

MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 20 September 2016
(7:04 - 8:06 pm)

Present: Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chair), Cllr Saima Ashraf (Deputy Chair), Cllr Sade Bright, Cllr Laila M. Butt, Cllr Evelyn Carpenter, Cllr Cameron Geddes, Cllr Lynda Rice, Cllr Bill Turner and Cllr Maureen Worby

Also Present: Cllr Irma Freeborn

Apologies: Cllr Dominic Twomey

35. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

36. Minutes (19 July 2016)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2016 were confirmed as correct.

37. Budget Monitoring 2016/17- April to July (Month 4)

The Strategic Director of Finance and Investment introduced a report on the Council's capital and revenue position for the 2016/17 financial year, as at 31 July 2016.

The General Fund showed a projected end of year spend of £157.0m against the approved budget of £150.3m. The overspend of £6.722m was almost £2m higher than projected at the previous meeting and was largely attributable to an increase in pressures within the Homelessness service from £1m to £2.7m. The Strategic Director confirmed that a recovery plan had been put in place which should bring the service within budget by the year end. The ongoing pressures within Children's Social Care of £3.6m were also expected to be much reduced by the year end.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) showed a predicted revenue surplus of £0.6m, which would increase the HRA reserve to £9.3m at the year end, while the forecast outturn for the Capital Programme was at £204.1m against the budget of £199.4m due to accelerated spend on several projects.

The Strategic Director also advised on an opportunity to capitalise the £2m Transformation Programme funding that was due to be met from revenue budgets, as well as proposed virements from the Central Expenses budget to cover the costs associated with the annual pay award and Microsoft IT licences.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the projected outturn position for 2016/17 of the Council's General Fund revenue budget at 31 July 2016, as detailed in paragraphs 2.1 to 2.19 and Appendix A of the report;

- (ii) Agree to rescind the decision made by Minute 82(vi) (19 January 2016) to fund the £2m of the initial stages of the Transformation Programme from reserves and instead for the funding to be met from capital receipts, subject to an in depth review of capital receipts and the cost of the programme overall by the Strategic Director of Finance and Investment which shall be reported as part of the MTFs to a future meeting;
- (iii) Note the overall position for the HRA at 31 July 2016, as detailed in paragraph 2.20 of the report;
- (iv) Note the progress made on budgeted savings to date as detailed in paragraph 2.27 and Appendix B of the report;
- (v) Note the projected outturn position for 2016/17 of the Council's capital budget as at 31 July 2016, as detailed in paragraph 2.28 to 2.33 and Appendix C of the report; and
- (vi) Approve virements from the Central Expenses budget in respect of the annual pay award (£2,635,500) and Microsoft IT licences (£380,000), as detailed in paragraph 2.34 of the report.

38. Corporate Delivery Plan 2016/17 - Quarter 1 Performance Reporting

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Performance and Delivery introduced the inaugural performance report under the new, interim corporate performance framework which covered the first quarter of the 2016/17 financial year.

The Cabinet Member explained that the new approach had a greater focus on the Council's key ambitions and the delivery of outcomes that supported local residents' aspirations. It was also designed to complement the stronger strategic role of Cabinet Members and would continue to be developed to give more focus to quantitative performance indicators and, for 2017/18 onwards, the Council's enhanced role as a commissioning-based organisation.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration commented that the new approach concentrated on the most important issues to the local community. The information would also support the Council's continued efforts to hold other providers to account for the services that they provided to the local community.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note progress against the Key Accountabilities as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (ii) Note performance against the key performance indicators (KPIs) as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3 to the report.

39. Waste Strategy 2016 - 2020: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle

The Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene introduced the Waste Strategy 2016 - 2020 which set out the Council's plans to reduce waste and

increase the reuse and recycling of materials over the next five years.

It was noted that Barking and Dagenham households threw away approximately one tonne of rubbish each year, the highest level of waste production per household in London. Furthermore, the borough recycling rate had reduced from a peak of over 30% in 2011/12 to approximately 24% in 2014/15 and an estimated 19.2% in 2015/16. The Cabinet Member explained that a number of service improvements and a public awareness campaign had seen the 2016/17 recycling rate increase to around 28.6% by the end of July. The new Strategy would build on that improvement via a wide range of measures aimed at changing the behaviour of the local community and through the delivery of cost-effective services.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the Waste Strategy 2016 - 2020: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (ii) Authorise the Strategic Director of Customer, Commercial and Service Delivery, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Street Scene, to agree minor amendments to the Strategy prior to its publication.

40. Playing Pitch Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Leadership presented a new Playing Pitch Strategy which set out current and emerging needs in respect of football, cricket, rugby, tennis and hockey pitches in the Borough.

