

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 9 December 2020 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Monday 21 December 2020 at 5.00pm

Present: Councillors Robert Gledhill (Leader), Shane Hebb (Deputy Leader), Mark Coxshall, James Halden, Deborah Huelin, Barry Johnson, Ben Maney, Allen Mayes and Aaron Watkins

Apologies: Councillor Andrew Jefferies

In attendance: Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Ian Hunt, Assistant Director Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer
Lucy Tricker, Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live-streamed and recorded, with the audio recording being made available on the Council's website.

62. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 November 2020 were approved as a true and correct record.

63. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

64. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

65. Statements by the Leader

The Leader began his statement and outlined the daily change in the levels of COVID-19 across the borough. He stated that he would not give a breakdown of cases by age, but that added that Thurrock currently had 224 positive cases per 100,000. He confirmed that although COVID levels were rising across the borough, the number of COVID cases amongst people over 60 had dropped. He added that neighbouring council's across Essex and London were also facing increased COVID levels. The Leader confirmed that the decision surrounding tiers was made by central government, and Thurrock's tier position would be updated next week. He hoped that Thurrock would remain in Tier 2, and urged residents to practice 'hands, face, space', as well as social distancing and wearing masks in all shops, regardless of how large they were. He added that the Council would be working with businesses to make sure they continued to be COVID-19 compliant.

The Leader moved on and discussed the annual Give a Gift scheme, which ensured disadvantaged children from across the borough received presents at Christmas. He stated that donations were currently being accepted online via an Amazon wish-list, which would close at midnight on Sunday. He stated that the project currently needed donations of gift cards, to make sure that older children could choose presents they really wanted. He stated that all information was on the Council's website, and urged Members to share the scheme on their social media pages. He added that an email from the Communications team was also being sent round, and outlined how easy it was to send a gift to a disadvantaged child. He thanked Thurrock Council staff for their help in organising the scheme, as well as Amazon, and the people who had already donated. He stated that donations had been received from people all around the UK, as well as from people overseas.

The Leader then discussed the free school meals scheme, which would ensure that eligible children received £15 per week over the two weeks' Christmas break. He stated that the scheme was grant funded from central government's Winter Grant Scheme, and would begin to be distributed on 14 December 2020 directly from the schools. He added that this would help ensure 6,200 Thurrock children had enough to eat over the Christmas period, and would be continued for the February half-term too. He stated that Thurrock Council were working with central government and volunteers to ensure the scheme would continue through later half-terms and school breaks. He thanked all charities and volunteers that were working with eligible families to ensure that no child went hungry.

The Leader then outlined the Transforming Homes scheme, which had continued to renovate and improve the homes of 205 families living in the borough's high rises and flats. He stated that new windows had been fitted, as well as communal areas being decorated and new external doors fitted. He gave the example of Derwent Parade, and the benefits that residents had already seen from the scheme in this area. The Leader moved on and stated that the Local Plan consultation had started today, which would create a direction for Thurrock's communities. He stated that the Council were working with the Prince's Foundation on the 'BIMBY Project', which stood for Beauty in my Back Yard. He encouraged all residents to take part in the consultation process, and highlighted how successful the charrette process had been in Aveley.

The Leader then outlined the Clean It, Cut It, Fill It update, and stated that 1938 potholes had been filled, all within target time; 260 tonnes of litter had been cleared; 814 fly-tips had been cleared; and 2342 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued.

The Leader summarised and stated that the discretionary grant scheme was still running and offered help for businesses across Thurrock struggling with the impact of COVID. He urged those businesses that needed support to discuss this with the Council, as the team would work with businesses on an individual basis to make sure they had the support they needed. He added

that individuals struggling to pay their Council bills should also discuss this with the team, as the Council could help set up payment plans and offer support. The Leader then wished everyone across the borough a Merry Christmas and a happy New Year, even though it would not be the same festive season as in previous years. He urged residents to follow government advice and help keep infection rates down over the Christmas period.

66. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

Councillor Johnson stated that there had been recent reports of damp in high-rise accommodation in the borough. He stated that although there was no quick-fix solution, he would work with officers and residents to help tackle the problem. He added that he had asked for a paper to discuss potential options for the high-rises, including short-term, medium-term and long-term solutions. He stated that the team would look at all options, including refurbishing the buildings, rehousing those tenants affected by damp, and potentially pulling down the high-rises. Councillor Johnson commented that he was committed to improving the safety and security for those residents in high-rises. The Leader commented that it was good to see the Council were acting on those reports and moving forward by considering all options. He stated that not all high-rises suffered from damp, and not all flats in those high-rises that did contain damp were affected by the problem. The Leader added that people living in low-rises and other accommodation could also be affected by damp problems.

