

# CABINET

Tuesday, 26 June 2012  
(5:00 - 5:20 pm)

**Present:** Councillor L A Smith (Chair), Councillor R Gill (Deputy Chair), Councillor J L Alexander, Councillor H J Collins, Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor L A Reason, Councillor P T Waker, Councillor J R White and Councillor M M Worby

**Also Present:** Councillor G Letchford and Councillor J E McDermott

**Apologies:** Councillor C Geddes

## 11. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

## 12. Minutes (22 May 2012)

The minutes of the meeting on 22 May 2012 were confirmed as correct.

## 13. Final Revenue And Capital Outturn 2011/12

Further to Minute 3 of the last meeting, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Education presented a report on the Council's final revenue and capital outturn position for the 2011/12 financial year.

The Cabinet Member referred to the expenditure summary by directorate and confirmed that the final position remained largely unchanged from the provisional position reported at the last meeting, with General Fund budgets showing a net underspend of £2m against the net revenue budget of £183.4m which gave an improved year-end balance position of £14.3m. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) surplus was £3.8m for the year, increasing the reserve to £8.2m at 31 March 2012, and the Capital Programme showed an outturn of £127.7m compared to the revised budget of £167.6m, with the underspends rolled forward to 2012/13 to enable the projects to be completed.

**Cabinet agreed:**

- (i) To note the final 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 final outturn against the 2011/12 savings targets as detailed in paragraph 2.11 and Appendix B of the report;
- (iii) To note the final outturn position for the HRA as detailed in paragraph 2.12 and Appendix C of the report;
- (iv) To note the final outturn position for 2011/12 of the Council's capital budget as detailed in paragraph 2.13 and Appendix D of the report; and

- (v) To note that the Central Expenses roll-forward, approved by Minute 3(vi) of the last meeting, had reduced by £58,125 following the finalisation of the accounts.

#### **14. Healthwatch: New Ways of Involving the Public in Health and Social Care Services**

The Cabinet Member for Health presented a report on the arrangements in hand to fulfil the Council's duties, under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, to commission a fully operational local health and social care watchdog by April 2013.

The Cabinet Member explained that the new local Healthwatch would replace the Local Involvement Network (LINK) as the organisation responsible for representing the views of local residents of all ages, advocating and influencing the delivery and commissioning of health and social care services and actively promoting choice. Healthwatch would be an independently constituted body and would be able to escalate concerns to a new national body, Healthwatch England.

Following initial discussions at the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board and its sub-group, the Community and Service User Reference Group, a Healthwatch Steering Group was established to undertake the detailed work to create a local Healthwatch, including the development of a local vision and set of principles outlining the local values. Arising out of that work, the Healthwatch Steering Group favoured a 'hub and spoke' local model whereby a central organisation would be the 'hub', networking with other existing local organisations and individuals, the 'spokes'. The 'hub and spoke' model was considered to offer the most inclusive approach by giving local residents the option of either speaking to a central organisation or liaising with a trusted local organisation or patient group.

The proposals were considered by the Health and Adult Services Select Committee (HASSC) at its meeting on 23 May 2012, who supported the broad principles that had been established and further recommended a model which enabled a local Healthwatch to also have a presence across North East London, as many health services were delivered across borough boundaries. HASSC also suggested that sharing back office functions would deliver efficiencies in the light of the limited funding that would be made available by Central Government to support local Healthwatch arrangements.

The Cabinet Member for Environment referred to the announcement earlier in the day that the Government was considering intervening in the South London Healthcare NHS Trust due to its funding deficit position, with the possibility that a direction would be issued to close one of the three hospitals in the Trust's area, and enquired as to the expected role of local Healthwatch bodies in such circumstances. The Cabinet Member for Health confirmed that local Healthwatch bodies would be statutory consultees on such issues but that it was unlikely that the ability of these bodies to successfully campaign and influence Government thinking would be strengthened.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) The proposed "Hub and Spoke" model for delivering local Healthwatch as set out in the report;

- (ii) In principle, to the procurement of Healthwatch along the lines of the outline strategy set out in the report, whether as a sole initiative or as a joint initiative with the London Borough of Havering and (should ongoing negotiations be successful) also the London Boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest;
- (iii) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Health and the Divisional Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to determine the procurement method and strategy for delivering the local Healthwatch and undertake the appropriate procurement of a service provider; and
- (iv) To authorise the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and the Cabinet Member for Health, to (a) award the contract upon conclusion of the procurement process; (b) form, establish or participate in such corporate body as may be necessary to create the Healthwatch; and (c) execute or approve the execution of such contracts and any other ancillary legal agreements or documents to facilitate the establishment of the Healthwatch.

