

MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 23 July 2013
(5:00 - 5:47 pm)

Present: Councillor R Gill (Deputy Chair in the Chair), Councillor J L Alexander, 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 H J Collins

22. Declaration of Members' Interests

The following declarations of non-pecuniary interests were made in respect of agenda item 11 (Barking Abbey and Robert Clack Comprehensive Schools: Acceptance of Football Foundation Grants for Artificial Grass Pitches):

- Councillor Geddes - Council-appointed Governor of Barking Abbey Comprehensive;
- Councillor Gill - Council-appointed Governor of Barking Abbey Comprehensive;
- Councillor White - Council-appointed Governor of Robert Clack Comprehensive.

23. Minutes (25 June 2013)

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 June 2013 were confirmed as correct.

24. Budget Monitoring 2013/14 - April to May 2013

The Deputy Chief Finance Officer presented a report on the Council's revenue and capital budget position for the 2013/14 financial year as at 31 May 2013.

The General Fund position showed a projected end of year surplus of £6.4m against the total approved budget of £178.1m, which would result in the General Fund balance increasing to £23.9m. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) showed a projected break-even position.

In respect of the Capital Programme, the Deputy Chief Finance Officer referred to a number of proposed amendments to existing schemes and the inclusion of new schemes relating to Direct Payment Adaptations (£0.4m), Disabled Facilities Grant (£0.575m) and Community Capacity Grant (£0.491m).

Cabinet resolved:

- (i) To note the projected outturn position for 2013/14 of the Council's revenue budget at 31 May 2013, as detailed in paragraphs 2.3 to 2.11 and Appendix A of the report;
- (ii) To note the progress against the 2013/14 savings targets at 31 May 2013, as detailed in paragraph 2.12 and Appendix B of the report;

- (iii) To note the position for the HRA at 31 May 2013, as detailed in paragraph 2.13 and Appendix C of the report;
- (iv) To note the projected outturn position for 2013/14 of the Council's capital budget at 31 May 2013, as detailed in paragraph 2.14 and Appendix D of the report; and
- (v) To approve the reprofiled Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix D plus the adjustments detailed in paragraph 2.12 of the report.

25. Future Management Arrangements for the Library Service

The Divisional Director of Culture and Sport introduced a report on options for the future provision of library services in the Borough.

The Divisional Director explained that the options were developed in the context of the budget saving requirements for 2014/15 and had been the subject of extensive public consultation and scrutiny via the Safer and Stronger Select Committee. The preferred option (Option 2) represented a 'mixed economy' approach which included:

- The Council continuing to directly manage Dagenham Library, Barking Learning Centre, Valence Library and Thames View Library;
- Reduced opening hours at Valence library (43 hours per week down to 36) and Thames View library (43 hours per week down to 30);
- A community management arrangement introduced at Robert Jeyes Library;
- A volunteer-delivered service at Marks Gate Library with the facility continuing to be managed by the Council.
- Closure of Rush Green library in view of the enhanced service to be provided at Barking and Dagenham College (Rush Green Campus);
- A service restructure to be undertaken to produce savings of £400,000 by 2014/15.

In outlining the anticipated timetable for implementing the new measures, the Divisional Director stressed that the ability to recruit volunteers was crucial to their success and would also strongly influence longer term proposals for the library service in view of the continuing pressures on Council funding for 2015/16 and beyond.

With regard to the future of the Rush Green Library premises, the intention was to return the premises to housing accommodation although it was agreed that the final decision should be taken in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and Housing to ensure that all parties were satisfied with the financial arrangements associated with the appropriation. Members also discussed the need to strengthen the arrangements for reviewing vacant land and property.

Cabinet resolved:

- (i) To approve the implementation of Option 2 as set out in the report in respect of the future management arrangements for the Library Service;
- (ii) To authorise the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services, in

consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, to:

- a. conclude the transfer of the Rush Green Library building to the Housing Service subject to agreement by the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Finance and Housing, of the sum required, and
 - b. approve the leasing arrangements for the Robert Jeyes Library;
- (iii) To note that savings of £400,000 would be achieved from implementing the above proposals in 2014/15;
- (iv) To agree that the difference between the agreed budget saving of £593,000 and the anticipated saving of £400,000 be managed by the application of corporate contingency funds in 2014/15, and that for 2015/16 the shortfall be addressed as part of the budget savings requirement; and
- (v) To agree that, where appropriate and feasible, officers bring forward the implementation of these proposals into 2013/14.

26. A Library Strategy for Barking and Dagenham

The Divisional Director of Culture and Sport introduced the report and confirmed that the proposed Strategy was compatible with the proposals approved via the preceding report.

Cabinet **resolved** to approve the Libraries Strategy 2013 - 2016 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

27. "Creative Barking and Dagenham": An Arts Strategy for the Borough 2013-16

The Divisional Director of Culture and Sport presented the report and suggested that the draft Arts Strategy was a proportionate reflection of the vision for the delivery and promotion of arts in the Borough over the next few years. The Divisional Director also commented on the importance of an Arts Strategy in terms of attracting external funding for projects.

Cabinet **resolved** to approve the Arts Strategy 2013-16 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

28. Children's Social Care Review 2012/13

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services presented the report which reviewed the significant operational service developments and inspections during the 2012/13 financial year.

The Cabinet Member referred to the ongoing improvement in most service areas and the future pressures that would be faced in the light of financial constraints and the changing demographics in the Borough.

Cabinet **resolved**:

- (i) To note the service improvements and development areas contained within

the review report and action taken in response to local demand pressures;
and

- (ii) To note the improvements to local corporate parenting arrangements and in particular the requirement of all officers and Councillors to continue to contribute to the Council's statutory requirements, as a corporate parent, with regards to the Borough's looked after children.

29. Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2012-13

The Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities introduced the Community Safety Partnership's Annual Report for 2012/13.

The Cabinet Member referred to the considerable successes during the year in the four priority areas of anti-social behaviour, serious youth violence, serious acquisitive crime and drugs and alcohol, and confirmed that those areas would remain the main focus for 2013/14.

Cabinet **resolved** to note the Barking and Dagenham Community Safety Partnership Annual Report 2012/13.

30. Disposal of Former Mayesbrook Nursing Home, Bevan Avenue, Barking

Further to Minute 83 (22 January 2013), the Cabinet Member for Finance advised on the outcome of the marketing of the former Mayesbrook Nursing Home site as a potential development site for private family housing.

Cabinet **resolved** to approve the disposal of the Council's freehold interest in the former Mayesbrook Nursing Home site, Bevan Avenue, shown edged red on the plan at Appendix 1, to Abbey Developments Limited on the terms set out in the report.