



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET Monday 9 September 2019 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 S Choudhary, Kennelly, Stephens, Thakkar and Long

1. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

There were no matters arising.

5. **Petitions (if any)**

None.

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

None.

7. **Formal Consultation on School Organisation Arrangements of Roe Green Infant School**

Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council, informed the meeting that a number of requests to speak from members of the public and Councillors on this item had been received. He informed the meeting that he intended to allow those speakers to speak first after which he would ask Councillor Amer Agha, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills & Employment, to introduce the report and respond to the points raised.

Councillor Butt welcomed Mary Adossides, Chair, Brent Trades Council, to the meeting. Ms Adossides urged the Cabinet to reconsider the proposed closure of the

Strathcona unit and the potential subsequent loss of jobs and educational provision. She highlighted the need for SEN provision and pleaded with the Cabinet to reaffirm its commitment to state education.

Councillor Butt welcomed Gloria Amadi, Chair of the Roe Green Infant / Strathcona School Governing Body to the meeting. Ms Amadi stated that she felt no counter arguments put forward during the consultation process had been seriously considered by Brent Council. She stated that the proposals, if approved, would impact negatively on the most disadvantaged in society and the life chances of children. She stated that the pupils and parents at Roe Green Infant / Strathcona wanted the school to remain open. She blamed the current situation on the Council's poor school admission planning process.

Mrs Nicole Lobo, Executive Head Teacher, drew Cabinet Members' attention to the report appendices stating that 542 responses to the consultation had been received. She stated that 99.8% of those responses disagreed with the closure.

Ms Marina Aziz, Assistant Head Teacher, read excerpts from a letter sent by a pupil to Councillor Butt which spoke of the positive experiences of pupils attending the school.

Ms Noreen Ahmed, a parent at the school, informed the meeting she was speaking on behalf of all the parents. She spoke of the friendly teaching staff and how the teachers help children. She stated that all children are treated equally stating that the school is more than a school, it is a family and community.

Marisa Malgieri said that she had been a teacher at Roe Green for the past ten years. She stated that the teaching corps had worked to maintain consistency and cohesion across the two sites. She stated that the proposed closure had deterred parents from applying during the admissions process. She stated that the proposed closure was soul destroying for the children.

Mrs J Sidhu, Head of School, Roe Green Strathcona, spoke of the alternative v additional use of the site. She stated that the Strathcona site was perfect for educating children with moderate learning difficulties given the good site access. She informed the meeting that the site could also be used as a family respite centre.

Ms E McLaren, Deputy Head Teacher, spoke to Cabinet of the length of the process leading to today's Cabinet decision. She spoke of the informal and formal process. She stated that at no point did the school community feel it had been listened to. She stated that the report being considered by Cabinet contained flaws and inaccuracies and that some core issues had been ignored.

Councillor Daniel Kennelly, Preston Ward, urged Cabinet Members to reconsider any proposed closure. He stated that he felt the decision has been rushed, based solely on the financial implications. The impact on the children had not been taken into account. He stated his concern that the school was not advertised on the Council's website which, he presumed, led to a fall in admissions.

Councillor Anita Thakkar, Preston Ward, spoke in recognition of the hard work of the staff. She stated that the viability of the site is evident from the Council report.

She welcomed the proposed phased closure approach but urged Cabinet Members to ensure teachers, parents, pupils were adequately supported by the Council. She urged the Cabinet to ensure that there were no compulsory redundancies for teaching staff.

Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council, thanked all the speakers and invited Councillor Agha to introduce the report.

Councillor Amer Agha, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills & Employment, introduced the report and stated that the report provided Cabinet with a summary of the formal consultation undertaken between 26 June 2019 and 24 July 2019 on a change in the age range of Roe Green Infant School and the closure of primary provision on the Roe Green Strathcona site from September 2020.

In response to questions from Councillor Harbi Farah, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, and Councillor Krupesh Hirani, Cabinet Member for Public Health, Culture and Leisure, Councillor Agha explained that the Roe Green Strathcona provision was established in response to increasing demand for places across the Borough, as set out in the Brent School Place Planning Strategy 2014-18. He stated that the Roe Green Strathcona provision was initially opened as temporary provision for 210 places in total, 30 in each year group from Reception to Year 6. He stated that, since 2017, there has been a reduction in the number of children applying for primary school places in the Borough that was not anticipated when the provision was established.

