

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 11 July 2018 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins if Friday 20 July at 5.00pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), Shane Hebb (Deputy Chair), Gary Collins, Mark Coxshall, James Halden, Deborah Huelin, Barry Johnson and Aaron Watkins

Apologies: Councillor Susan Little

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Steve Cox, Corporate Director Place
Roger Harris, Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health
David Lawson, Assistant Director of Law & Governance
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.

14. Minutes

Councillor Watkins requested that the Minutes for 13 June 2018 meeting on Item 11: Report on Fly-Tipping in Alleyways be amended to reflect that an additional recommendation was requested for the Committee to come back to Cabinet with further suggestions, regarding the Community Engagement Development Fund.

15. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

16. Declaration of Interests

The Leader stated that although he did not have a pecuniary or disclosable interest, he did live in the vicinity of the Elm Road site that was being discussed in Item 10.

17. Statements by the Leader

The Leader began his statement by updating Members on the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It Scheme. In doing so, Members heard how this past month 340 tonnes of waste had been removed from the borough. He continued by stating that 128 incidents of fly-tipping had been cleared, and that all abandoned vehicles that had been reported had been removed within three weeks of the report. In addition, Councillor Gledhill mentioned that 349 potholes had been filled,

which was every pothole in the borough bar 2, and that 200 hectares of grass had been cut across Thurrock.

The Leader then commented on the progress the Council had made on removing unauthorised encampments from the borough's green spaces. He stated that the Council were into the second stage of an injunction to prevent these encampments, which should be completed by the end of the year. He added that this was the first issue brought forward for his Portfolio and this was just one of many ways to tackle the problem, and to protect the borough's green spaces.

Councillor Gledhill then commented on the work of the Thames Estuary Growth Commission, which was hosted since the last Cabinet meeting. He said that this was an ambitious programme to deal with issues such as congestion and the quality of education, and although different boroughs along the Thames had different issues, they were all working closely together.

The Leader also discussed the fire which occurred on 20 June in a block of flats in Chadwell St Mary. He said that all families were now back in their homes, other than those which had been directly impacted by the fire or smoke, who were now out of hotels and into temporary accommodation. He also stated that those families in temporary accommodation were continuing to receive support until they could return to their homes.

In addition, the Leader also discussed the new war memorial in Grays which had been unveiled on Armed Forces Day to commemorate one hundred years since the end of World War One. He congratulated everyone that worked on the project and stated that there was now more funding for the cleaning and upkeep of war memorials across the borough. Finally, Councillor Gledhill acknowledged the good work of the planning team, as they were now in the top four nationwide for their good work. He mentioned that they were in the top 3% for timeline delivery, and had helped Brentwood Borough Council planning department to achieve fifth place nationwide.

18. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

Councillor Halden had a briefing on Policy, Budget and Other Issues which he wished to bring to the Cabinet. He began by updating Members on the status of Orsett Hospital. He stated that this would not close until the new medical centres had been opened and were fully operational. He also commented that this was a decision by the NHS Clinical Managers who were technical experts in their field, but made clear that Thurrock healthcare services would remain in the borough and would not be sent to Basildon or Brentwood. He stated that he felt proud of the role Thurrock was taking with the NHS to find the best clinical way forward for residents, and that conversations were being undertaken to work out how people were going to access the new integrated medical centres.

Councillor Halden also drew Member's attention to the tragic death of a Thurrock student in the London Borough of Havering. He added that there was a national problem with youth crime, but Essex County Council had granted £9 million in extra funding for new police officers across the county. In

addition the Youth Offending Service had received a recent upgrade in the form of a new model to tackle anti-social behaviour, as well as a new Pupil Referral Unit. Councillor Halden reiterated that tackling anti-social behaviour was a priority for the administration and was looking forward to new plans being brought forward to deal with this issue.

19. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

There were no petitions submitted by members of the public.

20. Questions from Non-Executive Members

The Leader of the Council advised that there had been one question received, but confirmed with the Cabinet that they were happy for the question to be heard when the report was discussed.

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

Councillor Gledhill advised that there were two reports which had been referred by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but this would be discussed during the course of the meeting.

