

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on 9 March 2022 at 7.00 pm

The deadline for call-ins is Monday 21 March 2022 at 5.00pm

- Present:** Councillors Robert Gledhill (Leader), Shane Hebb (Deputy Leader), Mark Coxshall, Jack Duffin, Deborah Huelin, Barry Johnson and Ben Maney
- Apologies:** Councillors Andrew Jefferies, Allen Mayes and Luke Spillman
- In attendance:** Lyn Carpenter, Chief Executive
Matthew Boulter, Democratic Services and Governance Manager, and Interim Monitoring Officer
Lucy Tricker, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the recording to be made available on the Council's website.

98. Minutes

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 9 February 2022 were approved as a correct record.

99. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

100. Declaration of Interests

The were no interests declared.

101. Statements by the Leader

The Leader began his statement by describing how Thurrock Council had joined other local authorities across the country in flying the Ukrainian flag as a show of solidarity as they fought to retain their freedoms. He commented that Councillors from across the Chamber had come together to show their unequivocal support for the brave Ukrainians, and to share their disgust at the brutal and unjustified attack from the Russian Federation. He commented that the Ukrainians had proven how hard they were willing to fight for their freedoms and democracy. He felt they were brave, determined and resolute in their opposition to the invasion from Russian aggressors. He commented that Thurrock had published information on its website to show residents the best way to support the Ukrainians, such as by donating to trusted charities who were working hard on the ground.

The Leader moved on and stated that COVID restrictions had now come to an end in England, and both Scotland and Wales were scheduled to end their COVID restrictions at the end of the month. He explained that the country was now moving to a position of being able to live with COVID, and thanked residents for the dedication and sacrifices over the past two years to allow the country to get to this position. The Leader explained that although the virus still existed, he hoped it would become endemic and urged residents to get vaccinated. He stated that officers and the NHS were continuing to champion the vaccine in local communities by providing information to allow residents to make informed decisions and creating community-based pop-up vaccine centres across the borough in coming weeks.

The Leader commented that the first tree for the Queen had been planted in South Ockendon a couple of weeks' ago, and the Mayor would be planting another tree this Friday. He explained that over the course of the coming weeks a new tree would be planted in every ward. He stated that Ward Members had selected both the type of tree and the location, and these were being planted to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee as part of the national Queen's Green Canopy scheme, with each one having a plaque to mark the occasion. He commented that the Council were committed to ensuring appropriate trees were planted in suitable areas throughout the borough to create natural sanctuaries for residents to enjoy. He mentioned that as well as the trees being planted for the Queen's Jubilee, the Council would also be planting more than 3,400 new whips and trees thanks to £285,000 funding from the Forestry Commission.

The Leader summarised and outlined the Clean It, Cut It and Fill It update. He stated that since April 2021: 3,175 potholes had been filled, more than 99% within agreed timeframes; 1,586 fly-tips had been cleared; 255 Fixed Penalty Notices had been issued and eight vehicles seized in relation to this crime; and 3,965 Fixed Penalty Notices issued for offences such as littering and spitting.

102. Briefings on Policy, Budget and Other Issues

Councillor Huelin explained that she had recently visited the new Cromwell Road care centre, which she felt provided an excellent service for users. She stated that the new centre had transformed old administration areas into areas for service users including: a designated high-tech games room; a craft room; hairdressers; pamper room; a virtual befriending service; and a wheelchair friendly kitchen that could be utilised by both professionals and residents. She explained that the centre also had landscaped gardens, an outdoor gym, and was open for longer hours in the evenings and weekends. Councillor Huelin added that the meals on wheels service was currently in place on site, and this was being delivered by a high-quality microenterprise.

103. Petitions submitted by Members of the Public

No petitions had been submitted by members of the public.

104. Questions from Non-Executive Members

The Leader stated that one question had been submitted by a Non-Executive Member, and this would be heard during the item to which it related.