The Cabinet Member advised that the new Strategy built on the version adopted in 2005 and reflected the latest Sport England and National Governing Body guidance. The Strategy contained priority actions relating to football, cricket and rugby which included seeking external funding to improve the pitches and enhance changing and club house facilities. It was also proposed to reduce the number of adult football pitches and increase those for youth and mini-football, to reflect shifts in demand.

It was noted that the implementation of a new Strategy was essential to support future funding bids to Sport England and other agencies and would form part of a wider Parks and Open Spaces Strategy that was currently being developed.

Arising from the discussions, the Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement suggested that the Strategy could be enhanced through increased reference to the important role of women and girl's sports in the Borough and how their specific needs would be met.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the Playing Pitch Strategy at Appendix 2 to the report, subject to the inclusion of additional reference to women and girl's sports and how their needs would be met within the Strategy; and

- (ii) Authorise the Strategic Director for Growth and Homes, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Engagement and Leadership, to agree any minor amendments to the Strategy prior to its publication.

41. Substance Misuse Strategy 2016-2020

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration introduced the Substance Misuse Strategy for 2016 - 2020 which set out the measures for tackling the impact of drugs and alcohol in the Borough over the next five years.

The Cabinet Member advised on the latest data relating to substance misuse in the Borough and referred to the four main objectives of the Strategy, namely:

- Reduce the harmful impact of substance misuse on the wider community;
- Ensure everyone can access good quality healthcare when they need it and continue to enable access to effective treatment and promote sustained recovery;
- Enable social responsibility by supporting residents to take responsibility for themselves, their homes and their community; and
- Protect the most vulnerable, keeping adults and children healthy and safe.

Key to achieving those aims would be a programme of prevention and education initiatives and the Cabinet Member made particular reference to the work already being carried out in schools to make children more aware of the dangers of substance abuse and the avenues open to those who experienced the effects within the family environment. The Cabinet Member also referred to the important role of the general public in reporting substance misuse concerns to the Council, the Police, the Health Authorities and other relevant agencies, to enable appropriate action to be taken.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree to adopt the Substance Misuse Strategy 2016 - 2020 at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (ii) Authorise the Strategic Director for Service Development and Integration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration, to agree any minor amendments to the Strategy prior to its publication.

42. Chadwell Heath Cemetery Extension

The Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety presented a report on proposals for landscaping and other works at Chadwell Heath Cemetery to provide additional burial space in an extended area of the site.

The Cabinet Member explained that there was a shortage of burial space within the Borough, with Chadwell Heath Cemetery only able to offer new burials for plots that had already been purchased. Planning permission for the extended area at the site had been granted several years ago and some works, including drainage improvements and the raising of the land above the high water table, had been carried out to make the area more suitable.

An investment of £400,000 would enable the extended area to be brought up to an aesthetically appropriate condition and the Cabinet Member referred to the range of proposals, which included a bespoke area for Muslim burials and a pet cemetery. In response to a question regarding the location of the pet cemetery, it was noted that the area was not ideally suited to human burials although the new drainage and raising of the land meant that it would now be entirely suitable for pets. With regard to the area for Muslim burials, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the pricing structure would be reflective of the availability of other dedicated Muslim burial space in the neighbouring area as well as the limited capacity at the Chadwell Heath Cemetery. On that issue, it was noted that the new pricing structure for the Borough's cemeteries would be presented as part of the corporate fees and charges report to be presented to Cabinet later in the year.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree an investment of £400,000 to complete the extension of Chadwell Heath Cemetery as detailed in the report, which shall include:
 - landscaping work to enhance the whole site;
 - installation of above ground vaults;
 - development of a new scattering area;
 - development of a new bespoke area for Muslim burials;
 - development of a pet cemetery.
- (ii) Note that officers are to undertake an options appraisal for a new car parking area to serve the Cemetery.

43. Boundary Road Hostel Refurbishment and Extension Project

The Strategic Director of Growth and Homes introduced a report on the proposed procurement of a contract to extend and refurbish the Boundary Road Hostel to provide an additional eight units and improve accessibility and facilities at the hostel.

The Council had been successful with a grant application to the Greater London Authority in the sum of £656,250 towards the total budget of £875,250. The Strategic Director confirmed that the additional units would be achieved through the reconfiguration of the current building without the need to expand onto the existing car park. The works would address the greater needs of homeless single and disabled residents, with four of the additional units being on the ground floor specifically for disabled individuals, and the works would be carried out in such a way as to minimise the need to decant residents.

