

CABINET

Tuesday, 16 April 2013
(5:00 - 5:14 pm)

Present: Councillor J L Alexander (Chair), Councillor H J Collins, Councillor C Geddes, Councillor M A McCarthy, Councillor L A Reason, Councillor P T Waker, Councillor J R White and Councillor M M Worby

Apologies: Councillor L A Smith and Councillor R Gill

125. Appointment of Chair

In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair, Councillor Alexander was appointed as chair for the meeting.

126. Declaration of Members' Interests

The following declarations of non-pecuniary interests were made:

- Councillor Alexander - item 5 (Demand for School Places - Proposed Investment Strategy) - Council-appointed Governor of Eastbury Comprehensive School;
- Councillor Geddes - item 5 (Demand for School Places - Proposed Investment Strategy) - Council-appointed Governor of Barking Abbey Comprehensive;
- Councillor McCarthy - item 5 (Demand for School Places - Proposed Investment Strategy) and item 6 (Proposed Transfer of Land at Robert Clack School (Gosfield Road site) to All Saints School and Technology College) - Diocese-appointed Governor of All Saints School and Technology College;
- Councillor White - item 5 (Demand for School Places - Proposed Investment Strategy) and item 6 (Proposed Transfer of Land at Robert Clack School (Gosfield Road site) to All Saints School and Technology College) - Council-appointed Governor of Robert Clack Comprehensive;
- Councillor P Waker - item 9 (Award of Contract for Provision of Taxi Services for Children with Special Educational and Complex Needs) - received hospitality in March 2012 from one of the bidders for the contract.

127. Minutes (19 and 26 March 2013)

The minutes of the meetings held on 19 and 26 March were confirmed as correct.

128. Modernisation of Cashiering Services (Phase 2)

Further to Minute 146 (24 April 2012), the Divisional Director of Finance introduced a report on proposals to withdraw face-to-face cashiering services at the Civic Centre by the end of August 2013 under the second phase of the Cashiering Service Modernisation Programme.

The Divisional Director explained that phase one of the programme related to the closure of cashiering services at Barking Learning Centre from 1 June 2012 and he confirmed that the implementation of phase two would be dependent on the alternative arrangements, as described in section 2 of the report, being in place.

In respect of the reduction in staffing levels as a result of the proposals, the Cabinet Member for Adult Services and Human Resources stated that she had been advised earlier in the day that the remaining ten staff had been notified by Elevate East London, who took over the service under the joint venture partnership with the Council, that all ten posts would be deleted. The Divisional Director referred to the statement at paragraph 7.2 of the report that the restructure plans would see the establishment figure reduce to eight but Elevate's Head of Benefits advised that the remaining ten staff would indeed be in a potential redundancy situation.

In view of the uncertainty regarding the staffing position, Cabinet agreed to **defer** consideration of the proposals to its next meeting and asked officers to ensure that the report to that meeting set out the exact position.

129. Demand for School Places - Proposed Investment Strategy

Further to Minute 51 (13 November 2012), the Cabinet Member for Children's Services presented a report on the progress of various school expansion projects aimed at addressing the demand for school places in the Borough, together with potential expansion projects at several secondary schools via funding available under the Department for Education (DfE) Targeted Basic Need Programme and 16 to 19 Demographic Capital Growth Fund.

The Council had received £28.1m under the Basic Need Allocation for 2013 to 2015 and it was noted that a further report would be presented to Cabinet on the schemes to be progressed from that allocation. The Cabinet Member advised that the allocation was approximately £12m below the Council's projection of the cost of creating a sufficient number of new places to meet demand. As a result, it was proposed to bid for additional funding for specific projects at Barking Abbey, Eastbury and Robert Clack Comprehensive Schools via the Government's Targeted Basic Need Programme and a further bid relating to Barking Abbey via the 16 to 19 Demographic Capital Growth Fund. The report also set out proposals in respect of an area of land owned by the Greater London Authority (GLA) which would be required as part of the Robert Clack expansion project.

In respect of the funding already set aside to support current projects, the Corporate Director of Children's Services undertook to provide the Cabinet Member for Environment with confirmation of the precise funding for the All Saints School and Technology College project referred to in paragraph 2.3 of the report.

