

# MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 14 November 2017  
(7:01 - 7:59 pm)

**Present:** Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chair), Cllr Saima Ashraf (Deputy Chair), Cllr Dominic Twomey (Deputy Chair), Cllr Sade Bright, Cllr Evelyn Carpenter, Cllr Cameron Geddes, Cllr Lynda Rice, Cllr Bill Turner and Cllr Maureen Worby

**Apologies:** Cllr Laila M. Butt

## 55. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

## 56. Minutes (17 October 2017)

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2017 were confirmed as correct.

## 57. Lease Arrangements for the East End Women's Museum

The Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement introduced a report on plans to bring to fruition the Council's long-held ambition for a museum celebrating women and girls from London's East End to be located in the Borough.

The Cabinet Member advised that the East End Women's Museum would operate out of new ground floor retail premises in Abbey Road, Barking, which had been made available to the Council as part of the Section 106 planning agreement for the Be:Here development at Barking Abbey Retail Park. The project, which would be delivered in partnership with Eastside Community Heritage and the Museum founders via a Community Interest Company, would have the key aims of:

- Providing local residents with an opportunity to learn about the area's history and to contribute their voices and experiences, building a sense of ownership and pride in the Borough's heritage;
- Providing local women and girls with stronger links to their own history of economic contribution, cultural influence and civic participation, building a sense of empowerment;
- Presenting girls and young women in the Borough with positive role models from the region's history and examples of women's strength and resourcefulness; and
- Providing girls and young women with opportunities to learn about heritage themes which are traditionally presented as 'masculine', including politics, union activism, science, engineering and manufacturing.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Law and

Governance, to grant a 30-year lease for ground floor retail premises at the Be:Here housing development on Abbey Road, Barking, for the East End Women's Museum, subject to satisfactory negotiation of the lease and associated requirements; and

- (ii) Authorise the Chief Executive, in the event that it is not possible to enter into a lease agreement with the East End Women's Museum, to enter into a lease on the same terms with another cultural organisation.

#### **58. Gambling Act 2005: Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy 2017-2020**

Further to Minute 115 (25 April 2017), the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement presented a revised Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy for 2017 - 2020 following consultation over the summer period.

The general response to the Council's proposals was very positive, with the vast majority of the 123 respondents sharing the Council's serious concerns of the impact that any further increase in the number of gambling premises may have on the most vulnerable and in 'at risk' areas of the Borough. Another key focus of the policy that drew overwhelming support was the Council's intention to give careful consideration to applications for premises located near schools or other venues frequented by children and young adults.

The Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement spoke in strong support of the protections for children and young adults offered by the new policy and also remarked on the worrying statistic from the Health Survey for England 2012 which suggested that there could be in excess of 1,400 problem gamblers in Barking and Dagenham. In that respect, the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration referred to the need to review the support systems in place for problem gamblers and their families and to raise awareness of the services available.

The Cabinet **resolved to recommend the Assembly** to adopt the Barking and Dagenham Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy 2017 - 2020, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

(Councillor Ashraf left the meeting at the conclusion of this item to attend a family celebration.)

#### **59. Budget Monitoring 2017/18 - April to September (Month 6)**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment presented a report on the Council's revenue budget monitoring position for the 2017/18 financial year as at 30 September 2017.

The General Fund showed a projected year-end overspend of £5.883m against the budget of £145.13m, which represented an increased overspend of £0.479m on the position for the end of August. The Cabinet Member advised that the increased overspend was largely due to a worsening of the pressures in the Children's Care and Support service and he also referred to a number of the other ongoing areas of overspend and, on a positive note, the projected additional £60,000 income from the Council's film unit.

The report also set out the position in respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), which showed an unchanged projection from the previous month's deficit of £0.769m against the budgeted contribution of £39.642m to the HRA Capital Programme. The Cabinet Member explained that the position was due to a shortfall in rental income as the Government's austerity and welfare reform measures were impacting on local residents' ability to pay their rent.

The Capital Programme for 2017/18 was projecting a spend of £240.6m against the current budget of £226.4m. The variation arose from a combination of expenditure on future years' projects being brought forward, slippage in the HRA Capital Programme and the proposed addition of a number of new projects relating to the Council's investment, regeneration and Smarter Working programmes. Among those projects was the Street Property Purchasing Scheme under which 77 properties had already been acquired and the Cabinet Member was pleased to announce that 33 of the properties had been earmarked for care leavers, 10 for adults with mental health issues and the remainder to support key workers in the Borough.

