

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 October 2015 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-in is Friday 23 October 2015 at 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors John Kent (Chair), Barbara Rice (Vice-Chair), Oliver Gerrish, Victoria Holloway (from 7.05pm), Bukky Okunade, Jane Potheary, Richard Speight and Lynn Worrall

Apologies: Councillor Gerard Rice

In attendance: Councillor James Halden
Councillor Roy Jones
Councillor Brian Little
Councillor Graham Snell
Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
David Bull, Director of Planning and Transportation
Steve Cox, Assistant Chief Executive
Carmel Littleton, Director of Children's Services
Roger Harris, Director of Adults, Health and Commissioning
Kathryn Adedeji, Head of Housing - Investment and Development
Sean Clark, Head of Corporate Finance
Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration
Richard Parkin, Head of Housing - Community & Needs
Daniel Toohey, Principal Solicitor - Contracts & Procurement
Stephanie Cox, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

47. Minutes

The Minutes of Cabinet, held on 9 September 2015, were approved as a correct record.

48. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

49. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Okunade declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Agenda Item 15, Thameside Complex Review, as she was a board member of TRUST which occupied offices within the Thameside Complex.

50. Statements by the Leader

The Leader welcomed Lyn Carpenter to her first meeting of Cabinet, as the new Chief Executive, and thanked David Bull for his work as interim Chief Executive.

The Leader welcomed the residents in the public gallery to the meeting and briefly highlighted those who were present in the Council Chamber, which included the Cabinet Members as decision makers, officers who advised on the decision making process, opposition members and the media.

The Leader further explained that there was usually no provision for the public to speak at meetings of Cabinet, however in this instance he had waived the rules and exercised his Chair's discretion in order to permit three residents to make statements in relation to Item 10, Housing Estate Regeneration Update. He asked all those present to be courteous and not to speak over others when speaking.

At 7.05 pm Councillor Holloway arrived at the meeting.

51. Update Report: Corporate Performance Summary (Up To End of July 2015)

Councillor Holloway, Cabinet Member for Central Services, introduced the report which summarised performance against the Corporate Scorecard 2015-16, a basket of key performance indicators (KPI's), as at Month 4 (end of July 2015). Members were informed that at the end of Month 4, 77% of these indicators were either meeting or within an acceptable tolerance of their target, and that this figure was lower than usual at this stage of the year.

Councillor B. Rice reported that the target for self-directed support was now 'Green' and meeting target, which was primarily a result of two factors, that included carers were now excluded in the data as carers were to be reported separately from service users and that the implementation of the Care Act 2014 had impacted upon performance in the first quarter.

Councillor Speight highlighted that contaminated recycling resulted in loads being rejected and disposed of as residual waste, which significantly increased disposal costs, and felt this was important cross-contamination was monitored.

52. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

There were no petitions submitted.

53. Questions from Non-Executive Members

The Leader of the Council advised that one question had been submitted and that the question would be taken with the corresponding agenda item in the usual manner.

54. Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Leader of the Council informed Members that one item had been referred by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which was included later on the agenda at Item 15, Thameside Complex Review.

55. Housing Estate Regeneration Update (Decision: 01104415)

Councillor Worrall, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report which provided an update on the results of the recent consultation regarding high rises in Grays and the progress that was being made on the Council's other key housing estates.

Councillor Worrall thanked all residents who took part in the consultation and explained that the information gathered had been valuable. She further apologised to residents, as she felt that they had been caught in a political point scoring exercise and emphasised that Councillors should remain balanced and listen to the views of residents.

Councillor Worrall reported that she wished to make an amendment to recommendation 1.1 printed in the report in order to delete the words 'at this stage' so that the recommendation would read as follows:

"Cabinet not to award decant status to three Grays high rises – Butler, Davall and Greenwood House, but instead to note that continued consultation should take place with residents to include detailed design on alternative home provision to ensure residents are given a clear unambiguous set of choices."