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

Other than those items already contained within the agenda, no items had been referred to the Cabinet for their consideration by an overview and scrutiny committee. The Leader explained that as members of the public were in attendance, these items would be heard first.

106. Petition 557 - Renaming of B1335

Councillor Maney introduced the report and stated that Cabinet had adopted the Naming and Numbering of Streets and Highways Assets Policy in July 2021, which enabled the Council to receive requests for the naming of roads, including after living or deceased people, which Cabinet would then determine. He explained that at November's Full Council, Councillor Van Day had submitted a petition with over 230 signatures, calling for the B1335, Aveley Bypass, to be renamed in honour of the late Lance Corporal Nicky Mason. Councillor Maney stated that Lance Corporal Mason had been serving in Afghanistan with the 2nd battalion Parachute Regiment when he was killed by an explosion in September 2008 at the age of 26. He stated that as a lifelong Aveley resident he knew of Lance Corporal Mason, albeit not closely, and felt that his loss had greatly impacted the tightknit Aveley community, and impacted even more so his family including his father Dennis and brother Lee. He added that both Dennis and Lee had done so much to support ex-service members and to keep Lance Corporal Mason's memory alive, and both fully supported the call to rename the Aveley Bypass as proposed.

Councillor Maney felt that the public outpouring of support for Councillor Van Day's petition was evidence that time had not erased the sense of loss felt by the community, and the petition had continued to attract more submissions even after its presentation to Full Council last year. He explained that even though there had been overwhelming public support for the proposal, one objection had been received from one of the local community forums. He felt that the objection was not a view shared by the wider community and was not supported by any of the three Aveley Ward Councillors, who had been directly elected to represent their residents. He mentioned that the longer established Aveley forum, chaired by Rev. Alan Field, had previously approached the Council with a desire to rename a road or area after Lance Corporal Mason. Councillor Maney felt that the hundreds of names added to the petition outweighed the sole objection received. He asked Cabinet to evaluate the objection and urged Cabinet members to respectfully disagree.

Councillor Maney explained that the Aveley bypass was the main route through Aveley and would have been well known to Lance Corporal Mason, who would have had to cross the road many times enroute to his local

secondary school. He stated that Lance Corporal Mason had served directly in the fight against Islamic extremism and had made the ultimate sacrifice whilst doing so. He felt that those who fought terrorists overseas did so in order that people back at home, including Aveley residents, could live beyond the reach of extremists. Councillor Maney felt that it would be a fitting memorial to Lance Corporal Mason if the Aveley bypass were to be renamed and bear his name, and would also be a comfort to Lance Corporal Mason's family to see him commemorated in this way. He summarised and asked Cabinet Members to consider the proposal, and if minded to agree, decide upon a new name for the road.

Councillor Van Day asked his question as follows: "*will the Portfolio Holder agree to take into consideration Lance Corporal Nicky Mason's father's wish for how the old Aveley bypass be renamed?*" Councillor Maney replied that the wishes of Lance Corporal Mason's family would be at the heart of the decision taken by Cabinet, all of whom would work with the family.

Lance Corporal Mason's brother, Mr. Lee Mason, was invited to speak by the Leader and felt that the most fitting name for the road would be Lance Corporal Nicky Mason Way.

Councillor Huelin recognised that the forum who were objecting to the proposal formed only part of the Aveley community, and both forums from Aveley had been involved in discussions regarding the proposal. She welcomed the petition that had been submitted to Full Council by Councillor Van Day, which she felt included voices from across the community. Councillor Coxshall queried why there were two forums in Aveley. He also apologised to the Mason family for the delay in getting to this stage, and asked the Portfolio Holder as to why there had been a delay. Councillor Huelin explained that although there were currently two forums in Aveley, officers would restart their work with these forums after purdah to see if they could be united. Councillor Maney replied that there had been a delay as the Council's previous position did not support the naming of roads after people living or deceased. He confirmed that he had not personally agreed with this policy and therefore the new policy had been agreed by Cabinet last year. He felt that the new policy recognised deserving people, and thanked Councillor Van Day, the Mason family, and the Aveley community for their hard work on this proposal. The Leader agreed that the new policy recognised deserving people.

