keep the level of services without their innovative thinking, energy, responsibilities and accountabilities. She referred to the importance of challenge and democracy with the best intentions for the District.

The Leader of the Council thanked the Leader of the Opposition for her comments.

129. QUESTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE 6(3) OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

There were none.

130. MAKING OF THE WICKHAM BISHOPS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Council considered the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance advising that the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan (WBNHP) had successfully passed its referendum and had automatically become part of the statutory Development Plan for the District. The report sought formal adoption of the WBNHP by the Council.

The report provided background information regarding the WBNHP and it was noted in the referendum that 91.6% of those who had voted were in favour of the plan.

The Leader of the Council congratulated Wickham Bishops and put the recommendation as set out in the report, this was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED that Council 'makes' the Wickham Bishops Neighbourhood Plan in accordance with section 38(A)(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

131. ONE MALDON DISTRICT

The Council considered the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance, seeking Members' approval of a new integrated approach to health and wellbeing and community safety in the Maldon District.

The report set out the key health and wellbeing and community safety elements of the Maldon District Corporate Plan for 2021 – 23. The need for cooperation and coordination of the whole Essex system to maximum health benefits along with involving partners across the whole system was highlighted. In light of this the report set out the proposal to form One Maldon District to bring together all key partners and stakeholders in the Maldon District. The proposed Terms of Reference were attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Leader of the Council referred the report and put the recommendation. This was duly seconded.

A debate ensued and in response to questions the following information was provided by Officers:

- An Asset Based Community Development Model worked directly with communities and primarily residents ensuring they were involved in the policies which supported their communities.
- The Terms of Reference appended to the report set out the broad structure and how if the Council were to approve the principle of OMD appointment of Members to OMD would be brought back to a future meeting of the Council.
- The pandemic had demonstrated the need for systems management and the Council had to go through the bi-literation to finalise the detail and which Groups Members would sit on. It was not proposed to reduce the level of democratic involvement.
- Performance and value would be dealt with at Committee level rather than through the OMG.

Councillor B S Beale referred to the Southminster Medical Centre and contact with Dengie Members requesting that an item on this subject be brought forward to ensure it was not lost off the tracking system.

Councillors Mrs P A Channer proposed that the Council in principle endorsed the approach to the formation of the One Maldon District and merging the strategic arm of the Livewell Group and Responsible Authorities Group into OMD, enabling a joined-up approach to community safety and health and wellbeing, but a further report be brought back to the Council with further details to enable it to determine the final structure and member inclusion and to agree the final Terms of Reference. This proposal was duly seconded.

The Lead Legal Specialist and Monitoring Officer clarified that there already a motion proposed by the Leader of the Council and duly seconded. Councillor Mrs Channer could make an amendment to this. Councillor Mrs Channer advised that her proposal was an amendment to motion in the name of the Leader of the Council.

The Chairman advised that the Council had to vote on the amendment first to determine the substantive motion.

In accordance with Procedure Rule No. 13 (3) Councillor C Morris requested a recorded vote. This was duly seconded.

The Chairman the put the proposed amendment in the name of Councillor Mrs Channer to the Council and the voting was as follows:

For the recommendation:

Councillors Miss A M Beale, B S Beale, Mrs P A Channer, M F L Durham, B B Heubner, A L Hull, J V Keyes, C P Morley, Mrs M E Thompson and Miss S White.

Against the recommendation:

Councillors V J Bell, M R Edwards, K W Jarvis, K M H Lagan, C Mayes, C Morris, S P Nunn, N G F Shaughnessy, R H Siddall, W Stamp, E L Stephens and Mrs J C Stilts.

Abstention:

Councillors M G Bassenger and C Swain.

The motion was therefore declared lost.

The Chairman the put the motion in the name of the Leader of the Council and the voting was as follows:

For the recommendation:

Councillors M G Bassenger, B S Beale, V J Bell, M R Edwards, K W Jarvis, K M H Lagan, C Mayes, S P Nunn, N G F Shaughnessy, R H Siddall, W Stamp, E L Stephens, Mrs J C Stilts and C Swain.

