

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 12 December 2018 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Friday 21 December 2018 2018 at 5.00pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Leader), Shane Hebb (Deputy Leader), Mark Coxshall, James Halden, Deborah Huelin, Barry Johnson, Sue Little, and Aaron Watkins

Apologies: Councillor Gary Collins

In attendance: Sean Clark, Director of Finance and IT
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
David Lawson, Assistant Director of Law and Governance, and Monitoring Officer
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways
Karen Wheeler, Director of Communications, Strategy & Customer Services
Lucy Tricker, 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.

63. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 14 November 2018 were held as a correct record.

64. Items of Urgent Business

The Leader began by stating that one urgent item had been received and asked Councillor Halden to introduce the report. Councillor Halden stated that this item was regarding the Schools Funding Formula 2019-2020 and had gone through the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee before coming to Cabinet. He added that this was classed as an urgent item because it had not appeared on the Forward Plan and the outcome of the report had to go to the Secretary of State by 21 January 2019. He commented that the report addressed the problem of underfunding in local schools, and Thurrock would gain a net £1.3billion through the National Funding Formula which they could choose where to allocate. He described how the problem of underfunding was historic, with schools such as the Ockendon Academy being underfunded for decades, but now they could increase their finances by six figures. Councillor Halden then commented that the report also addressed the problem of overfunding areas such as the high needs block, as they had inherited funding which was not linked to demand. He continued by stating that with the new formula Looked After Children funding would be replaced with a Pupil Place Premium, but each child would receive an additional £400 top-up. Councillor

Halden then drew the Committee's attention to the work that had been undertaken in schools in the past 2.5 years including the new inclusion units that had been built; the new fair access panel; and the new money granted for mental health provision in schools. He clarified that four formula options had been taken to the Schools Forum, of which they had chosen Option C which used a transition period in 2019-2020, and then followed the national schools funding formula set out in Option A in 2020-2021. He then thanked Councillor Hebb for the budget surplus which would support the pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block.

Councillor Little commented that she was pleased Looked After Children would receive an extra £400, and thanked Councillor Hebb for all his work on the budget surplus which meant the Council had money to do work such as this.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Decided changes to the local funding formula to be implemented from April 2019. The Schools Forum have been consulted and the proposed changed take their comments into consideration:

The National Funding Formula , with the exception of Free School Means, to be implemented in 2019/20;

Minimum Funding Guarantee to be implemented at 1.5%, in line with the National Funding Formula guidelines. Any unallocated funds once the National Funding Formula has been implemented will be used to reduce the Minimum Funding Guarantee to the lowest possible figure to afford more protection to schools. The options presented show this as -0.57%

A revised calculation for Notional Special Educational Needs to be implemented consistent with the new funding formula.

The National Funding Formula to be implemented in full from 2020/21.

65. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

66. Statements by the Leader

The Leader began by thanking people who had contributed to the Give a Gift campaign currently running at intu Lakeside, and stated that each star on the Christmas tree represented a corporate child that was looked after by Thurrock Council. He stated that so far 2,300 presents had been received, which meant every corporate child could receive a gift from their social worker. He thanked local residents, businesses and volunteers for running the unit and donating, and mentioned that the Cabinet would also be volunteering after the meeting to help wrap the presents.

He continued by stating that Coalhouse Fort had received £7000 from a government grant to help fund projects such as the restoration of the World War Two radar tower and new information boards. He felt that the Fort was a jewel in the crown for the borough and wanted to protect the riverfront heritage for generations to enjoy.

The Leader commented that car cruising would be banned for three years in West Thurrock starting on Sunday 16 December, and this would prevent any kind of car cruising which would see a positive impact around the borough. The Leader then moved onto the Clean It, Cut It, Fill it figures and stated that since April: 2031 potholes had been filled in, 99% in target time; 890 acres of grass had been cut; 1944 tonnes of litter had been cleared; 1075 fly tips had been cleared; over 2000 fixed penalty notices had been issued; 90 community protection warnings had been issued; 35 community protection notices had been issued; and 87 £400 fines had been issued for fly-tipping. He then wished all Members and residents a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and hoped residents would get into the Christmas spirit by taking part in events around the borough such as Christmas light switch-on's, and seeing the pantomime at Thameside Theatre. He also highlighted that there was free parking in Council run car parks on Saturdays throughout December, to encourage residents to do their Christmas shopping locally.

67. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

There were no briefings on policy, budget or other issues.

68. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

No petitions had been submitted by members of the public.

69. Questions from Non-Executive Members

No questions had been received from non-Executive Members.

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

No matters had been referred to the Cabinet for consideration by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

71. Lower Thames Crossing Update

Councillor Gledhill began by thanking Councillor Smith for all his hard work on the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force and stated he could not attend Cabinet as it was his birthday. He explained that the extraordinary meeting of Full Council on 11 December 2018 had unanimously decided to take Highways England to judicial review, and the business and residents representatives had also made their cases. He stated that the draft consultation response had gone to the LTC Task Force and had been agreed by Full Council at their extraordinary meeting. He added that all Thurrock

Councillors opposed the scheme and this was supported by individual Councillors across Essex and Kent. He felt that more work needed to be done to prevent the crossing, but if this could not be achieved then it needed to meet the resident's needs in Thurrock.

Councillor Halden congratulated the Leader and Councillor Coxshall on their work on the LTC and the Local Plan, which had also been passed at the extraordinary Full Council. He mentioned that both Basildon Council and Castle Point Council had struggled to implement their Local Plan, and this problem was seen nationally. He felt it was great that there had only been one objection to the Local Plan and this was testament to 16 months of hard work. He added that he felt the conversation towards the LTC had also changed dramatically in three years as evidence against it was now being produced and they were able to quantify the damage it would cause. He added that other Council's across Essex should look to Thurrock as a model of good governance. The Leader added that the government should listen to the reasons Thurrock were presenting against the LTC being built, and was glad to see the Task Force and Cabinet were feeding into this process.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the work of the Task Force.

72. Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health School Wellbeing Service (Decision 110488)

Councillor Halden introduced the report and stated he felt a lot of hard work had gone into its creation. He described how one in ten young people suffered from a mental health issue and how many of these ended up in the adult social care system which had a significant impact on their lives and money spent on their wellbeing. He discussed that a young people's survey had been commissioned which had received over 1000 responses, and a mental health summit had also been held. He stated that the outcome from these had been that too much emphasis had been placed on crisis clinical intervention, and although this was important there were other aspects to mental health, and these could be tackled by looking at the causes of mental health issues such as bullying. Councillor Halden then discussed the need for additional resources and team members as he felt the current wait time of 12 weeks was too long, and this should be reduced to 4 weeks. He described how the new team would have 6.5 practitioners that would work to create an improved mental health system in schools. He commented that as this was non-statutory work it could only be achieved because the budget was in surplus, and described how the scheme would be paid for as detailed in the report. He finally thanked officers, Public Health and the Osborne Trust for all their help in preparing the scheme.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the strategic direction of travel for implementing a School Wellbeing Service as a preventative offer to improving Children and

Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health.

2. Approved the funding required to implement a School Wellbeing Service in Thurrock.

73. Children's Transport Re-Procurement of Service (Decision 110489)

Councillor Halden introduced the report and stated this had come to Cabinet because of the value of the contract. He then stated that funding would not be withdrawn for in-year school transport that had already been granted, but that too often the Council was relying on ad-hoc taxis under the exceptional circumstances category. He added that this report would better manage approved routes as the Council would no longer have to spot purchase taxis. He finally thanked Ensign Bus for all their work on the routes, particularly in areas such as Aveley.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the re-tender of a framework contract for Children's Transport in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules for a term of four years commencing at the start of the academic year 2019/2020.

2. Agreed the award of the contract be delegated to the Corporate Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Health.

