

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 13 December 2017 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Thursday 28 December 2017 at 5.00pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), Shane Hebb (Deputy Chair), Mark Coxshall, James Halden, Deborah Huelin, Brian Little, Susan Little and Aaron Watkins

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Sharon Bayliss, Director of Commercial Services
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
Steve Cox, Corporate Director Place
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service
David Lawson, Assistant Director of Law & Governance
Kenna-Victoria Martin, 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.

58. Minutes

The Minutes of Cabinet, held on 8 November 2017, were approved as a correct record.

59. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

60. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

61. Statements by the Leader

The Leader welcomed Members and those present to the final Cabinet of the year, in doing so he wished everybody a Merry Christmas and a happy new year.

Councillor Gledhill continued on the topic of Christmas and thanked those who had helped to arrange the Christmas lights switch on events across the borough. He commented he was particularly pleased the CEDF fund was able to assist the Corringham area with their lights this year.

He further commented on the fantastic project of Give a Gift the Council were running in partnership with intu Lakeside. He notified Members he had been told that thousands of hours had been donated by officers, residents, councillors and foster carers to make sure the shop was well-staffed.

The Leader continued to mention the Council had received new enquiries about becoming foster carers, raised thousands of pounds towards the local charity GiFT and received thousands of presents for local children who would otherwise not receive anything. He offered a big thank to all those volunteering, donating and fundraising for our local residents.

Members were then updated on the Clean it, Cut it, Fill it scheme. In doing so Councillor Gledhill highlighted:

- Since April 1288 potholes had been filled;
- 1174 tonnes of rubbish had been collected to date;
- 9,300 acres of Grass had been cut. This had now ceased for the Winter period, however other maintenance would be completed;
- 61,359 bags of litter had been collected; and
- 34,060 bins had been emptied.

In addition, the Leader advised free parking had returned to King Street car park in Stanford Le Hope and thanked Councillors Hebb and B. Little for all of their hard work. He commented that a review would be undertaken in the New Year.

Members heard that the first week in December marked an historic moment for Purfleet, and the Borough, as site investigation works began on the regeneration site. The Leader explained during the first phase the following work would be undertaken:

- A bridge over the railway line to replace the level crossing;
- New road connections;
- Additional school places;
- An integrated medical centre and;
- Improvements to the riverfront walkway.

Finally Councillor Gledhill reminded Members last week was the annual staff awards ceremony. The night was a chance for the Council us to say thank you and recognise the officers who go above and beyond in their service to the borough. He offered his thanks and appreciation to all finalists and winners.

62. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

Councillor Hebb addressed Cabinet Members with 3 updates relating to policy and budget.

He started by advising Members that the Council was a record holding authority for the amount of council tax collected each year compared to other Essex Councils, with almost 99% collected. The Portfolio Holder for Finance continued to explain that the debt team was recently independently assessed by the IRRV and was found to be innovative and fair in its approach.

Members heard the Cabinet Member for finance had recently attended a night shift with debt collecting colleagues and had been impressed with their professionalism and approach to collections. It was following this that he was therefore announcing that a Fair Debt Summit would be held in early 2018, with officers of the Debt team, a representative from each political group, and other bodies such as the CAB, being invited to attend.

Councillor Hebb stated the summit would look to do everything the Council could to introduce an even more compassionate service; one to which residents could look to for help. He further mentioned that the summit would also be looking at the furthest reaching measures to make sure that the small segment of people who could afford to pay but refused also paid their dues.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance informed Members he had met with the S151 Officer, the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council, earlier in the year to discuss the topic of self-sufficiency. He mentioned Public bodies across the country had had to take charge of their own duties to help reduce the national deficit caused by excessive public spending.

He continued by remarking the Council Spending Review had led on a service review programme, fundamentally reviewing services over a three year period. The Council Spending Review, and most recently Cabinet and Council, had approved the Administration's investment approach.

Following this, Councillor Hebb announced the investment approach was on target, not only to balance the budget for 2018/19, but also for 2019/20. .

Lastly the Portfolio Holder for Finance commented on the rainy day fund, stating that when the Conservatives assumed administration, council reserves had sat at £8million for a number of years, and he had made a pledge to increase such reserves.

Members heard that Councillor Hebb had hoped to increase council reserves by £2million, to £10million, in the next few years. He took pleasure in confirming that by March 2018 the council would be increasing its reserves by almost 38%. This meant council reserves would be increased from £8million to £11million.

Councillor S. Little welcomed the update from the Portfolio Holder for Finance, remarking it was brilliant to hear and noting that the Council's reserves were on the up.

Councillor Coxshall commended Councillor Hebb on his update, as the budgets were not only balanced but the Council also had funds to spend on services which required it.

The Leader of the Council observed there could be lots of factors as to why people were unable to their Council Tax, however to simply not pay was unacceptable.

63. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

The Leader of the Council advised that no questions had been submitted from Non-Executive Members.

64. Questions from Non-Executive Members

The Leader of the Council advised that no questions had been submitted from Non-Executive Members.

