



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET Monday 13 October 2014 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Butt (Chair), Councillor Pavey (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Denselow, Hirani, Mashari, McLennan and Moher

Also present: Councillors Chohan, S Choudhary, A Choudry, Filson, Jones, Mahmood, Perrin and Tatler

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None made.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED:-

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 15 September 2014 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Matters arising

None

4. Deputation - School Place Planning Strategy 2014-2018

With the consent of the Cabinet, Martin Francis (local resident, Brent Green Party) addressed the meeting in connection with the School Place Planning Strategy report. While acknowledging the thoroughness of the report, he questioned the advisability of relying on free schools and academies for the provision of school places given recent examples of schools not opening as originally scheduled or the possibility of a change of government and policy. He reminded the Cabinet that expansions and mergers had significant implications and were potentially stressful for the schools involved.

5. School Place Planning Strategy 2014-18

Councillor Moher (Lead Member, Children and Young People) introduced the report which sought approval of the final version of the School Place Planning Strategy 2014-18 following consultation. The draft version was approved by the council's Executive in March 2014 as a basis for consultation. The covering report also drew out a number of key issues for decision by the Cabinet which related to specific schools and sites. Councillor Moher referred to the council's obligations to improve

outcomes for children and drew attention to the proposals for expansion and amalgamation and the continued designation for education use of The Avenue site in Brondesbury. The costs were considered to be affordable in the current levels of secured funding however a further report would follow.

The Strategic Director Children and Young People responded to the concerns expressed earlier in the meeting by Martin Francis and assured that the council would be seeking to work with free schools and academies with a good or outstanding track record. The Free school model was the current policy but this would be kept under review and the principles were sufficiently robust to be able to withstand change. She also assured that the council was working with the Brent Schools Partnership to set up Federation to further cooperation between schools.

Members welcomed the report, agreed that the council had to take a long term approach, explain the advantages of larger schools and do all possible to have school places available given the demographic forecasts. It was noted that full consultation on the individual proposals would be carried out in the usual way and heard that the schools involved were broadly in support.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the School Place Planning Strategy 2014-18 be approved, circulated to all schools and relevant stakeholders and made available on the council's website;
- (ii) that approval be given to progress development of the following schemes proposed for adoption within the council's school expansion programme as set out in paragraph 4.0, and that a subsequent report be submitted to Cabinet for approval of fully detailed and costed schemes:
 - Byron Court Primary School– 2 form of entry expansion
 - Leopold Primary School – 2 form of entry expansion using the Gwenneth Rickus Building
 - Oakington Manor Primary – 1 form of entry expansion

The subsequent report to include an updated cashflow position for the School Expansions Programme to take account of the strategy's approach to providing school places in Brent;

- (iii) that the following school amalgamations be agreed in principle, subject to formal agreement by governing bodies and formal consultation and decision-making processes as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the Director's report:
 - Lyon Park Infants and Juniors Schools
 - Carlton Vale Infants School and Kilburn Park Juniors School
 - Malorees Infants and Juniors Schools.
- (iv) that the council seek to retain the designation of The Avenue site for education purposes as set out in paragraph 6.1 of the Director's report.

6. **Event Day Parking and Vehicle removals (pilot)**

The Chair (Councillor Butt, Leader of the Council) reminded the Cabinet that in April 2014 the Council's Executive decided to make some alterations to the Council's methods for removing illegally parked vehicles and also relax Civil Enforcement Officer deployment on Wembley Stadium Event Days. The report from the Strategic Director, Environment and Neighbourhoods summarised the impact of the trial on the council's vehicle removal operations, and consequently made recommendations for future vehicle removal activity. The report also provided an update on the validity of Visitor Parking Scratch Cards, which were scheduled to be removed from circulation on 31 August 2014.

Councillor Perrin asked to speak and drew attention to reference in the report to pressures on the parking account, the proposals which would result in a further loss in income of £303k and questioned whether the timing of the decision was right in the financial climate. Councillor Butt responded that it was felt that the financial implications of towing away cars was disproportionate and there was a need for the council to be seen to be fair to residents.

