



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

Held as an online virtual meeting on Monday 20 April 2020 at 4.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors (in remote attendance) M Butt (Chair), McLennan (Vice-Chair), Agha, Farah, Hirani, Miller, M Patel, Krupa Sheth, Southwood and Tatler

Also present: Councillors (in remote attendance) Kelcher, Nerva & Stephens (for agenda items 15 & 16 only)

1. **Apologies for Absence**

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Amar Agha.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

None.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 9 March 2020 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. **Matters Arising (if any)**

None

5. **Petitions (if any)**

None.

6. **Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)**

None.

7. **Change in Order of Business - Urgent Item: Emergency Planning Response to Covid 19**

Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council) advised of a change in the order of the agenda to enable an urgent update to be provided on the emergency planning arrangements introduced in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In accordance with the provisions outlined in the Council's Access to Information Rules and Standing Order 60, the Leader of the Council confirmed that he had **AGREED** to the following report being considered as an urgent item. This was on the grounds that it provided the latest update on the Council's emergency planning

response to Covid 19, along with associated resource implications and reflected the pace at which the situation was developing.

Emergency Planning response to COVID-19

Carolyn Downs (Chief Executive) introduced the report providing Cabinet with an overview of the emergency planning arrangements that had been introduced as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The report also included an update on the service changes that had been introduced as part of the Council's overall response along with details of those services categorised as critical in terms of business continuity planning for Covid 19. In addition, an update was provided on the current financial impact on the Council as a result of Covid 19, including the estimated loss of income (currently estimated at over £11m) and impact on the ability to achieve the savings agreed as part of the Council's budget for 2020/21.

As a result of the update, Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the content of the report and update provided in relation to the work that had been undertaken since the emergency planning and GOLD arrangements had been stood up within the Council in response COVID-19, along with the associated resource implication detailed within Appendix 3 of the report.
- (2) To note the main areas of heightened activity across the Council, as detailed in section 3.10 of the report. Specific areas highlighted by Cabinet included:
 - The focus on Adult Social Care in relation to supporting hospital discharges, care homes and domiciliary care;
 - The support and work with the Voluntary and Community Sector and charities in supporting residents across the borough;
 - The focus as a priority on protecting those people who were homeless or at risk of homelessness. Members were advised that whilst fewer individuals were currently presenting for help the numbers requiring provision of suitable accommodation had increased due to the closure of night shelters and welcomed lowering of current thresholds for support, highlighting the true scale of need. In recognising this need, the Council had been proactive in making use of two hotels and accessing self-contained flats for people who were showing symptoms of Covid 19 in order to provide additional accommodation. The logistics and scale of the challenge had been considerable, with Councillor Southwood (as Cabinet Member for Housing & Welfare Reform) specifically thanking the housing needs service and local partners for their efforts. In addition, members were advised of the procedures established to continue essential checks and emergency repairs with an assurance provided that Government guidelines in relation to access were being followed;
 - The additional capacity being provided to deal with the increase in benefit and Council tax enquiries and roll out of the Government's Hardship Fund. Members recognised that as a result of the pandemic, applications for Universal Credit had increased, along with applications for Council Tax Support and to the Local Welfare Assistance programme. The Council were ready to assist people in accessing the help needed, including additional financial provision where required, with the Poverty Commission also continuing its important work in helping to

identify how best to assist people experiencing poverty as a result of the current crisis;

- The work with schools to provide guidance and support co-ordination in relation to the childcare commitment for key workers;
- The ongoing enforcement efforts in relation to social distancing within parks and open spaces and work with local businesses regarding support on the small grant scheme and Business Rate relief;

(3) To note the consideration of options in relation to the recovery planning process once the current lockdown arrangements were either partially or totally removed, as detailed in section 4 of the report.

(4) To note the scheduled of service change decisions and critical services identified in Appendix 1 and 2 of the report, which would also be subject to consideration by the Audit & Standards Advisory Committee.

(5) To thank officers for the update provided and their ongoing efforts in developing and delivering the Council's emergency response to Covid 19.

8. **Transfer of Network Homes Temporary Accommodation Portfolio**

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, Councillor Eleanor Southwood, introduced the report seeking approval for the Council to take over management of the Network Homes Housing Association Temporary Accommodation Portfolio in Brent.

Cabinet noted the positive impact the transfer would have in terms of addressing the demand for more settled leased temporary accommodation in order to meet demand and in relation to the need to avoid implementation of the Reasonable Rent Scheme.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

(1) Confirm the decision not to approve the implementation of the Reasonable Rent Scheme, as set out in paragraphs 3.10 to 3.13 of the report.

