

MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 25 May 2021
(7:03 - 8:36 pm)

Present: Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chair), Cllr Saima Ashraf (Deputy Chair), Cllr Dominic Twomey (Deputy Chair), Cllr Sade Bright, Cllr Evelyn Carpenter, Cllr Syed Ghani, Cllr Margaret Mullane and Cllr Maureen Worby

Apologies: Cllr Cameron Geddes

1. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes (20 April 2021)

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2021 were confirmed as correct.

3. Barking and Dagenham School Improvement Partnership Business Plan 2021-2024

The Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement introduced the Barking and Dagenham School Improvement Partnership (BDSIP) Business Plan for 2021-24.

The Business Plan set out BDSIP's vision, values, and social and commercial ambitions for the coming years, which included improving pupil outcomes year-on-year and generating an annual financial surplus of 5%, that would be re-invested in new service offers to schools. The Cabinet Member advised that while all 43 Local Authority schools and 13 Academy schools had continued to be Members of the BDSIP, the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted on the business, an example being a significant drop in the number of schools purchasing careers and work experience services in 2020/21. However, BDSIP had adapted well to mitigate the negative impact and had progressed several new opportunities, such as developing an online delivery model for Continued Professional Development.

It was noted that the uncertainty surrounding the long-term impact of the pandemic meant that the Business Plan only included financial performance forecasts for the 2021/22 financial year. The Cabinet Member was nonetheless reassured that BDSIP remained on a sound financial footing via the monitoring and challenge mechanisms in place via the Council's Shareholder Panel.

Members discussed other potential opportunities for the BDSIP to expand its clientele and offer to schools, such as GDPR services and the emerging economies in the Borough.

Cabinet **resolved** to endorse the BDSIP Business Plan 2021-2024 as set out in the appendices to the report.

4. Independent Domestic Abuse Commission Report - Initial Response

Further to Minute 78 (15 February 2021), the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration presented a report on the Council's initial response to the recommendations of the Independent Barking and Dagenham Domestic Abuse Commission (DAC).

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the Council had acknowledged and accepted all of the DAC's recommendations and a five-year delivery plan was being developed to enact them. It was noted, however, that Outcome 3, Step 3 of the DAC's report, which related to funding a young ambassador's group, was likely to be achieved in a different way than that proposed due to the level of resources required to achieve the projected outcomes.

A two-phased approach to embedding the principles and recommendations had been adopted, Phase 1 being 'Priming the System' and Phase 2 'Realising Change'. The Cabinet Member advised that domestic abuse survivors would be at the centre of the delivery plan's development and implementation, supported by dedicated staff resources within the Council, and led by a new strategic group, the Barking and Dagenham Against Domestic Abuse (BDADA).

Members commended the work of the DAC and the considerable progress already made by the Council in response to the recommendations. Members also expressed their pride at the Council's pro-active approach to tackling domestic abuse within the Borough and referred to other initiatives, such as the introduction of a new bereavement leave policy for staff that suffer a miscarriage before the 24th week of pregnancy, that exemplified the Council's position as an innovator in the public service sector.

Cabinet **resolved** to approve the Council's initial response to the Domestic Abuse Commission's recommendations, as detailed in the report.

5. Tri-Borough Civil Protection Service - Statutory Plans

The Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety presented a report on the Tri-Borough Civil Protection Service and updated versions of the two statutory plans which underpinned much of the service's work, the Corporate Emergency Management Plan and the Corporate Business Continuity Plan.

The Cabinet Member referred to the key responsibilities and achievements of the tri-borough service, which also covered the London Boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest, since its inception in September 2017. The two statutory plans, required under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, were extremely comprehensive and the robustness of the existing plans and service arrangements had been particularly evident in the Council's response to the fire at Samuel Garside House in July 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Corporate Business Continuity Plan also sets out the Council's procedures for responding to IT system software attacks, which had occurred in other local authorities and had a significant impact on their ability to maintain service provision.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the Corporate Emergency Management Plan at Appendix 1 to the report;
- (ii) Approve the Corporate Business Continuity Plan at Appendix 2 to the report; and
- (iii) Note the delivery mechanism for resilience via the Tri-Borough partnership arrangements.

6. Parking Permit Policy - Car Free Developments

The Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety presented a report on a proposed revision to the Council's Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) policy relating to "car free", "car light" or private parking areas within the Borough.

The Cabinet Member explained that many new developments in the Borough were subject to planning approvals / conditions aimed at reducing traffic congestion, reducing air pollution and managing the limited capacity for on-street parking, particularly in areas with good public transport links. The intention, therefore, was to bring the Council's CPZ policy into line with the planning regime by restricting the eligibility of residents within such areas from the residential parking permit scheme, unless exceptional circumstances applied.

It was acknowledged that there needed to be further discussions, both within the Council, with the Government and with local residents, regarding achieving the correct balance between implementing the Government's Green Agenda and meeting the needs of residents via new and improved infrastructure.

