



## **LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT**

### **MINUTES OF THE CABINET Wednesday 12 September 2018 at 4.00 pm**

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

Also present: Councillors Long and Mahmood

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Carolyn Downs, the Council's Chief Executive, Gail Tolley, Strategic Director of Children and Young People, and Amar Dave, Strategic Director of Environment and Regeneration.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 August 2018, 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. Authority to proceed - Six sheet advertising**

Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council, introduced the report concerning the future provision of the Council's six-sheet free standing advertising units contract. Councillor Butt stated that the report requests approval to invite tenders in respect of the proposed six-sheet free-standing advertising units contract to start December 2019, as required by Contract Standing orders 88 and 89.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) Cabinet approved inviting tenders for six-sheet free standing advertising units contract on the basis of the pre - tender considerations set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report;
- (ii) Cabinet approved officers evaluating the tenders referred to in 2.1 above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report; and
- (iii) Cabinet delegated authority to the Director of Performance, Policy and Partnerships in consultation with the Leader of the Council to award the concession contract for a term of eight years plus one further two year extension (a total contract term including extensions of ten years).

**8. Community Hubs - Extending the Model across Brent**

Councillor Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, introduced the report setting out proposals to extend the community hub model across Brent. It outlined how the model had been developed in Harlesden and how the pilot had informed proposals to extend to other areas across the borough, as well as outlining the key considerations in rolling out the model.

Councillor Southwood stated that full details of the proposals to extend the hub model across the borough had been outlined in the accompanying report. The proposals had been informed by learning from the delivery of a pilot in Harlesden and through conversations with key partners and service areas (including Customer Services, Housing, Employment, Skills & Enterprise, Strategy & Partnership and Libraries). Councillor Southwood thanked partners and staff.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) Cabinet approved and supported the proposals set out in *Community Hubs: A model for Brent* at Appendix 1 of the report, for extending the community hub model currently operating in Harlesden to additional areas of the borough including Kilburn, Willesden, Wembley and Kingsbury and Kenton; and
- (ii) Cabinet noted the intention to revert to Cabinet for a decision to set up a Community Interest Company, or other delivery vehicle, once exploratory work has concluded.

**9. Parking Annual Report 2017-2018**

Councillor Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, introduced the report by stating that the Council was committed to providing a high quality parking service and a fair, consistent and transparent approach to parking and traffic enforcement. The purpose of the Parking Annual Report was to explain the aims and objectives of the Council's Parking service and the key achievements of the 2017-2018 financial year. The report included a statistical analysis setting out information on the number of parking and traffic related Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) issued during the financial year 01 April 2017 to 31 March 2018, the revenue and

expenditure recorded in the Parking Account, and how the surplus on this account had been allocated.

The Report also meets a key requirement set out in the Statutory Guidance issued under the Traffic Management Act 2004. This requires local authorities to produce and publish an annual report on parking enforcement activities within six months of the end of the financial year.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) Cabinet approved the Parking Annual Report 2017-2018, attached as the Appendix to the Cabinet report; and
- (ii) The Parking Annual Report 2017-2018 be published online by 1 October 2018.

10. **Contingency planning for the Council's Benefits Service: Authorisation of Third Parties to determine Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax Support Claims**

Councillor Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, introduced the report seeking agreement for the provision of cost-effective resilience for Brent's Benefits Service against peaks in workload and staff turnover during a period of potential instability caused by the rollout of the full Universal Credit service, due to start in November.

Councillor Southwood stated that this will enable a small proportion of benefits work to be undertaken by a third party, which will mitigate the risk of the Service not being able to respond to demand, and ensure that residents get benefit decisions in a timely way. Cabinet was therefore asked to authorise for decisions on Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax Support claims to be made by a third party service provider within the scope of the recommendations set out in Section 2.0 below and as further set out within this report.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) Cabinet gave authority to permit a third party service provider to make decisions relating to Housing Benefit (HB), Council Tax Benefit (CTB) and Council Tax Support (CTS) claims and associated Council Tax matters concerning discounts and liability, for the purposes set out within this report where the appropriate approvals have been obtained in compliance with Council standing orders and financial regulations; and
- (ii) Cabinet delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Member to authorise a third party service provider to make decisions relating to Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and Council Tax Support claims and associated Council Tax matters concerning discounts and liability for any other specific and ad-hoc purposes that may arise subsequent to the circumstances set out within this report subject to the appropriate approvals being obtained in compliance with Council standing orders and financial regulations.

