

MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 18 June 2019
(7:02 - 9:02 pm)

Present: Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chair), Cllr Dominic Twomey (Deputy Chair), Cllr Sade Bright, Cllr Evelyn Carpenter, Cllr Cameron Geddes, Cllr Syed Ghani, Cllr Margaret Mullane, Cllr Lynda Rice and Cllr Maureen Worby

Apologies: Cllr Saima Ashraf

10. Statement by the Leader

At the commencement of the meeting, the Leader gave a statement on the fire at Samuel Garside House, De Pass Gardens, Barking, that occurred in the afternoon of Sunday 9 June 2019.

Ten flats had been completely destroyed by the fire and a further 43 had varying levels of damage, although the Leader was very pleased to confirm that there had been no serious injuries and only two residents required treatment, for the effects of smoke inhalation. The Leader especially praised the London Fire Brigade for its immediate response to the first call at approximately 3.30pm and also commended the Council staff who began to arrive at the scene within 30 minutes to help coordinate the efforts and provide advice and support to those affected.

A total of 79 families were impacted by the fire and a range of measures had been put in place to ensure that they all had a roof over their heads from that first evening. There had been ongoing dialogue with the site developer (Bellway Homes), the managing agent (RMG) and Southern Housing Association regarding the options for those not able to return to their homes and the Leader was pleased to announce that plans had been agreed earlier in the day between the Council, Barking Riverside Limited, London & Quadrant Housing Trust and the insurers for the developer to provide permanent accommodation in the Borough to those not able to return home for the duration of the repair works.

The Leader and Cabinet Members spoke on the kindness, generosity and support of the local community, which included donations to a crowdfunding page as well as offers of clothing and other items. Particular mention was also made to the support of the British Red Cross and the Leader advised that he would be writing to all the organisations involved to thank them for their hard work and generosity.

On a different issue, the Leader also spoke on the success of the Future Youth Zone project in Parsloes Park, which already had over 3,000 young members and had been receiving, on average, over 1,800 visitors each week since it opened in April 2019.

11. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

12. Minutes (21 May 2019)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2019 were confirmed as correct.

13. Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn 2018/19

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report on the Council's revenue and capital outturn position for 2018/19, which represented the expected final position for the year, subject to external audit.

The General Fund revenue expenditure for the financial year was projected at £151.667m against the revised budget of £145.368m, although that was offset by an income surplus of over £3m which meant that the year-end net variance was projected to be an overspend of £2.881m. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the overspend would be met from the specific Budget Support reserve, meaning that the main General Fund reserve balance would remain at £17m (£2m above the minimum floor position previously agreed by the Council). The Cabinet Member also referred to a number of revenue budget carry forwards and transfers to / from reserves that had been accounted for in the outturn position and advised that 98% of previously agreed savings had now been achieved.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) showed a projected year-end surplus of £1.075m, which would be transferred to the HRA reserve, while Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) expenditure showed an overspend of £1.902m due to pressures on the High Needs block, which were expected to continue into 2019/20. The Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement reported that, in spite of the ongoing financial pressures faced by schools, a significant amount of progress was being made. One example was a project led by the Council, in partnership with the Department for Work and Pensions and other agencies, to increase accessibility to free school meals which had resulted in an extra 1,984 registrations in the 2018/19 financial year, taking the total number of children accessing free school meals in the Borough to 8,196.

The Council's Capital Programme showed expenditure of £225.153m against the budget of £284.758m and it was proposed that the £37.559m of slippage that related to General Fund projects would be carried forward to 2019/20. The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services also referred to two new capital projects, one to support local ward initiatives and the other to fund urgent repair and replacement works to corporate, commercial and non-HRA residential properties.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the provisional revenue outturn for Council services as set out in sections 2 and 3 and Appendix A to the report;
- (ii) Note the provisional outturn on the Dedicated Schools Budget as set out in section 4 of the report;
- (iii) Note the provisional Capital Programme outturn as set out in section 5 and appendices B and C to the report;

- (iv) Approve the carry forward of slippage of £37.559m into the General Fund Capital Programme 2019/20;
- (v) Approve the creation of a Ward Member capital budget of £0.34m and £1.0m capital budget for urgent maintenance and health and safety works, as set out in section 6 of the report;
- (vi) Approve the transfers to and from reserves as set out in Appendix D to the report;
- (vii) Note the provisional outturn of the Housing Revenue Account as set out in section 8 of the report; and
- (viii) Note the position on Schools balances as set out in section 9 of the report.

