

MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 16 April 2024
(7:02 - 7:40 pm)

Present: Cllr Dominic Twomey (Deputy Chair in the Chair), Cllr Saima Ashraf (Deputy Chair), Cllr Cameron Geddes, Cllr Syed Ghani, Cllr Kashif Haroon, Cllr Jane Jones, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe and Cllr Maureen Worby; Cllr John Dulwich

Apologies: Cllr Darren Rodwell and Cllr Sade Bright

107. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

108. Minutes (19 March 2024)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2024 were confirmed as correct.

109. Contract for the Provision of a Domestic Abuse Victim / Survivor Support Service

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration presented a report on proposals to procure a new, maximum five-year contract for the provision of a Domestic Abuse Victim / Survivor Support Service commencing 1 October 2024.

The Cabinet Member advised that in the 12-month period to May 2023, Barking and Dagenham had the highest rate of domestic abuse offences in London at 16.8 per 1,000 population, which showed that despite the various initiatives already being undertaken by the Council and other partners in the Borough, much more needed to be done. The proposed procurement was for an outcome-based, proactive support service which could be adapted to the changing needs and resources available, working in conjunction with other agencies and services to provide a coordinated response. Outputs that would be included in the tender specification included:

- A single front door with one phone number, one referral form, assessment and transfer into appropriate support;
- Trauma-informed service provision for residents, victims, survivors and their children;
- Refuge accommodation;
- Independent Advocacy and 1:1 Support;
- Therapeutic support (group) for adults and for children affected by domestic abuse;
- Sanctuary schemes and target hardening, making the survivors safer in their homes;
- Community engagement and awareness raising, including training for staff and partners, and healthy relationship workshops offered to schools and providers working with children and young people;

- Volunteering opportunities, peer mentoring and peer support development.

Cabinet Members spoke in strong support of the proposals and highlighted the need for such services, which serve extremely vulnerable individuals and their children, to be properly funded.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of a contract for a Domestic Abuse Victim / Survivor Support Service in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Authorise the Commissioning Director, Care and Support, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration, the Strategic Director, Resources and the Head of Legal, to award and enter into the contract(s) and all other necessary or ancillary agreements to fully implement and effect the proposals.

110. Provision of Children's Residential Care Homes and Independent Foster Care Agency Services

The Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Disabilities introduced a report on the proposal for the Council to join the London Borough of Newham's Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS), which would allow access to a pool of pre-approved providers of children's residential care homes and independent foster care agencies.

The Cabinet Member advised that a key aim of the Council's approach to children and young people who were not able to stay safely within their family environment was to provide, wherever possible, suitably matched high-quality homes within family settings, such as foster care, and as near as possible to the child's family home, to support the maintaining of links with their family and local community wherever appropriate. The Cabinet Member referred to the excellent in-house foster care arrangements already in place across the Borough and confirmed that participation in the DPS would supplement that existing provision by giving access to a range of additional high-quality and flexible provision. The new arrangement was also expected to reduce current costs through lower membership/participation fees compared to existing arrangements and by lessening the need to independently spot-purchase services.

It was noted that the initial intention was to join the DPS on 1 April 2024 for an initial 23-month period up to 8 March 2026. The initial period would allow the Council to evaluate whether the DPS met the needs of its children and young people and, if so, the Council would have the option to extend its participation for a further four years until March 2030.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the entering into of an Access Agreement with the London Borough of Newham and call-off from Newham's Dynamic Purchasing Vehicle (DPS) in respect of the provision of Children's Residential Care

Homes and Independent Foster Care Agency Services, in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules and the strategy detailed in the report; and

- (ii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Children and Adults, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Disabilities, the Strategic Director, Resources and the Head of Legal, to award and enter into the Access Agreement and all other necessary or ancillary agreements to fully implement and effect the proposals.

111. Procurement of Reablement At Home Service

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration presented a report on proposals regarding the development and procurement of a Reablement at Home service.

The Cabinet Member explained that there were two main elements/outcomes relating to a therapy-based reablement service, the first being a short-term care service offered to individuals at home who were unwell and unable to look after themselves due to a 'crisis' in their lives. Typically, that would be due to an accident, poor health or the early onset of a long-term health condition. At the end of the intervention the aim was for the individual to be able to return to living independently, outside of the care system. The second element acknowledged that some individuals still needed longer term care services, for example Homecare, and reablement would contribute to supporting individuals to recover sufficiently to have a reduction in their care hours and complexity of support within the first few weeks. The new therapy-driven service would have a positive impact on both the individual in need and the pressures faced by the Council in relation to the significant costs of care provision.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Council had initially commissioned two short-term pilots to test and trial different models of reablement. Both pilots were due to end in the coming months but in light of the positive results, those pilots would be extended until the new Reablement at Home service had been commissioned and there had been an efficient transition from the existing Adult Crisis Intervention service.

Cabinet colleagues spoke in strong support of the new service proposals and reiterated the call for local authorities to be properly resourced to meet the significant increase in demand for adult and children's social care services.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note that the two reablement pilot schemes were extended into the 2024/25 financial year and shall terminate upon the award / mobilisation of the new reablement provision;
- (ii) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of a contract for Reablement at Home arrangements in accordance with the strategy set out in the report, subject to the endorsement of the Procurement Board to the exact model of reablement to be procured; and

- (iii) Authorise the Strategic Director, Children and Adults, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration, the Strategic Director, Resources and the Head of Legal, to conduct the procurement and award and enter into the contract(s) and all other necessary or ancillary agreements to fully implement and effect the proposals, including any periods of extension.

112. Travelodge Hotel, Yew Tree Avenue, Dagenham - Development Agreement

Further to Minute 114 (20 March 2018), the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development presented a report on the proposal to enter into a new Development Agreement with Travelodge for the conversion of the vacant ground floor retail space into 15 additional hotel rooms at the site in Yew Tree Avenue, Dagenham.

The Cabinet Member explained that the original agreement with Travelodge related to the development of a 78-bed hotel with a ground floor retail unit. Whilst the hotel element had been trading successfully, there had been limited occupancy / interest in the retail unit. As a consequence, Travelodge were seeking to transform the retail space into additional hotel accommodation. The Cabinet Member alluded to the financial elements of the proposed Development Agreement, which were detailed in an exempt appendix to the report, and it was noted that the proposed terms met the required metrics within the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy.

Cabinet colleagues raised the potential merits of retaining the ground floor retail space and other alternative options, particularly in view of the major developments coming to fruition in the immediate area. The Cabinet Member confirmed that a range of options had been considered and costed but, on balance, the conversion into 15 additional hotel rooms represented the most economically advantageous proposal. He pointed out, however, that the conversion proposal was subject to planning permission and should a potential retail tenant come forward in the meantime, the terms of any offer would be considered.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the entering into of a Development Agreement with Travelodge in respect of the conversion of the vacant ground floor retail space at the Dagenham East site into 15 additional hotel rooms (Option 1), in line with the terms set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (ii) Authorise the Strategic Director of Resources, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development, to agree final terms for the Development Agreement (including the capital contribution), the agreement for lease and the new lease; and
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Head of Legal to execute all the legal agreements, contracts, and other documents on behalf of the Council in order to implement the arrangements.

(Note: During consideration of this item, a resolution to exclude the public and press from the meeting was passed to allow a very brief discussion of the financial information that was exempt from publication by virtue of paragraph 3 of Part 1, Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).)