The Cabinet Member also provided an update on the Council's Transformation Programme. Implementation costs were projected to be kept within the overall £23.6m budget and the planned £48m contribution to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) from 2020/21 was also on target. It was acknowledged, however, that there were considerable risks associated with delivering such an extensive and innovative Transformation Programme and, to that end, it was noted that a £2.7m contingency had been incorporated in the 2018/19 MTFS to address potential shortfalls that had been identified to date.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the forecast outturn position for 2017/18 of the Council's General Fund revenue budget at 30 September 2017, as detailed in section 2 and Appendix A of the report;
- (ii) Note the new financial pressures and the suggested mechanisms for resolving them, as detailed in section 3 of the report;
- (iii) Note the overview of the Housing Revenue Account for 2017/18, as detailed in section 4 and Appendix B of the report;
- (iv) Approve the following additions to the Capital Programme;
  - Land Acquisitions - £10m
  - Becontree Heath New Build - £5.7m
  - Street Property Purchase Programme - £30m
- (v) Approve the inclusion of £1.48m in the 2017/18 Capital Programme for a number of data related IT projects, as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report;
- (vi) Note the reprofiled Capital Programme position for 2017/18 as detailed in Appendix C to the report;

- (vii) Approve the capital budgets for 2018/19 and future years, as set out in Appendix D to the report; and
- (viii) Note the update on the Medium Term Financial Strategy savings, as detailed in section 6 and Appendix E of the report.

## **60. Education Strategy 2014 - 2017 and Schools' Annual Performance Review 2016/17**

The Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement introduced a report on progress against the Council's Education Strategy for 2014-17 and the performance of schools during the 2016/17 academic year.

The Cabinet Member commented on the excellent work by pupils, teachers and parents during 2016/17 which had helped achieve significant improvements, examples of which were:

- The proportion of good or outstanding schools had risen by 6% to 91% - 2% above the national average and in line with Outer London;
- Primary results in national tests and assessments were strong, with Key Stage 2 Reading improving by 6% to be in line with the national average and the overall combined figure for Reading, Writing and Mathematics up 5% on 2015/16 to continue above national averages;
- At Key Stage 4 / GCSE, performance on the headline Progress 8 measure was particularly strong at 20th best in the country out of 151 local authorities;
- There had been a marked increase of 44% of successful university applicants going to the most competitive top third universities;
- The validated 2015/16 data for Looked After Children placed the Borough's Key Stage 2 performance amongst the best in the country.

The Cabinet Member referred to the priorities for 2017/18 which included celebrating pupils' and schools / colleges success, supporting ambition and aspiration for all children and young people particularly in the 16-18 age range to encourage them into employment, further education or training, and supporting the recruitment and retention of experienced teachers. Comments were also made which encouraged School Governing Bodies to resist the Government's outdated programme of academisation and stay within Barking and Dagenham's family of schools.

In respect of issues that had been raised at the Headteachers' Summer Conference, Cabinet Members spoke on the pressures being faced within Barking and Dagenham in terms of the significant school age population growth, deprivation levels and the Government cuts to education funding allocated to local authorities.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the performance against the overarching objectives within the Education Strategy 2014-17, as set out in section 2 of the report;
- (ii) Endorse the priorities for 2017/18 as set out in section 3 of the report;

- (iii) Reaffirm the Council's commitment to continuing the strong partnership with all schools in the Borough to achieve the best possible outcomes and opportunities for children and young people; and
- (iv) Note the performance of schools in national tests and examinations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

## **61. Fees and Charges 2018/19**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment introduced a report on the proposed fees and charges for Council services, the majority of which would come into effect from 1 January 2018.

It was noted that all fees and charges had been assessed against the Council's Charging Policy framework and, in most cases, would only be subject to an increase in line with the Retail Price Index (at August 2017). The Cabinet Member also explained that charges in respect of leisure services and planning and capital delivery services would no longer be set by the Cabinet as those services were now outside the Council's direct control, although steps had been taken to ensure that they remained affordable and appropriate.

In respect of parking charges, it was noted that resident parking permit charges would remain at 2017 levels pending a wider review that would seek to encourage the use of electric and other low emission cars whilst discouraging higher emission and diesel vehicles. Other on and off-street parking charges would be increased by an average of 50% to reflect market rates, although the impact would be closely monitored. In response to concerns expressed regarding the parking of commercial vehicles on the Borough's residential roads outside of the current restrictions, it was confirmed that officers were looking at a range of options to address the problems caused.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree the proposed fees and charges as set out in Appendix A to the report, to be effective from 1 January 2018 unless otherwise stated;
- (ii) Note the fees and charges no longer applicable from 1 January 2018, as set out in Appendix B to the report; and
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Service Development and Improvement, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and the relevant Cabinet Members, to set fees and charges to be applied from September for schools and academic year based activities.

## **62. Budget Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21**

Further to Minute 25 (11 July 2017), the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment presented an update report on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the Budget Strategy for 2018/19 to 2020/21.

The Cabinet Member commented that the Council continued to face significant

financial pressures as a consequence of unrelenting funding cuts by the Government, which had already resulted in savings of over £122m having to be made since 2010. To compound the pressures on Council services, population growth in Barking and Dagenham was four-times higher than the national average and there were high levels of deprivation.