Councillor Worrall explained that the amendment was important, as the Council was not planning to award decant status to residents of the Grays high rises but would continue to consult with residents as there were some who wanted to leave and others who wanted to stay.

Councillor Worrall explained that recommendation 1.3 was for Cabinet to note that the Council's new build development on Seabrooke Rise would be allocated in accordance to the Council's existing Lettings Policy and existing residents of the Seabrooke Rise high rise towers would not benefit from enhanced priority status at the current time, however added that she wanted to do what she could to assist those residents who wanted to leave by creating a local lettings plan.

In light of this the Cabinet Member informed all those present that officers would consult with residents regarding the local lettings plan and a report would be referred to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration, subsequent to which it would be referred to Cabinet for approval.

Councillor Worrall further reported that the government's recent announcement to impose a 1% reduction on rents over the next four years had a significant impact on the Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan and consequently officers were evaluating how this would affect the regeneration programme.

The Cabinet Member briefly summarised the investment on the Flowers Estate in South Ockendon and the Garrison Estate in Purfleet and emphasised that it was important to speak with local ward Councillors and engage with local residents on plans going forward.

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, invited the three residents to make their statements in the following order:

- Miss Harries, Lead Petitioner of Petition 467 'to save our homes being pulled down: Butler; Davall and Greenwood' explained that the number of people who signed the petition were not used in the overall percentage calculation, rather it was the number of flats on the petition. Miss Harries reported that the percentage of residents who wanted to stay was 64% in Butler, 72% in Davall and 54% in Greenwood which equated to a total average of 63.9% in favour of staying. She added that the flats were resident's homes, some tenants of which had lived there for up to 30-40 years, and that it was a living community as many residents socialised with each other and made good friendships with others throughout the flats, not just with those who lived on the same floor. The resident explained that to break up the community would devastate a large number of people and the impact on the elderly and disabled would be particularly catastrophic both socially and emotionally. Members were informed that residents of the high rise flats provided a great deal services and care for neighbours, such as cooking, pet care and social visits that prevented social isolation without any expectation of payback that was greater than any Council could expect to afford. Miss Harries further commented on the fact that there were so few Council homes on offer in Grays and questioned where the 174 families could be rehoused in addition to those on the housing waiting list and others who needed support and assistance such as those seeking asylum. She felt that the Council needed to increase its Council housing stock, not reduce it, and it did not make sense to pull down homes that had 40-50 years of life in them, and whilst recognising the blocks required updating this had been set out in the Council's five-year transforming homes programme. In summarising Miss Harries asked that if a final decision went in favour, whether the Council could provide long-term tenancy agreements for residents so that they could not be threatened with a similar proposal in the near or not too distant future.
- Miss Low, Lead Petitioner of Petition 470 in favour of demolishing Butler, Davall and Greenwood High Rise blocks in Grays, explained

that since the beginning of the process the hopes of residents wishing to move had been raised by the possibility of them being able to apply for new properties on The Echoes. She added that discussions had been ongoing for the best part of a year and felt that the Council was prolonging the process. Miss Low reported that she respected the desire of some residents who wanted to stay in the flats but felt that they were not suitable properties to raise young children in as the flats were cold, some windows did not close and during summer months parents were afraid to open other windows for fear of their children's safety. The resident felt that if the flats stayed residents should be given the choice to move and described that some residents had found the earlier petition misleading and believed they were signing the petition to register their participation in a debate. She advised that her petition only surveyed Butler, Davall and Greenwood Houses as it had been made clear if these three blocks were demolished residents of Lionel Oxley, Arthur Toft and George Crooks would be eligible to move out but would not receive payment. In summary Miss Low observed that many residents felt that this debate had gone on long enough and called upon the Council to make a decision as soon as possible and hoped that Councillors would make the right decision for the future regeneration of Grays.