He stated that, in January 2019, there were 557 pupils on roll at Roe Green Infant School, of whom 110 were on the Roe Green Strathcona site. There were only 7 pupils in Reception on the Roe Green Strathcona site and all year groups, other than Year 5, had significantly lower numbers than 30.

Councillor Agha informed Cabinet that, for the purposes of admissions, when applying for a place at Roe Green Infant School, parents could make a preference for either the Roe Green Infant School Princes Avenue site or the Strathcona Road site. He stated that applications for Reception places on the Strathcona site for September 2019 were also low, with only 3 pupils expected to attend the Reception year group in September 2019.

Councillor Agha informed Cabinet the Strathcona site is supported by the local funding formula. The school receives approximately £5,300 per pupil funding plus a split site allocation of £200k. With 110 pupils this totals £786k of funding that Roe Green Infant School receives to deliver school places at the Strathcona site.

Councillor Agha stated that funding was provided by the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), and equated to nearly £7,100 per pupil for children at this site. This compared to an average of £5,000 per primary pupil across the borough. Given that there were spaces in other schools, the closure of the site would lead to more efficient use of DSG.

In response to a question from Councillor Tom Miller, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Engagement, about use of Brent Council's consultation portal, Brian Grady, Operational Director, Safeguarding, Partnerships and Strategy,

stated that Central Government had a prescribed consultation framework that Local Authorities must use in such circumstances.

Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council, thanked Cabinet Members for their contributions. He stated that he had met with parents, children and the teaching staff and that local authorities, such as Brent, were forced into situations such as these because of the reduction in funding from central government. He outlined the central government funding cuts experienced by Brent.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet determined the proposal published in a statutory notice on 26 June 2019 to:

- i) change the age range of Roe Green Infant School from 3-11 to 3-7
- ii) reduce the school's Published Admission Number (PAN) from 150 to 120 for September 2020
- iii) implement a phased closure of the provision on the Roe Green Infant School Strathcona site so that no new admissions were made into any Reception cohort from September 2020 and the site be fully closed at the end of July 2022.

8. **Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for Open Spaces, Graveyards and Cemeteries**

Councillor Muhammed Butt, Leader of the Council, welcomed Ms Philippa Hutchinson, to the meeting.

Ms Hutchinson stated that she is a Brent resident and lives a few minutes' walk from Paddington Old Cemetery. She spoke in support of the proposal to adopt a borough-wide Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for graveyards and cemeteries.

Councillor Tom Miller, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Engagement, thanked Ms Hutchinson for her support for the proposals.

Councillor Miller stated that Brent Council is committed to maintaining a clean and safe environment and it is the Council's responsibility to keep our parks, open spaces, graveyards and cemeteries and local environment clear of litter and obstructions and deal with other local environmental quality issues including anti-social behaviour.

Councillors Hirani, Butt and Southwood spoke in support of option 1 in the proposals.

Councillor Krupa Sheth, Cabinet Member for Environment, suggested an additional recommendation delegating authority to add any additional parks to the PSPO regarding the consumption of alcohol.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet

- i) approved option 1 in respect of the introduction and implementation of the proposed PSPO in the draft terms and the options as set out in appendix one for a period of three years.
- ii) delegated authority to the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment to set the date on which the PSPO will become effective and in force.
- iii) noted that the previous delegation provided by Cabinet to the Chief Operating Officer (now the Strategic Director of Regeneration and Environment) in consultation with the lead member for Community Safety and Engagement for the function of making Public Spaces Protection Order under the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 remains in place for future PSPO proposals.
- iv) Noted that a separate review and update report will be submitted to Cabinet in due course reviewing the decision making process for the PSPOs made to date and considering whether to have alternative arrangements for making a PSPO.
- v) Noted that the Council's bye laws relating to its parks, open spaces, cemeteries and graveyards will no longer be in force when the proposed PSPO comes into force.
- vi) delegated to the Strategic Director for Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Lead Members for Environment and Community Safety and Engagement the authority to add any additional parks to the PSPO regarding the consumption of alcohol.

9. **Tenant Management Organisations in Brent: Renewal of Modular Management Agreement**

Councillor Ellie Southwood, Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform, stated that there were two Tenant Management Organisations (TMO), Kilburn Square TMO (KSTMO) and Watling Gardens TMO (WGTMO). She stated that, following the transition from Brent Housing Partnership (BHP) to in-house management, the Council has sought to review the arrangements in place between the Council and each TMO. This was to ensure they are reflective of the latest statutory guidance and will be achieved by entering into new Modular Management Agreements (MMA)s.