Cabinet agreed that the B1335, Aveley Bypass, should be renamed to 'Lance Corporal Nicky Mason Way'.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Agreed to rename the Aveley Bypass as Lance Corporal Nicky Mason Way.

Councillor Van Day left the meeting at 7.27pm.

107. Lower Thames Crossing Task Force Update Report (Decision: 110606)

Councillor Massey introduced the report and stated that it provided an update on the work of the Task Force from November 2021 until January 2022. He stated that the November meeting had been postponed until December, and the Task Force had received a presentation from the Transport Action Network, which had detailed various legal challenges which could relate to the LTC, for example changes in the government's climate and environmental regulations. He explained that questions had been asked regarding the World Health Organisation (WHO) regulations on PM2.5, the Climate Change Act and low carbon budgets. He felt that electric vehicles would play an important part in the future of the UK travel network, and these were discussed by the Task Force in relation to the LTC, particularly possible future options relating to LGVs and HGVs becoming non-petrol/diesel.

Councillor Massey moved on and explained that the December agenda included an update on the Hatch Report, which had become a regular item for the Task Force. He stated that some of the Hatch measures were proving difficult to secure, and the Task Force had raised concern regarding smart speed limits, legacy worker accommodation, air quality and noise pollution along the route, and HGV routes during construction phase. He explained that work was ongoing between the Council and National Highways regarding these mitigation measures. Councillor Massey explained that carbon hubs were also discussed during the meeting, but more definition was required regarding how they would be incorporated into the LTC, as well as potential issues regarding the historic landfill along the coast.

Councillor Massey explained that at the January meeting of the Task Force they had discussed the impact of the Thames Freeport on the LTC, mainly around the local road connectivity to the LTC. He stated that the Council were working with Thames Gateway, Port of Tilbury, and DP World to discuss the implications of the LTC. He explained that, as suggested by Cabinet, the main areas of discussion had included the A13 Manorway and A13 Orsett Cock junctions, as the current plans were not seen as optimal by the Council, which could lead to an increase in traffic around the ports. He stated that one road that both the Council and the ports would be pushing for in Development Consent Order version 2 (DCOv2) would be the Tilbury Link Road, as this would provide some local connectivity to the LTC. He commented that the Task Force remained concerned regarding the lack of available baseline health impact and traffic data from National Highways, as much of this information may not be available until after DCOv2 submission. He stated that concern was also raised across the Task Force regarding the expected future consultation that could be held during purdah. He summarised and stated that the Task Force would be meeting on Monday 14 March, and would be discussing the Orsett Cock/A13 junction, as well as the latest proposed consultation.

The Leader confirmed that he had written to National Highways regarding their suggestion of holding a consultation during purdah. Councillor Coxshall agreed that there should be no consultation during the purdah period and

thanked Cabinet and the LTC Task Force for their sustained pressure on the matter. He highlighted that the new Freeport required sufficient connectivity for both residents and businesses, for example at the Asda roundabout. He felt that the LTC needed to include provision for local connectivity as this could benefit both residents and the port, for example additional connections and junctions between the local road network and the proposed LTC. The Leader thanked Councillor Massey for this consistent attendance at Cabinet to provide regular update on the work of the Task Force, and felt pleased to see the approach the Task Force were taking and the feedback they were receiving.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the work of the Task Force

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

Councillor Massey left the meeting at 7.36pm.