The Strategic Director also advised that the hostel would form part of the wider regeneration plans for the area and that the Council's 'Community Solutions' initiative would provide a more holistic approach to dealing with issues associated with homelessness going forward.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

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

renovation works to Boundary Road hostel in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and

- (ii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Growth and Homes, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment, the Strategic Director for Finance and Investment and the Director of Law and Governance, 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.

44. School Catering Procurement Strategy

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration reported on the proposed procurement of contracts to supply the Borough's schools with various foodstuffs.

The proposed procurement would be via a mini-competition from the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) Food Framework Agreement and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Performance and Delivery commented on the fact that local suppliers were not party to those Frameworks. Reference was also made to the Council's Healthy Eating campaign and whether the commissioning was reflective of that vision. The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration agreed to provide her Cabinet colleagues with a detailed response, although she was able to confirm that the principles of Healthy Eating would be reflected in the quality requirements of the contract specifications. The Leader added that the Council's "look local" approach to contracting had already achieved a level of 17%, with a longer-term target of at least 25% which would see Barking and Dagenham being among the top 10 local authorities.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree to proceed with the procurement of contracts for the supply of frozen foods, groceries and other products by way of a joint call-off exercise, led by the London Borough of Havering, from the Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation (YPO) framework in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Service Development and Integration, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration, the Strategic Director of Finance and Investment and the Director of Law and Governance, to conduct the procurement exercises 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.

45. Re-Tendering of the Contract for Insurance, Claims Handling and Operational Risk Management Services

The Strategic Director of Finance and Investment introduced a procurement report in respect of the Council's insurance-related services, the current contract for which was due to expire on 31 March 2017.

Arising from the discussions, the Strategic Director confirmed that plans were being developed to undertake joint procurements with other neighbouring Councils in the future, although the varying end dates of existing contracts and other factors meant that was not possible at the present time.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the tendering of the Council's requirements for the provision of Insurance, Claims Handling and Operational Risk Management Services in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Finance and Investment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment and the Director of Law and Governance, to conduct the procurement and enter into the contract and all other necessary or ancillary agreements, including the exercising of any extension options that are deemed to be in the best interest of the Council, with the successful bidder(s) and/or other related parties in accordance with the strategy set out in the report.

46. Highways and Street Lighting Term Maintenance Contracts

The Chief Executive introduced a report relating to the retendering of contracts for planned and reactive highways works and street lighting services, alongside a proposal to extend the current contractual arrangements while the procurement was conducted.

By Minute 65 (23 November 2010), the Cabinet had approved arrangements for the previous contracts to be procured under joint arrangements with Havering Council, which would act as the lead authority, and the intention was to continue with that arrangement for the new contracts. In response to a question, it was confirmed that the street lighting contract would continue to include responsibilities for monitoring the stock.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Waive the requirements to advertise and tender in accordance with the Council's Contract Procurement Rules in order to extend the existing Highways and Street Lighting Term Contracts with the current providers for five months from 1 November 2016 until 31 March 2017 in accordance with the strategy set out in the report;
- (ii) Agree that the Council proceeds, in collaboration with the London Borough of Havering, to invite tenders for highways maintenance (planned and reactive) and street lighting services; and
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Customer, Commercial and Service Delivery, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety, the Strategic Director of Finance and Investment and the Director of Law and Governance, 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.

47. Debt Management Performance and Write-Offs 2016/17 (Quarter 1)

The Strategic Director of Finance and Investment introduced the performance report for the first quarter of the 2016/17 financial year in respect of the debt management function carried out by the Revenues and Benefits Service within Elevate East London.

The Strategic Director advised that the performance of Elevate was predominantly positive and he made particular mention of the above target returns in the areas of Council Tax and Council Tax arrears as well as the collection of older debts. Underperformance was, however, being experienced in respect of rent collection equivalent to approximately £380,000 (-0.36% against target). The Strategic Director commented on the steps being taken by Elevate to rectify that position and also the additional resources that had been directed towards Council Tax arrears which had resulted in the level of collection being £244,000 above target.

The Leader made reference to the cost effectiveness of debt collection and the need to be mindful of the vulnerability of many residents who found it difficult to pay all of their bills. The Strategic Director referred to the Council's debt collection arrangements, which included assessing an individual's ability to pay and active engagement to try to reach a solution, although he stressed that the Council had a duty to collect as much as possible in order to sustain the services that it was responsible for providing. It was agreed that further discussions should take place on the issue.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the performance of the debt management function carried out by the Revenues and Benefits service operated by Elevate East London, including the performance of enforcement agents; and
- (ii) Note the debt write-offs for the first quarter of 2016/17.