

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 September 2016 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Tuesday 20 September 2016 at 5.00 pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), James Halden, Shane Hebb, Brian Little, Susan Little, Deborah Stewart and Pauline Tolson

Apologies: Councillors Garry Hague (Deputy Chair) and Mark Coxshall

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
Ann Osola, Head of Highways & Transportation
David Lawson, Deputy Head of Legal & Monitoring Officer
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.

25. Minutes

The Minutes of Cabinet, held on 13 July 2016, were approved as a correct record.

26. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

27. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest

28. Statements by the Leader

The Leader of the Council advised that last week saw the 100 days of the new administration. He further advised that feedback on the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It policy was currently in progress, although feedback on the 'Clean It' part of the policy was still awaited. Members were informed that 1500 acres of grassland had been cut to which the Leader compared this to the size of 3 Hyde Parks.

Councillor Gledhill continued to inform the Cabinet that 5000 road defects had been repaired, making a big difference to the Borough. He added that the Council had been working with Essex Police in relation to unlawful encampments, in some cases travellers were being moved on within hours

rather than days. The Leader stated that further provisions in wider Essex were to be put in place and he would update Cabinet accordingly.

He further mentioned that the Council were keeping the pressure on Anglian Water following the closure of Grays Beach. Cabinet were also informed of the Soup Event being held at the Beehive Centre on Friday (9 September).

Finally, the Leader advised that along with the current administration meeting its first 100 days, this week also saw the Chief Executive's first year at Thurrock Council. He thanked the Chief Executive for all of her work on behalf of the Borough and wished her many more years at Thurrock.

29. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

There were no petitions submitted.

30. Questions from Non-Executive Members

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

31. 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.

32. Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme – Asset Management and Recommendations for Improvement (Decision 01104379)

Councillor B. Little, Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways, presented the report informing Members of the findings and recommendations following a review of the Thurrock Highway Asset Management Strategy in accordance with the Government's Highways Maintenance Efficiency Programme (HMEP). Therefore the report was seeking cabinet's approval to adopt refreshed versions of Highways Maintenance Policies and Strategies for Thurrock.

He continued to explain that Thurrock Council, in its role as a Highway Authority, had a duty under the 1980 Highways Act to maintain its highway network to a reasonable standard in the interest of public safety. The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transportation highlighted that the refreshed versions of the Policy also took into account the Councils 'Clean It, Cut It, Fill It' campaign, which would allow improved journeys for all residents.

The Leader of the Council, queried the 17 recommendations mentioned within the report under Pothole Management Review, to establish if all recommendations had been implemented.

The Director for Environment and Place confirmed that all recommendations had been implemented to his knowledge, however he would clarify and confirm in writing to Cabinet Members.

Resolved that Cabinet:

- 1. Approved the HMEP efficiency principles approach towards the highway infrastructure asset management; and**
- 2. Endorsed the attached revised Highways Asset Management documents.**

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

33. Quarter 1 Revenue Budget Monitoring and Council Spending Review Update (Decision 01104380)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services provided an update for Cabinet Members explaining the forecast for 2016/2017 outturn position as of the end of June 2016 and summarised the main changes to the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2017/2018 through to 2019/2020.

Members were advised following Full Council in February 2016, where Members agreed the General Fund budget for 2016/2017 as part of the MTFS and although no additional budget savings to front line services were proposed, the budget did include previously agreed savings of £3.3 million.

Councillor Hebb continued to advise his fellow Cabinet Members that within the report it highlighted pressures of £8.6 million which had been identified; this required mitigating actions to be identified for the balance of £4.1million after taking into consideration the £4.5m budgeted contingency.

He continued to talk Members through the report highlighting the following points:

- Legal Services had been set an additional saving of £200 thousand, to be able to achieve this officers were to offer greater commercial services;
- The MTFS presented to Council in February 2016 showed the budget gap over 3 years to 2020 as £18.4million;
- There was an assumed £2.5million savings as agreed for the next financial year it was also assumed a Council Tax increase of 3.99% in each year could also occur: and
- Officers were continuing to work with the Cabinet to find the balance of £158 thousand to support the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It campaign as this was still in the pilot stage.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services mentioned Officers were continuing to undertake a review of the Councils finances, with the

intention to carry out a review of services every 3 years to enable a zero based budget.

Councillor S. Little thanked Councillor Hebb for the comprehensive report and stated that her main concern as the Cabinet Member for Children's and Adults' Social Care was that every child in the Borough was safe.

The Leader of the Council commented that the table within the report highlighted pressures of £8.6million, he sought clarification from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services as to whether this was as a result of the previous administration not having a zero based budget at the end of 2015/2016.

Councillor Hebb explained that the £8.6million overspend was from 2015/2016, which was inherited from the previous administration with £5.6million overspend being from Children's Services, however he commented that the current Portfolio Holder had offered the reassurance that she was working very closely with officers.

During discussions regarding to Children's Services it was agreed that Councillor S .Little would provide a weekly update to the Leader of the Council in relation to how funds within the Service were being spent.