108. Financial Update - Quarter 3 2021/22 (Decision: 110607)

Councillor Hebb introduced the report and stated that it provided an update on the Council's finances for quarter 3 2021/22. He explained that this report was focussed on Children's Social Care as there remained a pressure of £0.385m on the service. He explained that there were positive controls surrounding this pressure and officers were following correct processes, but the pressure required further mitigation. He added that the Children's Social Care budget had been affected by two recent unregulated placements, but assured Cabinet that detailed work was ongoing by officers, which included innovative new ideas to reduce the pressure on the budget caused by unregulated placements. Councillor Hebb moved on and stated that the number of Looked After Children in Thurrock had reduced by nine over quarter 3, but this had not affected budgetary pressures as some individual cases cost more than others, due to the services required by some children. He added that there was also a service pressure of £0.6m due to the number of cases of children in remand. He thanked all council departments for their hard work on the budget, which could ensure that the most vulnerable in Thurrock received the correct care. He urged residents to apply for the Local Council Tax Scheme if they were struggling to pay their council tax, and to contact the council if they were unable to pay any fines.

Councillor Hebb moved on and outlined the capital programme. He stated that in 2021/22 the capital budget had been £32.4m, of which £27m had been spent and approximately £7m remained. He stated that the remaining £7m would be reprofiled for the next quarter. He highlighted point 7.9 of the report which outlined Thurrock's ambitious future plans for the high rises in Blackshots. He described how this could be a difficult process, but would remain a focus for the council moving forward. He stated that the breadth of services provided by local authorities around the country continued to

increase, but explained that this was an issue that was being explored by the Local Government Association and other organisations.

Councillor Johnson explained that although there remained pressures within the Children's Social Care budget officers worked hard to ensure that every child received a good level of care, and children remained at the forefront of the team. Councillor Huelin thanked the Adult Social Care and Transformation teams for their hard work mitigating pressures within the Adult Social Care budgets whilst still improving and transforming services. She explained that the Council had continued to deliver services to residents throughout the pandemic, and were seeing an increased rate of residents requiring longer-term care. She explained that officers were working closely with the NHS to ensure appropriate preventative care was provided when necessary.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Commented on the forecast financial outturn position for 2021/22.

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

109. Report on Asset Related Savings (Decision: 110608)

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report and stated that it provided Cabinet with an update on the Thameside Complex, and a statement had been submitted to Cabinet and Corporate Overview and Scrutiny on behalf of Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions. He stated that lots of work had been undertaken on this proposal, which would hopefully be completed within the next few months. He felt that transferring the asset to the community would improve the arts and culture offer within Thurrock. He explained that the Council were working with the relevant community groups to ensure good governance and legal standing surrounding the transfer, which he felt would also help the community groups apply for funding in the future. Councillor Coxshall assured Cabinet that the Thameside continued to take bookings and would have opportunities to apply for external funding in future. Councillor Huelin added that the conversation between the Council, community groups and other partners continued to move forward, and thanked officers and community members for their hard work. Councillor Hebb agreed that transferring the Thameside Theatre to the community would improve arts in Thurrock, and felt pleased to see that the proposal would have good governance.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted the main points from the discussions with the community and through the ongoing wider Roundtable meetings.

2. Supported the relevant Portfolio Holders and Officers to continue with further discussions with the community over the future of the Thameside building and related services, and that a recommendation is made to Cabinet for final decision no later than July 2022.

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

110. CO1 - Redevelopment Update (Decision: 110610)

Councillor Coxshall introduced the report and stated that the proposal consisted of approximately 56 one-bedroom flats and 26 two-bedroom flats on the current CO1 site. He explained that there had been numerous options available to deliver the site, but if the recommendations were agreed by Cabinet, then the site would be delivered, owned and managed solely through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and would be solely high-quality council housing. He stated that this scheme would increase the amount of council housing stock available, and would work towards the Council's objective of 'fewer buildings, better services'. Councillor Hebb added that the scheme would rationalise the Council's assets as it would reduce the amount of office space, improve energy efficiency, and improve services, whilst also reducing the Council's cost. He stated that the proposal would improve housing for local residents and would provide additional homes.