3. Noted that a further report will be presented should any policy changes be required in due course.

74. Review of Outsourced Service Provision (Decision 110490)

Councillor Hebb began by stating this report had been commissioned by Councillor Aker following a motion at Full Council. He congratulated the hard work put into the report by Sharon Bayliss and Stef Seff as the report was very clear and clinical. He added this report built on previous work about what services were delivered by which providers, as well as the ongoing Council Spending Review. He stated that 84% of services were delivered either by the Local Authority or volunteers based in Thurrock, but even the multi-national companies that were awarded contracts had employees who lived in the borough, which served the local economy. Councillor Hebb added that the Council tried to ensure that each tender had a local bid, and the Council also ran a workshop for local businesses on how to put together a successful procurement bid. He summarised by stating this was an ongoing piece of work, that the Council would revisit when the market or demand levels changed.

Councillor Huelin added that she felt disappointed that when officers had stayed late to present this report to Members, Councillor Aker did not show. She commented that the community workshops on how to place a successful

procurement bid were well attended and also showed local businesses how to get the funding they needed. The Leader also added that each tender was different and it was important small businesses knew how to put a bid together. He stated that the Council wanted good value for residents, both in terms of money and social added value and gave the example of the children's transport contract which utilised many Thurrock businesses.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Reviewed the response to the motion raised by Councillor Aker MEP and agreed that the current and planned actions set out within the report were sufficient.

75. Quarter 2 Financial Position (Decision 110491)

Councillor Hebb began by stating that the current long-term economic plan had been in place for seven years and this had secured many services for residents. He commented that the budget would now be in surplus for the next 2.5 years, so if a child was born in May 2016 they would be in early-years before there were financial changes. He mentioned the Council Spending Review which set out the Council's self-sufficiency objectives and therefore gave elected Members a genuine choice. He then thanked officers at all levels for their hard work every year in increasing the budget surplus. Councillor Hebb then highlighted areas of the council which were experiencing financial pressures such as housing. He stated this was because of the focus on the Housing General Fund and the problem of homelessness in the borough which had to be tackled. He also drew the Cabinet's attention the ongoing pressure on Children's Social Care which was due to the number of new cases which had significant costing implications. He also mentioned Environment and Highways which experienced pressure, but stated this was a nationwide issue and not solely Thurrock's. He commented that new bin tags had now been launched which were important as it helped residents identify which waste can be recycled and therefore lowered processing costs at the recycling plants. He added that Thurrock was one of the only boroughs that still had weekly bin collections on all of its bins, and added this could only continue if the right rubbish was put in the right bins. Councillor Hebb then mentioned the pressures on public health as this was caused by the migration from the CCG to the Council.

Councillor Hebb then moved onto discussing the external income of £500,000 that the Council was bringing in, the dividends of which would start to come through soon. He drew the Committee's attention to page 109 of the agenda and table 10.7.1 which listed items that had been considered at Budget Council in February 2018, and how many of these targets had now been almost completed, such as approval of the Local Plan and initiatives to combat fly-tipping. He then discussed the table 10.7.2 in detail and the plans that were in place such as £750,000 extra for funding anti-social behaviour prevention in the borough and £100,000 extra in 2018/19 to fight the LTC.

The Leader added that he felt glad the Council did not have to make cuts, and were now having more debates on how to spend money rather than save it. He added that the new police officers would be in addition to those that were paid for through council tax, and as tackling anti-social behaviour was now a priority, these extra resources should start to see outcomes. Councillor Watkins added that new environmental protection measures such as the 'Curb It' Scheme were now in place to solve issues such as cars parking on grass verges which could ruin the verge and the road. He thanked Councillor Hebb for the budget surplus which allowed the environment team to run initiatives such as these.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the revenue forecast outturn position for 2018/2019 and that further mitigation is required to outturn within the agreed budget envelope;**
- 2. Noted the updates to the Medium Term Financial Strategy;**
- 3. Considered the additional funding bids;**
- 4. Noted the results of Treasury Management activities undertaken in the first half of 2018/2019;**
- 5. Noted the capital forecast outturn position and the overall position of the approved programme.**