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

The Leader of the Council informed Members that no matters had been referred to the Cabinet by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

66. Quarter 2 Corporate Performance Report 2017/18

The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Central Services presented the report to Members explaining it provided a progress update in relation to the performance of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), including a focus on some specific highlights and challenges.

She continued by stating that 68% of KPI's had been achieved and this had been proven with staff winning awards in different service areas. It was further highlighted that, although eleven focus areas remained failing, there were clear action plans in place meaning the council was in a proactive position.

Councillor Huelin advised Members that results of the recent Resident Survey would be presented at a future Cabinet meeting.

Councillor Hebb commented on the results stating that 68% of KPS's in the green were outstanding. However, as stated, the remaining 32% showed there was still more that the Council could do.

Councillor Halden felt more commentary was required for focus point 7 the percentage of 17-21 year old Care Leavers in Education, Employment or Training. He continued by stating the cohort for new apprenticeships was low with only 2 young people being recruited, therefore the slightest drop in attendance would significantly affect the performance figures.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment congratulated the street cleansing team on their recent win at the staff awards. He continued by stating recycling was at the forefront of the up and coming Environment Strategy and a report was

scheduled for the December Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader of the Council stated it was important that Council housing stock was in a fit state before allowing residents to move in therefore he would rather the void target be slightly under target but have liveable properties for residents.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To note and comment upon the performance of the key corporate performance indicators in particular those areas which are IN FOCUS**
- 2. To identify any areas which require additional consideration**

67. 2017/18 Capital Monitoring Report - Quarter 2 (Decision 0110444)

Councillor Hebb, Portfolio Holder for Finance, introduced the report notifying Cabinet that £1.3 million of projects had been delivered under budget. This included savings such as £60,000 for replacing LED street lighting throughout the borough. It was mentioned that £5million had also been profiled into different schemes, such as updating the IT server rooms.

He continued to state that, although the Council was at 26% verses its 30% target, for reasons explained he was happy the Council would be on target by the end of the year.

Councillor Halden welcomed the report, mentioning that good capital monitoring was behind the improvement of delivery of services for residents such as the recent primary school allocations, where most parents received their first place preference.

The Leader of the Council highlighted the LED street lighting project was delivered under budget at a time where other Local Authorities were turning off street lights.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the General Fund capital programme is projected to have available resources of £6.467m as at 31 March 2018 with this funding carried forward to 2018/19 to fund schemes currently in progress;**
- 2. Noted that there is a further £114.868m in the approved programme that is under development and/or dependent on third party actions as set out in paragraph 3.7;**
- 3. Noted that the Housing Revenue Account capital programme is projected to have available resources of £21.040m as at 31 March 2018 with this funding carried forward to 2018/19 to fund schemes currently in progress.**

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

68. Developing a new model of residential care for older people in Thurrock, fit for the 21st Century (Decision 0110445)

The Portfolio Holder for Children's and Adult's Social Care addressed Cabinet explaining the report proposed that consideration be given to the development of a new residential care facility in South Ockendon, with accommodation and services fit for the 21st Century.

Councillor Halden welcomed the report stating these investments were encouraging to see and would support elderly residents for years to come. He continued by further commenting that the Council was working with NHS partners to support and develop the new model of residential care for Thurrock residents.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Approves the strategy outlined in this report for the development of a new residential care facility, fit for the 21st Century, on the Whiteacre / Dilkes Wood sites, in conjunction with Health partners;**
- 2. Agrees that a further report, with detailed funding and development proposals for the construction of the new facility, together with the associated procurement proposals, should be brought to Cabinet for approval in 2018.**

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

69. Treasury Management 2017/18 Mid Year Report (Decision 0110446)

Councillor Hebb presented the report to the Cabinet explaining that the key message from the report was that in the last 6 months the finance team had enabled £2.5 million to be put back into the General Fund, through good treasury management.

The Leader commended the Portfolio Holder of Finance on the report and stated it was pleasing to see the Council was able to return funds to the General Fund.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Commented on the report on Treasury Management activity as at month 6 in 2017/18.**

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

70. Aveley Community Hub Business Report and New Build (Decision 0110447)

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration reported that previously Cabinet had considered a report on the Thurrock Library Service. The report had outlined that the Council was working closely with Aveley Village Community Forum to progress plans for a new community building.

He continued to comment the £1.7 million project would include a:

- Hall, Common room and Youth Centre
- Hub Office
- Reception with self-serve library facility
- Community Café
- Nursery

Members heard how the project supported essential infrastructure in the area to complement new housing developments. In addition the new medical centre was due to open in Purfleet in 2021. It was clear from the consultation that medical services were high on the list of residents' concerns.

Councillor Halden commended the Portfolio Holder on his report and welcomed the new modern facilities for residents in the Aveley area.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the work completed to date and to support the development of a new building for the Aveley Community Hub;**
- 2. Agree to the Council procuring a building contractor for the scheme and to delegate authority for appointment to the Corporate Director of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, Highways and Transportation subject to budget provision.**

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

71. Primary Care Improvement Plan (Decision 0110448)

Councillor Halden, Portfolio Holder for Education and Health, addressed Members explaining the new strategic approach to improving the diagnosis and management of patients with long term health conditions in Primary Care that had been developed jointly with partners in the NHS.

