

# MINUTES OF CABINET

Tuesday, 13 October 2015  
(7:00 - 7:48 pm)

**Present:** Cllr Darren Rodwell (Chair), Cllr Saima Ashraf (Deputy Chair), Cllr Laila Butt, Cllr Lynda Rice, Cllr Bill Turner and Cllr Maureen Worby

**Apologies:** Cllr Dominic Twomey, Cllr Evelyn Carpenter and Cllr Cameron Geddes

## **50. Declaration of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **51. Minutes (15 September and 1 October 2015)**

The minutes of the meetings held on 15 September and 1 October 2015 were confirmed as correct, subject the amendment of Minute 49 (1 October 2015) to reflect that the Democratic Services Officer had given advice that the discussions should be focussed on the Living and Working Select Committee's consideration of the call-in and not the original report and decision made by Cabinet under Minute 21 (21 July 2015).

## **52. Launch of Growth Commission**

Further to Minute 24 (21 July 2015), the Leader of the Council took the opportunity to advise that the formal launch of the Growth Commission would take place on Monday 19 October 2015.

The Commission's work would commence with a two-day session where it would consider data from a variety of Government and other databases and take evidence from a wide range of stakeholders to ascertain where Barking and Dagenham was and where it was going.

The Leader commented on the range of expertise amongst the Commission members, a number of who had connections with the Borough. It was noted that the Commission's work would be concentrated over a two-month period and it would present its findings to the Council in the New Year.

## **53. Budget Monitoring 2015/16 - April to August (Month 5)**

Members received a report on the Council's capital and revenue position for the 2015/16 financial year, as at 31 August 2015.

The General Fund showed a projected end of year spend of £157.7m against the approved budget of £151.4m. The projected overspend of £6.3m continued to be attributable to the ongoing pressures within the Children's Services department and Councillor Worby, presenting the report on behalf of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services, referred to the Outline Business Case at Appendix E to the report which contained plans developed by the Children's Social Care

Ambition and Financial Efficiency (SAFE) Programme to minimise the overspend position in the current year and achieve a balanced position for 2016/17.

Councillor Worby advised on further pressures within other service areas such as adult social care and parking, which were expected to be brought back into line by the year end, and commended the work of the Treasury Management team in respect of a projected £700,000 surplus relating to treasury management costs.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) showed a predicted breakeven position while the forecast outturn for the Capital Programme was £138.7m against the revised budget of £137m. Councillor Worby was pleased to report that there was greater confidence that the full capital allocation would be spent in-year as new projects were ready to be brought forward to replace any existing schemes that may slip. To that end, it was noted that the next Budget Monitoring report would include plans for the reprofiling of a number of capital schemes.

Councillor Turner introduced the SAFE Programme's Outline Business Case at Appendix E to the report and advised that he was due to present a slightly updated version to the Public Accounts and Audit Select Committee on 21 October 2015, which he would share with his Cabinet colleagues. The SAFE Programme had identified a total of £11.655m of financial pressures, almost all of which related to Children's Social Care, and Councillor Turner outlined some of the initiatives that would help to reduce the level of spending and realise savings for the future, which included the initiative with the recruitment specialists, Penna, to replace agency staff with permanent employees.

Councillor Turner commented that some of the pressures had arisen as a result of insufficient budget allocation, most evident in the areas of No Recourse to Public Funds and Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers where there was no budget provision, although he acknowledged that there was scope to better manage those areas in order to reduce expenditure. Furthermore, the success of campaigns to increase the number of fostering and adoption placements had impacted on the budgets in those areas.

Councillor Turner remarked on the importance of frontline staff being engaged in the SAFE Programme and the costs associated with its implementation over the next 18 months.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the projected outturn position for 2015/16 of the Council's General Fund revenue budget at 31 August 2015, as detailed in paragraphs 2.1, 2.4 to 2.10 and Appendix A of the report;
- (ii) Note the progress against the agreed 2015/16 savings at 31 August 2015, as detailed in paragraph 2.11 and Appendix B of the report;
- (iii) Note the overall position for the HRA at 31 August 2015, as detailed in paragraph 2.12 and Appendix C of the report;
- (iv) Note the projected outturn position for 2015/16 of the Council's capital budget at 31 August 2015, as detailed in paragraph 2.13 and Appendix D of

the report;

- (v) Adopt the Children's Services Outline Business Case, as set out at Appendix E to the report, in order to address the current pressures in the service; and
- (vi) Approve expenditure of £1m over the next 18 months for programme costs to support the delivery of the Children's Services Outline Business Case, as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the report.

#### **54. Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015 - 2018**

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, Councillor Worby, presented the joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2015 - 2018, which also incorporated an Outcomes Framework and Delivery Plan.

Councillor Worby explained that the Strategy was an overarching document which linked to a number of the Council's and its partners' strategies, including the Joint Better Care Fund work programme, the Children and Young People's Plan and the Community Strategy 2013 - 2016. The Strategy was developed based on evidence from the Borough's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and had the following high-level objectives:

- Increase the life expectancy of people living in Barking and Dagenham;
- Close the gap between the life expectancy in Barking and Dagenham with the London average; and
- Improve health and social care outcomes through integrated services.