The Leader stated that housing officers, Members and the Portfolio Holder were currently working on delivering a number of schemes, including the redevelopment of Blackshots, by demolishing the existing high-rises in the area and building new houses and apartments. He stated that the detail surrounding this scheme would be presented to overview and scrutiny and Cabinet in the future, but would work to improve housing for residents in the Blackshots tower blocks. He explained that there were currently three high-rises comprising of 168 flats, 155 of which were council owned and 13 privately owned. He stated that the Council would work with the leaseholders of these flats as the project developed. The Leader commented that residents in the high-rises would be decanted into new housing in the area, which would be formed of both houses and flats, ensuring different provision was accessible to residents. He added that officers and Members were also re-opening proposals regarding the high-rises in Grays and Tilbury, as these high-rises could also suffer from problems with damp and mould. He summarised and stated that the housing team and Cabinet would be considering the whole of the HRA and council housing stock across the borough.

Councillor Maney thanked the Leader for those reassurances regarding the future of the Blackshots estate. He stated that as Ward Councillor for the area he regularly met with housing officers and was working hard to ensure the tower blocks were demolished and good housing built for those residents. He understood that this could be a long journey, as it could be difficult to demolish the tower blocks, but felt that the Council were moving in the right direction with the project. He added that some of the high-rises in the borough, including the tower blocks in Grays, suffered from problems with damp and mould, as the high-rises were at end of life and needed replacing. Councillor Coxshall added that any new high-rises that were considered in the future needed to be of good quality design and well-maintained. He

commented that some Thurrock residents enjoyed living in tower blocks due to the sense of community, and felt that there were opportunities for new high-density housing options in places such as town centres. The Leader commented that high-rises could have nice views, and modern high-rises may not suffer as much with damp and mould due to modern building standards. He summarised and stated that this could be a long project and work would be ongoing in the meantime to maintain the current high-rises.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the proposed redevelopment of CO1 be 100% funded through the HRA.

2. Approved that the scheme proposed is to be directly delivered by the Council and the properties be owned, managed and let by the Council through the HRA.

3. Noted that consultants are appointed to take the scheme through to planning submission subject to formal approvals and consultation.

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

111. Parking Policy and Strategy, Parking Design & Development Standards, and Parking Enforcement Strategy (Decision: 110611)

Councillor Maney introduced the report and stated that it sought endorsement for a suite of documents which, if approved, would shape the Council's policy and approach in respect of vehicle parking in the borough. He stated that it was important that the Council implemented an updated Parking Policy and Strategy document, along with a set of Parking Standards, in order to meet current national objectives and keep pace with changing transport trends and vehicle ownership. He stated that the two documents contained within the report would assist the Council in ensuring the right level of parking provision across the borough and make sure it was of appropriate design and standard. Councillor Maney explained that the documents would also guide the parking requirements for future developments, both residential and commercial, and would form part of the Local Plan. He stated that the third document presented in the report outlined the Parking Enforcement Strategy, which would allow the Council to be clear and responsive to parking issues across Thurrock.

Councillor Maney stated that all three documents had been subject to public consultation and had broadly attracted support. He stated that residents had voiced a greater desire to see verge and pavement parking enforced more widely, and mentioned that officers were currently in the process of designing a number of pilot schemes which would prohibit anti-social parking in selected areas. He summarised and stated that the report and accompanying documents had been considered by the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee twice, and a number of their

recommendations had been included in the report. He thanked the Committee and the Chair for their hard work scrutinising the report, which would ensure the strategies and principles it contained worked for residents and businesses.

The Leader thanked officers and the Portfolio Holder for their hard work on the report and felt it good to see that HGV no parking areas were being proposed. He felt that this issue could cause problems for residents as HGVs could park in residential areas for numerous days, and hoped the pilot scheme preventing this issue was successful. The Leader highlighted page 101 of the agenda, and felt that as the level of car ownership increased across the borough, the level of parking provision in new homes and flats should also increase. He commented that parking provision should be realistic and managed through the documents in the report. He also felt that the number of cars per household allowed to park in controlled parking zones should be increased from three to four or five, as the majority of households across the country often had more than three cars. He also wished to see passive provision for electric vehicle (EV) charging in new homes built across Thurrock. He felt that the wording for this proposal be changed from 'could' to 'should' as this would ensure that new homes would be future-proof and would help to increase the number of EV's in Thurrock. He highlighted page 126 of the agenda and felt it was good to see the documents also increased the number of on-street EV charging stations in town centres and residential areas, and felt pleased to see the Council were partnering with Connect Kerb on this scheme.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the Parking Policy and Strategy document for adoption by Thurrock Council.

