

CABINET

Tuesday, 20 March 2012
(5:00 - 5:32 pm)

Present: Councillor L A Smith (Chair), Councillor R Gill (Deputy Chair), Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor H J Collins, Councillor C Geddes, Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor L A Reason, Councillor P T Waker, Councillor J R White and Councillor M M Worby

Also Present: Councillor E Keller, Councillor G Letchford and Councillor J E McDermott

117. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

118. Minutes (14 February 2012)

The minutes of the meeting on 14 February 2012 were confirmed as correct.

119. Budget Monitoring 2011/12 - April to January 2012

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Education presented a report on the Council's revenue and capital budget position for 2011/12 as at 31 January 2012.

The General Fund continued to show an improved position with a projected year-end underspend of £1.3m (before the planned £1.5m contribution to balances) compared to a projected £0.7m underspend as reported at the last meeting. The Cabinet Member referred to the main areas of overspend within the Children's Services directorate (Complex Needs and Social Care) and the Housing and Environment directorate (reduced income and cost pressures in the Environment division) and the steps taken to address the overspends. The Cabinet Member also advised on a proposed transfer of £235,000 to offset a budget gap that had arisen due to changes in Housing Benefit Subsidy.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) had a projected underspend of £693,000, an improvement of £44,000 on the previous month's position, and the Cabinet Member also referred to the Capital Programme which had an overall status of 'Green' at the end of January 2012.

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) To note the projected outturn position for 2011/12 of the Council's revenue budget as detailed in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.11 and Appendix A of the report;
- (ii) To note the progress against the 2011/12 savings targets as detailed in paragraph 2.12 and Appendix B of the report;
- (iii) To note the position for the HRA as detailed in paragraph 2.13 and Appendix C of the report;

- (iv) To note the projected outturn position for 2011/12 of the Council's capital budget as detailed in paragraph 2.14 and Appendix D of the report; and
- (v) A revenue budget adjustment of £235,000 from the Housing General Fund, Housing and Environment directorate, to the Revenues and Benefits service, Finance and Resources directorate.

120. Housing Strategy 2012 - 2017 and Council Housing Business Plan 2012/13

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented a report on the Housing Strategy 2012 - 2017 and the associated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2012/13.

The Cabinet Member referred to the four main objectives within the Strategy of (a) delivering social and economic regeneration through building high quality homes and thriving communities, (b) investing in new council housing and establishing new ways to deliver affordable housing, (c) good quality services and (d) sustainable communities, and explained that the key measures of success would be higher levels of satisfaction and improved quality of life and well-being amongst residents. The Strategy was also designed to adapt to changing circumstances and new initiatives, and in the latter respect the Cabinet Member referred to the potential to support elderly residents in private properties.

The HRA Business Plan set out proposals that underpinned the operation of the Council's Housing service and would assist in the delivery of the Housing Strategy. The Cabinet Member commented that new Right-to-Buy discount arrangements may impact on the current proposals and annual updates would be presented to Cabinet on the Business Plan and the Council's Housing Asset Management Strategy.

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) To **recommend the Assembly** to approve the Barking and Dagenham Housing Strategy 2012 - 2017; and
- (ii) The HRA Business Plan 2012/13.

121. Improved Housing Management and Environmental Services in Town Centres and Flatted Housing Estates

The Cabinet Member for Environment presented a report on plans to improve front-line housing management and environmental services in the Borough's town centres and flatted housing estates through a new joined up service.

The Cabinet Member advised that pilot schemes in two areas of the Borough that had commenced last year had brought together services such as grounds maintenance, housing and street cleaning, with each area overseen by a Localities Manager. Those pilots had proved very successful by providing more responsive and accountable services to local people and, more importantly, improving the quality and consistency of the service provided. The proposal was to extend the arrangements to four further areas of the Borough and implement revised staffing and management structures to reflect the new 'localities' service model.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) That an integrated Housing Management and Environmental service, as described in the report, be delivered in the targeted areas broadly outlined in Appendix A to the report, on the understanding that the exact boundaries would be subject to change to reflect operational requirements identified during implementation and development of the new localities model; and
- (ii) That formal consultation commence with Unions and affected staff on the restructuring proposals as detailed in the report.

122. Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service

Further to Minute 29 (23 August 2011), the Cabinet Member for Housing presented a report on proposals to extend the level of in-house provision following the expiry of the current housing repairs and maintenance contract in April 2013.

Since the Cabinet meeting in August 2011, further opportunities to provide services in-house had been assessed and the Cabinet Member stated that he was confident that the latest proposals would enhance the delivery of an efficient and effective service to the benefit of the local community, the workforce and the Council. The Cabinet Member added that the procurement of some external services referred to in the report were intended to supplement the new in-house services but would also be applied where in-house provision was not able to meet requirements.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) That the day-to-day responsive housing repair, gas servicing and voids services be provided primarily as an in-house function from the end of the current contract in April 2013;
- (ii) The current Housing Repairs and Maintenance procurement exercise approved by Cabinet on 23 August 2011 be revised to provide for the procurement of a service provider for voids and repairs services (to supplement the in-house function) on a call-off term contract;
- (iii) A procurement exercise be conducted for the selection and award of one or more contracts to external providers of gas servicing and maintenance services (to supplement the in-house function) with contract lots based on geographic areas;
- (iv) The Council continue with its procurement exercises for the selection and award of contracts to external providers of mechanical and electrical services, aids and adaptations services, and a range of small contracts including asbestos testing and removal services;
- (v) A procurement exercise be commenced or incorporated in the existing procurement exercise for the procurement of a stores function, any necessary infrastructure requirements, equipment, vehicles, ICT hardware, software, licences and services, and all other necessary supplies and services, required for the operation of in-house services;

- (vi) The existing proposals to provide an in-house client and complaints team continue to be developed;
- (vii) The existing OJEU procurement strategy and process be revised as necessary to facilitate the implementation of the above recommendations, and that any new or revised notices in respect of voids, repairs and gas servicing services, values and scope, be issued and published;
- (viii) To reaffirm the earlier decision to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Housing and Environment, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, the Divisional Director for Legal and Democratic Services and the Cabinet Members for Housing and Finance and Education, to agree the procurement strategy (including the procurement procedure, contract structure, contractor selection and evaluation criteria and detailed proposals for client management) and take any other related or necessary actions to facilitate the implementation of the above recommendations, including assessing and agreeing TUPE requirements and associated staffing structures;
- (ix) That the existing proposal to provide an in-house call centre through Elevate East London LLP continue to be pursued subject to satisfactory delivery and cost proposals;
- (x) That Section 20 leaseholder consultation requirements be amended and reissued as necessary, and capital and revenue expenditure needed to deliver these revised arrangements be identified and funded from HRA balances and the Housing Capital Programme;
- (xi) That appropriate discussions and consultations with Trade Unions take place; and
- (xii) That a Communications Plan be developed and implemented.

123. Pay Policy Statement 2012/13

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Human Resources presented the draft Pay Policy Statement for the Council for 2012/13.

The Localism Act 2011 required all local authorities to publish an annual statement of its pay policy, covering areas such as the level and elements of remuneration for each chief officer and the relationship between the remuneration of chief officers, other officers and its “lowest paid employees”. The Cabinet Member advised that the Council’s previous decisions to reduce the level of Chief Executive pay and to implement the London Living Wage meant that the ratio between the highest and lowest paid employees was 1:10, which compared very favourably to the Hutton review recommendation that the ratio should not be greater than 1:20. The Cabinet Member also referred to an amendment that would be made to the policy prior to its submission to the Assembly.

Cabinet **agreed to recommend the Assembly** to approve the Pay Policy Statement for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham for 2012/13, for publication with effect from 1 April 2012.