Against the recommendation:

Councillors Miss A M Beale, J V Keyes, C Morris and Miss S White.

Abstention:

Councillors Mrs P A Channer, M F L Durham, B B Heubner, A L Hull, C P Morley and Mrs M E Thompson.

RESOLVED that the approach to the formation of One Maldon District (OMD) and merging the strategic arm of the Livewell Group and Responsible Authorities Group into OMD, enabling a joined-up approach to community safety and health and wellbeing, be endorsed.

132. MID-ESSEX ALLIANCE - MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Council considered the report of the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance seeking the Council's approval of the Mid Essex Alliance Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) (attached at Appendix 1 to the report).

The report outlined the need to have localism for Mid Essex in light of the changing landscape of the NHS, with the dissolution of Clinical Commissioning Groups and the formation of Integrated Care Systems. A Mid Essex Alliance was proposed to coordinate a place-based approach to health priorities to ensure the localism needed. It was noted that Membership of the Mid Essex Alliance would enhance the systems management approach for the District and support work which would achieve delivery of corporate outcomes, and be further strengthened by all partners signing the MOU.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and put the recommendation as set out in the report. This was duly seconded.

A debate ensued and in response to comments made the Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance advised that any matters relating to policy etc. would be

referred back to the Council for decision. He confirmed that the MOU had been reviewed by the Council's legal department.

The Lead Legal Specialist and Monitoring Officer clarified that the MOU clearly stated that it was not creating legal relations. It set parameters between public sector bodies to give understanding how things would work. There were no legal implications and it did not make for a binding agreement.

In accordance with Procedure Rule No. 13 (3) the Chairman requested a recorded vote. This was duly seconded.

The Chairman then put the recommendation to the Council and the voting was as follows:

For the recommendation:

Councillors M G Bassenger, Miss A M Beale, B S Beale, V J Bell, Mrs P A Channer, M F L Durham, M R Edwards, B B Heubner, A L Hull, J V Keyes, K M H Lagan, C Mayes, C P Morley, S P Nunn, N G F Shaughnessy, R H Siddall, W Stamp, E L Stephens, Mrs J C Stilts, C Swain, Mrs M E Thompson and Miss S White.

Against the recommendation:

Councillor C Morris.

Abstention:

Councillor K W Jarvis.

This was therefore agreed.

RESOLVED that the Council agrees to be a signatory to the Mid-Essex Alliance Memorandum of Understanding.

Councillor K W Jarvis left and returned to the meeting during this item of business and abstained from the vote.

133. BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED BY THE CHAIRMAN TO BE URGENT

There were none.

134. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, and that this satisfies the public interest test.

135. ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

RESOLVED that the meeting be adjourned for a short break at 20:54.

136. RESUMPTION OF BUSINESS IN CLOSED SESSION

RESOLVED that the extraordinary meeting of the Council resumes in closed session at 21:05.

137. OUTSTANDING LOAN - FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Council considered the report of the Director of Resources, seeking Members' consideration of a request to change the financial arrangements for an existing loan.

The report provided detailed information regarding the loan arrangements and existing instalment schedule. A request had been received to make changes to the existing loan arrangement and appendices to the report provided detailed information in relation to this request.

Prior to its consideration of the report the Council received a presentation from a trustee of the company (that the loan related to) who also proceeded to answer questions raised by Members.

At this point, Councillor Miss A M Beale disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in this item of business.

In response to questions regarding the trustee attending, Officers provided background information and the Lead Legal Specialist and Monitoring Officer advised that there was no constitutional reason that a member of the public could not attend and address the Council. The Director of Strategy, Performance and Governance advised that Officers would take on board the comments of Members for any such future presentations.

Following further debate, Councillor K M H Lagan proposed that the Council did not convert the loan and the original terms remained. This proposal was duly seconded.

Councillor R H Siddall proposed that the Council keep things as they were (in respect of the loan) but that the Finance Working Group receive and review the company's business plan and full accounts before reporting back to the Council. This proposal was duly seconded.