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) To note the allocation of the Basic Need Grant Funding of £28,104,818 from the DfE to help address the need for additional school places and that a further report would be presented to Cabinet once specific schemes had been identified;
- (ii) The bid programme as set out at paragraph 4 of the report in respect of the Targeted Basic Need Programme, which met with the original strategy approved by Cabinet on 13 November 2012 and was recommended following consultation with all schools;

- (iii) The bid proposal, as set out at paragraph 5 of the report, in respect of the 16 to 19 Demographic Capital Growth Fund 2013-15, and noted that the project for Barking Abbey was included in the original strategy document approved on 13 November 2012 and was recommended following consultation with all Secondary Schools and Trinity School;
- (iv) The purchase of the land known as the Eldonwall site, as shown hatched on plan LOC10 attached as Appendix 1 to the report, to facilitate the expansion of Robert Clack School as detailed in paragraph 2.8 of the report, subject to agreement of terms with the GLA and advice from the Council's asset management and legal services; and
- (v) The inclusion in the 2013/14 Capital Programme of the School Improvement Grant for capitalised repairs from the DfE in the sum of £3,633,262, to support the improvement of condition and modernisation of the Borough's schools and the wider Children's Services property portfolio.

130. Proposed Transfer of Land at Robert Clack School (Gosfield Road site) to All Saints School and Technology College

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services reported on the proposed transfer of an area of land measuring 1714 m² at Robert Clack Comprehensive School, Gosfield Road site, to the Diocese of Brentwood to facilitate the expansion of All Saints School and Technology College from 180 to 240 pupils per year group.

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) The disposal of the freehold interest in the land shown hatched on plan 916 SK14 attached as Appendix 1 to the report, in favour of the Diocese of Brentwood for the sum of £20.00 only, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for Education; and
- (ii) To authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to enter into all necessary legal documents on behalf of the Council to secure the disposal.

131. Disposal of 89 Axe Street, Barking

The Divisional Director of Finance introduced a report on the proposed sale of 89 Axe Street which was now considered surplus to the Council's requirements as office accommodation.

Cabinet agreed:

- (i) The disposal of 89 Axe Street, Barking, on the terms set out in the report;
- (ii) To authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to negotiate terms for the disposal of the freehold interest in the property; and
- (iii) That a further report be presented setting out the offers received in order for Cabinet to agree a successful purchaser of the property.

132. Adoption of Powers under London Local Authorities Act 2007 - Mail Forwarding Businesses

The Corporate Director of Housing and Environment introduced a report on proposals for the Council to require local mail forwarding businesses to register with the Council.

The Corporate Director explained that a mail forwarding business was one that used a 'P.O. Box' address for the receipt of post and whilst the majority of mail forwarding businesses were legitimate, the anonymity associated with a P.O. Box address was often used by those with criminal intentions.

Cabinet **agreed to recommend the Assembly to resolve:**

- (i) That the Council adopts the provisions of section 75 of the London Local Authorities Act 2007 to require mail forwarding businesses in the Borough to register with the Council from the appointed day;
- (ii) That the appointed day from which the measures would take effect be 16 June 2013; and
- (iii) That the fee for the registration of mail forwarding businesses be set at £110 for 2013/14, to be reviewed annually.

133. Award of Contract for Provision of Taxi Services for Children with Special Educational and Complex Needs

(Councillor Waker advised that in view of his non-pecuniary interest in the matter he would take no part in the discussions and he left the meeting prior to the consideration of the report.)

Further to Minute 83 (22 January 2013), the Cabinet Member for Children's Services presented a report seeking authority for the commissioning Chief Officer to approve the appointment of bidders to the Framework Agreement for the provision of taxi services for children with special educational and complex needs, in order for new contractual arrangements to be in place prior to the expiry of the current contractual arrangements.

Cabinet **agreed** to authorise the Corporate Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services, the Chief Financial Officer and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to approve the appointment of the successful bidders onto the Framework Agreement upon conclusion of the procurement process and to execute all contracts relevant to the procurement.