124. Parking and Traffic Enforcement Policy

The Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities presented a report on a proposed policy in respect of parking and traffic enforcement in the Borough.

The Cabinet Member advised that the new policy would assist the Council in achieving its wider transport objectives as well as provide a transparent and consistent approach to the enforcement regime, covering aspects including cancellation and discretionary arrangements, vehicle removals and debt write-off.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) To adopt the Parking and Traffic Enforcement Policy at Appendix A to the report and the associated annexes listed below:
 - Cancellation Guidance
 - Description of Traffic Signs
 - Discretionary Policy
 - Vehicle Removals Policy
- (ii) To adopt the revised Write-off Policy at Appendix B to the report in respect of Parking and Traffic Enforcement, which would be incorporated into the Corporate Debt Management Policy later in the year.

125. Statement of Licensing Policy 2012 - 2015

The Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities presented a report on an updated Statement of Licensing Policy for the Borough.

The Cabinet Member advised that a number of changes had been made to the Council's current policy to reflect new legislative arrangements as well as local concerns. In this latter respect, the changes included restrictions on the hours of sale of alcohol both late at night and in the morning, the principle that alcohol licences would generally be refused for premises in the vicinity of schools, stricter requirements for the location of alcohol in off-licence premises and the active promotion of the existing Responsible Retailer scheme.

Cabinet **agreed to recommend the Assembly** to adopt the revised Statement of Licensing Policy at Appendix 1 to the report.

126. Beam Park Prospectus

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration introduced a report on a revised approach in respect of the regeneration of Beam Park, south Dagenham, an area of approximately 30 hectares of largely vacant land south of the A1306, two thirds of which was within Barking and Dagenham and the other third in the London Borough of Havering.

The Cabinet Member advised that the intention had been for the site to be for residential-led development but recent interest from the market had suggested that a major leisure-led project could provide the essential catalyst to secure regeneration and deliver growth in the wider south Dagenham / Rainham area.

With that in mind, a joint prospectus had been prepared which, although not changing or replacing current planning policy, provided an up-to-date statement of the two Councils' aspirations for the area and described the key development objectives, an illustration of the expected planning benefits and a summary of planning and transport requirements including planning policy considerations.

Cabinet **agreed to recommend the Assembly** to approve the Beam Park Prospectus at Appendix 1 to the report.

127. Single Equality Scheme 2012 - 2016

The Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities presented a report on the Council's Single Equality Scheme 2012 - 2016, which built on the Single Equality Scheme 2010 - 2013 and incorporated the nine Equality Objectives as required under the Public Sector Equality Duty 2011.

The Cabinet Member advised that a new Action Plan would be developed to ensure delivery of the Equality Objectives, set within the context of the resources currently available to the Council.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) To formally adopt the revised Single Equality Scheme 2012 - 2016 as the Council's method of meeting the specific duty in regard to Equality Objectives; and
- (ii) To authorise the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities, to agree a four-year Action Plan commencing from April 2012.

128. Transitions Strategy for Disabled Young People with Support Needs 2012 - 2015

The Cabinet Member for Children and Adult Services presented a report on a strategy aimed at helping young people with long-term, substantial care and support needs due to a disability or impairment to have a seamless, well informed and well planned transition into adulthood.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Transitions Strategy was based on a national model of good practice but had been developed through a multi-agency Steering Group that involved officers from across the Council, voluntary sector partners and carer representatives, including several families with children at Trinity School. The three key areas for improvement identified within the Strategy were the need for (a) better comprehensive and co-ordinated planning from Year 9 of secondary education, (b) greater choice and control and (c) a wider range of local opportunities available for disabled young adults including education and employment.

Cabinet **agreed** the Transitions Strategy for Disabled Young People with Support Needs 2012 - 2015 and associated Action Plan at Appendix 1 to the report.

129. Amalgamation of Grafton Infant and Junior Schools and William Bellamy Infant and Junior Schools

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Education presented a report on the proposal to amalgamate Grafton Infant and Junior Schools and William Bellamy Infant and Junior Schools to become primary schools with effect from 1 April 2012.