- Mr Calder, representative of the Seabrooke Rise Steering Group, explained that the group understood that demolition was not the Thurrock default option when estates were not in need of a great deal of repair, as the group considered was the case with the high rise blocks in question. He recognised that the Council needed to be socially hearted but financially minded given the present dictates by Central Government and that estate properties were being brought up to the Decent Homes standard despite the high costs involved. Mr Calder explained that the flats were peoples' homes and many had been living there for a long time. It was reported that the Steering Groups focus had been brought back to what the community wanted but felt had been lacking, which was full proper participation within any consultations or process that concerned their homes and any regeneration that may affect their lives and neighbourhood. Mr Calder felt that many older long-term residents were against demolition and the upheaval of moving whilst many younger families with children wanted to move, but the consultation process so far had brought worry and anxiety to older people and had raised the hopes and expectations of those who wished to move. Members were informed that the Steering Group wanted to work towards a regeneration plan that included all of the Seabrooke Community with the aspirations of the young and the old being voiced by working in partnership, which supported the Council's mission statement. He thanked Cabinet for the opportunity to speak but observed that he could not convey the views of all residents and felt that they deserved a better hearing.

Councillor Worrall remarked that it was a sad situation that this matter had become politicised and felt that Elected Members had a responsibility to hear all views fairly and not take one side against the other. She hoped that the amended recommendation's would go some way to helping both sides of the debate and advised that the Local Lettings Plan would need to be explored by both Housing Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet again so that it could consider the detail of how residents of the three high rise blocks could benefit from enhanced priority status on the new Echoes estate.

Councillor Worrall assured all residents that she was listening to their concerns but felt that it was unfair to say that there was a split with only the young wanting to move and only the elderly wanting to stay.

The Chamber were advised that the flats over the next 10 years would require over £10 million of investment in order to bring them up to the decent homes standard and that only £4 million was available through the Transforming Homes programme.

Councillor Kent asked the Cabinet Member for clarification regarding the fact that some people felt the opportunity to benefit from enhanced priority status for The Echoes estate had been taken away. In response the Cabinet Member explained that the re-examination of the Local Lettings Plan, which was suggested in the amended recommendation 1.3, would enable residents who wanted to move out of the flats to receive priority for The Echoes, Tops Club and Kings Walk sites.

Councillor Potheary observed that this process had been difficult for all involved and thanked the residents who wanted their voices heard. She felt that the reported Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) should be addressed through consultation with the Housing team.

Councillor Gerrish remarked that the information which had been presented had divided the community and that opposition Councillors had exacerbated fears. He felt that corporately the Council had put residents in a difficult position and that lessons needed to be learnt from this in future on other estates, such as the Garrison Estate in Purfleet.

Councillor J. Kent recognised this had been a difficult decision to reach and that at his surgeries residents had explained that they felt trapped in the tower blocks, which was also a problem in Chadwell St Mary, Tilbury and Blackshots. He stated that he was heartened by the proposal to re-examine the Local Lettings Plan to enable Seabrooke Rise residents to receive enhanced priority status. In the interim he felt that the housing team needed to explore whether a concierge system was needed in order to address Anti-Social problems and if improvements could be made to cladding, windows and the heating exchange.

Councillor J. Kent further reported that the community was not divided, although there were divided opinions, and in response to the suggestion to create long-term tenancies, assured residents that through the amendment to

recommendation 1.1 and the removal of 'at this stage' the Council did not have any intention to revisit the decision not to award decant status anytime soon.

In summing up, Councillor Worrall assured all those present that the Local Lettings Plan would be consulted upon with tenants, the residents Steering Group and cross-party through the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee before referral back to Cabinet for a final decision.

Councillor Worrall summarised the recommendations that Cabinet would be approving, subsequent to which Councillor J. Kent proposed an amendment to recommendation 1.3 to confirm that the Council would explore a local lettings plan as a matter of urgency. The new recommendation read as follows:

“Cabinet to note that the Council’s new build development on Seabrooke Rise will be allocated in accordance to the Council’s existing Lettings Policy and existing residents of the Seabrooke Rise high rise towers will not benefit from enhanced priority status at the current time, therefore Council explores a local lettings plan as a matter of urgency.”

Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations, including the proposed amendments, whereupon the Chair declared these to be carried.

RESOLVED:

- 1. Cabinet not to award decant status to three Grays high rises – Butler, Davall and Greenwood House, but instead to note that continued consultation should take place with residents to include detailed design on alternative home provision to ensure residents are given a clear unambiguous set of choices.**
- 2. Cabinet to agree that officers consider feedback from this consultation as part of the development of the emerging master plan for Grays Town Centre.**
- 3. Cabinet to note that the Council’s new build development on Seabrooke Rise will be allocated in accordance to the Council’s existing Lettings Policy and existing residents of the Seabrooke Rise high rise towers will not benefit from enhanced priority status at the current time, therefore Council explores a local lettings plan as a matter of urgency.**
- 4. Cabinet to note that the Council is currently reviewing the proposed Housing Development Plan and Estate Regeneration Programme in the light of the Government’s imposed reductions in rent. The Council are assessing the implications and options available to ensure that the financial parameters of the HRA are met, whilst retaining an affordable and deliverable programme of housing investment and new build development.**

Reason for Decision - as stated in the report
This decision is subject to call-in

The Leader the Council asked the Cabinet Member to clarify the decision made, to which it was re-iterated that decant status would not be awarded to the three Grays high rises – Butler, Davall and Greenwood House – but instead a continued consultation would take place, and that although existing residents of the Seabrooke Rise high rise towers would not benefit from enhanced priority status at the current time, the Council would explore a local lettings plan as a matter of urgency.

At 7.42 pm there was a 3 minute break to allow members of the public gallery to leave the Council Chamber if they wished to do so.

56. Shaping the Council and Budget Update (Decision: 01104416)

Councillor J. Kent, the Leader of the Council, introduced the report which set out the pressures in 2015/16 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) with a need to meet an estimated budget gap of over £28 million for the four years between 2016/17 and 2019/20. Members were advised that the latest MTFS included the impact of the cessation of the Serco contract which would allow for greater flexibility in future and that it was hoped that staff could join the authority a month early.

In introducing the report the Leader highlighted to Members attention a graph which documented the decline of the revenue support grant received by Thurrock Council from Central Government from 2010/11 to the present day and an estimated projection to 2019/20. The graph documented a cut of £36 million.

The Leader further expressed concerns following the latest Chancellors speech at the Conservative Party Conference, where it was announced that local authorities could retain business rates locally, which he felt was misleading as in reality much of the business rates collected would still be retained and distributed among other Boroughs and Districts.

Councillor B. Rice explained that that cuts in the revenue support grant from Central Government had a considerable negative impact on her service area, where the total gross spend on older persons had reduced by one third per person from 2009. She further reported that the service faced significant challenges in light of the fact that the government had imposed a £600,000 in-year grant funding cut on Thurrock, which would need to be recouped across the next 6 months.

Councillor Holloway observed that it was helpful to have such information presented each month, especially when residents saw essential services in difficulty, such as waste collection and grass cutting.

Councillor J. Kent highlighted the impact of the government cuts on Essex Police, which would see 32 of the current 38 Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) cut.

Councillor Gerrish observed that in future year's services that residents regard as essential will not be able to be delivered and difficult choices would need to be made.

Councillor Okunade reported that budget cuts in Children's Social Care were unavoidable but the Council were committed to delivering a safe service.

There was a brief debate on the negative impact the recent announcement by Central Government to impose a 1% reduction on rents over the next four years would have in Thurrock, which equated to £4.5 million per year.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet note the current financial position and that a future Shaping the Council and Budget Update report will set out any financial impact of pressures within the Children's and Housing Services budget, as set out in the report; and**
- 2. That Cabinet note the latest update on the Serco transition.**

Reason for Decision - as stated in the report
This decision is subject to call-in

57. Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2010-15 (Decision: 01104417)

Councillor Worrall, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report which set out the Council's statutory duty to have a Homelessness Strategy which detailed the local authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are, or will be, available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

Councillor J. Kent questioned what the imposed 1% reduction on rents over the next four years would have on the duty, to which the Cabinet Member explained the results of the housing needs survey highlighted that more one and two bedroom homes were needed in Thurrock and that private landlords were not always accepting of people on universal credit.