Councillor Mayes stated that Thurrock had recently been chosen as one of ten sites to benefit from mobile lung health checks. He commented that the project had begun today, with a mobile unit placed at the Grays Hospital site. He mentioned that if you were aged between 55 and 74 years old and were a smoker, you would be contacted by letter or text, asking you to come for a scan at the mobile centre. He stated that the scan would be COVID secure, and could help detect lung cancer early and improve outcomes for residents. Councillor Mayes also stated that the government had also approved the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine, which would be rolled out this week. He stated that Basildon and Thurrock University Hospital had started the vaccination process, and felt pleased to see that the COVID-19 vaccination could help stop the spread of the pandemic. He added that the vaccine would not solve COVID-19 overnight, and people should continue to follow the government guidelines. The Leader added that it was good to see the vaccine being offered to Thurrock residents already, and stated that he would be liaising with those residents to discuss their experiences.

67. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

No petitions had been submitted by members of the public.

68. Questions from Non-Executive Members

No questions had been submitted from non-Executive Members.

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

Other than those items already contained within the agenda, no matters had been referred to Cabinet for consideration by an overview and scrutiny committee.

70. Overview and Scrutiny at Thurrock: A Review (Decision 110537)

Councillor Gerrish introduced the report, as Chair of the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chair of the Scrutiny Review. He began by thanking Democratic Services for their hard work on the project, and stated that it had been a lengthy project due to delays caused by COVID-19 and the need for genuine cross-party participation, particularly from scrutiny Chairs, members from scrutiny, and members of the Executive. He thanked all Members for their participation in the project, and stated that all suggestions raised at the Executive-Scrutiny Workshop had been incorporated within the recommendations. He stated that the aim of the review had been to improve scrutiny, and ensure that scrutiny recommendations resulted in action. He added that although the functions would remain separate, with the Executive making decisions, the wish of the review had been to ensure that scrutiny had a full role, including policy development. He highlighted page 22 of the agenda, which contained the recommendations for the review, which had been divided into structural recommendations that could be implemented now, and developmental recommendations that would take longer to implement. He stated that one of the most important recommendations was the adoption of the Executive-Scrutiny Protocol which would formalise operating guidelines and introduce new ways of working. He stated that the Protocol would provide more formal recognition of scrutiny's feedback at Cabinet and also ensure scrutiny powers, such as invitation of Portfolio Holder's to scrutiny meetings, were developed. He stated that the Executive-Scrutiny Protocol highlighted processes that already existed at Thurrock, such as the Chairs Letter to the Executive, but would ensure that scrutiny could have a larger role within the Council. He stated that due to limitations the review had not considered how members of the public could become more involved in scrutiny, but this could be looked into at a later date, as this report introduced a framework which could be built upon.

Councillor Halden thanked Councillor Gerrish for the report and stated that he felt good scrutiny and good opposition created good governance. He was pleased to see the report and felt that an improved scrutiny function would ensure that the Executive made good decisions, with all Members included in the process. He felt that the scrutiny function depended on individual Chairs working with the Executive, but welcomed the report and its recommendations. He asked if an additional recommendation could be added for the Monitoring Officer to convene a Constitution Working Group in 2021 to ensure the recommendations from the report were embedded within the Council.

Councillor Coxshall again thanked Councillor Gerrish and stated that scrutiny Chairs also needed to work with officers on reports that came before their committee, as well as working with the Portfolio Holder if political questions needed to be answered. He felt that it was a good idea for the scrutiny Chairs to invite the Portfolio Holder before the Committee once a year to undertake a deep dive regarding certain issues. He added that cross-party scrutiny Chairs should also work together to ensure scrutiny was working as a whole.

Councillor Hebb welcomed the report, and agreed with all recommendations. He stated that the Protocol and recommendations would improve clarity regarding the hand-over from the scrutiny function to the Executive. He added that each Chair had a different character and would lead their scrutiny committee differently, so this should be considered when implementing the report. He felt that although the report and recommendations were good, it was a shame that the process had to be formalised, as this would potentially lose some individual characteristics from each Chair and committee. He agreed that Portfolio Holders should attend scrutiny meetings, as he felt this would improve relationships between the Portfolio Holder and their shadow, and would lead to better working. He agreed with the additional recommendation from Councillor Halden regarding the Constitution Working Group looking at the recommendations.