Councillor Lagan withdrew his earlier proposal at this point.

The Chairman then put the proposal in the name of Councillor Siddall to the Council and this was duly agreed.

RESOLVED that the current arrangements for the loan remain unchanged and the Finance Working Group receive and review the company's business plan and full accounts before reporting back to the Council.

138. LEISURE CONTRACT UPDATE

The Council considered the report of the Leisure Contract Task and Finish Working Group (the Working Group) advising Members of the on-going work from the Working Group in relation to the current position with the Leisure Services. The report also sought Members' approval for the Working Group to continue to meet to review the forecasted financial parameters.

The report set out the work undertaken by the Working Group since its last report to the Council. This included a summary of future forecast information in relation to the 2021 / 22 financial year and a detailed breakdown was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Leader of the Council presented the report and moved the recommendation as set out in in report. This was duly seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and the Leisure Contract Task and Finish Working Group will continue to meet quarterly to review the forecasted financial parameters.

There being no further items of business the Chairman closed the meeting at 10.11 pm.

C MAYES
CHAIRMAN

This page is intentionally left blank

LEADERS SPEECH 30/06/2021

The Council by-elections in May this year consolidated the position of the Independent Group as the largest group on Maldon District Council. We are now established as the administration of the Council and are looking to bring stability, a renewed focus on service delivery and corporate plans and projects, to the residents and businesses of the District.

I want to start by remembering the residents, business owners, friends, family and loved ones that have suffered loss due to the Covid-19 pandemic and to be mindful of those who are still struggling with the anxieties and challenges that the Coronavirus has brought to everyday lives.

Right now, livelihoods, and health are my main concerns, including mental health.

Residents need a Council that is understanding, engages more and takes positive action, that puts our homes, and our futures firmly at the centre of all our decisions, conversations and policies.

The Council Office continues to operate as a vital NHS resource, providing vaccines to protect our residents and to help us regain our confidence and freedoms. I want to praise all the NHS staff, key workers and volunteers for their tireless hard work and thank them for the care they have given and continue to.

From crisis, comes opportunity and there is a definite sense of hope and community, but this comes with an understandable cautiousness about what we still don't know of the pandemic and of what a potential third wave might bring.

The longer-term impacts from the pandemic are not yet fully known. National data is starting to show us that in the Maldon District women were furloughed more than men and that retail, leisure and tourism have been hit the hardest. There are also concerns for the construction industry as access to skilled workers and materials is challenging. This adds to the current cost of living, so the need to safely welcome back visitors to our beautiful District and supporting our local businesses is paramount for our future success.

Like many public sector organisations and businesses, the Council's finances remain challenging. The pandemic has seen an increase demand for council services yet income from sources such as parking, planning and local tax collection rates is down. Although the Council is well placed to respond, the longer-term impact is more uncertain. Therefore, we must continuously adapt and look for ways to keep vital services running. This means we need to continue to think commercially and look for revenue generating opportunities, BUT I must point out that we also need to ensure public value is the focus for every commercial decision made. We will continue to question 'is this the right thing to do', as well as seek to raise funds from some of our projects and assets.

The updated Corporate Plan, we published in February of this year, clearly sets out the Council's priorities, and is consistent with the statement I made in December of last year, upon becoming Leader. The Plan maintains the 3 key themes of Place, Prosperity and Community, but brings a greater focus to our activities and particularly around the environment, the economy and our work with communities to support the great work they are doing.

Looking ahead there are positives to focus on. We're excited about bringing forward our commitment to climate action, as many of our Councillors and residents are passionate about the environment and initiative we can take. We are going to reach out to our young people and communities to give them the opportunity to take climate action and to be part of

the 'Our Home, Our Future' engagement group, to ensure they have an active voice in making long-term, accessible change.

The title reflects that this is a strategy to be owned by us all as it affects everyone's future.

We have continued to support businesses in both surviving the challenges of the Covid Pandemic through 27 million of direct grant support, whilst also looking forward to the future and how the economy of the district can grow and thrive as restrictions ease. We have introduced initiatives such as 'Click and Collect' to help local retailers to compete with online offers to protect the vitality of our High Streets. We are working with partners to deliver a wide range of business support including business start-up funding and capacity building for existing businesses. Work is also underway on the Maldon District Investment Prospectus to attract new businesses to locate in our District.

We continue to build on our excellent partnerships and work with the community. Whilst Covid has been, and continues to be a challenge, we have been proud to be part of the amazing community response we have seen in the District. This includes the work we have done with the CVS and community partners to support the community hubs, and also the work we have done with the NHS to provide the vaccination centre at the Council Offices. A huge thank you to all for everything everyone has done no matter how large or small. I have no doubt we have many unsung heroes and heroines within this room alone as well as in our wonderful wider community.

We continue to work with partners and are keen to build on the partnerships that have been formed to enhance support to our communities as we hopefully move past this pandemic and embrace the opportunities of a new future.

We will be bringing forward initiatives to strengthen these partnerships, including the 'One Maldon District' approach that will be presented to Council this evening, as a model of how we capture the benefits of working in partnership and achieve more by working together.

The other part of our corporate plan was the introduction of a shared set of corporate values – signed up to by both Officers and Members. Following a year of political turmoil and unfortunate conflict at the Council, this shared set of values and the buy in of the whole Council is seen as vital to our ability to move forward together. We are a team that has shaped a new set of core values that must be embedded to create a culture of feeling safe and connected, and that helps to openly and respectfully challenge issues and ideas. We want to attract talented people to work for the Council and retain the great staff we have. We also want local people to want to become elected members of the Council. Our time is best spent delivering services, ensuring policies are fit for purpose and seeking opportunities for the District, not on efforts that distract us from what we are here to do. that wastes time or is an attempt at points scoring. Any behaviour that prevents us from being successful has to be challenged. We won't tolerate any negative behaviour that unfairly or disrespectfully attacks Councillors, Staff and the Council, especially at a time when the Council has been working in exceptional circumstances and under immense pressure.

Other key priorities for the year include the review of our Local Development Plan, which we will be consulting on later in the year. It is an opportunity to shape the district and provide homes and services for local families and residents who want to live in the district and continue to build their lives here. This review is key to the future of the district, as we will be asking for your views as we seek to put in place a plan that will deliver growth in a sustainable way, that meets the needs of residents in terms of homes and economic growth, but also focuses on sustainability, appropriate infrastructure and the protection of all that is already great about the unique character of our District.

We have put together a dedicated Team to ensure our Local Development Plan is delivered effectively, and we have switched resources away from the Bradwell B Project, as the development programme from BRB has slowed this year. We will re-engage fully in that work in due course and as necessary, but it is vital that as a Council with relatively limited resources, we do focus those resources in the areas where we need to deliver. With that in mind, as we seek to deliver the Corporate Plan, focussing on those priorities I have highlighted, as well as a renewed commercial delivery to support financial sustainability, I will be asking our Directors to ensure that the structure and resources we have in place are fit for purpose to deliver that agenda. Whilst we recognise the needs for councils to live within their means we also recognise that if staff are being asked to deliver, they need to have the right resources and we will be seeking to ensure those resources are in place and that our approach is geared to delivery.

We are proud of how we have delivered our services and additional support for the community through the challenges of the pandemic, and we are determined that as we now go forward we continue to deliver and maintain that momentum to deliver not only to the minimum required but additional services and support to meet the challenges in the future.

I would like to thank all the members of staff who work at MDC for all the hard work and challenges they have faced and still face. I also wish to thank the members of the Independent Group for all their hard work, commitment, trust, heated discussions and support not only of me and Cllr Nunn, my excellent deputy but the leadership team and hope we can continue to work with all Political Parties and/or groups in the future.

After all working together is far better for our residents for the reasons I have just presented in my leaders speech.

Mr Chairman I present this speech to the Council with sincere belief and a determination to do the right thing for the Maldon District.

Thank you

Councillor Wendy Stamp
Leader
Maldon District Council