He continued to advise Members that primary care within the borough was not just about GP numbers. He compared the easy framework offered by Ofsted for primary schools as a framework required for primary care.

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health stated the integrated medical centres across the borough not only drove improvement but also gave other options for Accident and Emergency services at Basildon hospital.

It was discussed that a scorecard system would be provided to each GP surgery, this would detail any actions required for improvement and would be undertaken by the public health team and Thurrock CCG. Once improvements were made and kept, additional funding from the Better Care Fund would be a possibility.

Councillor Gledhill thanked Councillor Halden for the report and commended the good work as set out at 3.10 of the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet approves this new strategic programme of performance improvement and support for primary care with linked demand management for hospital and adult social care services, as detailed within the paper.**

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

72. Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 2 September 2017 (Decision 0110449)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report which highlighted that the approach to budget management had been reviewed in order to focus attention on high risk areas and introduce a level of self-service for smaller, lower risk budget areas.

He continued to notify Members that the Council Spending Review Panel continued to discuss the 2017/18 budget and reshaping council services. It was stated previously that the Portfolio Holder had reported an expected overspend of £1 million, however this had now been reduced to £475,000, still taking into account significant pressures which had been recognised. Councillor Hebb highlighted work had been undertaken within the children's and environment services following the previously reported pressures within these departments.

Councillor Halden notified Members that the Dedicated Schools Grant, although currently unbalanced, was not subject to funding cuts. He further advised the deficit of grant was a big topic for discussion by the Schools Forum.

The Leader of the Council highlighted that the Housing Revenue Account was on budget, although pressures such as operational costs were still required to be well managed within the service. He further stated that £15 million was

required to be spent on housing stock over the next 30 years to ensure properties for liveable for residents.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet comment on the current budget position for 2017/18 and support further mitigation to bring the outturn within the agreed budget envelope.**

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

73. Linford Household Waste and Recycling Centre - Commercial Vehicle Access Policy and Future Site Redevelopment (Decision 0110450)

Councillor Watkins, Portfolio Holder Environment, reported that Thurrock Council operated a single Household Waste and Recycling Centre at Linford. The site was currently operating significantly over capacity and the layout and infrastructure was not in keeping with modern sites.

He notified Members that an independent survey undertaken in June suggested there was a significant degree of commercial waste abuse on-site which was jeopardising the site's environmental permit and creating significant, avoidable waste disposal costs. The Portfolio Holder further explained the introduction of Commercial Permits and advised Members a total number of permitted visits would be allowed within a 12 month period, this would allow visits the site to deposit waste 12 times per year.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance welcomed the report and the redesign of the waste and recycling centre. He continued that levelling off the site would improve the facilities for residents and congratulated the team on their customer service.

Councillor Watkins commented on the redesign principles, highlighting the increase in recycling and re-use facilities on-site would allow for greater opportunities for partnership with local re-use community groups which would then enable a greater number of items such as furniture, bicycles and electrical goods to be re-used.

Members commented that local businesses were likely to welcome the commercial vehicles permit scheme, as this showed investment in the site and better facilities offered.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To note the comments of Cleaner Greener Safer Overview Scrutiny. The reports were in two parts Redevelopment of the Site (12th October 2017) and Commercial Vehicle Access Policy (15th November 2017).**

2. **To delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Highways in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to implement a permit based system for site access for Commercial Vehicles and Vehicles towing trailers at the HWRC.**
3. **To delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Highways in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to undertake Planning Application for the redevelopment of the HWRC Linford, on its current Buckingham Hill site in line with the design principles detailed in 5.3.**
4. **That Cabinet agree to increase the budget available by £1m to enable the planned works to include changes regarding Trade Waste, based on cost savings from waste disposal and income meeting the increased cost of capital.**
5. **Subject to planning approval, Cabinet agree to delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Highways in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and the Director of Finance and IT for the procurement of contracts for the redevelopment of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre.**

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

74. Voluntary Sector Corporate Grants Programme (Decision 0110451)

Councillor S. Little presented the report to Members, in doing so she explained Thurrock's Voluntary Sector Corporate Grants Programme was an established and recognised source of funding for key, strategic voluntary sector partners supporting communities in Thurrock.

She continued by commending the different groups on the work they completed within the borough and explained the 3 year funding term was welcomed as it enabled the voluntary groups to plan ahead.

Councillor Gledhill welcomed the report and mentioned previous issues had impacted on the voluntary sector, however it pleasing to see an outcome which was agreeable by all parties.

RESOLVED:

1. **That the administration of the Voluntary Sector Corporate Grants Programme continues with Thurrock CVS from April 2018 – March 2021 with the option to extend by one year if required.**
2. **That the process reflects the criteria set out in Section 3.**
3. **To seek delegated authority for new funding agreements from 2018 – 2021 to be agreed by the Accountable Director for Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.**

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

The meeting finished at 8.33 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**