

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 April 2017 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Wednesday 19 April 2017.

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Chair), Shane Hebb (Deputy Chair), Mark Coxshall, James Halden, Deborah Huelin, Sue MacPherson and Pauline Tolson

Apologies: Councillors Brian Little and Susan Little

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
Rory Patterson, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Jackie Hinchliffe, Director of HR, OD & Transformation
Karen Wheeler, Director of Strategy, Communications and Customer Service
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.

117. Minutes

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

118. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

119. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

120. Statements by the Leader

The Leader addressed Portfolio Holders and in doing so, advised the new bin round collections would start on the 8 May 2017, he urged all residents to take note of the new days which would be communicated by letter and social media.

He further advised Members the £1.2 million, 3 year parks program had started which would see capital investment in many of Thurrock's play and park areas.

Councillor Gledhill commented that £819,000 from HCA had been secured to support improvements to council housing for residents and identify where new housing could be built. In addition, £481,000 had been pledged to support Thurrock repair its roads. The Leader informed Cabinet the new money had been received from the National Productivity Fund.

It was remarked that Thurrock Council had been working alongside Barratts and Essex Police to install nuisance biker signage in the east of the borough following complaints from residents. The signs would work as the first official warning, meaning the police could then take enforcement action as soon as the offence was committed.

The Leader highlighted the Council's Trading Standards and Fraud Teams had been working hard with successful prosecutions for retailers selling dangerous products with somebody admitting two charges of engaging in misleading practices under the Consumer Protection and Unfair Trading regulations.

It was announced that Thurrock had entered a relationship with Hyperoptic, the UK's leading Fibre-to-the-Premises (FTTP) broadband provider focused on partnering with Councils to support their digital inclusion initiatives.

Councillor Gledhill explained Hyperoptic would initially be offering its services available to 1,700 tenants across 12 of the Council's Social Housing developments. The relationship was completely at the choice of the tenant and provided low cost and affordable solution to high-speed broadband services.

The Leader further announced that at 1.36pm on Tuesday 28 March 2017 the Council had issued its 1000 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering in Thurrock.

Finally the Leader stated the Council had agreed to write to James Berry, Member of Parliament for Kingston and Surbiton, to ask that Thurrock be excluded from continuing to fund the Lea Valley Park. He continued to explain the park was 35 miles away, the same distance away as Hyde Park, yet the Council had to fund the park nearly 40% of its own budget for country parks here in Thurrock.

121. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

There were no petitions submitted.

122. Questions from Non-Executive Members

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

123. 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.

124. Revenue Budget Monitoring - January 2017 (Decision 01104415)

Councillor Hebb presented the report explaining it provided an update on the forecast 2016/17 outturn position as at the end of January 2017. He continued by highlighting previous reports had shown that the Council had met considerable financial pressures.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services mentioned that whilst no additional budget savings to front line services had been proposed, the 2016/17 budget did include previously agreed savings.

It was discussed that the overspend position for the year end included funds to deliver the 'Clean it, Cut it, Fill it' initiative for 2016/17, which was highlighted by residents through the recent Resident Survey. Members were further notified that the most significant pressure remained within Children Services.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Gledhill, commented there were many pressures within Children's Services, one of which was asylum seeking children. He informed Cabinet that following the Government's decision to allocate these children across the region, Thurrock's allocation was 28 children, but here were currently 63 asylum seeking children being homed across the borough.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Note the forecast outturn position for 2016/17; and**
- 2. Agree the use of capital receipts to fund transformation spend in line with the capital receipt flexibility policy introduced as part of the Governments multi-year settlement and council's efficiency plan.**

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

125. 2016/17 Capital Monitoring Report - Quarter 3 (Decision 01104416)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services, addressed Members informing them the 2016/17 Capital Programme was last considered at the December meeting.

It was explained that since the last reported position, additional funding had been added to the programme. Councillor Hebb continued to state that £15million had been re-profiled for libraries and the Purfleet Project.

Councillor Halden mentioned that £11million had been allocated by the School's Basic Need Grant for the improvement and expansion for Schools and Academy in the borough, such as the expansion of St Cleres secondary school and East Tilbury Primary.

The Leader of the Council commented on the previously reported over spend within the Housing department. He stated he felt the spending of money to repair housing structures was not over spend but instead necessary spend for council residents.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Note the General Fund capital programme is projected to have unspent capital budgets of £14.897m as at 31 March 2017 being carried forward to 2017/18 to fund schemes currently in progress or under development;**
- 2. Note the Housing Revenue Account capital programme is currently forecasting an overspend of £0.502m, but work continues to be undertaken to eliminate this by the 31 March 2017; and**
- 3. Note the Schools Basic Need Government Grant allocation of £5.026m (2017/18) and £6.830m (2018/19) which will be added to the capital programme to fund further school improvements/expansions within the borough.**

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

126. Customer Services Strategy (Decision 01104417)

Councillor Huelin introduced the report explaining that customer expectations were rising, the local population was growing and changing, and in response, the council was increasingly required to strengthen its customer focus and build integrated service delivery models.

