

MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 16 November 2021
(7:00 - 8:17 pm)

Present: Cllr Dominic Twomey (Deputy Chair in the Chair), Cllr Saima Ashraf (Deputy Chair), Cllr Sade Bright, Cllr Evelyn Carpenter, Cllr Cameron Geddes, Cllr Syed Ghani, Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe and Cllr Maureen Worby

Apologies: Cllr Darren Rodwell and Cllr Margaret Mullane

50. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

51. Minutes (19 October 2021)

The minutes of the meeting held on 19 October 2021 were confirmed as correct.

52. Revenue Budget Monitoring 2021/22 (Period 6, September 2021)

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report on the Council's revenue budget monitoring position for the 2021/22 financial year as at 30 September 2021 (period 6).

The General Fund revenue budget showed a forecast outturn position of £184.322m, which was a slight improvement on the position reported for period 5. Once income was taken into account, that would represent an overspend of £10.187m which could be offset against the Budget Support Reserve of £11.433m, although that would deplete the reserve and increase the risk in future years.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the large overspend in the previous year due to the COVID pandemic, some of which was met through Government grants, and advised that many of those additional costs had now become the 'new normal'. Two areas which would continue to face revenue pressures in the years to come dealt with the Borough's most vulnerable residents, those being Community Solutions and the Children and Adults' services. As there was unlikely to be a similar level of grant to cover those ongoing pressures and with the recent reduction of Universal Credit of up to £1,000 per year for some residents, the Cabinet Member commented that the local community would continue to suffer as a direct result of the Government's policies, albeit that the Council was doing all it could to reduce the burden.

The Cabinet Member referenced the prudent investments made by the Council, without which the Council would be in a considerably worse financial position, and advised that returns from the Council's subsidiary companies continued to provide dividends which would supplement the budget.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the projected revenue outturn forecast for the 2021/22 financial year

as set out in sections 2 and 3 and Appendix A of the report

- (ii) Note the update on savings proposals, as set out in section 4 of the report.

53. Provision of New SEND School Places

The Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement introduced a report on the provision of new special education needs and disabilities (SEND) school places.

The Council had a statutory obligation to provide a school place for every child or young person who wanted one in the borough. The demand for places from pupils with SEND was steadily increasing and, in response, the Council planned to create additional capacity.

The Cabinet Member and Champion for Disabilities explained that Additional Resource Provisions (ARPs) were educational provisions set up within a mainstream school, designed to provide vital specialist and targeted support for pupils with long term SEND. ARPs were very popular with parents and carers as they cater for pupils and young people in a local context. With this targeted help, many pupils or young people with additional learning needs could make better, more sustained progress when they attended mainstream schools.

Cabinet Members spoke in support of the proposal and commented on the life changing support given by ARPs to the young people in the Borough.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree the permanent establishment of seven new Additionally Resourced Provisions (ARPs) at the following schools:

Name of School	Total number of places	Type of need
Ripple Primary School Suffolk Road Site	12	Complex and Moderate Learning Difficulties
Ripple Primary School Westbury Road	12	Autistic Spectrum Condition
Rose Lane Primary School	12	Autistic Spectrum Condition
Barking Abbey Longbridge Road	15	Complex and Moderate Learning Difficulties
Eastbrook Primary School	24	Autistic Spectrum Condition
Becontree Primary School	12	Autistic Spectrum Condition
Dorothy Barley Infant School	8	Complex and Moderate Learning Difficulties

- (ii) Agree the expansion of the following three ARPs as detailed below:

Name of School	Total number of additional places	Type of need
Barking Abbey School Sandringham Road	18 places	Autistic Spectrum Condition
Eastbury Primary School	2 places	Hearing Impairment
Dagenham Park School	10 places	Complex and Moderate Learning Difficulties

- (iii) Agree the closure of the ARP at Eastbrook Secondary School for pupils with social, emotional and mental health disorders in light of the new provision at Eastbrook Primary School and future additional provision at Pathways Special School.

54. School Streets Programme

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development introduced a report on the school streets programme.