The Cabinet Member advised that the budget gap for 2018/19 currently stood at £12.437m, which took into account £11.3m of the total £47.9m cost reductions by 2020/21 stemming from the Council's Transformation Programme. To achieve a balanced budget for 2018/19, savings proposals totalling £9.646m had been identified while the remaining £2.791m was proposed to be met by a drawdown on reserves. The Cabinet Member also drew attention to the current in-year budget pressures, other potential risks and future opportunities which could impact on the Council's overall financial position going forward. In respect of opportunities, the Cabinet Member spoke on new London devolution arrangements and a proposal for the Council to participate in a London-wide Business Rates pooling arrangement in place of the current joint arrangement with Basildon, Havering and Thurrock Councils. A prudent income estimate of £1.1m for 2018/19 had been factored into the MTFS pending formal consideration of the Council's participation at a future Cabinet meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration suggested that the Government should not be allowed to hoodwink the public in relation to extra social care funding pledges and gave the example of last year's announcement which, unbeknown to the public, came with strict conditions that it be spent to support problems associated with the NHS. The Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement shared similar sentiments in respect of education spending and referred to a campaign involving 5,000 schools which had identified that the Government needed to allocate an additional £1.7bn, on top of the £1.3bn it had already announced, in order to properly fund the country's education system.

The Leader also commented on his fears that the Chancellor's 2017 Budget, to be announced later in the month, would further impact on local residents and the services and support that they received from the Council.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree the implementation of the savings proposals for 2018/19 totalling £9.646m as set out in paragraph 6.2 of the report, subject to the outcome of consultation;
- (ii) Support the drawdown of circa £2.8m from general reserves in order for the Council to set a balanced budget for 2018/19 as set out in section 7 of the report, which would be reflected in the Council's statutory budget setting report in February 2018;
- (iii) Note that carry costs of the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy would be incorporated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy following the submission of the Be First business plan and the completion of detailed cash flow modelling, as referred to in paragraph 3.6 of the report;

- (iv) Agree to enter into the London Business Rates Pool, as set out in section 3.7 of the report;
- (v) Agree to set up a new Care Reserve of £688,000, to be funded from other reserves as detailed in paragraph 7.4 of the report; and
- (vi) Agree the proposed consultation process for the 2018/19 savings proposals, as set out in section 9 of the report.

(Councillor Turner left the meeting during this item to attend to childcare arrangements.)

### **63. Treasury Management 2017/18 Mid-Year Review**

Further to Minute 97 (13 February 2017), the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment presented the mid-year progress report in respect of the Council's treasury management activities during the current financial year.

The Cabinet Member alluded to the Bank of England's recent decision to increase the UK interest rate by 0.25% and advised that more information on the effect on the Council's investments and borrowing would be included in the February 2018 report. The future plans for the Borough relied heavily on the success of the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy and the Cabinet Member referred the revised net financing need for the year and Capital Financing Requirement as at 30 September 2017, set out at tables 3 and 4 in the report, which reflected that the Council continued to operate within the operational boundary limit for borrowing.

The Cabinet Member also referred to a proposed additional loan of £595,000 to Barking & Dagenham Trading Partnership, the formal business name of the Council's Traded Services delivery model, to provide start-up capital and cover initial set-up and governance costs.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve a loan of up to £595,000 for Barking & Dagenham Trading Partnership, as detailed in paragraph 6.5 of the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment, to agree contractual terms, including the rate, duration and security as part of the loan agreements;

The Cabinet **resolved to recommend the Assembly** to:

- (iii) Note the Treasury Management Strategy Statement Mid-Year Review 2017/18;
- (iv) Note that in the first half of the 2017/18 financial year the Council complied with all 2017/18 treasury management indicators;
- (v) Note the value of investments at 30 September 2017 totalled £250.5 million;

- (vi) Note the value of long term borrowing at 30 September 2017 totalled £502.2m, comprising market, PWLB and EIB loans;
- (vii) Note the value of short term borrowing at 30 September 2017 totalled £70.0m; and
- (viii) Agree the revised Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

#### **64. Procurement of Contract for Cashless Catering Hardware, Software and Installation**

The Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement introduced a report on the procurement of a new cashless catering system for use by the Council's School Catering Service.

The Cabinet Member explained that as well as needing to replace the current software as it would be unsupported from 2019, the new system would enable the Catering Service to operate on a level footing with competitors in anticipation of the launch of the Barking & Dagenham Trading Partnership, which incorporated the Catering Service, from April 2018.

The Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the procurement of a contract for the upgrade of Cashless Catering Hardware and Software and associated support services, in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules and the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Commissioning Director for Children's Care and Support, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement, the Chief Operating Officer and the Director of Law and Governance, to award and enter into the contract(s) with the successful bidder.

#### **65. John East, Strategic Director of Growth and Homes**

The Leader placed on record the Council's appreciation to John East, Strategic Director of Growth and Homes, who was attending his last meeting prior to leaving the Council.