2. Approved the Parking Design & Development Standards document adoption by Thurrock Council.

3. Approved the Parking Enforcement Strategy document for adoption by Thurrock Council.

Reason for decision: as outlined in the report

This decision is subject to call-in

112. Integrated Transport Block Capital Programme 2022/23 & Highways Maintenance Allocation and Programme 2022/23 (Decision: 110612)

Councillor Maney introduced the report and stated that the Council had a duty to report on the 2021/22 grant funding that had been received from the Department for Transport, and to agree the programme allocations in line with transport priorities. He stated that the 2022/23 Integrated Transport Block allocation amounted to £978,000 which would be used to fund a range of transport projects such as road safety engineering and improved EV charging facilities. He highlighted the table at point 3.3 of the report outlined the coming

year's programme and the funding allocations. He mentioned that recommendation 3.3 of the report did allow for variations of these funding allocations where necessary in accordance with the delegated authority process.

Councillor Maney stated that the Council would also manage a proposed £1.383m grant settlement in the form of the Highways Maintenance Block allocation, and stated that this money was not ringfenced and allowed for some flexibility in terms of spend which was outlined in appendix 2 of the report. He stated that both programmes within the report required Cabinet approval and would be delivered in line with the Council's Transport Strategy and Assets Management Strategy. He added that although any aspect of the ITB could not formally be approved by Cabinet, the Safer Routes to School programme had been a central part of the ITB programme for many years, and had helped improve safety at schools across the borough. He stated that the Safer Routes to School programme would remain unchanged for the 2022/23 financial year and would receive a £250,000 allocation. Councillor Maney explained that he had asked officers to consider whether the scheme should be absorbed into a broader programme which he felt could better capture other council priorities, whilst ensuring school safety. He stated that work would be undertaken on this over the coming months to establish whether this should be reflected in next year's ITB report.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Approved the ITB Capital Programme allocations, policy and prioritisation direction for the DfT ITB Block funding under the key policy areas of Road Safety Engineering, Safer Routes to School, Area Intervention Programme and EV charging programmes.

2. Approved the Highways Maintenance Block Allocation Programme (as detailed in Appendix 2) for 2022/23.

3. Approved the process which delegated authority to the Director of Public Realm, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport, to review and make local changes to the ITB programme and the DfT Maintenance Block Allocation programme, as well as other funding allocations that may arise within year.

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

113. Commissioning Report - Advocacy (Decision: 110613)

Councillor Huelin introduced the report and stated that it provided a voice to vulnerable residents with learning difficulties and mental health issues across Thurrock, who struggled to express themselves and required an advocate. She explained that the Advocacy service provided people with specialised training to represent vulnerable adults and help them verbalise their needs and secure their rights. She explained that some of this service was statutory

and some discretionary, currently with some of the service supplied via the Council and some of the service supplied via government commissioning services. She described how this system had proven to be confusing for some service users and therefore the government had transferred responsibility to local authorities. She explained that the tender for this service would reduce the confusion for service users and would seek to find a provider whose experts could work across different areas of advocacy and disabilities to provide residents with a continuity of service and ease of contract renewal in future.

The Leader, Councillor Coxshall and the Chief Executive left at 8.29pm.

Councillor Huelin explained that there may be times in future where the Council would need to spot purchase advocacy services, for example for adults receiving specialised care outside of the borough and not within the working area covered by the contract. She stated that the report would improve the efficiency of the Council and would protect the rights of the most vulnerable residents. She stated that the Council would also be asking those that tender to allow for a 25-50% increase in demand due to the rise of people requiring care post-COVID. Councillor Huelin summarised and highlighted point 5.1 on page 209 of the agenda which stated that the results of the consultation with service users would be shared with Cabinet. She stated that the consultation was currently underway and would take time due to the sensitivities of those being consulted.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Agreed that the new Advocacy contract is procured in line with the contents of this paper.