School Streets was aimed at improving air quality and road safety around school gate areas and encouraging more active travel (cycling, walking and scooting). Vehicles would be prohibited from using the designated areas during the main school drop-off and pick-up times, with exemptions for those living in the designated roads, key school staff and other specified service providers.

The Cabinet Member advised that the School Streets trial project had been implemented at four of the Boroughs primary-age schools (Grafton Primary, Manor Junior, Dorothy Barley Primary and Becontree Primary) in July 2021, with Eastbury Primary implemented in September. All five areas implemented had been hailed a success by parents and, in response to the positive feedback, a further seven primary-age schools were planned for implementation by Spring 2022. It was noted that the schemes were funded by the Department for Transport via Transport for London.

Cabinet Members spoke in support of the School Streets project, especially compared to low traffic neighbourhood schemes introduced elsewhere in London, and expressed the desire to see the School Streets project extended to many other schools in the Borough.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Endorse the current School Streets trial projects at Becontree Primary, Dorothy Barley Primary, Eastbury Primary, Grafton Primary and Manor Junior;
- (ii) Approve the inclusion of Hunters Hall Primary, Parsloes Primary, Richard Alibon Primary, Southwood Primary, St Joseph's Primary (Dagenham), Sydney Russell Primary and Valence Primary in the trial programme by Spring 2022;
- (iii) Approve the draft School Streets Exemption Policy, as set out at Appendix D to the report, and authorise the Strategic Director, Inclusive Growth to make any necessary changes to the policy in response to feedback from

statutory consultation and guidance issued by TfL and DfT;

- (iv) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Inclusive Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Economic Development and the Strategic Director, Law and Governance, to:
 - (a) Agree the inclusion of further schools in the trial programme, subject to appropriate grant funding being available;
 - (b) Determine whether any trial scheme should be made permanent, prior to the expiry of the Experimental Traffic Management Order (ETMO) and following statutory consultation and a full assessment of the benefits of the scheme;
 - (c) Take all necessary steps to make permanent any trial schemes, including the publication of Traffic Management Orders.

55. Procurement of Framework for Day Care and Home Care Services for Residents with Disabilities

The Cabinet Member and Champion for Disabled People presented a report on the procurement of a framework contract for day care and home care services for residents with disabilities, to commence from 1 April 2022 when current arrangements expired.

The Cabinet Member explained that home care (also referred to as domiciliary care) was health care or supportive care provided to adults, young people and/or children by a professional carer, either at their home or where they may be living, while day care provided support to the service user to improve their quality of life and remain as independent as possible within their own home, the community and their chosen way of life.

The Care Act 2014 required local authorities to commission a range of providers for individuals to access various support services, whilst ensuring that individuals had choice and control over their support purchases. The Cabinet Member advised that as well as ensuring that the Council was compliant with the Act and financial contractual regulations, the framework would expand the range of services available and introduce a results-based accountability model to strengthen the monitoring of service quality and costs.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the Council proceeds with the procurement of a framework for day care and home care services for residents with disabilities and/or mental health, in accordance with the strategy set out in the report; and
- (ii) Authorise the Strategic Director, Children and Adults, in consultation with the Cabinet Member and Champion for Disabled People and the Strategic Director, Law and Governance, to conduct the procurement and award and enter into the contract(s) and all other necessary or ancillary agreements with the successful bidder(s), in accordance with the strategy set out in the report.

56. Annual Education Performance Review 2020/21

The Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement presented a report on the annual education performance review 2020/21 and opened by thanking the education providers for their tireless efforts throughout the last year.

The Cabinet Member commented that it had been a further year of disruption for pupils due to the COVID-19 pandemic, with little test and examination data for a second year running. There were also no comparison tables available as different methodology had been used across the country for teacher assessed results.

The Cabinet Member referred to the many achievements of schools, pupils and the support services, which included:

- Partnerships had strengthened and blossomed during the pandemic;
- The proportion of schools rated good or outstanding remained at 91.5%, unchanged from the previous year. That meant the borough's schools were well above latest published national benchmark and just under the London benchmark; and
- Health and wellbeing, creative and culture opportunities had been developed by teachers over the past year which significantly benefitted the borough's young people and supported them through the pandemic.