Cabinet **resolved** to agree that the Council's Controlled Parking Zone policy be updated to reflect that those residing in housing developments which are granted planning permission on the basis they are or will be deemed to be "car free", "car light" or have own private parking arrangement or access to private car parks in accordance with section 45 (3) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, shall not be eligible for a parking permit, subject to the Operational Director, Enforcement and Community Safety being authorised to approve applications where he considers there to be exceptional circumstances.

7. Procurement of External Enforcement Agent Service

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report on proposals relating to the procurement of a new four-year contract, commencing 1 January 2022, for external enforcement agent services to compliment the recently established in-house Enforcement Team.

The Cabinet Member outlined the key aspects of the procurement strategy and confirmed that the in-house service would deal with enforcement matters within the Borough and adjacent postcodes while the external service would focus on cases elsewhere, all in accordance with the Council's ethical debt collection approach.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of contracts for

external Enforcement Agent services in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and

- (ii) Authorise the Strategic Director of Community Solutions, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services, the Strategic Director of Law and Governance and the Managing Director, to conduct the procurement and award and enter into the contracts and all other necessary or ancillary agreements with the successful bidder(s), in accordance with the strategy set out in the report.

8. Future of Roycraft House, Linton Road, Barking

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced a report on the opportunity to redevelop Roycraft House, the Council's six-storey office block in the heart of Barking Town Centre, into a hybrid / mixed-use model of managed workspace with ground floor café/event space to meet the demand for high-quality office accommodation in the area.

The Cabinet Member referred to the options for the site that had been considered as part of the initial assessment, which included selling the site on the open market and redevelopment to provide for a new primary school. However, it was felt that in order to promote the Council's vision for a vibrant Town Centre with a mix of uses where adaptability and flexibility were key features, in line with the Barking Town Centre Regeneration Strategy and masterplan for the area, the redevelopment of Roycraft House as proposed represented the best option in the medium-term.

An independent study of workspace needs in the Town Centre had been commissioned and had identified a range of benefits for the Council, the area in general and local businesses. The Cabinet Member explained that the next step would be to secure an innovative, high-quality workspace operator to deliver the project and, to that end, it was proposed that a procurement process be commenced. The outcome of the procurement exercise would be reported to the Cabinet in due course, setting out the delivery options and detailed financial issues.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that tenders be sought for a workspace operator for Roycraft House on the terms set out in the report; and
- (ii) Note that a further report shall be presented to Cabinet on the outcome of the tender process and, if appropriate, seeking approval to enter into lease / contract arrangements with the preferred bidder.

9. Development of Land at Transport House, 46-48 New Road, Dagenham

Further to Minute 86 (23 January 2018), the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report on an approach from the housing developer, Hollybrook Limited, to work in partnership to deliver a 149-unit residential development along New Road, Dagenham, which would incorporate the Council-owned Transport House site and a large part of the Premier Inn car park

site.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Transport House site was earmarked for development by the Council to provide circa 50 new homes. The proposal put forward by Hollybrook Limited, who had acquired exclusive rights to redevelop the Premier Inn land, was to deliver a scheme across the two sites to provide a total of 149 new, mixed tenure homes which would be purchased by the Council at a fixed price on completion. The Cabinet Member referred to the proposed terms of the Development Agreement with Hollybrook Limited, the options and risk analysis and the financial implications associated with the project, which were set out in an exempt appendix to the report, and confirmed that the projected outcomes were in line with the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy.

Members spoke in support of the project and the wider regeneration proposals for the south of the Borough. It was stressed, however, that the Government and the National Health Service must support the Council's ambitious regeneration plans across the Borough by ensuring that the necessary infrastructure was in place to serve the new and existing communities.

Cabinet resolved to:

- (i) Approve the preferred option and tenure mix as set out in the report which would deliver 50% market rent and 50% affordable housing comprising 45 Affordable Rent homes let at up to 80% of market rent and 30 London Affordable Rent (LAR) homes;
- (ii) Approve in principle to enter into a Development Agreement with Hollybrook Developments to deliver 149 units for a total development cost of £44.5m for expected completion in 2024 subject to satisfactory due diligence;
- (iii) Approve in principle the borrowing of up to £37.7m within the General Fund to finance the entire development subject to satisfactory due diligence;
- (iv) Agree to allocate up to £3.8m restricted Right to Buy receipts, if required, to fund the construction and professional fees to support the financial viability of the affordable housing delivery;
- (v) Agree to allocate £3m GLA LAR grant funding, subject to a successful bid, to support the financial viability of the LAR tenure;
- (vi) Note that the scheme meets the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy financial performance metrics;
- (vii) Agree to the use of an existing or the establishment of a Special Purpose Vehicle(s) as required within the Barking & Dagenham Reside structure to develop, own, let, sell and manage and maintain the homes in accordance with the funding terms in a loan agreement between the Council and Special Purpose Vehicle; and
- (viii) Delegate authority to the Managing Director, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Law and Governance, to agree and execute any agreements and contract documents to fully implement the project.

10. Any other public items which the Chair decides are urgent

The Chair referred to the Black Lives Matter movement which gained prominence following the murder of George Floyd while in police custody exactly one year ago to the day and placed on record the Council's commitment to tackling hate and racism within the Borough in all of its forms.