The Strategic Director Environment and Neighbourhoods, Sue Harper, advised that there would be a focus on serious offences, for example parking on yellow lines, thereby causing traffic flow problems and then to issue a PCN instead of cars being towed on less serious events. Additionally, it was proposed that validity date of those remaining scratch cards in circulation since the decision in 2013 to cease sale be extended indefinitely.

Councillor Mashari (Lead Member, Employment and Skills) questioned whether there were any disability implications and Sue Harper responded that the number of cars towed away for obstructing pavements was relatively low but those that impede pedestrians may still be towed. The vehicles of repeat offenders would still be removed. Councillor Butt reminded the Cabinet that the aim of enforcement was to change behaviour.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the findings of the Removal Pilot set out in paragraphs 3.5 to 3.11 of the report from the Strategic Director, Environment and Neighbourhoods, the changes made between the start and end of the trial, and also the financial implications as set out in paragraphs 5.1 to 5.8 be noted;
- (ii) that agreement be given to continue the use of the revised criteria for vehicle removal which have resulted from operating the trial, and also the implementation of proposed Customer Enhancements;
- (iii) that the authority be delegated to the Operational Director, Environment and Protection to make minor amendments to the criteria and arrangements, on a continuing basis in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment. Any such change(s) would be subject to the agreement of the Chief Finance Officer;
- (iv) that the validity of visitor parking scratch cards, already in circulation, be extended indefinitely.

7. Wembley Area Action Plan

Councillor McLennan (Lead Member, Regeneration and Housing) introduced the report from the Strategic Director, Regeneration and Growth which explained that the council had received the inspector's report into the Examination of the Wembley Area Action Plan Development Plan Document. The Plan, first adopted in 2004, had been updated and was now found to be sound subject to a few recommended changes. The Plan would go before Full Council for adoption.

Councillor Moher drew attention to the inspector's suggestion that urban greening was to be sought rather than required in new developments and she emphasised the need for the council to take a robust approach. Andrew Donald (Strategic Director Regeneration and Growth) confirmed the council would be pushing hard for urban greening and the Cabinet agreed to retain the requirement that urban greening must be sought. Additionally, Councillor Moher also asked whether any improvements could be made to the pedestrian crossing at Wembley Triangle over which there were safety concerns particularly on Event Days. Sue Harper responded that this linked to other measures in the Wembley Master Plan but the light phasing could be reviewed.

Andrew Donald outlined the process for consultation and approval following which the report would go before Full Council for approval.

RESOLVED:

that Full Council be recommended to adopt the Wembley Area Action Plan Development Plan with the recommended changes, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report from the Strategic Director Regeneration and Growth with the inclusion of a requirement that urban greening should be 'sought' rather than required.

8. Sudbury Neighbourhood Plan

The report from the Strategic Director Regeneration and Growth provided an overview of the process which Sudbury Town Residents Association had followed to date in producing the draft Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Plan and a summary of its content. It recommended that the draft Plan be published on 23 October 2014 and made available for comment for six weeks. It was also recommended that it be submitted for examination subject to Full Council approval.

Councillor McLennan in introducing the report, acknowledged the contribution of the Localism Act in delegating plan making opportunities to neighbourhood level and paid tribute to the work of the Sudbury residents in giving the borough the opportunity to be one of the first to work with a Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Denselow welcomed this positive aspect of the Localism Act and the Councillor Hirani sought assurances on how the plans would be sustained and residents engaged.

Strategic Director Regeneration and Growth, Andrew Donald, outlined the timetable for adopting the neighbourhood plans. Once council had confirmed that the Plan had been prepared in accordance with the statutory requirements, an Examiner would be appointed to determine it met requirements and was in line with strategic

policies. The Plan would then be put to a Referendum. This was the first plan to reach this stage and three more are expected to follow. It would be for officers to develop new ways of working and to proactively take plans forward with local communities. Councillor McLennan added that officers had found it rewarding to work with residents in this way. Councillor Butt added that funding would come from external initiatives such as the Community Infrastructure Levy.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the draft Sudbury Town Neighbourhood Plan be agreed for publication and public consultation from 23 October 2014 for six weeks, and that Full Council be recommended to agree that the draft Plan be submitted for independent Examination;
- (ii) that the Head of Planning be given delegated authority to deal with any representations received during the statutory consultation period.