14. Estate Renewal - Approach and Resident Offer

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing introduced a report on the Council's proposed approach to developing estate renewal proposals, which covered the criteria for assessing potential estate renewal schemes, how the Council would consult residents on the proposals before final decisions were made and the offer to those residents displaced as a result of estate renewal projects.

The Cabinet Member referred specifically to the offer to displaced residents, which included giving Council tenants top priority to bid for an alternative Council home in the Borough and having a Right to Return to the new homes within the B&D Reside portfolio, at a Council target rent and on an Assured Tenancy. Officers were also assessing the implications of the Council offering interest-free equity loans in certain circumstances to enable resident leaseholders to take up their Right to Return.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the criteria for considering estate renewal, as set out in paragraph 2.1 of the report;
- (ii) Note the proposed approach to consultation on estate renewal proposals, and approve the proposed arrangements for statutory section 105 consultation as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report;
- (iii) Approve the rehousing offer for tenants and leaseholders as set out in paragraph 2.8 of the report;
- (iv) Note and approve the financial assistance that may be offered to resident leaseholders to enable them to stay in the local area, or to enable them to take up the Right to Return as set out in paragraphs 2.9 and 2.10 of the report;
- (v) Note and approve the proposed Help to Move offer, as set out in paragraphs 2.11 and 2.12 of the report;
- (vi) Agree that the rehousing offer be made to tenants and leaseholders of the

four estate renewal schemes currently subject to consultation (Rainham Road South, Rectory Road, Roxwell Road and Oxlow Lane) and note that further reports on those schemes would be presented to Cabinet later in the year following resident consultation; and

- (vii) Delegate authority to the Director of Inclusive Growth to extend the terms of the rehousing offer to any other tenant(s) or leaseholder(s) on a discretionary basis.

15. Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration presented a report on the plans for safeguarding children and young people in the Borough under new multi-agency safeguarding arrangements developed in response to new legislation, regulations and statutory guidance.

The new framework gave equal responsibility to the Council, the local Clinical Commissioning Group and the Police (the Statutory Partners) to develop robust safeguarding arrangements, which must be shared with the Department for Education and published by 30 June 2019 and in place by 30 September 2019. The Cabinet Member explained that the plans had been developed at two levels: the first reflected how the three statutory partners across Barking and Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge would better work together across the footprint to meet shared safeguarding challenges while the second and more detailed aspect related to the local arrangements that ensured the continued focus on the needs of children and young people in Barking and Dagenham. A new Safeguarding Partnership Board would replace the existing Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB), building on the agreed principles and priorities of the LSCB, and would comprise the three statutory partners alongside a local Safeguarding Champion who would represent the voice of the child and the wider family.

The Cabinet Member pointed to the expected outcomes and next steps for implementing the plans and reference was also made to feedback from the BAD Youth Forum regarding who young people would be more likely to speak to if they were experiencing problems.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree the principles and approach to the new Multi-Agency Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements as set out in the report;
- (ii) Note the plans for implementing the arrangements during the period July - September 2019; and
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Director of People and Resilience, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration, to finalise and publish the plan for the new arrangements by 29 June 2019.

16. OFSTED Inspection of Children's Services and Improvement Plan

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration introduced a report on the outcome of an inspection from OFSTED earlier in the year of children's social

care services, alongside the Council's Improvement Plan in response to OFSTED's findings.

The Cabinet Member explained that while the OFSTED inspection had identified that improvement was necessary across the board, the inspectors were very positive about the impact of the new senior leadership team, the improvements that were already being made and the positive plans for the future. OFSTED had made six key recommendations and the Council's Improvement Plan set out the measures that would be taken to address each recommendation, together with the target date and expected outcomes. It was noted that OFSTED was expected to undertake a 'focussed visit' at some point, ahead of a full review within two years.