Councillor Huelin thanked officers and the Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their hard work on the report, and felt that the conversation at the Executive-Scrutiny Workshop had been open and led to greater understanding and good recommendations. She felt pleased that recommendations 3 and 4 had been included in the report, and welcomed the conversation between Portfolio Holders and Shadow Portfolio Holders. She also welcomed recommendation 9 regarding the reduction of 'to note' reports at scrutiny, as this could free up time for proper scrutinising. Councillor Hebb questioned whether the 'to note' reports which were emailed to Members could come before public committee if necessary.

Councillor Gerrish stated that different scrutiny Chairs did have different styles, but felt that the Executive-Scrutiny Protocol would ensure Chairs had a clearer understanding of their powers and role, which would be beneficial for the wider Council. He stated that he was happy include the additional recommendation regarding the Constitution Working Group considering the implementation of the report in 2021, and felt this might improve the ongoing conversation. He replied to Councillor Hebb's question that the Chairs would receive specific guidance regarding 'to note' reports, and hoped that Chairs would understand when a report needed to come before Committee for public interest, compared to a report which had no real impact on scrutiny's work and could be separately emailed.

The Leader summarised and felt that it was good to see this report, and hoped it would have a continued impact. He felt that scrutiny should not be a 'talking shop' and should be a part of effective decision-making at the Council. He added that it was good to see a more formalised process for scrutiny comments to get to Cabinet, as well as a strengthening of the relationship

between Portfolio Holder and Shadow Portfolio Holder. He also felt it was a good recommendation for the scrutiny function to have oversight of the motions process, and ensure that each motion is taken seriously and actioned. The Leader supported the additional recommendation made by Councillor Halden regarding the Constitution Working Group, which would ensure all recommendations were enacted.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 as they relate to Cabinet functions, and noted those that pertain to the Overview and Scrutiny function.

2. Approved the draft Executive-Scrutiny Protocol, as attached at Appendix 1.

*Reason for decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call in*

71. Financial Update Quarter 2 2020/21 (Decision: 110538)

Councillor Hebb introduced the report and stated that central government had recently made a top-level announcement regarding government funding for Council's, but Thurrock were currently waiting for the detail of this to fully understand the Council's position. He stated that Thurrock were currently in discussions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the outcome of these discussions would be known next week. He stated that central government's spending review would affect Thurrock's position in a positive way, but would not fix all financial problems currently being faced. He added that the 2% increase limit for Council tax was still in place, as well as the 3% increase limit for the social care precept, which was now more important than ever due to COVID. He highlighted that the Council's current calculations suggested financial pressures in the budget, and although the COVID vaccine was moving forward, financial pressures due to the pandemic would continue to be felt for years to come.

Councillor Hebb stated that since 2018, the Council had always had a balanced budget for four out the five years on the Medium Term Financial Strategy, but the Council were now in a deficit of £33.6million over the next four years due to COVID. He stated that the next financial year was when the Council would experience the most financial pressure, with a funding gap of £19million. He added that although some Council's around the country had had to bring an emergency in-year budget to their Full Council meetings, Thurrock were not in that position, although the Council would be setting its budget up until the eleventh hour, which was the case around the country. Councillor Hebb added that Thurrock were working with central government to find ideas to tackle the budget deficit, but highlighted that some ideas would not work. He commented that the Council wished to do whatever was in their control to reduce the deficit without affecting services to residents, or increasing council tax.

Councillor Hebb added that had the pandemic not occurred then Thurrock's budget would have broken even. Councillor Hebb then outlined current service pressures, such as Children's directorate which was currently experiencing a pressure of £0.9million, or 2% of their overall total budget. He stated that this was due to an increase in the number of children presenting to the service, and an increase in the number of complex cases. He mentioned that Thurrock were not currently planning any new investments, as there was currently no market for new investments and confidence had decreased. He stated that all Councillors had voted for the investment strategy which had helped maintain the delivery of non-statutory services and reduced the financial burden on residents. He added that for the sixth year running the Council's audit had been signed-off by external auditors as being within target, and this had also been agreed by the Standards and Audit Committee.

Councillor Hebb then added that the Council were currently experiencing £15m in-year pressure, although Thurrock were receiving SR20 support. He added that Thurrock were also experiencing £4.3m in adult social care pressure, which would increase post-COVID, as well as £2.2m spent on rough sleeping accommodation, which had ensured that those homeless residents in Thurrock had been kept safe during the pandemic.

