

London Borough of Brent
Summary of the decisions taken by the Cabinet held at 10am in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre n
Monday 6 December 2021

PRESENT: Councillor M Butt (Chair), Councillor McLennan (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Farah, Knight, Nerva, Krupa Sheth, Stephens, Southwood and Tatler.

Agenda Item No	Item	Ward(s)	Decision
1.	Apologies for Absence		Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mili Patel.
2.	Declarations of Interest		There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.
3.	Minutes of the Previous Meeting		Cabinet RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 8 November 2021 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.
4.	Matters Arising (if any)		None.
5.	Petitions (if any)		Cabinet NOTED the comments made by a member of the public, Nicola O'Brien, presenting a petition with 236 signatures requesting the reinstallation of a water standpipe in Roundwood Park. Referring to a response received on the petition, she began by highlighting what was felt to be the disproportionate response to the recent vandalism of the standpipe involving its entire removal. Whilst recognising the issue about water wastage as a result of the damage caused, it was pointed out that the standpipe had been suffering from a slow leak which was unrelated and had remained unfixed prior to the vandalism. Although advised that the standpipe had not been designated for public use, Nicola O'Brien pointed out it had been relied upon and used by park users without any previous objection or issue prior to the current vandalism. She also queried

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			<p>its use purely as a source of water for the surrounding habitation pointing out that the design of the standpipe included an auto shut-off press tap which faced away from the flowerbed and towards the public footpath. As such it was felt the design encouraged use by park users looking for a quick supply or refill of water.</p> <p>In terms of the alternative option suggested regarding use of the café to purchase or supply water, those who had signed the petition did not feel this was appropriate given the busy nature of the café, costs and fact this would involve the supply of plastic bottles which would also be wasteful and more damaging to the environment than use of a public water supply. Whilst noting the proposal currently being investigated to restore the original public water fountain by the main entrance to the park, concerns had been expressed that no timescale had been provided on this. It was noted that similar water supplies appeared to be available in other parks and green spaces with the petitioners feeling the removal of the standpipe to be unjustified given the impact on park users. As a result, Nicola O'Brien advised that the petitioners were asking the Council to reconsider its original decision and to reinstall the standpipe and tap.</p> <p>In responding, Councillor Krupa Sheth (as Lead Member for Environment), began by thanking Nicola O'Brien for her presentation and advised that the original decision to remove the standpipe had been made due to a number of acts of vandalism that had taken place in quick succession of repairs being undertaken. This had</p>

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			<p>included damage to the auto shut-off tap, which it was acknowledged had been a feature of the standpipe. Given the constraints on the Parks Service budget, the combination of the repeated vandalism and associated cost of repairs along with the resulting loss of water the decision had reluctantly been made to remove the pipe and ensure there was a connection only for use by the contractor for watering the surrounding flowerbeds. Confirmation was provided that, although used by park users, the standpipe was not designed for that purpose with its intended use only to provide water for the surrounding flower beds. The level of local concern regarding its removal had, however, been recognised with an assurance given that the Council was continuing to investigate the cost and work required to restore the original water fountain at the main entrance to the park, including the options available to seek external funding and on which she advised Nicola O'Brien, as lead petitioner, would be kept updated on progress.</p> <p>Having noted the response provided, Councillor M Butt (Leader of the Council) ended by welcoming the contribution made at the meeting and reaffirming the Council's commitment to ensure, working with all stakeholders and Friends of the Park Groups, that the facilities and access available to parks across the borough were maintained for use by everyone. Recognising the level of local concern amongst park users, an assurance was provided that the Council would consider the specific issues raised in relation to the standpipe in Roundwood Park and any alternative solutions available, although it was pointed out this would need to be within</p>

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			the context of the significant financial pressures needing to be managed across the Authority.
6.	Reference of item considered by Scrutiny Committees (if any)		There were no references from Scrutiny submitted for consideration at the meeting.
7.	Draft Budget 2022/23	All Wards	<p>Cabinet noted the comments made by Councillor Kennelly who had requested to speak at the meeting on the draft budget item. In addressing Cabinet, Councillor Kennelly whilst recognising the challenging nature of the budget position faced by the Council, was keen to highlight the importance in maintaining a focus on key infrastructure requirements including maintenance of footways. Highlighting the support expressed locally for the repairs and maintenance undertaken on footways in his ward he also outlined the wider importance of this in terms of supporting the Council's objectives towards encouraging more active forms of travel and in tackling the Climate Emergency. As a result he asked Cabinet to ensure that consideration was given, as part of the budget proposals, to securing and maintaining the necessary levels of investment required to support the need for ongoing and future infrastructure investment, especially in relation to footways.</p> <p>In responding to the comments raised, Councillor Butt (as Leader of the Council) highlighted the challenges needing to be addressed in securing the necessary funding in order to support the key objectives identified as priorities by the Council, given the constraints on available funding. The issue raised in relation to securing long term invest to support infrastructure, including</p>

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			<p>footways, had been recognised with discussions also being pursued with key stakeholders, including TfL.</p> <p>Having considered the comments made at the meeting, Cabinet RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) To note the Council’s overall financial position. (2) To endorse the budget proposals for 2022/23 that were previously agreed at the Council meeting of 22 February 2021, as set out in Appendix A of the report. (3) To agree to consult on a Council Tax increase of 3% in 2022/23. (4) To agree to participate in a sub London Business Rates Pool in 2022/23 and delegate authority to the Director of Finance to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the participating authorities as may be necessary to implement and/or regulate the pool. (5) To delegate authority to the Director of Finance to agree to participate in such pools in subsequent years (in consultation with the Lead Member) and to enter into Memorandum of Understandings in respect of any such subsequent pools. (6) To note the position with regard to the funding for Schools and

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			<p>the Dedicated Schools Grant, as set out in Section 7 of the report.</p> <p>(7) To consult on a rent increase of 4.1% (CPI + 1%) for the 2022/23 Housing Revenue Account budget, as set out in Section 8 and Appendix B of the report.</p> <p>(8) To note the position with regard to the Capital programme, as set out in Section 9 of the report.</p>
8.	Brent Infrastructure Funding Statement 2020/21	All Wards	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) To note the content of the report and Appendix 1 “Brent Infrastructure Funding Statement 2020/21”</p> <p>(2) To approve the Infrastructure Funding Statement for publication.</p>
9.	Digital Strategy and Business Case 2022-2026	All Wards	<p>Cabinet RESOLVED:</p> <p>(1) To agrees the Digital Strategy 2022-26 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.</p> <p>(2) To agree the Outline Business Case as set out in Appendix 2 of the report with the funding identified to deliver the programme.</p> <p>(3) To approve the establishment of a Business Support Fund as</p>

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			<p>set out in Appendix 2 and Section 3.19 of the report.</p> <p>(4) To delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Customer and Digital Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources to agree eligibility criteria for the Business Support Fund.</p> <p>(5) To delegate to the Strategic Director of Customer and Digital Services authority to administer and award assistance from the Business Support Fund.</p>
10.	Exclusion of Press and Public		There were no items that required the exclusion of the press or public.
11.	Any other urgent business		None.