The Cabinet Member referred to the key benefits of amalgamation and the Corporate Director of Children's Services outlined the responses to the consultation. It was noted that many parents and staff from William Bellamy Infant School had expressed concerns about the amalgamation and these had been fully discussed in parents' meetings.

Cabinet **agreed** the amalgamation of Grafton Infant and Junior Schools and William Bellamy Infant and Junior Schools to become all-through Primary Schools from 1 April 2012.

130. Retendering of Five Children's Centre Day Nurseries

The Cabinet Member for Children and Adult Services reported on proposals for the retendering of contracts to provide day-care nursery services at five of the Borough's Children's Centres, the current contracts for which were due to expire on 31 December 2012.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) That a competitive procurement exercise be conducted for the appointment of a provider of full day-care nursery services at Eastbury, Ford Road, Furze, Leys and Wellgate Children's Centres, in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules and on the terms detailed in the report;
- (ii) That service contracts and coterminous leases for each of the Children's Centres be entered into with the appointed provider for the duration of the contracts; and
- (iii) To authorise the Corporate Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, to award the contract and coterminous leases upon conclusion of the procurement process.

131. Framework Contract for the Provision of Independent Travel Training for Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults

The Cabinet Member for Children and Adult Services presented a report on proposals for the Council to act as lead on a multi-borough Framework Agreement for an Independent Travel Training Provision, primarily for young people with significant educational needs but also by other user groups such as vulnerable adults.

The Cabinet Member explained that the Council had a very successful programme in place that encouraged those with learning difficulties to travel independently and was therefore best placed to lead on the procurement. The new framework would help users to better access community resources while providing a more

responsive and cost-effective service.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) That the Council act as lead authority for a two-year Framework Agreement (with an option to extend for a further two years) for an Independent Travel Training Provision to a number of other participating authorities, on the terms detailed in the report; and
- (ii) To authorise the Corporate Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, to approve the appointment of the successful bidders to the Framework Agreement.

132. Re-tendering of Contract for Leasehold Property Insurance Services

The Cabinet Member for Housing reported on proposals for the retendering of the contract for the provision of insurance services for leaseholders, the current contract for which was due to expire on 29 September 2012.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) The arrangements for the retendering of the Leasehold Property Insurance Services contract, as detailed in the report; and
- (ii) That the decision to award the contract be taken by the Cabinet.

133. Programme of Meetings 2012/13

The Leader of the Council reported on the proposed principles for the Programme of Meetings for the forthcoming municipal year 2012/13, which were largely unchanged from the current year.

Cabinet **agreed** the basis of the Programme of Meetings for 2012/13 as detailed in the report.

134. Debt Management Performance and Write-Offs 2011/12 (Quarter 3)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Education presented a report on the performance during the third quarter of the 2011/12 financial year (October - December 2011) in respect of the debt management function carried out by the Revenues and Benefits Service within Elevate East London, together with details of the debts written-off as uncollectable during the period and comparable information from the previous financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Housing referred to the rent collection targets within the contract with Elevate and the need to ensure that the achievement of targets did not impact on other elements of the Housing service such as eviction levels. The Corporate Director of Housing and Environment advised that the service delivered by Elevate had resulted in the Housing Revenue Account benefitting by the equivalent of £1m per annum in additional revenue and that the ongoing relationship between the Council and Elevate would ensure that all contractual obligations were fulfilled. The Chief Executive added that achievement levels within the contract had been set above the levels achieved when the services were

provided in-house and the mechanisms within the contract were designed to achieve continual improvement.

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) To note the performance of the debt management function carried out by the Revenues and Benefits Service operated by Elevate East London as detailed in the report; and
- (ii) To note the debt write-offs during the second quarter of 2011/12 and that a number of those debts would be publicised in accordance with the policy agreed by Minute 69 (6 November 2007).