Councillor Southwood stated that the report provides Cabinet with an overview of the proposed agreements, with a view to enter into a new MMA with each TMO. The report sets out which services KSTMO and WGTMO have selected under the Right to Manage (RTM) and how this will be managed by the Council.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet

- i) noted the options selected by KSTMO and agreed to enter into a new MMA by delegating authority to the Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing, in conjunction with the Director of Finance and the Cabinet Member for

Housing and Welfare Reform to enter into a new Modular Management Agreement retrospectively

- ii) noted the options selected by WGTMO and agreed to enter into a new MMA by delegating authority to the Strategic Director of Community Wellbeing, in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer and the Cabinet Member for Housing and Welfare Reform to enter into a new Modular Management Agreement retrospectively.

10. **NNDR Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief**

Councillor Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader of the Council, informed Cabinet Members that the Council has the discretion to award rate relief to charities or non-profit making bodies. She stated that the Council also has the discretion to remit an individual National Non-Domestic Rate (NNDR) liability in whole or in part on the grounds of hardship. The award of discretionary rate relief is based on policy and criteria agreed by Cabinet on 15 November 2016. New applications for relief have to be approved by the Cabinet.

Councillor McLennan stated that the report details new applications for relief received since Cabinet last considered such applications in January 2019.

RESOLVED: that the applications for discretionary rate relief detailed in Appendix 2 to this report from the Strategic Director of Customer and Digital Services be approved.

11. **Brent Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) Projects**

Councillor Shama Tatler, Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Property and Planning, introduced the report requesting Cabinet approve the allocation of Neighbourhood CIL (NCIL) funds to eight community projects from round one of the 2019/20 NCIL programme.

Councillor Tatler stated that the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge applied to eligible developments to help fund strategic (borough-wide) and neighbourhood infrastructure related to development. Brent's CIL was formally introduced on 1 July 2013.

Councillors Butt, Hirani, McLennan, Agha and Krupa Sheth welcomed the report and the funding for worthwhile neighbourhood projects.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet

- i) Approved the NCIL allocation of:
 - a. **£366,975** to support the refurbishment of a new building for the Refugee Support Network in Harlesden.
 - b. **£250,000** to support the refurbishment of Challenge House in Harlesden for Crisis UK.
 - c. **£210,000** to support the refurbishment of the Silver Jubilee Park Clubhouse for Kingsbury Town Management Co. Ltd and Hendon Youth FC in Willesden.

- d. **£109,833** to support the running of The Sanctuary Café for Hestia Housing and Support across neighbourhoods.
- e. **£134,800** to support the installation of central heating of a community facility for St Michael and All Angels Church in Harlesden.
- f. **£170,000** to support the refurbishment of a community hall for St Cuthbert's Church in Wembley
- g. **£150,000** to support the building of a new Community Café and outdoor space for St Catherine's Church in Neasden
- h. **£80,000** to support tree planting in the Dudden Hill area. This would be in addition to £30,000 allocated to tree planting in this area in NCIL's 2018/19 round one, bringing the total spent by NCIL on tree planting in Dudden Hill to £110,000.

- ii) noted the total allocation of **£417,400** (including the £80,000 for tree planting in Dudden Hill, subject to Cabinet approval) to tree-planting projects in this NCIL funding round.

12. **Brent Community Lottery Proposal - Cabinet variation report**

Councillor Tom Miller, Cabinet Member for Community and Engagement, introduced the report seeking to inform and obtain Cabinet approval for a variation to the Cabinet report titled 'Brent Community Lottery Proposal' approved on 17 June 2019.

RESOLVED: that Cabinet:

- i) noted the content of the report from the Assistant Chief Executive;
- ii) agreed that the Head of Strategy and Partnerships awards a contract to Gatherwell in the form agreed by them.

13. **2018/19 Treasury Management Outturn Report**

Councillor Margaret McLennan, Deputy Leader of the Council, introduced the report updating members on Treasury Management activity and confirming that the Council has complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2018/19.

RESOLVED: that having considered the 2018/19 Treasury Management outturn report, Cabinet requested that it be forwarded to Council, in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management (the Code).

14. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

None

15. **Any other urgent business**

None

The meeting ended at 5.35 pm

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT

Chair