She continued by stating the Customer Services Strategy sets out where the Council wanted to be and how it would get there. It was intended to provide a strategic overview that would lead the direction of travel through service plans and other council procedures.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Central Services further commented that the Council's contact centre did an excellent job and were working closely to assist residents self-serve.

Councillor Hebb remarked that many services were to undergo a review to observe where resources were required to ensure that the best service was given to local residents as they were the council's customers.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the Customer Services Strategy document at Appendix 1.**
- 2. Approve the proposals as demonstrated in the Pen Portrait examples (Appendix 2) for dealing with customer enquiries**

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

127. Transforming and Securing the Councils Youth and Skills Offering - Inspire (Decision 01104418)

Councillor Halden, the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health, presented the report and in doing so explained the purpose was to update Members on the most appropriate delivery for Inspire Youth Offer. It was further explained that it had been decided to bring the scheme in house under the Council where it could be moved forward.

He continued by stating he did not want young people to leave school and 'fall' into a job, when they could learn a skill and secure a job they wanted to do.

Councillor Halden commented that in addition the council had secured a £2.4million grant in European funding and taken on the management of the Council's Grangewaters Outdoor Education Centre recovering a further £330,000 in the current year to leave the site cost neutral.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the principle that the service, including the operation of Grangewaters outdoor education centre, remain an in-house service and is supported in incubating its commercial principles.**
- 2. Approve more autonomy for Inspire to meet its objective to form a cost neutral and self-sustaining service, while meeting our goals and principles to improve outcomes for young people.**

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

128. Grays South: Delivering the New Pedestrian Rail Crossing (Decision 01104419)

Councillor Coxshall addressed Members explaining that on the 2 February 2017 the Council received notification that its bid for £10.8million from the Local Growth Fund had been successful and that the Council would receive the full amount requested to complete the funding package to deliver the Grays South Project.

He continued to inform Cabinet that the Grays South Project aimed to create public squares and a pedestrian rail crossing to replace the level crossing in Grays High Street, together with the development of modern retail and residential units.

It was mentioned that the project had been a long standing priority for the Council. It was stated that the Council had been working with Network Rail to develop the proposals for the pedestrian rail crossing.

Councillor Gledhill, Leader of the Council, commented that the £11million was awarded by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, so it was businesses and Council Leaders from East Sussex to the top of Essex who all saw and agreed with the benefit of the scheme. He further commented that the scheme would allow the Council to transform Grays and make it modern.

RESOLVED:

- 1. To approve the implementation of the Grays South Project and delegate to the Corporate Director Environment and Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, the negotiation of a joint delivery approach and agreement with Network Rail and C2C.**
- 2. To resolve that the use of Compulsory Purchase powers under Section 226(1) (a) and powers of acquisition under section 227 and 237 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and Section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 would in principle be justified in order to facilitate the delivery of a pedestrian rail crossing to replace the level crossing in Grays High Street (the Scheme) on the land outlined red on the plan in Appendix 1.**
- 3. Delegate to the Corporate Director of Environment and Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration the implementation of the Land Acquisition and Partnership Strategy including:**
 - i. To grant written authority to officers and their appointed agents to enter on to the land and other land for the purposes of carrying out surveys under section 15 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976**
 - ii. To issue notices requisitioning information from persons in relation to the land and other land under section 16 of the**

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 or Section 5A of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981.

- iii. **Undertake land referencing and rights to light surveys to identify all owners, tenants, occupiers, and other interests or those who would be likely to be qualifying persons under Section 12(1) of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981 in relation to the scheme.**
 - iv. **Negotiate to acquire land needed to facilitate the Scheme by agreement.**
- 4. To approve the option 4 design for the pedestrian rail crossing as the basis for the next stage of design and for further consultation about the Scheme to be undertaken.**
- 5. To approve the funding strategy.**
- 6. To note that**
- i. **A detailed report in relation to the exercise of the Compulsory Purchase Powers, setting out the full justification for their use including a full statement of reasons, will be presented for consideration by a future Cabinet.**
 - ii. **The appropriation of Council owned land required for the Scheme from the purposes for which it is currently held to planning purposes is likely to be required under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 to deliver the Scheme and the need to do so will be identified once detailed proposals have been prepared.**
 - iii. **The use of stopping up powers under section 247 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) is likely to be required to deliver the Scheme.**
 - iv. **An equalities assessment will be carried out during the following design stages.**

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

129. Connected Thurrock - Thurrocks Digital & Information Technology Strategy 2017-20 (Decision 01104420)

Councillor Hebb, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services, presented the report to the Cabinet and in doing so highlighted he felt the Council needed to embrace technology. He continued to comment it was not just IT infrastructure that was required to be improved, but also digitalising services.