Councillor Hebb commented that the capital programme had been paused, which would provide £13m in savings, and the capital budgets were also under review. He stated that as of 30 September 2020, Thurrock had borrowed £3bn, and investments had been agreed by all Councillors in 2017, 2018 and 2019. He stated that Thurrock had also recently had discussions with the Public Works Loan Board, but this was not to borrow for new investments. He summarised and stated that although there were ongoing financial pressures from COVID-19, the Council were in a good position due to increased reserves.

Councillor Halden commented and stated that he was proud of the social care team, and thanked the Corporate Director of Adults, Housing and Health; the Corporate Director of Children's Social Care; and all frontline staff for their hard work throughout the pandemic. He stated that even during this difficult time, the Council were still supporting those in need in the borough, such as through tax cuts for foster carers, the Resiliency Fund, and new housing for the Head Start Housing project. He added that the consultation regarding domiciliary care had ended today, which would help reduce market threats. Councillor Halden added that the social care teams had a difficult challenge ahead, as the economic impacts from COVID affected people's social situations, and increased the number of domestic violence and mental health incidents across the borough. He stated that although government grants would help with the COVID-19 pressures, and social care market would continue to see increased demand and more complex care cases to deal with.

The Leader stated that the Council had been in a good financial position before the pandemic had hit, and although government grants did help, they did not fully cover the financial pressures being experienced by the Council.

He added that the Council were being affected by the pandemic in numerous different ways, such as an increase in people claiming Local Council Tax Scheme support; a reduction in the number of houses being built, so no increase in council tax; and a reduction in car parking fees. He stated that the additional pressures had been unexpected and significant, and Thurrock would have to pay for 75% of its lost income, with 25% being paid by central government. He stated that Council expenditure would need to be rolled back, but projects that had already been started would continue.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Commented on the MTFs and the forecast outturn position for 2020/21

2. Agreed that Thurrock's 2021/22 schools funding formula be implemented as stated in section 16. This being consistent with Cabinet's decision made in February 2020.

*Reason for decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

72. Environmental Health Jurisdiction: DP World Distribution Park (Decision: 110539)

The Leader introduced the report and stated that the Corporation of London was the Council for London's square mile, and also had responsibility for port health matters along the Thames, which included environmental health at DP World. He stated that the jurisdiction of the Corporation of London was limited to the Port, and currently did not include the new distribution park. The Leader stated that this could cause numerous delays and multiple copies of paperwork as goods moved between the port and distribution park. He stated that this report would extend the Corporation of London's jurisdiction to include the distribution park, and would therefore ensure that paperwork was not multiplied and procedures were simplified.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Authorised the Director of Place, in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour, enter into an agreement, on behalf of Thurrock Council, with the Corporation of London to transfer jurisdiction for Environmental Health Matters pertaining to food law enforcement within the DP World Distribution Park from Thurrock Council to the Corporation of London.

*Reason for decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

73. Housing Development Delivery Approach (Decision: 110540)

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report and stated that in 2016 Thurrock had introduced a principle that allowed affordable homes to be built for local people. He added that this paper helped Thurrock deliver this principle and build more homes. He stated that the Local Plan was also moving into its next stage, as the Council considered how it could be delivered. He stated that this report advocated a mixed delivery approach, which would ensure that even if a project were delayed, the policy as a whole would not also be delayed. He mentioned that this report would also ensure more council homes were built, which would be low-cost or low-rent and a further commitment regarding this would be made in the future. He summarised and stated that 2021 would be the Year of the Local Plan, and urged residents and businesses to engage with the ongoing consultation.

Councillor Johnson thanked officers for their hard work on the report and felt that a mixed delivery approach would be the best way forward. He stated that the report had been through the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and progress had started on seven of the sites presented before them.

Councillor Hebb thanked Councillors Johnson and Coxshall for their work on the report, and felt it was good to see diversification of delivery which looked at the whole approach, and ensured an objective could still be delivered even if projects were delayed. He stated that it was also good to see a collaborative approach with different market partners. Councillor Coxshall highlighted that a single approach could cause delays, as seen with the development on Belmont Road. He felt it also showed the Council were being transparent with their plans and policy delivery objectives.

Councillor Halden felt that Thurrock were now going further than before regarding their commitment to building council houses, and added that Thurrock were also providing social value housing, such as through the Head Start Housing scheme and specialist housing for adults with autism. He felt that it was good to see more diverse options, which would help keep a child with special needs, or an older vulnerable person, in their community and receiving the right care.