9. Deputation - Customer Access Strategy

Sujata Aurora addressed the Cabinet in relation to the Community Access Strategy and while welcoming some aspects of the proposals, expressed concern at the proposals to reconfigure space at the new Willesden Green Library Centre. She reminded the Cabinet that the expansion of the customer services had been the main argument in favour of the development, to be a hub in the south of the borough to mirror provision in the Civic Centre. She now considered the revised proposals to be second rate. Ms Aurora accepted that many residents did transactions on line however the proposals would remove all opportunity for face to face contact. The relatively low levels of residents accessing face to face facilities in the interim service at Harlesden could be because it was not well signposted and people did not know it was there. Ms Aurora felt that many high need customers lived in south of the borough with no access to the internet, and there was a correlation with old age, disabilities, hearing problems and more complex needs. The weekly surgery by appointment was limited.

The Cabinet also heard from Martin Redston who endorsed the views put forward earlier by Sujata Aurora. He felt that proposals for multi-purpose space and wider library space would diminish the profile of arts and degrade use of the library. There was a need for the focus to community based instead of commercial and the reinstatement of a bookshop was essential. A genuine community hub was required.

10. Customer Access strategy and target operating model

The report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth set out proposals for transforming the arrangements in place to enable residents to access information and services more easily and more efficiently. The aim of the new strategy was both to improve residents' experience when they did contact Brent and increase the efficiency of overall operating arrangements.

Councillor Butt (Chair, Leader of the Council) responded that the focus was on residents having access to council services whether by telephone or social media. The council would be working with partners to ensure that people were not

disadvantaged and were able to access services. Members welcomed the access strategy in particular the 'Tell Us Once' approach for residents' information to be shared with other services they require avoiding duplication. Councillor Denselow acknowledged that online contact was not suitable for everyone and encouraged attendance at the meeting scheduled for 27 October where the potential for the new Willesden centre would be discussed.

Councillor Mashari (Lead Member, Employment and Skills) referred to the need for the council to make £54m savings. Discussions would be taking place on how to involve other agencies but she assured that the services would still be community focussed. More information would be forthcoming on the provision of IT in the library and self service areas. Councillor Pavey (Lead Member, Resources) stated that digital service provision was becoming the norm, library staff would be able to assist with basic enquiries and most people were happy to use self service providing support was on hand. The Strategic Director, Regeneration and Growth assured that the council was aiming to provide improved services for those with complex needs.

Councillor Denselow (Lead Member, Stronger Communities) advised that group discussions would take place over the usage of space in the new centre based on both improving access for all residents and delivering savings.

RESOLVED:

that approval be given to the new Access Strategy and the planned implementation of this, as set out in Section 3 of the report from the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Growth.

11. Budget strategy and financing update

The report from the Chief Finance Officer gave an update on the council's funding forecasts for the next four years. It took account of anticipated spending pressures, whether driven by changes in legislation, demographic trends or local policy intentions and provided updated estimates of the financial impact of these. It also took account of updated information on financing from central government and other sources, where this was available.

The Lead Member Resources, Councillor Pavey, stated that the council was required by central government to identify an unprecedented level of budget cuts and he outlined some of the spending pressures that would also need to be managed as part of the budget process. Additionally, the capital programme was becoming more restrained as alternative funding sources diminished. Councillor Pavey drew attention to the London Council's report which expressed the view that the local government finance system was not sustainable in its current form and he described the impact on Brent as brutal.

Councillor Hirani commented on the change in legislation and the new requirement under the Care Act for local authorities to cap the fees payable by an individual for their care at £72,000 in their lifetime making costs more difficult to estimate. Social care support for children continued to be non-means tested.