The Cabinet Member and Member Champion for Disabled People referred again to the review of Additional Resourced Provision undertaken during the year which had highlighted the wealth of strong practice and opportunities for new provision to meet the complex needs of young people with SEND.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and were impressed with the continued hard work of everyone concerned throughout the ongoing pandemic.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Renew the Council's commitment to continuing to strengthen and develop partnerships with Barking and Dagenham's family of schools, BDSIP, Barking & Dagenham College, CU London and other key partners to achieve the best possible outcomes and opportunities for the borough's children and young people; and
- (ii) Note performance against the priorities of the Education and Participation Strategy 2018-22 as set out in section 3 of the report and in the dataset at Appendix A to the report, acknowledging that most benchmarking data in Appendix A was for 2019 and 2020/21 provisional updates were made to lines 23-28 of the dataset only.

57. Fees and Charges 2022

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced a report on the proposed fees and charges for Council services, the majority of which would come into effect from 1 January 2022.

The Cabinet Member referred to the Council's Charging Policy which underpinned the review of fees and charges and explained that the default position, which had been applied to the majority of services, was an inflationary increase of 3.2% in line with the August 2021 Retail Price Index. However, the Council had been mindful of the impact that increases could have on residents, particularly those most affected by the pandemic, and the Cabinet Member referred to some of the services charges which had not been increased by inflation, which included:

- 30 minutes free parking at all street parking locations and one-hour free parking in the Council's car parks;
- Following the introduction of controlled parking zones to help achieve the vision of a cleaner, greener Borough, there would be no further changes to residents parking permit charges in 2022; and
- No increase in the charges made by Revenues Service for summonses issued.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration also advised that a number of planned increases to social care charges from 1 January 2021 had not been fully applied due to the pandemic. To avoid service users facing a potential double increase in 2022, it was proposed that those charges would remain at the planned 2021 rate for the coming year.

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 2022 unless otherwise stated;
- (ii) Note the fees and charges no longer applicable from 1 January 2022, as set out in Appendix B to the report; and
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director, Children and Adults, in consultation with the Managing Director and the relevant Cabinet Members, to set fees and charges to be applied from September for schools and academic year-based activities.

58. Treasury Management 2021/22 Mid-Year Review

Further to Minute 84 (15 February 2021), the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced a report on the mid-year review of the Council's treasury management activities for 2021/22.

The Cabinet Member summarised the key issues and achievements and confirmed that the Council had complied with all 2021/2 treasury management indicators, policies and statutory requirements. He also praised the Council's Treasury team for achieving an overall surplus of £2.4m against targets and significantly outperforming its peer group with an investment return of 1.61% compared to the London average of 0.24%.

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

- (i) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement Mid-Year Review 2021/22;

- (ii) The economic update covering the increase in inflation and the potential for an increase in the Bank of England Base Rate;
- (iii) That the value of the treasury investments and cash as at 30 September 2021 totalled £170.2m and that the treasury investment strategy outperformed its peer group, with a return of 1.51% against an average of 0.24% for London Local Authorities (as at 30 June 2021);
- (iv) That the value of the commercial and residential loans lent by the Council as at 31 March 2021 totalled £171.5m;
- (v) That the total borrowing position as at 30 September 2021 totalled £1.0 billion, with £331.2m relating to the Housing Revenue Account and £669.1m to the General Fund;
- (vi) That interest payable was forecast to be £12.6m against a budget of £13.6m, representing a surplus of £1m;
- (vii) That interest receivable was forecast to be £8.2m against a budget of £6.5m, representing a surplus of £1.7m;
- (viii) That capitalised interest was forecast to be £6.5m against a budget of £5.0m, representing a surplus of £1.5m;
- (ix) That Investment and Acquisition Strategy income was forecast to be £4.9m against a budget of £6.6m, representing a deficit of £1.7m; and
- (x) That in the first half of the 2021/22 financial year the Council complied with all 2021/22 treasury management indicators.