

CABINET

Tuesday, 22 May 2012
(5:00 - 5:18 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 P T Waker, Councillor J R White and Councillor M M Worby

Also Present: Councillor S Tarry

Apologies: Councillor L A Reason

1. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

2. Minutes (24 April 2012)

The minutes of the meeting on 24 April 2012 were confirmed as correct.

3. Provisional Revenue And Capital Outturn 2011/12

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Education introduced a report on the Council's provisional revenue and capital outturn position for the 2011/12 financial year.

The provisional outturn position for General Fund budgets showed a net underspend of £2m against the net revenue budget of £183.4m. This resulted in an improved year-end projected balance position of £14.3m and represented a significant improvement on the forecast position reported throughout the year.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) generated a surplus of £3.8m for the year and the Capital Programme showed an outturn of £127.679m compared to the revised budget of £167.566m. The Cabinet Member also referred to the variances on capital projects, the proposed roll forward of capital underspends to enable projects to be completed and the implementation of a savings proposal for 2013/14 associated with the review of the Library Service.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that the final outturn position would be reported to the next Cabinet meeting, following the finalisation of accounting entries for the year.

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) To note the provisional outturn position for 2011/12 of the Council's revenue budget, as detailed in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.10 and Appendix A of the report;
- (ii) To note the provisional outturn against the 2011/12 savings targets, as detailed in paragraph 2.11 and Appendix B of the report;

- (iii) To note the provisional outturn position for the HRA, as detailed in paragraph 2.12 and Appendix C of the report;
- (iv) To note the provisional outturn position for 2011/12 of the Council's capital budget, as detailed in paragraph 2.13 and Appendix E of the report;
- (v) The following savings proposals for 2013/14 in the sum of £226,000, as detailed in paragraph 2.14 of the report;
 - Closure of Castle Green library
 - Re-shaping of the Mark's Gate library service
- (vi) The requests to roll forward General Fund revenue budgets into 2012/13 and the resulting budget amendments, as set out in Appendix D to the report; and
- (vii) The requests to roll forward capital budget underspends into 2012/13, as set out in Appendix E to the report.

4. Housing Garage Sites

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented a report on a proposed strategy to improve garage management and enhance the parking facilities available to residents of, and visitors to, the Borough.

The Cabinet Member explained that the strategy would target dilapidated garage sites which would be either refurbished, fully converted into a car park or part converted to create a car parking and garage site. The approach for each garage site would differ on a site-by-site basis and would be confirmed in consultation with Ward Councillors and local residents.

The Cabinet Member advised that the key aims were to provide a safer parking environment, reduce anti-social behaviour and enhance the appearance of the areas, while at the same time generating additional income for the Housing Revenue Account via a pricing structure that encouraged local use of the sites.

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) The proposed strategy for improving garage management and enhancing the parking facilities available to Borough residents and visitors, as outlined in the report, and authorised the Corporate Director of Housing and Environment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to agree the detailed arrangements;
- (ii) That the £500,000 provision made within the Housing Capital Programme 2012/13 be used to implement the first phase of works at the nine garage sites listed in paragraph 2.4 of the report;
- (iii) The implementation of a garage and car park pricing structure for Borough residents in the immediate vicinity of the site, other Borough residents and non-Borough residents, as set out in paragraphs 2.15 to 2.18 of the report; and

- (iv) To note that the day-to-day management of the service would be undertaken within the Housing Area offices.

5. Proposed Expansion of Primary Schools

Further to Minute 109 (14 February 2012), the Cabinet Member for Finance and Education presented a report on the proposed expansion of a number of primary schools to help meet the projected growth in demand for school places in the Borough.

Cabinet **agreed** the formal expansion of schools as detailed below, with effect from 1 September 2012:

- Parsloes Primary - from two to three forms of entry.
- Southwood Primary - from two to three forms of entry.
- Monteagle Primary - from three to four forms of entry.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary (Barking) - from one to two forms of entry.
- St Joseph's Catholic Primary (Dagenham) - from one and a half to two forms of entry.
- Eastbury Primary - from three to four forms of entry.
- Gascoigne Primary - all year groups to five forms of entry.