The Chief Finance Officer summarised the budget strategy and financial position referring to demographic and policy changes and their likely impact, updated funding assumptions for 2015/16 to 2016/17, core funding projections and forecasts for 2017/18. The council would be required to save of the order of £100m over the next four years.

Members expressed grave concern over the projections, the seriousness of the challenges the council faced and referred to forums and Borough Plan meetings where residents could help shape the future of the borough.

RESOLVED:

that the latest forecasts for the council's financial position for 2015/16 to 2018/19 be noted.

12. Financial report – August 2014

The Cabinet considered the report from the Chief Finance Officer which set out the overall financial position of the Council for 2014/15 as at August 2014 and covered Budget monitoring summary, Council Tax and NNDR collection rates, debt analysis, capital programme summary and financial control. Councillor Pavey (Lead Member, Resources) emphasised the importance of financial control and urged lead members to take an interest in the audits taking place in their departments. The council was generally on track to deliver savings subject to a projected underspend on Public Health which would be revised through the year as progress on projects became clearer. The Chief Finance Officer drew attention to need for the Cabinet to endorse the amended budget for 2014/15 and approve the rephrasing exercise on the Medium Term Financial Plan.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that the Finance report be noted;
- (ii) that approval be given to the budget virements for the capital programme as set out in section 5 of the Financial Report appendix.

13. Procurement of the Customer Services ACD Telephone System

Councillor Pavey (Lead Member, Resources) introduced the report from the Chief Finance Officer which concerned the procurement of an Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system to replace the existing solution provided to the council by Interactive Intelligence. Approval was requested, as required by Contract Standing Orders 88 and 89, to invite tenders in respect of a solution to enable the council to manage and handle incoming telephone calls, customer emails, webchat and social media customer interaction. Councillor Pavey assured that officers would be working closely with IT to ensure the specification met requirements.

RESOLVED:

- (i) that approval be given to invite tenders for an Automated Call distribution (ACD) solution to enable the council to manage and handle incoming telephone calls, customer emails, webchat and social media customer

interaction on the basis of the considerations set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report from the Chief Finance Officer;

- (ii) that approval be given to the evaluation of the tenders referred to in (i) above on the basis of the evaluation criteria set out in paragraph 3.6(vi) of the report;
- (iii) that approval be given to a waiver from Contract Standing Orders for the requirement to seek written quotations and to give approval to the direct award of a short-term contract to Interactive Intelligence for a period of six months in the circumstances and for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

14. Procurement of Housing and Revenues and Benefits systems

The report from the Chief Finance Officer, introduced by Councillor Pavey (Lead Member, Resources) requested authority to award a contract as required by Contract Standing Order No 88 and summarised the process undertaken in procuring the contract and recommended to whom the contract should be awarded.

The Cabinet also had before them an appendix to the report which was not for publication as it contained the following category of exempt information as specified in Schedule 12 of the Local Government (Access to Information Act) 1972:

Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

RESOLVED:

that the contract for Revenues and Benefits and Housing Software be awarded to Northgate Information Solutions UK Limited (Northgate).

15. Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committee - 9 September 2014: Parking Services update

The Cabinet received the recommendations from the Scrutiny Committee which met on 9 September 2014 and after having considered an update on Parking Services made recommendations to Cabinet.

The Chair (Councillor Butt, Leader of the Council) stated that the comments from the Scrutiny Committee had been noted and consideration was being given to how to address concerns starting with the removal of the deadline for use of the remaining scratch-cards visitor permits held by residents. The Chair also advised that a new Head of Parking was due to join the authority who would have full oversight. He thanked the Scrutiny Chair and members for their contribution.

RESOLVED:

that the recommendation from the Scrutiny Committee held on 9 September 2014 regarding the parking services update be noted.

16. **Any other urgent business**

Fly tipping

In response to a question from Councillor Mahmood on fly tipping surveillance vehicles, Councillor Mashari advised that two vehicles had been commissioned and were on the road.

The meeting ended at 8.35 pm

M BUTT
Chair