11. **2017/18 Treasury Management Outturn Report**

Councillor Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced the report stating that the Council's treasury management activity was underpinned by the Code, which required authorities to produce annually Prudential Indicators and a Treasury Management Strategy Statement on the likely financing and investment activity. She stated that the Code also recommends that members are informed of treasury management activities at least twice a year.

Councillor McLennan stated that this report fulfils the Council's obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to both the CIPFA Code and the CLG Investment Guidance.

She informed Cabinet that the Council had borrowed money over the long term to support investment in the Council's infrastructure and also invests cash balances held for short periods. She continued to say that it was therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. Councillor McLennan stated that the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk are central to the Council's treasury management strategy.

**RESOLVED** that Cabinet requested the 2017/18 Treasury Management Outturn Report to be forwarded to Full Council, in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code).

12. **Brent Council Borrowing Strategy 2018/19 - 2020/21**

Councillor Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced the report stating that in February 2018, Cabinet endorsed an ambitious three-year (2018/19 - 2020/21) capital programme amounting to some £800m. This report sets out the likely medium to long term borrowing requirement for the Council partly arising from that decision and reaffirms the Council's approach to borrowing as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy whilst highlighting the potential risks and benefits of various options.

Councillor McLennan stated that, up to this point the Council had adopted the strategy of funding capital investment from internal cash balances and delayed entering into borrowing commitments. However, as explained throughout the report, this approach, which had been highly cost effective for the last few years, was no longer sustainable as in the short to medium-term the Council will need raise in the order of £230m additional finance to continue with its capital investment plans. Given the scale of the programme this was likely to be the biggest single financial transaction the Council will have undertaken in a generation.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) Cabinet noted the Council's balance sheet analysis and estimated borrowing need as set out in section 5 of the report;
- (ii) Cabinet approved the borrowing strategy as set out in the report including the commencement of negotiations to agree a forward funding loan of up to £40m, as detailed in section 6 of the report;

- (iii) Cabinet noted that the actions recommended above were within the operational boundaries already agreed by Full Council when setting the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19 as part of the budget setting process; and
- (iv) Cabinet noted that a copy of this report had been presented to the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee in July for review and consideration. The comments from the Audit and Standards Advisory Committee were shown in paragraph 1.6 of the report.

### 13. **Housing Revenue Account Borrowing Headroom**

Councillor Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, introduced the report outlining the current opportunity the Council had to apply for additional borrowing headroom for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) via the GLA, as well as new grant available to build new council housing.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) Cabinet agreed for the Council to bid for additional headroom borrowing to build new Council homes at social rent level; and
- (ii) Cabinet agreed that should negotiations with the GLA alter the proposed amount of borrowing, the decision to progress be delegated to the Strategic Director, Community Wellbeing in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform and the Chief Finance Officer (s.151 Officer).

### 14. **Funding of London Borough of Culture 2020**

Councillor Krupesh Hirani, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Culture and Leisure, introduced the report providing an update on plans for Brent to be London Borough of Culture 2020, in particular the anticipated legacy and the planned budget.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (i) Cabinet agreed the funding strategy for the London Borough of Culture 2020;
- (ii) Cabinet agreed the commitment of £0.250m Neighbourhood CIL to support areas of the programme which meet the NCIL criteria;
- (iii) Cabinet delegated to the Cabinet Member of Public Health, Culture and Leisure in consultation with the Strategic Director Community Wellbeing and Chief Finance Officer, as a contingency measure, the decision to:
  - approve additional non recurrent funding from Council reserves to support the legacy of Brent Borough of Culture 2020 should this be necessary
  - And / or scale back the programme;
- (iv) Cabinet noted the intention to fund raise from external sources in order that the use of reserves should not be necessary.

15. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

None.

16. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting ended at 4.38 pm

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT  
Chair