(2) Agree that the Council enters into a Transfer Agreement with Network Homes Limited for the transfer of the temporary accommodation portfolio to the Council and authorises the Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing to finalise the terms of the Transfer Agreement.

(3) Approve the assignment of the leases currently held by Network Homes for the Temporary Accommodation portfolio in Brent to the Council.

9. **Authority to tender contract for procurement and management of the Temporary Accommodation Housing Association Leasing Scheme**

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, Councillor Eleanor Southwood, introduced the report seeking approval to invite tenders in respect of the procurement and management of Temporary Accommodation in support of the Council's Housing Association Leasing Scheme (HALS).

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- (1) Approve inviting tenders for Procurement and Management of Temporary Accommodation in support of the Council's Housing Association Leasing Scheme (HALS) on the basis of the pre - tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.25 of the report.
- (2) Approve officers evaluating the tenders referred to in (1) above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 3.25 of the report.
- (3) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing, in consultation with the Lead Member for Housing & Welfare Reform, to award contracts for Procurement and Management of Temporary Accommodation for an acquisition and management term of 3 years, with an option to extend for up to a further 2 years, and a further management term of 3 years following expiry of the acquisition and management term.

10. **Purchase of 114 Affordable Homes in Alperton**

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, Councillor Eleanor Southwood, introduced the report seeking approval to purchase the long leasehold interest in 114 affordable homes at the Grand Union site, located in Alperton. Cabinet noted the detailed outlined provided on the development, site and breakdown of the 114 affordable homes which were being made available. It was pointed out these would not only meet the essential housing needs currently identified in terms of the housing register but would also be beneficial in terms of their location.

In addition, Cabinet's attention was drawn to the financial appraisal undertaken which had identified the scheme as financially viable on the basis of the assumptions set out in section 5.7 of the report. In completing her introduction Councillor Southwood also took the opportunity to thank Councillor Tatler (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning) and officers for their support and efforts in progressing the scheme.

RESOLVED that Cabinet:

- (1) Note the content of the report, including the amendment to the figure in section 6.2 which should read 92 and not 22 affordable homes.
- (2) Approve the proposed purchase of the long leasehold interest in 114 affordable homes within the scheme currently in development for the purchase price of £27m (plus statutory costs), subject to contract and subject to a) clean and marketable title b) financial and legal due diligence and c) vacant possession, with a target exchange of contract in May 2020.
- (3) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Regeneration & Environment in consultation with the Lead Member for Regeneration, Highways, Planning, to negotiate and agree the terms and thereafter enter into a contract with the developer for the purchase of the scheme.

11. **Highway Works funded under the HIF Grant in South Kilburn**

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning, Councillor Shama Tatler, introduced the report seeking approval to vary the Development Agreement with Countryside Properties Ltd to include the construction of adjacent and intersecting highway works at the Peel Site. In considering the report, Cabinet noted the programme synergies of the approach recommended for consideration.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve that the Development Agreement between the Council and Countryside Properties Limited entered into on 31 July 2018 be modified to include the construction of an adjacent and intersecting highway works at Peel as shown in Appendix A (Peel Highway Works) of the report at an estimated value of three million pounds (£3,000,000)

12. **Capital (CIL) Contribution towards the Provision of Three Medical Centres**

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning, Councillor Shama Tatler, introduced the report seeking approval for a capital contribution towards the fit out of three medical centres proposed as part of regeneration schemes in growth areas within Wembley Park, South Kilburn and Alperton. Whilst noting the background to the provision of the health centres and funding proposals, members were also keen to recognise that a commitment would need to be secured from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) towards the ongoing revenue funding costs which also took account of their revised financial position following the write-off of historic debt.

On the basis set out above it was **RESOLVED** that Cabinet, subject to confirmation from the CCG that it was committed to the ongoing revenue funding of the proposed new South Kilburn centre, approve a capital contribution from Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funds of up to £3.472m for use towards the fit out costs of three new medical centres, in Wembley Park, South Kilburn and Alperton.

13. **Social Value and Ethical Policy**

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Margaret McLennan, introduced the report seeking to update Cabinet on the Social Value and Ethical Policy and its alignment with the delivery of Social Value as part of the Borough Plan 2019-2023. Cabinet noted that as well as setting out the principles as to how Social Value would be delivered, the Policy also included an Ethical Policy that set out standards of integrity and professionalism expected from the Council's suppliers.