Councillor Speight welcomed the strategy, which he felt was thorough and well thought through, but was concerned at the evidence that private landlords did not accept people in receipt of universal credit payments.

Councillor B. Rice explained that this was currently being reviewed as part of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Councillor Gerrish was concerned with the stark trend of the number of households who had approached the Council for homelessness advice and

assistance in Thurrock over the past three years, which was up from over 1,000 in 2012/13 to nearly 1,600 in 2013/14 and 2,700 in 2014/15.

RESOLVED:

1. **That Cabinet notes the review of homelessness in the borough - Appendix 1.**
2. **That Cabinet approves the Homelessness Prevention Strategy 2015 to 2020 - Appendix 2.**
3. **That Cabinet approves plans for an annual review of the Homelessness Prevention Strategy – to be presented at the September Housing Overview & Scrutiny committee meeting.**

Reason for Decision - as stated in the report
This decision is subject to call-in

58. Right to Move (Decision: 01104418)

Councillor Worrall, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report which explained that on 20 April 2015 new statutory rules called the “Right to Move” came into force, which meant that Thurrock Council could not disqualify someone from joining their housing register on the grounds of no local connection where they meet certain criteria, which included:

- The person is already a social housing tenant (Council or Registered Provider tenant) in another borough in England, and;
- They have a need to move to Thurrock to avoid hardship, and;
- They need to move to Thurrock because they either already work in Thurrock, or;
- They need to take up an offer of work in Thurrock.

Members were informed that the Council could restrict the number of properties allocated under the new rules to an agreed annual quota, which was at least 1% of relets, and in June 2015 the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommended that Cabinet agree the annual quota be set at 1% of the preceding years housing allocations which would represent 6 properties per year.

Councillor B. Rice questioned whether the 1% quota would mean that some properties are left empty, to which it was confirmed this would not be the case and applications would be dealt with as they were received.

Councillor Worrall confirmed that to date no applications had been received under the Right to Move scheme.

RESOLVED:

1. **That the new “Right to Move” regulations be noted.**

2. **Cabinet approve the annual quota of properties to be allocated under the new provisions be set at 1% of all Council housing allocations for the preceding year (1st April to 31st March) with the provision that officers endeavour to seek mutual exchanges, where possible, to mitigate the impact on levels of Thurrock Council housing stock.**

Reason for Decision - as stated in the report
This decision is subject to call-in

59. Denominational Transport - Service Review (Decision: 01104419)

Councillor J. Kent, Cabinet Member for Finance and Education, introduced the report which proposed to go out to further consultation on the future of the service including possible de-commissioning.

RESOLVED:

Cabinet approve a review of denominational transport with the option of discontinuing the service after July 2016.

Reason for Decision - as stated in the report
This decision is subject to call-in

60. Devolution, Combined Authority and South East Local Enterprise Partnership Update (Decision: 01104421)

Councillor J. Kent, Leader of the Council, introduced the report which set out the progress being made in discussions involving the Council on devolution and combined authorities and the latest position with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

In introducing the report he questioned whether Thurrock's best interests were being served under the current arrangements or whether it would be more beneficial to form a partnership with South Essex authorities instead. Concerns were also raised in the fact that there was no vice-chair position for the federated area of South Essex.

Councillor B. Rice questioned the benefits to Thurrock under the current arrangements, to which it was explained the mechanism of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership divided up Business Rates and could negotiate a greater say on matters such as skills and training and job centre plus.

Members debated whether Thurrock would be best served by the current arrangement or if a new partnership should be formed with Southend Borough Council or both Southend and Basildon Council's.

During the debate Members felt that a separation with Essex County Council would best serve Thurrock's interests and that a partnership with Southend

and Basildon would be more appropriate given the natural similarities between the Boroughs, as Thurrock had little in common with some North Essex authorities.

