



LONDON BOROUGH OF BRENT

MINUTES OF THE CABINET

Held in the Conference Hall, Brent Civic Centre on Monday 11 September 2023 at 10.00 am

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

Also present: Councillor Georgiou.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gwen Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools).

In welcoming everyone to the meeting, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council) announced that due to Councillor Mili Patel having recently commenced a period of maternity leave he had appointed Councillor Tatler to cover the role of Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform. This would be in addition to her existing position as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth. In welcoming Councillor Tatler to her new position, the Leader also took the opportunity to congratulate Councillor Mili Patel on the recent birth of her second child and wished her and her family well.

Councillor Muhammed Butt also advised members that it was with regret he had to inform them of the death of former Councillor Ruth Moher. In paying tribute, the Leader recognised the dedicated and compassionate way in which former Councillor Moher had served during her time in office and advised she would be deeply missed by all who knew her.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made at the meeting.

3. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting held on Monday 17 July 2023 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

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

None.

5. **Petitions (if any)**

There were no petitions submitted for consideration at the meeting.

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

There were no references from the Community & Wellbeing or Resources & Public Realm Scrutiny Committees submitted for consideration at the meeting.

7. **Future of Housing Repairs Service**

Councillor Knight (Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Renters Security) introduced a report setting out options, developed following consultation with members, for delivering the housing repairs service following expiry of the current repairs service contract with Wates Construction Limited in September 2024.

In considering the report, Cabinet noted the main principles developed to guide future delivery of the repairs service taking account of the current social housing climate and extensive nature of the consultation and engagement with members in seeking to develop a preferred service delivery option. Details of the options considered along with the detailed appraisal undertaken had been set out within section 7 of the report, with the preferred option identified being a hybrid model. Cabinet were advised this would involve the repairs and maintenance provision being divided into six lots (three in the north and three in the south of the borough) for external procurement meaning at least two contractors would be involved in delivering the service; the establishment of a framework for small local sub-contractors and development of an in-house handyman service, with the expectation that this would include provision for local contractors based in Brent and the recruitment of handyman's from amongst Brent residents. Members were advised that this approach had also been designed to support the Council's strategic priorities in relation to Prosperity and Stability, Community Wealth Building and Thriving Communities.

In supporting the approach outlined and thanking all those involved for their efforts in developing the options outlined and wider engagement with members, Cabinet **RESOLVED**, having noted the exempt information contained in Appendix 1 of the report:

- (1) To agree the principles outlined for future delivery of the repairs service, as set out in section 5.0 of the report.
- (2) To note the process and outcome of the consultation with members as outlined in section 8.0 of the report.
- (3) To approve the implementation of Option 3 (Hybrid Model) by Brent Housing Management (BHM) for future delivery of the Housing Repairs Service.
- (4) To agree the timetable for future repairs delivery actions as detailed within the report.

8. **Brent Data Strategy**

Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council) introduced a report which outlined the development of a Brent Data and Insight Strategy and Delivery Plan.

In considering the report, Cabinet noted that the Strategy and Delivery Plan had been developed to fulfil the commitment within the Borough Plan 2023-27 to introduce a dedicated data strategy that would support the Council in becoming an organisation that maximised the value of data. The Strategy and Delivery Plan was also recognised as key in defining the Council's approach to harnessing the power of data to not only inform decision making but also secure improvements in the way the organisation operated and collaborated in delivering better outcomes for local people.

In welcoming the innovative nature of the Strategy, members also recognised the confidence and assurance it would provide in ensuring that data continued to be used in accordance with best practice and the necessary legal and ethical guidance. In recognising the increasing significance and need for robust management of data, members also welcomed the establishment of a Data Ethics Board as a means of providing further guidance and challenge in delivery of the Strategy, with it noted that Brent was currently one of only a few local authorities to have implemented such a Board.

Having expressed support for the approach outlined in terms of the way it would assist in establishing more modern, joined up and agile ways of working to support better outcomes for local residents, Cabinet **RESOLVED** to endorse and approve the Brent Data and Insight Strategy and the accompanying Delivery Plan, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

9. **Alperton Housing Zone - Parks Improvements**

Prior to consideration of the report, Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council) invited Councillor Georgiou, who had requested to speak on the item, to address the meeting. Councillor Georgiou (as one of the local councillors representing Alperton Ward) began by welcoming the proposed additional infrastructure investment in Alperton, stating that the funding was crucial to ensure that regeneration benefitted both new and existing residents. Although recognising the positive impact that the investment could have on the parks, Councillor Georgiou highlighted that 40% of residents currently believed the spaces to be in a poor or very poor state and that the parks and surrounding areas experienced heightened anti-social behaviour and fly tipping.