Councillor Hebb explained the strategy would take Thurrock on a journey to become a 'digital exemplar' and meet wider community ambitions, around place making and economic growth.

It was discussed that the second recommendation was to have regular updates presented to both the Cabinet and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

1. **That the Connected Thurrock Strategy be approved;**
2. **As a result of the feedback received from the meeting of the Corporate Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 14th March 2017, a regular update be presented to both Cabinet and Corporate Overview & Scrutiny as the strategy moves to the practical implementation stages; and**
3. **That sign-posting support for resident (users) is documented on the Contact Us page on the Council's website.**

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

130. Communication Strategy 2017/20 (Decision 01104421)

Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services introduced the report, notifying Cabinet that the council was a £0.5billion business. He stated that the strategy was to make it clear how the council would engage with the media and vice versa.

He continued by stating residents did not have time to search for information, so it was important for it to be easy to find. Councillor Hebb commented that it was important to become self-service but also put the council out for business.

Councillor Coxshall welcomed the report, stating it was long overdue.

The Leader commented on the excellent work undertaken by officers to produce a wide ranging document to promote Thurrock.

RESOLVED:

1. **To agree the proposed Communication Strategy 2017-20 as the principle policy document for engagement with residents via all communication and media platforms.**

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

131. Quarter 3 Corporate Performance Report 2016/17 (Decision 01104422)

Councillor Huelin addressed Members informing them the Corporate Priority Activity Plan for 2016/17 outlined the focus areas for service delivery during year. The plan was supported by the Corporate Key Performance Indicator (KPI) Framework which detailed the statistical evidence the council used to monitor the progress and performance against those priority activities.

The Portfolio Holder for Performance and Central Services stated the council was 55% on target compared to 44% of KPIs passing last year. She continued by mentioning, due to the bad weather towards the end of last year, it was difficult to keep on top of potholes across the borough, however this was out of the council's control.

Councillor Tolson mentioned that grass verges had been cut and officers had issued 1,000 fixed penalty notices. She further stated that she was awaiting the figures for the number of people the council would be taking to court for refusing to pay the fines.

Councillor Gledhill commented he was pleased to see Clean it, Cut it, Fill it, was meeting its targets and it only took to pothole to be missed to not achieve 100%.

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**

132. Procurement of Energy for Council Offices and Premises 2017 (including schools) (Decision 01104423)

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report to Members which provided context on the Council's current means of gas and electricity purchasing through framework contracts.

Members were notified the internal authority for the gas contracts would expire at the end of September 2017 and the electricity September 2018. It was further explained that the report, also sought authority for a strategy which would enable the Council to continue for a further four years using flexible procurement frameworks managed by expert procurement teams. This would ensure continuity of supply of bulk purchased gas and electricity and best value.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That the Head of Property and Development be authorised to;**

- **To approve during the next four years up to 1st October 2021, the entering into of gas and electricity contracts called off from the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) frameworks.**
- **Enter into new contracts under alternative frameworks if suitable options become available, subject to compliance with relevant procurement rules in order to secure the continued purchase of gas and electricity for a further period of four years until the end of September 2021.**

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

133. Renewing Contracts with Care Home Providers (Decision 01104424)

Councillor Halden presented the report on behalf of Councillor S. Little, notifying Members that Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act 2014 stipulated that where the care planning process had determined that a person's needs were best met in a care home, the local authority must provide for the person's preferred choice of accommodation, subject to certain conditions.

He assured Portfolio Holders that Councillor S.Litte had ensured the same quality assurance when looking at the contracts as she did across all aspects of Adult Social Care.

RESOLVED That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve a waiver from the constitutional requirement for competitive tendering for the provision of care home services for older people and working age adults, and approve a single sourcing arrangement for new contracts for care home placements commissioned by the Council.**
- 2. Delegate to the Corporate Director for Adults, Housing and Health in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, the authority to award contracts for care home services to meet the assessed needs and preferences of older people and working age adults.**

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

134. Procurement of Essential Capital Repairs to Belhus Swimming Pool (Decision 01104425)

The Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods presented her report detailing to Members that Belhus Park Swimming Pool was part of the leisure complex at

Belhus and was run by Impulse Leisure in buildings that were leased from Thurrock Council.

She continued to inform Members the Council had obligations under the lease agreement to maintain the fabric of the building and that Impulse Leisure was responsible for day to day maintenance. Condition surveys, undertaken for the Council had confirmed the swimming pool was in a poor state of repair which required the Council as landlord to carry out significant essential repairs.