In light of the debate Councillor J. Kent proposed an amendment to recommendation 1.1, which read as follows:

“That Cabinet confirms its commitment to pursuing a devolution deal with Government and to continue to work with partners across South Essex and Greater Essex, whilst continuing to explore whether Thurrock’s best interests can be served through a Greater South Essex Combined Authority.”

Members voted unanimously in favour of the recommendations, including the proposed amendment at 1.1, whereupon the Chair declared these to be carried.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1. Confirms its commitment to pursuing a devolution deal with Government and to continue to work with partners across South Essex and Greater Essex, whilst continuing to explore whether Thurrock’s best interests can be served through a Greater South Essex Combined Authority.**
- 2. Agrees that a devolution deal must be underpinned by a business case that demonstrates benefits for Thurrock, that could not otherwise be achieved, which have the support of local businesses and are underpinned by a governance framework that localises decision-making.**
- 3. Strongly supports the creation of a SELEP vice chair position for the federated area of South Essex.**
- 4. Notes that Thurrock Council has signed the SELEP Joint Committee Agreement.**

Reason for Decision - as stated in the report

This decision is subject to call-in

61. Thameside Complex Review (Decision: 01104420)

Councillor Snell, Chair of the Thameside Complex Review Panel, introduced the report which detailed the findings of the Thameside Complex Review Panel and the recommendations they wished Cabinet to endorse, following its consideration at Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September 2015.

In introducing the report, Councillor Snell highlighted the following key points:

- That the library was the most well-used facility in the Thameside Complex, accounting for 58% of visits mentioned in the survey, alongside 15% respondents for the Café, 13% for the museum and 10% for other services which included the registry office, baby activity groups and visiting voluntary organisations.
- That the panel had visited the Thameside Complex and noted that museum displays were dated and needed refreshing, and opinion was divided about the building.
- Many respondents valued the services provided within the Thameside Complex and were concerned that it would be demolished and replaced with housing, which was a fear that the panel had found to be unfounded.
- That the majority of respondents agreed that the Thameside Complex was in the right location, as it was easily accessible.
- That the registry office was not competitive with other more picturesque locations elsewhere, and that it had been suggested Coalhouse Fort would be a good wedding venue, which was frequently requested by residents.
- That Charcoal Blue had highlighted a number of issues with the current theatre provision, which include cramped seating, inadequate stage winds, limitations for stage backdrops, minimal prop storage and changing rooms on a different floor.

Councillor J. Kent questioned whether residents liked the location of the current Thameside Complex on the corner of Orsett Road or whether they simply wanted the facilities in Grays.

In response Councillor Snell felt that overall people wanted the provision offered to remain in Grays, which was not necessarily at the exact current site.

Councillor Speight felt that it was important provision remained in Grays due to its good transport links and that it was important to have a cultural vision to complement the backstage skills which were being developed in Purfleet.

Members commended the work of Councillor Snell and the Thameside Complex Review Panel, and recognised that this was a large piece of work that was of much local interest to residents.

A brief discussion took place on whether The State Cinema could viably be developed into a theatre, to which Councillor Snell explained that this had been ruled out as a viable option due to limitations with the building itself.

Councillor Potheary highlighted that there was a sense of mistrust about the Thameside Complex and that the process needed to be managed carefully going forward.

Members were in agreement that this was an important project that was vital the Council did not get wrong, and as a result a clear vision and cross-party support was essential in order to show unity.

Councillor J. Kent observed that the report had made clear the Thameside Complex building itself was not fit for purpose and that left the Council with limited options. Whilst further options were identified he felt that it was important the theatre continued to do what they could to increase revenue.

Councillor J. Kent further reported that the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee had expressed the need for clarity regarding funding and costs of possible alternatives going forward, and as a result instructed officers to undertake a more detailed evaluation on the Thameside Complex which could be referred back to Members at a later date.

Councillor Snell felt that this was a good opportunity to create something Thurrock could be proud of.