22. Delivering our Free School Programme - Land Disposal (Decision 110472)

Councillor Kent was invited to ask his question which was: what other, potential, sites were considered for this school before deciding to recommend selling the six acre park, Elm Road Open Space? Councillor Halden responded that two other sites had been considered which were Curzon Drive and Thurrock Parkway. He stated that they were discounted because they were too small and not appropriately located as they were in industrial areas. He went on to add that the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) may have looked at other privately owned sites, but that Council owned sites are faster to build schools on and ensures the Council can enter into Heads of Terms with the ESFA. Councillor Kent responded that all can agree new schools need to be built, but that the Osborne Trust has been working for three years on the proposed new school. Councillor Kent raised concerns that members of the community would not accept the loss of the open space, and also that streets around the proposed sites were already clogged with traffic due to the proximity of Thameside Primary School. He stated that the addition of a 900 place school, as well as staff members would create extra traffic within the area. He also raised concerns that the site was very small as government guidelines indicated a site needed to be 2 acres, and although the site was 6 acres when parking and access roads were included, it would be a small space. He also stated that there was an issue in process as the Osborne Trust had been left out of conversations that were happening between the Council and the ESFA.

Councillor Halden agreed that he felt the process was cumbersome, and had

already written to the ESFA to try to make this easier. In regards to space, Councillor Halden stated that Thurrock, in terms of planning, was much more of a city than a country borough, and building was difficult as sites were small and complex. He then drew Members attention to section 8 of the report which stated that the school's amenities would still be available to the public outside of school hours for community use. He went on to mention that it was a difficult site, but this was why there was an additional recommendation which allowed Officers and Members to consider other pieces of land if the Elm Road site fell through. Councillor Halden then summarised by stating that this new school would be a benefit to the community as it would provide 900 new 'good' or better school places, and that this was 'infrastructure before expansion' in practice. He also said that the community would have a chance to consult at many stages of the process.

The Leader again reiterated that although he had no pecuniary interest, he lived close to the Elm Road site and used it for recreational purposes. He then invited Councillor Halden to deliver the report.

Councillor Halden began by stating that the Elm Road site would deliver 900 new school places, and was significant infrastructure for Grays. He mentioned that Thameside Primary, which would be a 'feeder' school, was next door and this was an added opportunity as the sites could share resources. He then drew the Cabinet's attention to a memo which had been received from the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee, following their extraordinary meeting on the site. Councillor Halden started with point 1 of the memo and explained that with the proposed three new schools, and the expansion of existing schools, 3,500 additional school places would be available within the borough. In regards to point 2 of the memo, Councillor Halden stated that a condition of disposal of the land would be that the school site would be accessible to the community outside of school hours. He then addressed point 3 and commented that he felt it had been discourteous to not discuss this site with the Ward Member, and agreed he should have written to him prior to the meeting. He also stated that he could not agree to point 4 or 6 of the memo as there was already plenty of opportunity for public consultation, and did not want to add another layer of bureaucracy to proceedings. Councillor Halden then said that he would agree to the recommendation in point 5 and that in future reports will give alternative options and reasons why other sites had been discounted. Finally, Councillor Halden discussed point 7 of the memo and said Officer's would not go against what the Portfolio Holder's wanted, and stated the recommendation would remain as "Officer's in consultation with Portfolio Holder's".

Councillor Coxshall then spoke on the item and reiterated the difficulty in finding sites as Grays was becoming more built-up. He felt that co-locating a primary and secondary school was a good use of space, as they could share amenities and resources. He added that by 2020, the borough would have opened ten new schools, which equated to ten new schools in ten years. He reemphasised the point that this was infrastructure first, as there were also new four new state-of-the-art medical centres being built.

The Leader of the Council restated that the site was very close to where he lives, but agreed that the site would remain accessible outside of school hours. In addition, he mentioned that there were other small open spaces nearby that could be used. He continued by saying that the open space was occasionally unusable during the day, as during the night people used it as a drinking spot and smashed bottles on the ground, making it unsafe.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the Free Schools Programme progress to date and the partnership working with the ESFA.**
- 2. Subject to the outcome of any consultation pertaining to the disposal of open space land, approved the disposal of the Elm Road Open Space to the Department of Education (acting through the ESFA) for the purposes of building and establishing a new Free School on the site**
- 3. Authorised the Corporate Director of Place, in consultation with Portfolio Holder for Education and Health and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration to dispose of the Elm Road Open Space on terms to be agreed with the ESFA, in accordance with Section 8, recognising that the disposal of the site is subject to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government consent**
- 4. Delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Place in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children's Services and Assistant Director of Law and Governance, and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, to agree heads of terms for the disposal of the identified site to the DfE/ESFA and to take all necessary steps to complete the transactions.**
- 5. Endorsed authorised officers to undertake consultation for the proposed disposal of open space land at the site where applicable and delegated authority to those officers and members identified in 4 above to consider any pertinent objections to the disposal of open space land and to determine whether or not the disposal should proceed in the light of such objections.**
- 6. In the event that the Elm Road site is not deliverable that delegated authority be given to the Corporate Director of Place, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Children's Services and Assistant Director of Law and Governance, and in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, to identify an alternative site and to dispose of it on terms to be agreed with the ESFA for the purposes of a new free school.**