During discussions it was highlighted that the survey recommended that works be undertaken to the roof, heating, ventilation and filtration system. Failure to carry out these works could result in an unplanned closure of the swimming pool.

RESOLVED:

- 1. Approve delegated authority being given to the Corporate Director of Environment and Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhoods, to tender and award works up to a value £1.8m subject to a full tendering and procurement process.**

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

135. Thurrock Better Care Fund Section 75 Agreement (Decision 01104426)

Councillor Halden, the Portfolio Holder for Education and Health, introduced the report on behalf of Councillor S. Little explaining the agreement allowed the creation of a pooled fund with the purpose of promoting the integration of care and support services.

He continued to explain the Council was the 'host' organisation for the pooled fund, which meant that once the Section 75 Agreement had been agreed the Council would commission the relevant community services on behalf of Thurrock CCG and the Council. As the final guidance had not been received from NHS England and because there was no Cabinet until June Cabinet was being asked tonight to agree to delegate the entering of the Section 75 to the relevant Corporate Director in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Agree to the Council entering into the Better Care Fund Section 75 Agreement with NHS Thurrock Clinical Commissioning Group for 2017-2019 based on the terms set out in the 2016-17 Agreement and subject to the Council's agreed budget.**
- 2. Agree to delegate agreement for changes to the Better Care Fund Section 75 Agreement to the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health and Director of Finance and ICT in**

consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's and Adult Social Care.

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

136. Developing and Expanding Assistive Technology for the 21st Century for Social Care Service Users in Thurrock (Decision 01104427)

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health, presented the report explaining essential work had been undertaken to decommission the hard-wired pull cord community alarm system in sheltered housing blocks and general needs community alarm flats, it was further explained these were to be replaced with dispersed personal alarms where required by the service user.

Members were notified that technology had evolved since community alarms were first introduced and had improved allowing people to live in their own homes for longer.

Councillor Halden informed Cabinet that through the scheme the Council was able to abolish the charges in connection with enhanced technology for social care service users. He continued to thank Officers for all of their hard work.

Councillor Coxshall sought clarity as to where the funding came from to enable the Council to abolish the charges for the service. The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health explained that the Chancellor increased the Better Care Fund by £2.8million and this extra income would come from this source as the savings from early intervention would pay for the service.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve:

- 1. To the essential work being undertaken to decommission the hard-wired pull cord community alarm system in sheltered housing blocks and general needs community alarm flats, and to replace them with dispersed personal alarms where required by the service user.**
- 2. To the plan to upgrade the Careline monitoring system which is also obsolete and lacks the functionality required to support the service.**
- 3. To develop the Careline service into a new, enhanced and expanded telecare and assistive technology service, linked to telemedicine services where appropriate;**
- 4. In relation to charging for Careline and the new telecare service:**
 - To make Careline / Assistive Technology and the new telecare service available free of charge to users of adult social care as part of our wider prevention strategy.**

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

137. Key Worker Housing Scheme (Decision 01104428)

Councillor Halden addressed Members advising the Council had experienced difficulties in recruiting staff to key roles in the borough such as teachers and social workers. Members were further informed in order to fill vacant posts the Council and NHS had undertaken a number of recruitment drives both nationally and abroad.

He continued to explain one of the key issues obstructing recruitment of Key Workers was Thurrock's close proximity to London providing easy access to London jobs with weighting allowances.

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Health advised Cabinet of the Council's plan to initially rent eight four bedroom properties. The first proposed to be on the St Chad's site in Tilbury, would be available later in the year. Members were notified that William Edwards Secondary School offered teachers a place to stay while working at the School.

Councillor Gledhill, Leader of the Council and Housing Portfolio Holder, commented on additional challenges Key Workers from abroad may face, for example they may have no experience of living abroad or renting in a foreign country, they may have no family, friends or other contacts in the UK.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cabinet agree to the proposal to assist key workers from outside the borough with shared accommodation, during their first year of employment.**

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

138. Oracle DBA Support, Hosting Services and Technical Support and Maintenance (Decision 01104429)

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Legal Services, presented the report informing Members the ICT service had conducted a review of supplier contracts and believed that an opportunity existed to reduce the overall annual running costs of Oracle by re-tendering both the hosting and support contracts.

Councillor Hebb stated by going out to tender on the contract could potentially save the Council £0.5million.

The Leader of the Council commented that by finding such savings enabled the Council to put funds back into front line services.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- 1. Agree and support the proposal to commission a tender exercise in accordance with EU procedures for the supply of Oracle DBA Support, Hosting Services, Technical Support and Software Maintenance for a period of 2 years with the option to extend the contract by a further 2 years; and**
- 2. Approves 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 and Legal.**

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

The meeting finished at 8.20 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**