76. Mid-Year/Quarter 2 Corporate Performance Report 2018/19

Councillor Huelin began by stating that 71% of services were on target, which was a record high, and the number of on-target services continues to increase. She felt that the Council were proactive in helping to meet targets such as the number of volunteers, which she had highlighted at the last Cabinet meeting and was now on-target. She added this report had gone to Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee in November and wanted to thank them for their hard work and due diligence to provide good governance. The Leader commented that under the last administration the figure of on-target services was often less than 50%, even with the amber target rating, and felt it was much better to see 71% with the new red and green only ratings.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted and commented upon the performance of the key corporate performance indicators in particular those areas which are off target.**
- 2. Identified any areas which required additional consideration.**

77. Grays South Regeneration: Civic Offices Update (Decision 110492)

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report by stating that this project had first been started under the previous administration and was part of the Grays Masterplan to make Grays the civic capital of Thurrock. He added it would provide a better area for weddings and a more private area for those that were homeless. He added that Thurrock's goal was to build 10% better than London, and although this entailed a slight cost increase, it would make the building more economical in the long run. He added that as this project had been started 3-4 years ago, it was difficult to estimate cost, but that this report had designed for issues. He felt this would be a building which could last for a minimum of 20-30 years, and would place the Council entrance on the right side of the High Street now SEC College had opened, and could give a nice view over the Church. He mentioned that this new design would also allow for 120 new homes to be built on the site of CO1 which would be vital for the regeneration of Grays. The Leader added that this would also improve customer facing services and give a better customer experience, such as improved waiting area for those that had recently been made homeless.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the scheme for an extension to CO2 as set out in the body of the report and at Appendix A;

2. Authorised officers to submit the following:

i. A full planning application for an extension to CO2 based on the emerging designs contained at Appendix A

ii. A planning application for approximately 120 new residential units on the CO1 site to be submitted at a later date.

3. Authorised officers to begin a procurement process for the appointment of a main build contractor and enter into the relevant contracts to deliver the new Civic Offices.

78. Communities First - A Strategy for Developing Libraries as Community Hubs in Thurrock (Decision 110493)

Councillor Huelin began by stating that under the Labour administration libraries had had their budgets cut by over £500,000, which was two thirds of their original budgets. She elaborated that this was the first strategy in twenty years and reassured residents that libraries would not be closing, but would be evolving. She stated that 89% of residents wanted their libraries to become community hubs, such as the one in Ockendon, and could include services such as hearing tests or volunteer hubs, as well as hosting the usual craft and activities groups. She commented that the Aveley community hub would be reopening, as well as the East Tilbury hub. The Leader added that libraries were not just about renting books anymore, but had an increased range of

services.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the draft strategy at Appendix 1.

79. Acquisition of Employment Land Use (Decision 110494)

The Leader began by stating there were exempt appendices attached to the report, and if these had to be discussed they would need to enter exempt session and ask members of the public and press to leave. Councillor Coxshall stated that this report formed part of the regeneration plans and the land lift and shift policy. He commented that the site had been offered to the Council which would increase the Council's portfolio and income received. He added that as communities had built up, industrial sites had become stranded in the middle of residential areas, such as in Purfleet, Stanford-le-Hope, and the Globe Estate in Grays. The Leader clarified that the Globe Works had been situated there since the 1500 and 1600s, but that 90% of Thurrock Rectory was now urban and residential, with the Globe Industrial Estate in the middle. He stated he felt glad to see an increase in income, and felt this could better deliver other services across the borough.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the regeneration and investment opportunity presented by the acquisition of land identified in Appendix A which could be used for employment use purposes.

2. Approved the proposed freehold acquisition of the site as outlined in Appendix A of this report pursuant to Section 227 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as well as Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972, and delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Place and Director of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration to negotiate and agree final terms for the site's acquisition and to enter into any necessary agreements for the purchase of the site for the Council.

3. Approved the development of the site as outlined in the report and delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Place to finalise the scheme, submit a planning application and enter into appropriate development agreements for its development in accordance with the planning permission.

The meeting finished at 20.03

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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