

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 12 July 2017 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Monday 24 July at 5.00pm

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

Apologies: Councillors Mark Coxshall and Sue MacPherson

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Sharon Bayliss, Director of Commercial Services
Sean Clark, Director of Finance & IT
Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and 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
Paul Feild, Legal Representative
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.

12. Minutes

The Minutes of Cabinet, held on 21 June 2017, were approved as a correct record.

13. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

14. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

15. Statements by the Leader

The Leader addressed Portfolio Holders and in doing so gave an update following the incident at the Grenfell Tower Block. He assured Members the cladding used on the tower blocks within Thurrock was not the same as used in the Grenfell Tower and the cladding was O rated which meant it was non-flammable.

He further notified Cabinet that even though the Government had not required samples for testing the Council would be going forward with independent testing just to make sure that residents were safe. Councillor Gledhill confirmed residents' meetings had been held at all of the tower blocks in the Borough or at the Civic Offices, he thanked those who attended for their feedback.

Councillor Gledhill welcomed Councillor Aaron Watkins onto Cabinet as the new Portfolio Holder for Environment. The Leader thanked Councillor Tolson for her service as Cabinet Member for Environment. He continued by updating Members on the Clean it, Cut it and Fill it campaign in that:

- Enforcement Officers had issued 39 Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) bringing the total 1,672 since December. An additional 14 prosecutions were brought against people for not paying the FPN, resulting in them receiving a much larger fine and a criminal record.
- Since April the council had collected 22,425 bags of litter from litter picking across the borough and emptied the equivalent of 11,895 litter bins.
- Since April over 1,000 hectares of grass had been cut and from 79 parks and green spaces an additional 4,630 bags of rubbish had been removed and another 1.6 tonnes of fly tipping.
- 2068 potholes had been filled since April. Major resurfacing works were underway as part of the National Productivity Investment Fund which included Argent Street, Hogg Lane and Buckles Lane which had all been completed and were resurfaced.

The Leader was pleased to announce the council were working with Hyperoptic to provide affordable broadband to social housing tenants. This would mean Thurrock residents within our social housing developments would be able to choose from a number of affordable broadband and landline packages provided by Hyperoptic. He continued by explaining Hyperoptic would initially be making its service available to 1700 tenants across 12 developments in Thurrock, the first to launch would be the Marina Court development in Purfleet.

Lastly Councillor Gledhill mentioned there had been 22 gas leaks in London Road in recent years which required urgent attention. He advised that from 24 July to 1 September the first phase of works would be delivered.

16. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

There were no items on policy, budget or other issue reported to the Cabinet.

17. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

There were no petitions submitted.

18. Questions from Non-Executive Members

The Leader of the Council advised that one question had been submitted. Councillor Gledhill invited Councillor B. Rice to read the question that she had submitted.

“Thank you for giving me the opportunity to ask this question from our sheltered housing residents who have asked me to speak for them. The question that I would like to ask, Leader, is in these times of austerity, where every single penny counts, can the Leader please tell us what additional services or commodities will be provided for sheltered housing tenants for the extra £10.00 per week that, if it is voted through tonight will go ahead in 22 months?”

In response the Leader of the Council advised *“As the report makes clear this proposal, which obviously still hasn’t been agreed as yet, will ensure that over 36 services the council provides, not only to sheltered tenants but all those general tenants, will be added as a service charge. Those service charges will be paid for by those that receive them, not by everybody in some archaic, all inclusive rent system”*

Councillor B. Rice was offered a supplementary question in which she asked:

“That being the case, I’m pleased to hear that. So, are you telling us tonight, Councillor Gledhill, that all of the £3million plus will be invested and used for our sheltered housing tenants, and not for other properties? Because the paper clearly states, and you have said, that we can’t have people paying for other services, or others that don’t live there getting a freebie.

So can you assure us tonight that in 22 months’ time when we are collecting the full rate, which is £3million, all of that is going to be invested for our sheltered housing tenants?”

The Leader reported that *“The amount of money that’s collected by service charges can only be used for those services. The good thing about service charges is should, through contract negotiation or whatever, the cost of supplying that service goes down then obviously the cost can also go down. Should we supply more services or have to increase it because of increased costs again that service charge will be increased, but all of that money is only spent on those services. It’s not distributed elsewhere it’s just for the service charge or goods that they’re actually paying for.”*

Councillor Gledhill thanked Councillor B. Rice for her question and advised that item 13 was to be brought forward to be the first item heard.