The Leader summarised and encouraged residents and Members to get involved in the Local Plan consultation to ensure that 2021 was the Year of the Local Plan. He agreed that it was good to see various housing models, including affordable housing, being adopted across the borough. The Leader also highlighted that the Local Plan did not just focus on housing, but also included places of entertainment, shopping and schooling.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Agreed to adopt a mixed approach to Housing Development Delivery, in order to improve the Council's capacity to increase its delivery rate.**
- 2. Noted that potential schemes will be brought forward for approval in line with the Council's Constitution in due course.**

*Reason for decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

74. Sheltered Housing Decommissioning - Alexandra Road/Dunlop Road

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and stated that it presented a clear, forward approach. He highlighted that in March 2019 the communal entryways had been examined and the team had found that 40 properties in Alexandra Court did not meet current standards, and this had hampered remedial works due to take place. He stated that three options had been presented in the 2019 report, and had concluded that even with renovation works, some flats would still not have suitable access, and the need to move residents would still occur. He stated that the report had been to Housing Overview and Scrutiny who had been reassured that services would not be withdrawn until all residents had left the premises. Councillor Johnson stated that all residents would be part of the Local Lettings Plan, and would receive priority for the Beaconsfield Place development, which was only 400m away from their current properties. He stated that if residents did not wish to move to Beaconsfield Place then they would receive the highest priority on the Council's waiting list. He added that each resident would also receive a dedicated officer who would support them through all aspects of the moving process. He stated that the team had undertaken detailed consultation with the residents and Ward Councillors, and feedback had been included within the report. Councillor Johnson summarised and stated that once all the flats had been voided, the site would be considered for temporary accommodation or for redevelopment through the housing delivery approach.

Councillor Mayes stated that as local Ward Councillor for the area, he was pleased to see the report brought before Cabinet, and had provided his feedback on the report. He stated that he had visited the site and accessibility for residents had not been great, but highlighted that all residents he had spoken to were happy to move to the new development.

Councillor Hebb highlighted point 4.2 of the report and felt that it would be good if the site was considered for temporary accommodation, as Thurrock lacked this facility. He stated that the consultation appeared to be very detailed, and 36 out of 40 residents had been contacted in some way, even during the pandemic. He also felt it was good to see 71% of residents wished to move to the new development, and hoped all residents would feel supported during this transition.

The Leader summarised and thanked the housing team and Councillor Johnson for the report. He felt that Alexandra Court was an old building, and although it had been ahead of its time when built, it was now out-dated. He stated that the new development would include indoor communal spaces, outdoor gardens, and new innovations such as a mobility scooter storage area, which would benefit the residents.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the proposal to decommission the Sheltered Housing properties at Alexandra Road and Dunlop Road in Tilbury.

2. Noted and commented on the proposal to implement a local lettings plan for the new housing development for older people at Calcutta Road, which gives priority to tenants affected by the above proposed decommissioning.

75. Independent Review of the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnership (LSCP)

Councillor Halden introduced the report and stated that it committed the Council to transparent working practices to ensure child safeguarding across the borough. He commented that a full-scale, independent, external expert had been given carte blanche to review the service, and had been given the opportunity to speak with all partners and front-line staff. He stated that the full report and recommendations were included in the agenda, and no red-flags had been found, which was in-line with the Council's recent Ofsted rating of 'good'. He mentioned that some areas of learning had been outlined and the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee had welcomed and agreed with the recommendations. He highlighted the recommendation regarding the appointment of an independent Chair, as previously the Chairmanship had rotated between the three partners. Councillor Halden felt this system did not provide the Council with the necessary 'critical friend' outlook, and highlighted that although this had never caused problems in the past, a new independent Chair would provide the Council with the ability to act and hold individuals to account better. He stated that at the proposed annual review, the capacity of the partnership would be assessed, which would allow the partnership to also review near-miss cases. He stated that this would mean the Council would not just focus on LPR's and SCR's, but also learning points from those cases that did not meet LPR criteria, but was classified as a near-miss.

Councillor Hebb commented that an independent Chair would have lots of benefits for the partnership, as it would allow the three partners who had previously been rotating chairs to focus on the content of the meeting, rather than simply managing the meeting. Councillor Halden stated that by having an independent Chair it would also help to allay public fears, as Thurrock would now be independently scrutinised. He added that this would also help improve the social care function and the service as a whole.

The Leader summarised and stated that he had worked closely with Councillor Halden on this report, and felt it was good to see an independent Chair being appointed, as this would improve transparency across the service. He added that it was also good to see the partnership expand to look at near-miss cases as well as fatalities, as the service could learn and improve from these near-tragedies.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Commented on the independent review of the LSCP and supported acting upon the recommendations of the independent review.