In expressing their support for the Policy, Cabinet noted the alignment of the social value commitments within the Policy to the Council's strategic themes within the Borough Plan 2019-2023 and aim to focus on securing benefits for all communities within Brent. Members also welcomed the support provided in relation to community wealth building and the reviving of local economies alongside the specific inclusion of reference to a whistleblowing policy for employees and suppliers.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the updated Social Value and Ethical Policy and delivery plan set out in appendices A & B of the report.

14. **Authority to Award Contract for Oracle Cloud Subscription Licences**

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Margaret McLennan, introduced the report seeking approval to the award of contracts for Oracle Cloud subscription licences.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve the award of the contract for Oracle Cloud Subscription licences to Insight Direct UK Limited at an estimated total cost of £4.8 million for a term of up to 10 years.

15. **Executive Response to the recommendations from the Air Quality Scrutiny Task Group and recommendations of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee**

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Krupa Sheth, introduced the report setting out the Executive's response to the recommendations from the Air Quality Scrutiny Task Group.

Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council, welcomed Councillor Tom Stephens to the meeting who had requested to speak as Chair of the Air Quality Scrutiny Task Group. Councillor Stephens welcomed the report and positive commitments within the draft Executive response, on which he was keen to ensure progress continued to be monitored. Particular issues highlighted for consideration, once normal business had resumed following the restrictions in relation to Covid 19, included the lobbying for external funding support and to support adoption of the World Health Organisation guidelines; the monitoring of areas outside the Ultra-Low Emission Zones and consideration of the introduction of Low Emission Zones in areas identified as being negatively impacted; the commitment to Healthy Streets being included within the Council's core strategies and transport plans and further roll out of the Schools Streets programme. In summing up Councillor Stephens took the opportunity to thank the Executive for its response, and reiterate his thanks to all the officers, members and others who had contributed to this scrutiny inquiry.

Additional comments were also received from Councillor Nerva who welcomed the report and commitments set out within the draft response, highlighting the importance of air quality in relation to public health especially during the Covid 19 pandemic.

In response to the comments raised Councillor Krupa Sheth thanked all those involved in the Task Group for their effort. The importance of tackling air quality had been recognised as priority with the measures and commitments outlined within the draft response being co-ordinated alongside the Climate Emergency Action Plan. There would, however, be a need to ensure this was tackled on a partnership basis by all stakeholders across both the public and private sector with the impact on public health also fully recognised as the response was further developed.

Having considered the comments received, Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the draft Executive Response to the Air Quality Scrutiny Report and recommendations of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

16. **Executive response to the Budget Scrutiny Report and recommendations of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Margaret McLennan, introduced the report setting out the Executive's response to the recommendations made by the Scrutiny Budget Task Group.

Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council, welcomed Councillor Matt Kelcher to the meeting who had requested to speak as Chair of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group. Councillor Kelcher welcomed the report and draft Executive response. Whilst recognising the impact of Covid 19 on management of the Council's budgetary position, it was felt many of the principles identified within the commitments made remained relevant, particularly in relation to business support; air quality; partnership work with other boroughs, London Councils & Local Government Association and support of the voluntary and community sector.

Additional comments were also received from Councillor Nerva who also welcomed the report and highlighted his support for the approach recommended by the Task Group in relation to aggregating use of Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds as a means of driving further efficiencies and maximising the community benefits available.

In response to the comments raised, Councillor Margaret McLennan thanked Councillor Kelcher all those involved in the work of the Task Group for their efforts and for recognising the financial impact in relation to Covid 19 and on management of the Council's budgetary position. In terms of the response being developed, Councillor Muhammed Butt, supported by Councillors Shama Tatler (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property & Planning) and Councillor Krupesh Hirani (as Cabinet Member for Public Health, Culture and Leisure) felt it was important to highlight the significant work already being undertaken with London Councils and in terms of working to support the Public Health function, Voluntary & Community Sector and local businesses in the response to the Covid 19 pandemic. The comments made in relation to more co-ordinated targeting of CIL funds were also recognised with continued scrutiny on the budget and response being developed in response to Covid 19 also welcomed.

As no further issues were raised, Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the draft Executive Response to the Budget Task Group Scrutiny Report and recommendations of the Resources and Public Realm Scrutiny Committee.

17. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.

18. **Any other urgent business**

None, other than considered at the start of the meeting (item 7 above refers).

The meeting ended at 5.04 pm

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair