

CABINET held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 8 MAY 2025 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor P Lees (Chair)
Councillors A Coote, J Evans, N Hargreaves, N Reeve and M Sutton

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), N Brown (Head of Development Management & Enforcement), P Evans (Risk, Contracts and Performance Manager), B Ferguson (Democratic Services Manager), N Katevu (Head of Legal and Monitoring Officer) and A Knight (Director of Business Performance and People).

Also present: Councillors N Gregory (Chair of Scrutiny Committee) and G Sell (Liberal Democrat Group Leader); R Allsford (SPV General Manager – Linteum Leisure Projects at Pario) and B Reynolds (Uttlesford PFI Contract Manager at 1Life).

CAB114 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies were received from Councillor Moran, the Conservative Group Leader.

There were no declarations of interest.

CAB115 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2025 were approved as a correct record.

CAB116 QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS FROM NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (STANDING ITEM)

There were no questions or statements from non-executive members of the Council.

CAB117 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Gregory, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, provided a report on behalf of the committee. He said the committee had agreed to scrutinise items on car parking, the Community Safety Partnership and the use of Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) in the Council's fleet of waste vehicles at the next meeting. He said the police commissioner would be in attendance and highlighted the

need to ensure that residents were getting good value for money in respect of policing, while acknowledging the challenges faced by Essex Police.

CAB118 REPORT OF DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS (STANDING ITEM)

The [decision regarding Achieving Outcomes in Partnership with the Voluntary Sector – One-off grants](#) taken by the Leader of the Council on 9 April 2025 was noted.

CAB119 PFI CONTRACT UPDATE

Councillor Gregory left the meeting at 7.09pm.

The Leader welcomed Ms Reynolds, Uttlesford PFI Contract Manager at 1Life, and Mr Allsford, SPV General Manager – Linteum Leisure Projects at Pario, to the meeting.

Councillor Sutton spoke to the report and thanked officers for all of their work on the PFI contract. She invited the Contract, Performance & Risk Manager to highlight any key issues.

The Contract, Performance & Risk Manager said this was the first time Cabinet had received the report and provided a brief history of the contract. She said further opportunities for joined up working would be utilised in future, such as community group services to be offered at the leisure centres.

In response to a member question, the Contract, Performance & Risk Manager said 1 Life were working on a return to paying an Operator fee to the Council and the business was getting back on track following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. She said the Council benefitted from the contract and the company had costs to bear.

Councillor Coote said the leisure centre provided a service to the community; it was not about making a profit.

In response to questions, Ms Reynolds said the squash court had not been impacted by recent changes at all. The refurbished gym had also received positive feedback from the public.

The report was noted.

CAB120 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION FOR ATTRIDGES FARM

Councillor Evans presented the report regarding the confirmation of an Article 4 Direction for Land at Attridges Farm, High Roding. He proposed approval of the recommendation.

Councillor Reeve seconded the proposal.

The Development Manager said a decision had been made in March 2024 regarding this Article 4 Direction and the necessary advertising had now taken place. Subject to Cabinet's approval, he said the Article 4 Direction would come into effect in May 2026.

RESOLVED that an Article 4 Direction made on 24 March 2024 be confirmed for Land at Attridges Farm, HIGH RODING to take effect from May 2026.

CAB121 COUNTER FRAUD ANNUAL UPDATE

The Leader presented the report regarding the Counter Fraud Strategy, which summarised the counter-fraud activity that has been undertaken by the Council in 2024/25, including updates on potential irregularities reported to or identified by the Council and the current status of data matching exercises.

In response to a member question, the Leader said no significant fraud had been found by internal audit but there was no room for complacency.

The report was noted.

CAB122 INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT & OPINION

The Leader presented the report regarding the Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2024-25, which summarised the work that Internal Audit had undertaken during the previous financial year and provided detail of the high risk and priority issues which could impact the effectiveness of risk management and governance processes across the Council. She said 80 internal audit recommendations had been closed in the past year and highlighted a number of audit workstreams identified for next year, such as partnership workings and business continuity. She thanked the Internal Audit Manager for his work in producing the report.

In response to a question regarding the Biodiversity Net Gain audit recommendation, the Leader confirmed that this work was in hand.

The report was noted.

CAB123 CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

The Leader presented the report regarding the Corporate Risk Register and said that twenty-four risks had been highlighted, not twenty-three, as set out in the report. She thanked the Director of Business Performance and People for her work in producing the Corporate Risk Register.

In response to a member question relating to a risk associated with Stansted Airport, the Chief Executive said it was sensible to include such a risk, as in recent memory the Council was ordered to pay £3.4million in costs following a failed planning appeal.

Members referenced the decreasing level of risks in relation to the Local Plan and the financial management system.

The report was noted.

CAB124 MUSEUM INTERIM FORWARD PLAN

Councillor Sutton presented the report regarding Saffron Walden Museum's Interim Forward Plan. She said this was a requirement of the relevant accreditation scheme and that the action plan was also key to this process. She proposed approval of the recommendation.

Councillor Evans seconded the proposal.

In response to a member question, the Leader said the recruitment of a Community Engagement Officer was still the intention of the Museum, according to the information included in the report.

RESOLVED to approve the Saffron Walden Museum's Interim Forward Plan.

CAB125 BLUEPRINT UTTLESFORD UPDATE

The Chief Executive spoke to the report regarding Blueprint Uttlesford, which summarised the Council's change programme in the context of Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) and the recent impact of the USA trade tariffs on the economy. He said there had been a shift of the Devolution/LGR agenda which had commenced in December 2024, and with Uttlesford District Council now due to be abolished and replaced in three years' time, it now no longer made sense for the Council to continue with the Blueprint Uttlesford service reviews as originally envisaged.

The Leader thanked the Chief Executive and his senior management team for their proactive work on LGR and for their prudence in setting aside money for the LGR project work, which was not the case at other councils she was aware of.

The Leader proposed approval of the recommendation.

The proposal was seconded by Councillor Reeve.

RESOLVED to note and endorse the revised approach to Blueprint Uttlesford as set-out in the [report](#).

The meeting was closed at 7.57pm.