Cabinet Members spoke in support of the Improvement Plan and the progress being made despite the significant demands on children's social care services in the Borough. On that issue, the Leader called for the Government to redress the imbalance in funding through its Fairer Funding review.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the findings of the OFSTED Inspection of Children's Services in February 2019, as set out in Appendix A to the report;
- (ii) Agree to the publication of the Council's Improvement Plan in response to the OFSTED ILACS by 9 July 2019, as set out at Appendix B to the report; and
- (iii) Note that a report shall be presented to the Cabinet in July outlining proposals for a full Children's Improvement Programme.

17. Barking and Dagenham Local Plan - Local Development Scheme 2019 and Statement of Community Involvement Refresh 2019

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing introduced a report on the production of supporting documents to the Council's Local Plan to be published later in the year, which would set out the vision and priorities for growth in the Borough for the next 15 years.

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) document set out the timescales for preparing the new Local Plan while the Statement of Community Involvement Refresh (SCI) set out how the Council intended to engage with local and statutory stakeholders on local planning matters. The documents reflected changes in legislation, national policies and local circumstances since they were last adopted in 2015 and the Cabinet Member confirmed that the SCI was an interim document which would be subject to consultation.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the Local Development Scheme 2019 for publication; and
- (ii) Approve the Statement of Community Involvement 2019 refresh for consultation and note that a full review of the document shall take place following the submission of the Local Plan.

18. Treasury Management Annual Report 2018/19

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2018/19 which set out the key areas of performance during the year.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to report that investment income for the year was £8.9m compared to the budget of £4.3m, while the Council's average interest return of 1.50% was 0.57% higher than the average London Peer Group return and 0.58% higher than the Local Authority average return. The Council had borrowed an additional £140m of long-term funding via the General Fund during 2018/19, bringing the total long-term General Fund borrowing to £475.7m. The Cabinet Member confirmed that borrowing would continue to rise in the years ahead as the Council progressed its Investment and Acquisition Strategy, with returns being used to support the provision of improved services to the local community.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2018/19;
- (ii) Note that the Council complied with all 2018/19 treasury management indicators;
- (iii) Approve the actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2018/19; and
- (iv) Note that the Council borrowed £140.0m from the Public Works Loan Board in 2018/19.

19. Contract for Adults' Home Care Services

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration introduced a report on plans for the procurement of a four-year contract for the provision of home care services, to commence from January 2020.

The Cabinet Member referred to the options appraisal which set out details of the six possibilities that were considered in the development of the proposals. The preferred option would bring together the two strands of general home care and crisis intervention services under one framework, with successful tenderers becoming responsible for providing services within three defined localities, in line with the Council's Integrated Care Model.

Cabinet Members commented on the considerable work that had gone into the development of the proposals and particularly welcomed the prioritisation of quality over price in the tender evaluation criteria.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of a framework agreement contract for Home Care Services in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and

- (ii) Delegate authority to the Director of People and Resilience, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration, the Director of Law and Governance and the Chief Operating Officer, to conduct the procurement and award and enter into the contract(s) for the framework agreement and all other necessary or ancillary agreements with the successful bidder, in accordance with the strategy set out in the report.

20. Contract for Provision of Pest Control and Related Services in Council Premises

The Chair advised that the report had been withdrawn to allow officers to give further consideration to the services to be covered under the contract.

21. Contract for Provision of Security Services to Domestic Void Properties and other Vacant Properties

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing introduced a report on the procurement of a contract for the provision of security services to domestic void properties and properties to be regenerated or demolished, to commence on 1 September 2019.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of a contract for the provision of security services to domestic void properties and properties to be regenerated or demolished via the Fusion21 Empty Properties Security Framework, in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Authorise the Director of My Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing, the Director of Law and Governance and the Chief Operating Officer, to conduct the procurement and award and enter into the contract(s) and all other necessary or ancillary agreements with the successful bidder.