Councillor Halden left the meeting at 7.30pm

The Cabinet Member for Children's and Adults Social Care further stated that one third of Thurrock's Children were being fostered outside of the Borough.

Councillor Halden returned to the meeting at 7.35pm

Resolved:

- 1. That Cabinet noted the forecast outturn position for 2016/17 and agreed that £1.125 million of the growth allocation be vired to Adults, Housing and Health in line with the Adult Social Care Precept;**
- 2. That Cabinet agreed the funding of £0.260 million for the Clean it, Cut it, Fill it pilot;**
- 3. That Cabinet noted the revised MTFs position, including any adjustments for an increase to the General Fund Balance;**
- 4. That officers bring forward savings in excess of the MTFs forecast deficit to give Members choice around further investment initiatives, such as the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It initiative of Summer 2016; and**
- 5. That Cabinet agreed the Council Spending Review approach and timetable.**

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

34. **2016/2017 Capital Monitoring Report – Quarter 1 (Decision 01104381)**

Councillor Hebb introduced his report and in doing so notified Members that the Capital Programme 2016/2017 was agreed at February Full Council. Since April 2016, additional funding had been added to the programme, including funding from prudential borrowing and other grants. In addition, budgets carried forward from 2015/2016 had also been included to the programme.

It was explained there were two specific categories within Capital schemes and resources these were:

- Mainstream schemes - capital expenditure which was funded by prudential (unsupported) borrowing; and
- Specific schemes – capital expenditure which was funded by external funding sources, such as government grants

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services stated that the Performance Indicator Target was 10%, at present the total amount spent on the Capital Programme was £6.56 million worked out to 8.6% of the budgeted spend against the performance indicator of 10%. He further stated that, when considering payments due but not yet paid, he was confident the Council had met the 10% target.

Councillor Hebb mentioned the report reflected changes and set out the latest forecasted outturn position and a detailed summary of the current position on the School Capital Programme.

Councillor Halden thanked the Cabinet Member for his report; he stated that along with the Director for Children's Services he had met with the Department for Education and the Education Funding Agency.

He continued to mention that the demand for pupil places had increased significantly, with a large increase in 'in year' admissions from families moving into the Borough.

Resolved that Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the General Fund capital programme was projected to have available resources of £6.094 million as at 31 March 2017 with this funding carried forward to 2017/18 to fund schemes currently in progress or under development;**
- 2 Noted the Housing Revenue Account capital programme was projected to have no unused resources in 2016/17; and**
- 3 Was fully appraised on the current School Capital Programme Schemes for 2016/17.**

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

35. Treasury Management Outturn 2015/2016 (Decision 01104382)

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services presented the report which outlined the revised CIPFA Prudential Code which required that a Treasury Management Outturn report was produced after the financial year end.

Members were notified the Council had made net savings against the General Fund budget of £3.8 million and net savings against the HRA budget of £1.1million which had supported the delivery of a balanced budget in 2015/2016.

Councillor Hebb advised Cabinet that Council had an underlying need to borrow known as the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR). He further stated that generally the Council's long term borrowing should not exceed the CFR.

In addition the Cabinet Member highlighted the trend in interest rate movements showing the Council's average borrowing rate had fallen from 5.15% in 2008/2009 to 1.48% in 2015/2016.

Resolved:

In line with the Treasury Management Policy Statement approved by Council on 12 February 2015 and the CIPFA Code of Practice, the Cabinet were asked to comment on the borrowing and investment performance for 2015/2016.

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

36. The Award of Better Care Fund Contracts for Community Health Care Services (Decision 01104383)

Councillor S. Little, Cabinet Member for Children's and Adults Social Care, informed Members that at Cabinet on the 9 March 2016 it had approved the Better Care Fund Section 75 Agreement between the Council and NHS Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group. The Agreement allowed the creation of a pooled fund, to be operated in line with the terms of the Agreement, to promote the integration of care and support services.

She continued by explaining the Council was to be the 'host' organisation for the pooled fund, which meant that it would need to enter into contracts with providers of Community Health Services. Due to the lateness of approval from NHS England, Cabinet were being asked to approve to waive the requirement for a competitive procurement and to award the contracts for these services in line with the Section 75 Agreement and the decision made on 9 March 2016.

Councillor Halden stated that he supported the waiver and felt it was a good proposal as the Council would have to work speedily with Health partners such as the CCG and other officials.

The Leader of the Council commented that he felt the reasons for the waive were valid and fully supported the Council being the host organisation.

Councillor S. Little thanked her fellow Members for their comments and further advised being the host organisation allowed the Council to carry out its own audit on the funds.

Resolved:

- 1. That Cabinet approved the award of Better Care Fund contracts for Community Health Care Services; and**
- 2. That the requirement in the Council's Constitution for competitive tendering be waived, to allow for a negotiated procurement procedure without prior publication.**

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

The meeting finished at 7.55 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**