#### **15. Retender of the Young Person's Specialist Substance Misuse Service, SubWize**

The Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities presented a report on proposals to procure a new contract for the provision of the Young Person's specialist substance misuse service 'SubWize' following the expiry of the current contract on 31 March 2013.

The Cabinet Member explained that the SubWize service provided prevention and education services, family services, substance misuse treatment and diversion programmes to young people up to 19 years of age and had proved to be a very valued and successful programme.

**Cabinet agreed:**

- (i) The procurement of the 'SubWize' Young Person's Specialist Substance Misuse Service, to include a Single Point of Contact (SPoC) service, on the terms detailed in the report; and
- (ii) To authorise the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, to award the contract to the successful contractor.

#### **16. Debt Management Performance and Write-Offs 2011/12 (Quarter 4)**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Education presented a report on the performance during the final quarter of the 2011/12 financial year (January - March 2012 2011) in respect of the debt management function carried out by the Revenues and Benefits Service within Elevate East London, together with details of the debts written-off as uncollectable during the period and comparable information from the previous financial year.

In response to issues raised by the Cabinet Member for Housing at the meeting on 20 March 2012 in relation to eviction levels, the Corporate Director of Housing and Environment advised that he had reviewed internal processes and now personally approved all eviction requests. The Corporate Director also advised on the financial implications associated with evictions.

The Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Human Resources referred to the performance data provided by Elevate East London and the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources confirmed that the data was verified by the Council's client service.

Cabinet **agreed**:

- (i) To note the contents of the report as it related to the performance of the debt management function carried out by the Revenues and Benefits Service operated by Elevate East London including the performance of bailiffs; and
- (ii) To note the debt write-offs for the fourth quarter of 2011/12 and that a number of those debts would be publicised in accordance with the policy agreed by Minute 69 (6 November 2007) (the debts to be published are those with the highest value for which publication is not prevented by the criteria set out in paragraph 2.53 of the report).

## **17. Provision of Elderly Persons' Bungalows on Council Owned Sites**

(The Chair agreed that the report could be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency under the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.)

The Cabinet Member for Housing presented a report on the proposed use of two Council-owned sites for the provision of new build bungalows suitable for occupation by older people.

The Cabinet Member advised that the projects at the former Wood Lane Sports Centre, Wood Lane, and former Lawns older people's home, Rainham Road North, would provide a mix of approximately 40 x one and two bedroom bungalows to help meet the demand for smaller, single-level accommodation amongst the Borough's elderly tenants which, in turn, would release larger, under-occupied Council homes for families on the Council's waiting list.

The Cabinet Member referred to the development restrictions associated with the two sites which were within designated Green Belt areas and the associated financial and design considerations that had been taken into account. The projects would be funded via the Housing Capital Investment Programme and a detailed report on the next five years' rolling programme would be presented to the next Cabinet meeting, but the report had been brought forward to today's Cabinet meeting in order for the projects to be commenced as soon as possible, with an ambitious completion target of June 2013. The Leader of the Council reported that arrangements were in hand for the Wood Lane development to be named in celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's Diamond Jubilee.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Adult Services welcomed the proposal and

suggested that in addition to housing elderly residents the developments could also provide much needed accommodation for disabled residents. Furthermore, a greater focus on the number of two bedroom and family-sized bungalows at both schemes would cater for disabled people with families and enable elderly residents to have family and other visitors stay overnight. The Cabinet Member for Environment also spoke in favour of the proposal and the need for good management arrangements to be in place to ensure the ongoing success of the projects, and it was noted that a Tenancy Working Group had been set up to look at that and other related issues.

**Cabinet agreed:**

- (i) Subject to (iii) below, the proposal to develop circa 24 one and two bedroom bungalows for elderly and disabled people at the Wood Lane Sports Centre site in the manner and with the funds referred to in the report, subject to the formal appropriation of the Wood Lane Sports Centre site from the General Fund to the HRA;
- (ii) Subject to (iii) below, the proposal to develop circa 16 one and two bedroom bungalows for elderly and disabled people at the former Lawns site in the manner and with the funds referred to in the report;
- (iii) That an increased focus should be given to the development of two bedroom and family-sized bungalows at both schemes to reflect the needs of elderly couples and disabled people with families;
- (iv) In principle, to the appropriation of the Wood Lane Sports Centre site from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account, with a requirement that officers take necessary steps to seek formal appropriation of the site;
- (v) A contribution from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund of £1m in respect of the land value for the Wood Lane development site; and
- (vi) To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Housing and Environment, the Divisional Director of Legal and Democratic Services and the Lead Member for Housing, to agree terms and a detailed financial cost plan and procure the necessary design, consultancy and related services and works necessary to realise the developments in the manner proposed and to award and enter into all necessary and appropriate contracts and documentation to realise each scheme.