6. Retender of the Young Person's Specialist Substance Misuse Service

The report was withdrawn pending further discussion on the proposals.

7. Term Contract for Building Maintenance in Public and School Buildings

The report was withdrawn pending further discussion on the proposals.

8. Urgent Action - Shared Procurement of Oracle R12 Upgrade (Lot 3)

The Cabinet noted the action taken by the Chief Executive on 18 May 2012 under the urgency procedures contained within paragraph 17 of Article 1, Part B of the Council's Constitution in respect of the following:

- (i) That the Council enter into a contract directly with Oracle Corporation UK Ltd for the provision of software licences and support and maintenance (Lot 3) services; and
- (ii) To waive the requirement, under paragraph 5.2 of the Council's Contract Rules (Part D of the Constitution), for the Lot 3 contract documentation to be sealed and instead for the Chief Executive to sign the same and any other necessary and associated agreement or documentation.

9. Private Business

Agreed 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).

10. Mark's Gate 'Open Gateway' Regeneration Initiative

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration presented a report on a proposal by the Diocese of Chelmsford, in partnership with a private developer, to demolish the existing St Mark's Church and Vicarage in Mark's Gate and to redevelop the site to provide a major, multi-functional community facility with a dedicated space for worship, together with 56 housing units for sale.

The Cabinet Member outlined the other main aspects of the project, referred to as the "Mark's Gate Open Gateway Regeneration Initiative", which included the transfer of three vacant / underused Council-owned pieces of land for the sum of £400,000 in kind which would be ring-fenced, along with £1.45m from the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA), to support the Council acquiring 1 bed flats and 3 bed houses. An additional £1.1m of the 2011/12 HRA budget surplus would be used to augment the acquisition of new Council homes on the development. Furthermore, the scheme would deliver a wide range of significant benefits for the whole Mark's Gate community, such as pre-school and out-of-school activities for children, a comprehensive community exercise programme including a micro-gym, and new training and business opportunities.

The Cabinet Member commented that although the Council would not receive market value for the land to be transferred, he believed that the overall project represented, on balance, the best way forward. Councillor Tarry of Chadwell Heath ward also spoke in favour of the project, referring to the expected reduction in anti-social behaviour in the area when the vacant / underused sites were regenerated and new community facilities available for use, as well as the opportunities to access new external funding to support further enhancements for the whole community. Following on from that point, the Leader asked officers to take forward Padnall Hall as part of any future proposals. The Cabinet Member for Environment also stressed the importance of properly assessing the impact of new regeneration initiatives to ensure that value for money had been achieved and opportunities for improvement had been maximised and the Leader put forward the project at Althorne Way / Becontree Heath as a positive example in that respect.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) The disposal and transfer of the three sites, as specified in paragraph 2.6 of the report and shown as plots 1, 2 and 3 in the map at Appendix 1 to the report, to the Diocese of Chelmsford at £400,000 in kind to facilitate the delivery of the St Mark's Open Gateway proposal, subject to (a) the Diocese obtaining planning consent and any third party consents required of the Council for disposal of the sites, and (b) terms and conditions that protect the Council's investment and ensure the delivery of the proposal;
- (ii) The use of up to £2,550,000 of HRA funding to acquire 3 bed houses and 1 bed flats at the site;
- (iii) To delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Divisional Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to negotiate and conclude the terms of the land transfer to the Diocese of Chelmsford subject to the pre-conditions specified in (i) above being met, and to negotiate the acquisition of a number of housing units;

and

- (iv) To require the scheme's promoters to actively engage with the Management Committee of the Mark's Gate Community Association to explore opportunities for representation on the Governing Body, which the Council would insist on prior to the start of development, and to explore opportunities for the co-ordination of lettings and facilities management functions to deliver efficiency savings for both the new facility on the church site and the existing Mark's Gate Community Complex.