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

114. Quarter 3 (April to December 2021) Corporate Performance Report 2021/22

Councillor Duffin introduced the report and stated that the majority of Key Performance Indicators had met their target for quarter three despite ongoing challenges relating to the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated that the number of apprenticeships had decreased during quarter three, but had previously increased in quarter two. Councillor Duffin proposed a change to the table on page 224 of the agenda and asked if officers could include a new box which would outline the direction of travel for those KPIs that had missed target.

Councillor Hebb felt pleased to see that service delivery had continued during the pandemic, and felt pleased that the KPI regarding payment of business rates and council tax had met its target. He urged residents to contact the council and apply for the Local Council Tax Scheme if they struggled to pay their council tax bill.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

1. Noted and commented upon the performance of the key corporate performance indicators in particular those areas which are off target and the impact of COVID-19.

2. Identified any areas which require additional consideration.

Cabinet adjourned at 8.35pm

The Leader, Councillor Coxshall and the Chief Executive arrived at 8.45pm.

Cabinet reconvened at 8.45pm.

115. Thames Freeport: Business Rates Policy and Governance Structure (Decision: 110609)

Councillor Hebb introduced the report and stated that the Council currently retained approximately 38% of business rates collected due to central government's scheme of reallocation. He explained that the Council would be able to keep 100% of business rates collected from within the Freeport area which he felt would have a positive impact on the Council and local residents. He stated that the business rates policy was outlined at Appendix 1 of the report, and point 3.2 of the report highlighted that discretionary relief would be available to businesses for five years from the point at which each beneficiary first received relief. He stated that although the report was technical, he felt that the Freeport would provide new opportunities and connectivity for local residents and businesses.

Councillor Coxshall felt that the Freeport scheme was moving quickly, as it was hoped that Thames Freeport would be the first of eight Freeports across the country up and running. He stated that the Freeport would bring approximately £400m of investment into the borough and officers and Members could soon begin conversations about how to spend this investment in the future. He added that the Freeport would also bring approximately 24,000 new jobs into the area, which could not be jobs that had been relocated from other areas. Councillor Coxshall stated that Thames Freeport would work in synergy with the other Freeports, such as Freeport East in Harwich. He stated that conversations needed to continue regarding the governance structure surrounding the Freeport to ensure that it worked effectively and efficiently.

The Leader thanked officers and Members for their hard work on the report, and to ensure that the Thames Freeport would be the first of its kind up and running. He stated that there needed to be good governance surrounding the Freeport, as well as detailed understanding of government targets and how these would meet strategic objectives. The Chief Executive added that the Full Business Case submitted to the government was being used by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities as a best practice example and was being shared with the governments of the devolved nations.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet:

- 1. Approved the Thames Freeport Business Rates Policy at Appendix 1.**
- 2. Delegated authority to the Section 151 Officer to make necessary amendments to the policy as required, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Strategic Planning and External Relationships.**
- 3. Approved the Chief Executive's appointment as the Council's representative on the Thames Freeport Governance Board, who will be responsible for briefing and updating the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Finance, and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Strategic Planning and External Relationships on key and significant activity.**

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

Cabinet agreed that the following recommendations would be adjourned to a later Cabinet meeting:

- 4. Endorsed that relevant Officers participate in and represent the Council on the various Thames Freeport Sub-committees as necessary and delegated authority to the Chief Executive to appoint officers to appropriate sub-committees e.g. Skills, Levelling Up and Regeneration.**
- 5. Delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and Place Delivery and the Monitoring Officer, to enter into any Memoranda of Understanding with government and Freeport bodies in order to deliver the activities of Thames Freeport, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance and Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Strategic Planning and External Relationships.**

The meeting finished at 9.04 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**

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