RESOLVED:

- 1. Cabinet accept the conclusions set out on page 22 of the report (attached as Appendix 1) as a set of guiding principles when exploring future cultural provision at the Thameside Complex.**
- 2. A site that represents the Arts should remain in Grays.**
- 3. The Council should endeavour to improve and modernise the library, museum and registry service whether this be in the Complex or in another location.**
- 4. Any theatre needs to cater for the community but also a variety of professional acts and productions. It should represent the aspirations of a competitive regional theatre.**

Reason for Decision - as stated in the report
This decision is subject to call-in

62. Purfleet Centre - Award of Contract (Decision: 01104422)

Councillor J. Kent reminded Members that the report was part-exempt and asked Members not to stray into discussing the exempt information as the press and public would need to be excluded.

Councillor Speight, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, introduced the report which set out the detail of the regeneration of Purfleet, the largest regeneration programme the Council was directly responsible for delivering, which included 2,300 new homes and a state-of-the-art film, television and media studio complex around a new town centre featuring a primary school, health centre and local shops, leisure and community facilities.

The Leader invited Councillor B. Little to read the question that he had submitted and the following response was received:

- Councillor B. Little asked the Portfolio Holder how many new, permanent jobs would be created by this project and how much local sourcing was planned.

In response the Cabinet Members explained that job creation and local Supply Chains were two areas specifically considered in the Competitive Dialogue process which saw the Council selecting PCRL as its development partner.

Regarding the number of jobs created, the Cabinet Member explained that whilst a definitive answer could not be given at this point, it was anticipated that the film, television and media studios would provide the largest single number of jobs – estimated at around 1,000 permanent posts. It was expected that this number would be significantly increased as individual films and television programmes come forward. Outside of the film and television studios, several hundred new jobs would be created through the services and facilities also being constructed as part of the project including the new school, health centre, shops and cafes/restaurants in addition to more than 1,300 construction jobs created over the lifetime of the project.

The Cabinet Member further reported that on local sourcing/supply chains, PCRL had committed to working with the Council and maximising the opportunities for local firms and have their own experience of running ‘meet the buyer’ events to build supply chains.

As a supplemental question, Councillor B. Little asked the Portfolio Holder to clarify whether checks and balances would be in place to lock in local sourcing targets and jobs into contracts with appropriate review periods to ensure that the Council got what was agreed in the contract upon delivery.

The Cabinet Member explained that the Council constantly pushed for more than what was offered and through genuine partnership and co-working believed that targets would be locked in and substantively delivered throughout the lifetime of the project.

Councillor Gerrish welcomed the report and remarked that Thurrock should be proud to achieve a nationally significant cultural hub and its plans for a properly planned community to an area.

Councillor Holloway echoed the sentiments regarding the exciting project and commended the work of the late Councillor Andy Smith, who held the Portfolio previously and had laid the initial groundwork for the Purfleet Centre scheme.

Councillor B. Rice questioned whether the much needed school and health infrastructure would be prioritised first, to which the Cabinet Member assured those present that infrastructure was a key priority and was expected by residents. He emphasised that it was important to get this development right and was strongly committed to consultation and community participation.

Councillor J. Kent informed Members that a panel, which had included opposition members and PCRL representation, had already met to examine bidders for the new Primary School, and that the construction of educational facilities was a priority and too often was overlooked in the first phases of construction in the past.

Members commended the work of Matthew Essex, Head of Regeneration, for all this hard work in getting the project to this point.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet notes the progress made since the selection of PCRL as the Council's development partner for the Purfleet Centre scheme;**
- 2. That Cabinet approves the commercial terms outlined in Appendix 2 as the basis for the contractual agreements between the Council, PCRL and L&Q and authorises the completion of those agreements; and**
- 3. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, to conclude any remaining discussions necessary to complete those agreements on the Council's behalf provided that they are on substantially the same terms as those contained within this report.**

Reason for Decision - as stated in the report
This decision is subject to call-in

The meeting finished at 9.06 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**