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

23. Procurement of Phase 3 of the Data Modelling Service for Thurrock Council (Decision 110473)

Councillor Collins presented the report and began by saying that data modelling was already being used, and was already working, for Thurrock Council, as it offered early help to identify vulnerable children and adults. He described that Phase 1 identified children at higher risk of statutory intervention, and engaged them with the MHCLG sponsored Troubled Families Programme. He stated that 100% of Thurrock's Troubled Families attachments are found via the data analytics programme. He went on to say that Phase 2 was introduced in 2017 and focussed primarily on expanding the cohort of data sources in order to deliver proactive alerting of children at high risk of entering Safeguarding services. The next stage, Phase 3, now needed Cabinet approval as it exceeded the spend limit and was a key decision. Councillor Collins went on to add that the data modelling service reduced the need for more costly safeguarding services, as it could catch problems such as anti-social behaviour, homelessness, and mental illness earlier.

The Leader added that this showed the Council was spending money wisely, as a lot of money was currently spent on Children's Services. He drew Member's attention to page 29 of the agenda and highlighted the three new critical areas of data analytics which were: homelessness prevention; anti-social behaviour profiling; and informed debt collections. He stated that informed debt collections were very important as this could cause stress on vulnerable people and add problems to a family, such as borrowing from loan sharks or other family members. Councillor Coxshall then added that data analytics were growing in importance, and was glad to see the Council was undertaking data led prevention measures.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Agreed to proceed to procurement for Phase 3 of the Data Analytics Service as set out in this report

2. Approved delegated authority to award the contract to the Director of HR, OD and Transformation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Central Services

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

24. Gas Servicing, Repair and Renewal (Decision 110474)

Councillor Johnson introduced the report which outlined the procurement for gas servicing, as the current contract ends on 31 March 2019, and was very important for Council tenants. He began by saying that the report proposed to amalgamate two contracts into one, with a single contractor maintaining the whole of the Council's stock. He also stated that, as a landlord, the Council needed to ensure that each dwelling has an annual gas safety check. He added that this was being bought before Cabinet due to the monetary value

and finance involved in the contract. He described how this report had gone to the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee last night, and how they have also listened to the Tenancy Excellency Panel regarding the struggles they faced last winter, and have decided to focus on quality to stop problems such as call centre phones cutting out.

The Leader began discussions by mentioning that Councillor Johnson's Portfolio had been his last year and he understood the problems tenants faced during the winter months, as problems were not solved quickly due to the contract. He also encouraged tenants to put themselves forward for the Tenancy Excellency Panel, as he felt they did some excellent work.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Approved the process set out in the report to commence the procurement of a combined domestic and commercial gas servicing, breakdown, repair and installation contract for a period of three years with the option to extend for a further two years in any period combination.

2. Agreed delegated authority for the award of the contract to the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

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

25. Tender of the Council's Insurance and Related Services (Decision 110475)

Councillor Hebb introduced the report by stating that the report is in readiness for the expiry of the current contract on 31 March 2019 and the proposed tender which will be undertaken to procure the services. He added that the previous contract had been awarded in 2013 with a three year contract, and option to extend for a further two years. He said that the next proposed contract length is three years with a potential to extend for a further two years, and that once Cabinet agrees the recommendations, the process finishes and the Council will seek to award the contract.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Agreed and supported the proposal to commission a tender exercise in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 for the supply of Insurance and Related Services.

2. Approved delegation to the Director of Finance and IT to enter into and award the necessary contracts following the procurement process, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

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

26. Development Plan Update (Decision 110476)

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report and began by stating that more infrastructure was needed in the borough due to an increase in the population, as Thurrock becomes a place people want to move to. He stated that the next phase of the Development Plan was to get the views of Thurrock residents, and that this was not about promoting sites or getting developers, but was about choosing a town plan on a grand scale. He added that the Development Plan had started in 2014, but had moved on dramatically since then. He commented that there were now better opportunities in South Essex and along the Thames, as Thurrock was working in wider coordination with other authorities on the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan. He discussed the need for cross party representation at key stages of the Development Plan to ensure that everyone, across all areas are engaged to make sure the Development Plan works. Councillor Coxshall went on to mention that 32,000 new homes need to be built in the borough, although this figure was up for review, but that so far only 500 new homes per year had been built. He summarised the report and said he was happy to work with the new Task Force and look at the review from the Portfolio Holder, to be able to bring forward new suggestions at Council.