19. Proposed Housing Revenue Account Service Charges (Decision 01104434)

Councillor Gledhill, Leader of the Council, introduced the report which provided a follow up on the Cabinet report presented in February 2017 which

agreed to go out to consultation on proposed extensions to service charges in both general tenancies and sheltered tenancies.

In introducing the report the Leader of the Council made the following key observations:

- The proposal to extend charges in sheltered accommodation to all tenants however at a reduced rate following resident consultation and would be phased over three years reaching £10.00 per week by April 2019.
- The proposed charges were eligible for Housing Benefit and currently 72% of tenants living in sheltered accommodation were on full or partial Housing Benefit and would not be affected by the proposal.
- In relation to General Housing needs, tenants were charged individually for management services such as grounds maintenance, heating and lighting of communal areas and lift maintenance and repair.

Councillor S. Little welcomed the report and sought as to what improvements would be made moving forward.

The Leader and Portfolio Holder for Housing explained that Service Level Agreements (SLAs) would be introduced for all tenants and contractors, thus giving tenants the ability to hold the council to account if there were any problems. Councillor Gledhill mentioned it was not only Thurrock who were to introduce service charges, other Local Authorities such as Havering had introduced service charges for bulk waste collections.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the responses to the consultation carried out from March 1st to March 28th 2017 on the proposed changes to service charges for Council tenants.**
- 2. Noted the actions which are planned as an outcome of the consultation to improve the service for sheltered housing tenants.**
- 3. Agreed to the proposed changes to service charges for sheltered housing, starting at £ 5.00 pw from 1st October 2017, increasing to £ 8.00 pw from 1st April 2018 and then for all sheltered tenants to £ 10 pw from 1st April 2019.**
- 4. Agreed to the proposed introduction of specific service charges for general needs tenants which are currently only paid by leaseholders, as detailed in 2.15**

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

20. 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.

21. Appointments to Outside Bodies, Statutory and Other Panels

The Leader of the Council notified Members that Councillor MacPherson had been nominated to sit on the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership, to replace Councillor Tolson.

22. End of Year Corporate Performance and Progress Report 2016/17 and Corporate Performance Framework 2017/18 (Decision 01104432)

Councillor Huelin presented the report to Members, highlighting that the End of Year Corporate Performance Report compared the performance against last year's corporate scorecard with progress against the related actions/projects as outlined in the Corporate Priority Activity Plan for 2016/17. She continued to notify Cabinet that 96% of schools had been awarded good or better from Ofsted.

Councillor Huelin commented that 60% of targets were being met, which was an improvement on the previous year with continuous improvements being made. She further mentioned the Customer Service Strategy had been agreed and a Working Group had been set up to discuss the vision for Thurrock. It was noted that a repeat of the resident survey would be undertaken to seek residents' views for the Borough.

Councillor S. Little thanked the Portfolio Holder for her report. She continued to highlight the success of the Give a Gift campaign and expressed the community spirit was wonderful to witness. Councillor S. Little was pleased to announce that the campaign would be re-run this year.

Councillor Hebb welcomed the report and commented it had a clear message, that Thurrock Council was better now than it was a year ago. He continued to state that removing the Red, Amber, Green ratings enabled officers and Members to see clearly targets that were being achieved and now the council had a 60:40 percent on performance.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services further stated that in the last year of the Administration being in power they had enabled and maintained the Clean it, Cut it and Fill it scheme, on top of delivering an agreed budget, with an £0.5million surplus and £10million funding from Government into the redevelopment of Grays.

Councillor Halden stated that this year more children were offered their first choice on school places, making it the highest record to date. He further advised that the Council's Youth Offending Team had been named the best nationally.

The Leader addressed Members stating he was pleased to see transparency within the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). He continued by highlighting that not all failed KPIs were necessarily within the council's power - as mentioned within the report, the performance of the number of places available for two year olds to access early years education in the borough was noted as a failure. However as explained within the commentary the target for the indicator was set nationally and did not reflect the actual need within Thurrock as there had been a decrease in the number of eligible children in Thurrock. Therefore, more than enough places were available to families.

Councillor Gledhill advised that moving forwards the performance for clean streets would be audited by an independent auditor, Keep Britain Tidy. He thanked officers for their hard work.

RESOLVED That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted and commented upon the progress and performance against the corporate priorities for 2016/17 – Appendix 1 and Appendix 2**
- 2. Agreed the corporate performance framework for 2017/18 (Appendix 3)**

23. Thurrock Design Guide - Residential Alteration and Extension Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (Decision 01104433)

The Leader presented the report on behalf of the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, in doing so addressed Cabinet notifying Members the Thurrock Design Guide for Residential Alteration and Extensions was one of a series of design-related policy documents produced by the Council with ambition to raise development standards and environmental quality across the Borough.