In outlining previous attempts to improve green spaces in the area it was felt that not all of these efforts had managed to fully achieve the desired objectives. As a result, Councillor Georgiou felt it would be important to ensure that the funding committed was designed to secure long lasting, transformative and meaningful improvements with local residents, schools and community groups such as the Wembley Central and Alperton Residents Association (WCARA) and Friends of Mount Pleasant Space all fully engaged in the decision-making process regarding use of the investment secured.

Furthermore, in highlighting previous issues concerning parks and open spaces, Councillor Georgiou suggested that the 10% budget allocation for ongoing maintenance be increased to ensure it was sufficient to cover necessary costs and ensure the long-term benefit of the investment with the need for further investment in enforcement measures in the borough's green spaces to keep the areas safe and clean also highlighted. In concluding, Councillor Georgiou welcomed the investment

in Alperton which it was hoped (continuing the work already undertaken) would result in significant and lasting improvements at One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant Open Spaces.

In response, Councillor Butt (Leader of the Council) thanked Councillor Georgiou for his comments and welcomed the support expressed for the proposed additional investment, which he felt demonstrated the positive benefits arising from delivery of the Council's regeneration programme for residents across the borough despite the financial difficulties being experienced.

Councillor Tatler (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning & Growth) was then invited to introduce the report which sought approval for the use of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding and the use of Public Health funding to design, plan and deliver improvements to One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant Open Spaces. In presenting the report, Councillor Tatler took the opportunity to highlight the Council's commitment to investing in the borough's park and open spaces in order assist in meeting the growing demand for outdoor infrastructure and recreation space and in support of the wider programme of regeneration and growth across the borough, with Alperton recognised as one of the fastest growing wards by population in the borough. In thanking officers for the work undertaken to engage with local residents and ward councillors (and welcoming the support expressed by Councillor Georgiou at the meeting) in developing the proposals, the proposed improvements to the open spaces identified were not only felt to be important in terms of addressing growing demand but also in terms of improving the physical and mental health and wellbeing of residents in the area. Confirmation was also provided that the final proposals had been based on a detailed assessment of available options, key objectives and investment priorities within the Local Plan and would also be subject to ongoing consultation with local residents and stakeholders.

In support of the proposals, Cabinet welcomed the proposed investment identified which it was recognised would also include a commitment to ensure that parks and open spaces were accessible for all residents, including young people (including the provision of SEND friendly play equipment) and contributed towards the ongoing delivery of Brent's Climate and Ecological Strategy.

Having noted the benefits of the proposed improvements to the open spaces identified in relation to public health and in addressing the growing demand for accessible and well-maintained open spaces Cabinet **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To approve £525,466 of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding and £100,000 of Public Health funding to design, plan and deliver improvements to One Tree Hill and Mount Pleasant Open Spaces.
- (2) To approve the engagement plan for the proposed improvement works outlined in Appendix 5 of the report.

10. **South Kilburn medical centre additional SCIL contribution**

Councillor Tatler (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth) introduced a report detailing the funding challenges currently facing the delivery of the South Kilburn Medical Centre and seeking a further contribution of funds, in

addition to the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding previously agreed by Cabinet. In considering the report, Cabinet were reminded that the South Kilburn Medical Centre formed part of the social and community infrastructure included as part of the South Kilburn estate regeneration programme and Masterplan for the Peel Scheme. The importance of the scheme in supporting wider improvements in health outcomes and the quality of primary care in the area was also highlighted, with members noting that the additional funding being sought had been as a result of the current high interest rates and inflation which had increased building costs and negatively impacted on the current viability of the scheme. In order to address the viability gap identified the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) had agreed to match the additional SCIL contribution being sought, which was welcomed by Cabinet as a means of securing the additional funding requirement to enable the current scheme to progress. The use of SCIL for the purpose of supporting infrastructure provision linked to growth and development was also confirmed as being compliant with the necessary regulations and in accordance with the principle of the initial contribution agreed by Cabinet in April 2020.

In supporting the proposals, Cabinet recognised the current pressures on the viability of construction schemes along with the importance in delivery of infrastructure schemes such as the medical centre in growth areas such as South Kilburn as a means of tackling health inequalities and enhancing the quality of primary care facilities designed to meet local need. As such, members praised the partnership working with the NHS and welcomed the plans for community engagement regarding the services on offer once the Medical Centre became operational.

In commending the collaborative approach that had secured the viability of the Medical Centre, Cabinet **RESOLVED** to agree an additional £600,000 of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding for the infrastructure fit out costs of South Kilburn Medical Centre, subject to an amended funding agreement.