The key life stages were broken down within the Strategy to ensure that the needs of the different groups were individually assessed and appropriate actions identified. Four strategic themes were established which focussed on:

- **Prevention:** Supporting local people to make lifestyle choices at an individual level to positively improve the quality and length of their life and overall increase the health of the population.
- **Protection:** Protecting local people from threats to their health and wellbeing.
- **Improvement and Integration of Services:** Improving treatment and care by benchmarking against best practice and known failure in care, as well as exploring new and different ways of providing accessible health and social care, with particular emphasis on older people and disabled children.
- **Personalisation:** Ensuring that patients, service users and carers have control and choice over the shape of their care and support in all care settings.

Cabinet Members spoke in support of the Strategy and raised the following points:

- a) **Co-location of Health Visitors within GP Practices and Children's Centres by 2018** – Councillor Worby advised that responsibility for Health Visitors had transferred to the Council on 1 October 2015 which she hoped would enable co-location to be implemented prior to 2018.

- b) **Decrease in the Under-18 Conception Rate by 50% (against 1998 baseline) by 2018** – Councillor Worby suggested that the target was challenging and would require a strong focus, particularly in view of some specific demographic issues relevant to Barking and Dagenham. In that respect, Councillor Worby undertook to provide her Cabinet colleagues with a briefing document that she had received which illustrated, amongst other issues, the clustering of teenage conception and marriage between the ages of 16 to 19 years within the Borough.
- c) **Improved Health Outcomes for Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Youth Offenders by 2018** – Councillor Worby acknowledged that some targets were not being achieved, including for those in the Council's care, and a concerted effort was required to ensure that those groups were not disadvantaged.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Endorse the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and its Delivery Plan, as set out at Appendices 1 and 2 respectively to the report; and
- (ii) Note that an annual report on progress would be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

## **55. Payment By Instalments**

Councillor Worby introduced the Cabinet Member for Finance's report on the proposed introduction of a Payment By Instalments policy, aimed at helping local residents to spread the cost of a number of high-value Council services.

Councillor Worby commented that a number of Councillors had raised concerns at the difficulties that some local residents faced when receiving large pre-payment invoices from the Council. While some structured payment arrangements were already available on request, it was felt that any additional support that could be offered by the Council would be very much welcomed at a time when the Government's austerity measures were having such an impact on the local community.

Therefore, a review of the types of services suitable for inclusion in an instalments scheme was undertaken, alongside an assessment of the additional costs that would need to be added to make such a scheme cost-neutral to the Council. Councillor Worby advised that five services had been identified for inclusion in the scheme, which would be available only to Borough residents and where the payment exceeded £500.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree to the introduction of a Payment By Instalments policy on the terms set out in the report;
- (ii) Agree that the following services shall qualify under the policy:

- Dropped kerbs;
  - Funerals;
  - Hire of halls;
  - Hire of pitches;
  - Registrars.
- (iii) Agree that the policy shall only apply to residents of Barking and Dagenham;
- (iv) Agree the financial arrangements that shall be applied under the policy, as detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report;
- (v) Note the financial implications arising from the introduction of the policy;
- (vi) Note that the appropriate amendments shall be made to the Council's Financial Regulations and Rules (Part 4, Chapter 2 of the Council Constitution) to reflect the new arrangements, and reported to the Assembly for information; and
- (vii) Agree to review the policy after one year of its introduction to assess the impact on the Council's income, bad debt provision and the cost effectiveness of the policy.

## **56. Domestic Vehicle Footway Crossover (Dropped Kerb) Policy**

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor L Rice, presented details of a proposed policy for dealing with dropped kerb applications and enforcement.

Councillor Rice explained that while many residents had followed the proper processes to allow them to cross the public footpath to access off-road parking, illegal off-road parking remained a considerable problem and it was noted that the most recent 'sweep' by Enforcement Officers indicated that there were over 2,000 cases in the Borough.

Councillor Rice referred to the previous item on the agenda whereby the cost of dropped kerbs had been included in the Payment By Instalments scheme as a means of helping residents to comply. A further help to some residents was a plan to extend the Disabled Adaptations Scheme to include the installation of dropped kerbs in the qualifying criteria. Alongside those measures were a range of proactive enforcement initiatives aimed at supporting the Council's priority of "Enabling social responsibility" by dealing with those who refused to comply. Four extra officers had been assigned to the project and costs incurred by the Council in pursuing enforcement action would be passed on to the householder via the application fee.

Cabinet Members expressed their support for the policy and issues were raised relating to pavement parking in general and the means for residents to report illegal parking. Councillor Rice explained that the overriding intention was to ensure that vehicles were parked safely and legitimately and to reduce congestion on the roads and the pavements. With regard to the reporting of illegal parking, the Divisional Director of Environment referred to the "Report It" page on the Council's website and the smartphone app.

Cabinet **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the Domestic Vehicle Footway Crossover (Dropped Kerb) Policy, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report;
- (ii) Agree the approach to enforcement, as set out in section 5 of the report;  
and
- (iii) Agree to the amendment of the Adaptations Grant Scheme to include dropped kerb schemes in the qualifying criteria, as set out in paragraph 9.5 of the report.