22. Procurement of Carers' Support Service

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration introduced a report on the plans to procure a contract for the provision of an extensive carers' support service, to commence in February 2020.

The Cabinet Member referred to the new contract specification which covered a wide range of service requirements, including:

- the provision of a digital-based platform for information, advice, signposting and referral for formal carers' assessments;
- the provision of telephone and face-to-face support services and flexible service delivery, including out of hours and weekends;
- working with local health partners to raise awareness of carers and to support carers in accessing mental health and other relevant services;
- the development and enabling of Peer Support Groups;
- strategic partnership working to inform and develop the Carers' Strategy and

- marketplace;
- strategic partnership working to promote resilience and empowerment amongst carers and create a carer friendly community.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree the procurement of a Carers' Support Service for a period of three years commencing February 2020, with the option to extend for up to two years at the sole discretion of the Council; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Director of People and Resilience, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration, the Director of Law and Governance and the Chief Operating Officer, to conduct the procurement and award and enter into the contract and all other necessary or ancillary agreements with the successful bidder in accordance with the strategy set out in the report.

23. Corporate Plan - Quarter 4 2018/19 Performance Reporting

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced the corporate performance monitoring report for the fourth quarter of the 2018/19 financial year, which set out progress at the year-end in respect of the Council's Key Accountabilities and 47 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The Cabinet Member advised that the amount of waste produced per household and a fall in recycling rates were areas that required significant improvement. Several areas of improved performance were also highlighted, including the percentage of schools rated 'outstanding' or 'good' by OFSTED, the fall in staff sickness levels, the numbers of households in Temporary Accommodation and the fall in the average time taken to process Housing Benefit and Council Tax changes.

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 as detailed in Appendix 2.

24. Debt Management Performance and Write-Offs 2018/19 (Quarter 4)

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced the performance report for the final quarter of the 2018/19 financial year in respect of the debt management functions carried out on behalf of the Council by the Revenues and Benefits service within Elevate East London.

The Cabinet Member advised that of the six key debt collection targets, three had been exceeded, one was at the target rate and two were slightly below target. Those two related to Council Tax and Council housing rents, which the Cabinet Member suggested was a direct consequence of the financial pressures faced by many local residents as a result of the Government's austerity programme.

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 fourth quarter of 2018/19.

25. Purchase of 44-52 River Road, Barking

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report on the proposed purchase of the 4.37 acre site at 44-52 River Road, as part of the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy.

The Cabinet Member referred to the strong covenant provided by the existing lease arrangements, which were guaranteed for at least the next 10 years, and the projected investment yield based on a maximum purchase price, which was specified in an exempt appendix to the report, and taking into account guaranteed rental income and the costs of borrowing. The Cabinet Member also confirmed that the detailed proposals and financial assessment had passed through the Be First project gateway process as well as scrutiny by the Council's Investment Panel, who both supported the project.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the acquisition of the site at 44-52 River Road, as shown edged red in the plan at Appendix 1 to the report, via borrowing within the General Fund on the terms set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing and the Director of Law and Governance, to agree the final terms for completion and retain the asset as an investment on the completion of all due diligence; and
- (iii) Authorise the Director of Law and Governance to enter into all necessary agreements, contracts and other documents to complete the freehold purchase.

26. Private Business

Cabinet **resolved** to exclude the public and press for the remainder of the meeting by reason of the nature of the business to be discussed which included information exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

27. Purchase of Strategic Site in Barking Town Centre

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report on the proposed purchase of a strategically important site in the Barking Town Centre area, as part of the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy.

The Cabinet Member referred to financial arrangements associated with the proposed purchase and the projected investment yield based on a maximum purchase price, which took into account the rental income from the secure tenant and costs of borrowing. The Cabinet Member again confirmed that the detailed proposals and financial assessment had successfully passed through the Be First project gateway process as well as scrutiny by the Council's Investment Panel.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree to the purchase of the site, as shown edged red in Appendix 1 to the report, on the terms set out in section 2 of the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services and the Director of Law and Governance, to enter into necessary agreement(s) to purchase the site subject to satisfactory due diligence and an independent valuation.