Councillor S. Little welcomed the report and observed how clearly written the document was. She commented that it was easy for residents to understand and set out plainly the dos and don'ts. The Portfolio Holder for Adults and Children's Social Care continued by stating she felt the report encouraged residents to be creative when designing extensions to their homes, thus creating diversity within the borough.

The Leader echoed Councillor S. Little's comments and informed Members he knew Councillor Coxshall was very proud of the document.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Adopt RAE Design Guide (Appendix A) as a Supplementary Planning Document to the adopted Core Strategy and Policies for the Management of Development Local Plan**

2. Endorse RAE Design Guide (Appendix A) as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

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

24. The Procurement of an Integrated Sexual Health Service for 2018-2023 (Decision 01104435)

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health addressed Members advising them that Cabinet had previously agreed a one year extension for the NELFT contract which was due to end in March 2018, with delegated authority between Director of Public Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health.

Councillor Halden continued by commenting that the teenage pregnancy rate was at a record low and the service was important as it gave young people access to support.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Agreed to proceed to tender as set out in this report for the delivery of Integrated Sexual Health Services starting on 1st April 2018.**
- 2. Agreed delegated authority for award of contract to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health.**

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

25. Integrated Medical Centre Delivery Plan - Phase 1 (Decision 01104436)

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health reported previously that Cabinet had given approval to the Council to lead on the delivery of a Health Hub to be located in the Civic Square in Tilbury.

Councillor Halden continued that the report outlined the first steps in providing the new complex models, offering the necessary facilities to residents.

The Portfolio Holder explained the Integrated Medical Centre would form one of four hubs across the borough. He highlighted the remaining three hubs would be:

- Corringham / Stanford le Hope
- Grays
- Purfleet

The Leader of the Council declared that he was the Chair of one of the Patient Partnership Groups, however assured Members that the report did not affect the group in anyway.

Councillor S. Little welcomed the report outlining she felt the new Integrated Medical Centres would assist in stopping inequality in the service provided to residents.

Councillor Watkins thanked the Portfolio Holder for his report, stating it was pleasing to see the first steps were being taken in the right direction.

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health remarked current GP surgeries were outdated and in some case were run from poor accommodation. He continued by stating the new centres would attract patients and all designs were in line with the GP standard plan. Councillor Halden advised the Hubs would have the facilities to treat conditions for which residents may attend Accident and Emergency (A&E), meaning effective treatment within a community setting.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Agreed to the Council, in principle, taking the lead role in the capital development of the Tilbury and Chadwell IMC noting that this will require investment of council funds that will be met from the amount agreed by Council for the future and aspirational capital programme and is subject to a future business case being agreed by Cabinet.**
- 2. Agreed to the Council procuring a design team for the project on a phased basis and delegate authority for appointment to the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Environment and Place, Portfolio Holder for Education and Health and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.**
- 3. Agreed to receive a further report outlining the preferred route for the development of the Purfleet Integrated Medical Centre.**

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

26. 2016/17 Financial Outturn Report (Decision 01104437)

Councillor Hebb, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report which provided a high level summary on the outturn for 2016/17 for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme.

He continued by stating the key message was in the context of the pressures noted within the General Fund Reserve balance, which had been maintained

at £8million and the Housing Revenue Account Balance had increased from £1.7million to £2.1million. Councillor Hebb explained, this meant that overall expenditure had been achieved within the overall budget envelopes and as agreed at Full Council, the Council had begun a three-yearly incremental increase of its General Fund Balance.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services highlighted the £0.5million surplus and the start of the cross party Council Spending Review process. He observed the ambitions of the council becoming 'self-service' and learning from the lessons of the previous year.

Councillor Hebb remarked that the table within the report at 2.2 summarised the outturn position in line with new financial reporting requirements, including the need to compare against the prior year. He continued by stating with cross party working and robust processes the council was working in the right direction.

The Leader commented on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), citing the new build programmes and the right to buy scheme. He further mentioned the decision at Full Council to contact the Government to seek a removal of the cap on borrowing within the HRA.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Noted that the General Fund net expenditure has, despite in-year pressures and the discretionary investment of the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It campaign, been met within the overall budget envelope and the General Fund Balance has been maintained at £8.000m;**
- 2. Noted that the balance on the Housing Revenue Account Reserve at 31 March 2017 has increased to £2.175m due to one off savings; and**
- 3. Noted that there was a total of £44.297m in capital expenditure and some of the key projects have been set out in section 5.**

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

The meeting finished at 8.03 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**