2. Supported the establishment of an Independent Chair to help further the partnerships work and provide a critical friend function to all partners.

3. Requested a year's review to ensure that the partnership has the capacity to proactively review relevant cases of concern, and not just formal SCR's/LPR's.

76. Purfleet Centre Regeneration (Decision: 110542)

The Leader stated that the report contained exempt appendices, and highlighted that if Members wished to discuss these, then a vote would be undertaken and the meeting would enter exempt session. All Members agreed to this, as well as keeping all necessary papers in the agenda confidential.

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report and stated that the regeneration of Purfleet had been long overdue, but was pleased to see that £150m of funding had been received for its regeneration, with £75m coming from the Council and the rest coming from central government. He added that PTRL would now begin the process of regenerating Purfleet, including new houses, new services, new entertainment facilities, new infrastructure, and a new High Street.

Councillor Halden endorsed the comments made by Councillor Coxshall and felt that it was PTRL's last chance, as lots of services were dependent on spades going into the ground now, such as the NHS waiting to deliver the new Purfleet Integrated Medical Centre. Councillor Hebb added that the contract had been awarded in October 2015 and now needed to be delivered. Councillor Coxshall shared the frustration of other Members, but felt that he was looking forward to seeing the regeneration of the area. He stated that this would include a new train station, new secondary and primary school, and new riverside area. He stated that residents had been included in the process and now wanted the regeneration to begin.

The Leader summarised and stated that Purfleet-on-Thames needed to be regenerated, including new infrastructure such as the new Integrated Medical Centre, new school and new shops. He stated that £150m had been invested in the project, and he now wanted to see PTRL deliver and put spades in the ground. He stated that progress reports would be sent to Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee who would monitor the ongoing developments.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the progress of the scheme in recent months and, in particular, the positive Best Consideration sign off and the success of the HIF

application in securing £75.1m of Central Government investment into the borough.

2. Noted the key terms of the HIF Grant Determination Agreement and delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the s.151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Strategic Planning to negotiate final terms and enter into the Grant Determination Agreement with Homes England.

3. Approved the proposed variations described in Appendix 2 and delegated authority to the Director of Place, in consultation with the s.151 Officer and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Strategic Planning to agree any final terms and document and enter into a Deed of Variation to formally amend the Development Agreement in line with these proposals.

*Reason for decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

77. Purchase and Development of Land in Tilbury (Decision: 110543)

Councillor Johnson introduced the report and stated that the new diverse housing delivery approach would help to deliver 27 new houses on the site, with the help of the private sector in planning and delivery. He stated that currently the land was vacant and in poor condition, but the report would help to bring high-quality, modern, energy-efficient, and sustainable homes to the area. He stated that council tenants would still have the opportunity to buy their homes under the right-to-buy scheme, but the cost floor rule would apply for the first 15 years after being built, meaning that the house price would not be less than the cost of construction. He added that this report would not impact on the general fund budget, as it would be funded through the HRA, and would help regenerate and re-develop the area.

Councillor Coxshall agreed that this would help deliver a mixed approach to housing, and would deliver high-quality housing in Tilbury, that would encourage private sector investment in the area. He stated that the development would be good quality and would last long-term. He commented that the Tilbury Town Board would also be working to regenerate the area around the Civic Square and town centre.

Councillor Hebb felt it was good to regenerate this site in Tilbury, especially as the development would be of good standard and would diversify the approach. The Leader agreed with the statements, and agreed that high quality housing was necessary in the area. He felt the approach was innovative, but had some questions that would require Cabinet to enter exempt session.

A vote was held and all Cabinet Members agreed to enter exempt session.

An exempt session of Cabinet began at 21.03

Cabinet reconvened in public session at 21.26

The Leader and all Members agreed with the recommendations, and added to recommendation 2 that delegated authority also be in consultation with the Section 151 Officer, Cabinet Member for Housing, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, and the Leader.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the acquisition and development of land identified in Appendix A.

2. Delegated authority to the Director of Place and Director of Adults, Housing and Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Strategic Planning, Leader of the Council, and Section 151 Officer, to commence negotiations and seek to agree final terms for the acquisition of the site and construction of dwellings and to enter into any such agreements necessary to conclude the acquisition and terms of construction.

*Reason for decision: as outlined in the report
This decision is subject to call-in*

The meeting finished at 9.28 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