Councillor Halden added that he felt confused by a leaflet from the Thurrock Independent Party which was challenging the Conservative plans for 32,000 homes, but that still wanted 8,000 new council homes, as well as “Thurrock homes for Thurrock people”. He asked Thurrock Independent Members why they had voted against the proposal for 32,000 new homes. Councillor Coxshall added that he wanted proper process in regards to the Development Plan, as they had seen that without it 300 new homes had been built where they had not been wanted. He also mentioned that he wanted to increase the number of council houses within the borough, and undergo a thorough public consultation.

The Leader then discussed the memo that had been sent from the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Committee following their extraordinary meeting on the issue. In regards to point 2, the Leader felt that Thurrock was already a national leader as they had secured £50,000 extra in funding for additional residents consultation; were building 3,500 new school places; additional medical centres; and much needed roads. He felt they had a fantastic opportunity as there were more potential sites than there was need for properties, and this gave the Council the chance to pick and choose sites. He went on to discuss point 5 and stated that he felt Thurrock was already taking a lead role in the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan, and other authorities were impressed with the work being undertaken. In regards to point 3, he stated that Councillor Coxshall had already emphasised the need for new affordable and council housing, and they ensured that 1/3 of all new developments was designated for social housing. Councillor Gledhill then turned the Member’s attention to point 4 and emphasised the fact that 75% of housing is the natural

expansion of Thurrock, due to increasing work opportunities. Councillor Coxshall then added that the London Development Plan sought to “consume their own smoke” as they were building 60,000 new homes for the people of London to move into.

Councillor Halden added that the Local Plan included more sites than there was need for housing, because the Council had spent more money undertaking longer consultations with the public, to ensure there was choice. He discussed the Purfleet Regeneration Scheme and the benefits that would bring to the community such as removing the old level crossing, bringing in new shops, new homes, and a new medical centre.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

1. Approved the South Essex Statement of Common Ground (Appendix A) prepared by the Association of South Essex Local Authorities to guide the preparation of a Joint Strategic Plan for South Essex.

2. Approved the publication of the revised Local Development Scheme (Appendix B) and granted delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and in discussion with the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of each political party, to update the content of the document as and when appropriate.

3. Agreed that formal consultation on the updated Statement of Community Involvement (Appendix C) be carried out in accordance with the relevant regulations and to agree that any changes resulting from that consultation are delegated to the Corporate Director of Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration for adoption.

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

27. Procurement of the Internal and External Redecoration Programme (Decision 110477)

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and began by stating how important it was to tenants that this report received Cabinet approval, as it sets out proposals for the procurement of internal and external redecoration to council residential properties. He went on to add that this would be a three year contract, and that there would be no disruption to service users as this was an additional service to vulnerable people who had no family or friends to help them with decorating. He also mentioned that more details for vulnerable people were sent to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee separately.

The Leader added that he was glad to see this item coming forward as it was important for people that were unable to decorate. He went further to add that it was important for the Council to spend this money now, rather than in 15-20 years' time when the property may come back to the Council.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Agreed the proposed process to commence procurement of the Internal and External decorating programme for a period of up to 5 years (3 years with an option to extend for up to 2 years in any combination subject to performance and funding).**
- 2. Agreed delegated authority to award the contract to the Corporate Director of 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

28. End of Year Corporate Performance Report 2017/18

Councillor Huelin introduced the report and began by stating she felt pleased that the ambitious targets set had been matched, as 66% of key performance indicators (KPI's) were on or above target, and 20% had just fractionally missed targets. She stated that this meant 78% of services passed, and that this was meeting a high standard. She highlighted the fact that 97% primary schools were 'good' or better, and 20% of children were above the national average in reading and writing. She also congratulated the hard work of volunteers in Thurrock who had increased volunteering hours from 15,000 to 23,000 hours thanks to the time banking scheme. She encouraged everyone to sign up for the time banking scheme as it allowed people to receive help for things they needed, whilst also helping others.

Councillor Gledhill said that he felt officers had done well to meet these targets, as the Cabinet were used to seeing 45%-50% of targets being hit, but now this had increased to two-thirds. He also congratulated the litter picking team for their hard work, and wanted to emphasise the fact that the Council supported their staff. He also added that met targets should continue to do well, and targets that had not been achieved should be improved, so long as it was not at the expense of others. He also wanted to highlight that his new Portfolio was not included in the KPI's as these policies were maintained by the police, not by the Council. He also added that in the future, he would update Members on what the policies, and Anti-Social Behaviour Team, were achieving. He stated that the Anti-Social Behaviour policies were measured by the Annual Residents Report, and was down to how residents perceived crime and the fear of crime.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Noted and commented upon the performance of the key corporate performance indicators for 2017/18**
- 2. Agreed the indicators for 2018/19 and identified any areas which required additional consideration in the next monitoring cycle**

The meeting finished at 8.04pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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

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