11. **Picture Palace Refurbishment Project: Approval to Use Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL)**

Councillor Tatler (as Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Planning and Growth) introduced a report outlining progress on the refurbishment of the Picture Palace as a community facility and seeking approval for £3.3m of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy (SCIL) funding to complete the project. In considering the report Cabinet noted the aspirations behind the refurbishment project with the building expected to become a significant cultural and community anchor driving long lasting and positive change for Harlesden and the surrounding areas. Members were advised that the use of SCIL funding was being sought as a means of ensuring the scheme could be progressed (working alongside the wider consortium of local organisations already involved) in terms of the necessary design and build works enabling the schemes wider ambitions to be realised.

In support of the approach outlined, Cabinet welcomed the way in which the project had been designed to enable local communities to lead on the development and management of activities within their area supported by a local desire to see the scheme delivered. Members were also keen to recognise the positive impact being

created through the use of SCIL as part of the wider programme of regeneration activity and its associated benefits for local communities across the borough.

In support of the wider benefits identified and ongoing commitment to create long lasting and positive change for local communities in Harlesden and the wider area Cabinet **RESOLVED**:

- (1) To note the update on the Picture Palace refurbishment project.
- (2) To approve the use of £3.3m of Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy funding to complete the Picture Palace refurbishment project.

12. **Brent Youth Justice Plan**

As a result of Councillor Grahl (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools) having submitted her apologies for absence Councillor Muhammed Butt (Leader of the Council) introduced a report presenting the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2023/24. In considering the report Cabinet noted that the Youth Justice Plan included an overview of local youth justice progress and priorities along with the arrangements for monitoring performance, with the Plan (in accordance with statutory requirements) having been submitted to the Youth Justice Board for review and approval prior to its formal consideration by Cabinet in advance of its recommended adoption by Full Council.

In recognising the commitment and achievements of the Youth Justice Service and the wider partnership work being undertaken to support children and young people who were at risk of or had entered the youth justice system, members noted the overall performance achieved by the service particularly in respect of the reduction in number of young people entering the criminal justice system for the first time and low numbers of young people in custody. The strong performance identified was attributed to the Council's focus on prevention and engagement with children and young people, with members welcoming the positive feedback provided through young people and their parents and carers and supporting the importance identified in maintaining funding contributions towards the Youth Justice Service partnership budget.

Whilst recognising the positive work being undertaken, members in supporting the Plan also highlighted the need to maintain a focus on the increased risks identified in relation to serious youth violence, drug related offences and criminal exploitation and gang activity following the pandemic along with the ongoing work to reduce the disproportionate representation of young black people in the criminal justice system.

In thanking all those working within the Youth Justice Service for their efforts, diligence and innovation in supporting young people Cabinet **RESOLVED** to approve the Brent Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 to proceed to Full Council on 18 September 2023 for formal sign off and adoption.

13. **Treasury Management Outturn Report 2022/23**

Councillor Tatler (as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Reform) introduced a report updating members on Treasury Management activity during 2022 - 23.

In considering the report Cabinet noted the economic background in relation to the current outturn position which included the continuing economic volatility and challenges arising from the war in Ukraine and increase in both inflation and interest rates. In recognising the importance of the Treasury Management function in managing and planning for the level of funding required to support the Council's activities, services and affordability of the capital programme members noted that the activity looked to optimise the effect of borrowing costs and investment income whilst managing the associated risks in line with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators, which had been approved by Full Council in February 2022 and in accordance with relevant professional codes and legislation.

In noting that the Council had complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2022 – 23, members attention was also drawn to a review of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) undertaken following a recommendation from the Council's external auditor which had resulted in a change of approach for assets acquired prior to 2008. This had resulted in the expected economic life of these assets having to be revised downwards from 100 years to 49 with the changes reflected in the updated MRP statements for 2021 – 22 through to 2023 – 24 included within Appendices 4 – 6 of the report and requiring formal approval by Council.

Cabinet thanked officers for their work in relation to managing the Council's Treasury Management activity and having considered the report **RESOLVED:**

- (1) To note the 2022/23 Treasury Management Outturn Report and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategies set out in Appendix 4-6 of the report.
- (2) To agree that the Treasury Management Outturn Report and appendices be forwarded to Full Council for approval, in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management.
- (3) To note that for 2022/23 the Council had complied with its Prudential Indicators which were approved by Full Council on 24 February 2022 as part of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Capital Strategy Statement.

14. **Exclusion of Press and Public**

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

15. **Any Other Urgent Business**

None.

The meeting ended at 10.28 am

COUNCILLOR MUHAMMED BUTT
Chair