

MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 21 January 2014
(5:00 - 5:43 pm)

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

Apologies: Councillor M M Worby

83. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

84. Minutes (18 December 2013)

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2013 were confirmed as correct.

85. Betting Shops - Withdrawal of Permitted Development Rights and Consultation Draft Supplementary Planning Document

The report was withdrawn.

86. Budget Monitoring 2013/14 - April to November 2013 (Month 8)

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented a report on the Council's capital and revenue position for the 2013/14 financial year, as at 30 November 2013.

The General Fund showed a projected end of year surplus of £8.3m against the total approved budget of £178.3m, which exceeded the planned surplus of £5.2m and would result in a projected General Fund balance of £25.8m at the year end. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) continued to show a projected break-even position while the Capital Programme showed a projected spend of £137.6m against the total revised budget of £138.2m.

Cabinet resolved:

- (i) To note the projected outturn position for 2013/14 of the Council's General Fund revenue budget at 30 November 2013, as detailed in paragraphs 2.4 to 2.9 and Appendix A of the report;
- (ii) To note the progress against the 2013/14 savings targets at 30 November 2013, as detailed in paragraph 2.10 and Appendix B of the report;
- (iii) To note the position for the Housing Revenue Account at 30 November 2013, as detailed in paragraph 2.11 and Appendix C of the report; and
- (iv) To note the projected outturn position for 2013/14 of the Council's capital budget at 30 November 2013, as detailed in paragraph 2.12 and Appendix D of the report.

87. Calculation and Setting of the Council Tax Base 2014/15

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented a revised report, which the Chair agreed could be considered at the meeting under the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, in respect of the Council Tax Base for 2014/15.

The Cabinet Member referred to the powers available to the Council to set locally determined discounts, which were proposed to remain unchanged from 2013/14. The Cabinet Member also advised that the Council's new homes programme had contributed to an increase in the number of Band D equivalent properties for 2014/15 which would increase Council Tax revenue by up to £576,000 while, at the same time, enabling the Council to freeze the level of Council Tax for a sixth consecutive year should it choose to do so at the meeting of the Assembly on 19 February 2014.

Cabinet resolved:

- (i) That the existing discounts and exemptions for 2013/14, including the Council Tax Support Scheme as set out at Appendix B to the report, remain unchanged and those prescribed by statute be applied in calculating the tax base for 2014/15;
- (ii) That, consistent with previous decisions of the Council, no locally determined discounts based on categories of property or occupier be awarded for 2014/15;
- (iii) That, consistent with previous decisions of the Council, there be no award of reductions for prompt payment for 2014/15; and
- (iv) On the basis of (i), (ii) and (iii) above and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, that the amount calculated by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council as its tax base for the year 2014/15 shall be 40,522.12 Band 'D' properties.

88. Public Space CCTV Strategy and Delivery Plan 2013-2018

The Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities introduced the proposed Public Space CCTV Strategy and Delivery Plan for 2013-2018, which had been developed in consultation with the Community Safety Partnership constituent agencies.

The Cabinet Member explained that the overarching aims of the Strategy were to enhance community safety, assist in developing the economic well-being of the Borough and to encourage greater use of the town centres, estates and car parks. As part of that work, the Cabinet Member referred to possible future opportunities associated with mobile technology.

Cabinet resolved:

- (i) To adopt the Public Space CCTV Strategy and Delivery Plan 2013-2018 as

attached to the report; and

- (ii) That officers explore other opportunities for utilising mobile technology (such as cameras on Council vehicles or supporting the use of web cams) to combat crime and disorder.

89. Disposal of 145 Halbutt Street, Dagenham

The Cabinet Member for Finance introduced an options paper in respect of the former caretaker's house at 145 Halbutt Street, Dagenham.

The Cabinet Member advised that the property had been vacant for two years and a valuation had been commissioned last year to inform discussions between Council officers regarding the future of the property. The potential costs associated with transferring the property from the Council's General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account and bringing it up to a modern, habitable condition for letting as a Council house had initially been assessed as uneconomical. As a consequence, the Council's Property Asset Group had identified the property as appropriate for sale on the open market via public auction.

Arising from consideration of the options set out in the main report and the financial information contained in the exempt appendix to the report, it was suggested that a decision on the matter should be deferred pending a site visit and a reassessment by officers of all the options.

The Cabinet Member for Housing also stressed the need for proper arrangements to be in place within the Housing Service to ensure that the Council's exposure to repair costs for vacant properties are minimised.

Cabinet **resolved** that no action be taken in respect of the sale of the premises pending a further report to the Cabinet following a re-assessment by officers, in consultation with relevant Cabinet Members, of the options for the site.

90. Fanshawe Community Centre Site, Barnmead Road, Dagenham

The Cabinet Member for Finance presented a report on a proposal to market the Fanshawe Community Centre site as a potential housing development site.

The Cabinet Member advised that the site was currently used by the Fanshawe Community Association under a management agreement and by two religious organisations via licence agreements. The site had been identified as a potential redevelopment site several years ago at a time when a number of other community centres in the Borough were transferred into community management via long term leases.

In view of the expiry of the current licence agreements in August 2014, officers had recently commissioned a valuation of the site based on three types of housing development. The Cabinet Member referred to the valuations, contained in the exempt appendix to the report, the current usage of the building complex and noise-related complaints from local residents associated with some of the religious activities.

Cabinet resolved:

- (i) That the Fanshawe Community Centre site, which includes a community hall, committee room and former library and as shown edged red on the plan at Appendix 1 to the report, be marketed for sale as a housing development opportunity;
- (ii) That Option 4 be the preferred option to secure the redevelopment of the Fanshawe Community Hall site;
- (iii) That the marketing and development brief for the site include the following options:
 - development as flats or apartments.
 - development as three and four bedroom houses.
 - development as detached bungalows.
- (iv) That a further report be presented to Cabinet on the outcome of the marketing exercise following the submission of offers to purchase the site.