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MINUTES OF A CABINET MEETING Council Chamber - Town Hall Wednesday, 22 January 2014 (7.30 - 10.00 pm)

Present:

Councillor Michael White (Leader of the Council), Chairman

Councillor Steven Kelly (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Michael Armstrong

Councillor Robert Benham

Councillor Andrew Curtin

Councillor Roger Ramsey

Councillor Paul Rochford

Councillor Geoffrey Starns

Councillor Barry Tebutt

Councillor Lesley Kelly

Cabinet Member responsibility:

(Deputy Leader) Individuals

Transformation

Community Empowerment

Culture, Towns & Communities

Value

Children & Learning

Community Safety

Environment

Housing & Public Protection

Councillors Clarence Barrett, Barbara Matthews, Linda Hawthorn, Keith Darvill, Pat Murray, Denis O'Flynn, Lawrence Webb, Sandra Binion, Pam Light and Lynden Thorpe were present for the meeting.

3 Members of the public were also in attendance.

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest.

The Chairman announced the evacuation procedures in the event of an Emergency

Unless otherwise indicated, all decisions were agreed unanimously without any Member voting against.

102 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that this would be his last Cabinet as he was stepping down as Leader of the Council on 29 January. He thanked those present for their support and stated that it had been a privilege to have led the Council for the past ten years.

103 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 11 December 2013 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

104 **THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

Councillor Roger Ramsey, Cabinet Member for Value, introduced the report

Cabinet was reminded that it had received reports in August and September which had set out an update on national developments and information on the financial position within Havering.

The report before Cabinet updated Members on the progress of the corporate budget and the proposed financial strategy for the coming financial year. It showed how the Council was responding to the financial position facing it and recognised the need to develop a new, long term strategy for approval by the Administration after the local elections in May.

The report set out the additional proposals identified for consideration by all the relevant Committees and for consultation with stakeholders.

The provisional Local Government Financial Settlement had now been announced, and relevant details were included in the report, together with a summary of the key elements of the Autumn Budget Statement.

Reasons for the decision:

This enables the Council to develop its budget as set out in the constitution.

Other options considered:

None. The Constitution requires this as a step towards setting its budget.

Cabinet:

1. Noted the progress made to date with the development of the Council's budget for 2014/15 and the Council's intention to freeze council tax for a further year which would make use of the Government's Council Tax Freeze Grant.
2. Noted the outcome of the Autumn Budget Statement and the likely impact on local authorities.
3. Noted the outcome of the provisional local government financial settlement announcement, and that arising from the settlement, there

were reductions in mainstream Government funding for 2014/15 and 2015/16 of around £7m and £9m respectively.

4. Noted that a response to the consultation process had been submitted by the time Cabinet met and that a meeting with the Minister had taken place.
5. Delegated approval of the Council's response to the consultation on the business rates appeals process to the Cabinet Member for Value.
6. Delegated authority to the Group Director for Children, Adults and Housing to agree inflation rates with social care providers for 2014/15.
7. Delegated authority to the Cabinet Members for Individuals and Value to approve an annual spend plan for the Public Health grant.
8. Noted that it was proposed to undertake a one-off investment of £1m during 2014/15 as a result of surplus monies arising from the New Homes Bonus.
9. Agreed to expand the 2013/14 capital programme by £250,000 to enable the Council to jointly acquire the freehold interest in the former Ardleigh Green Baptist Church as 'Tenants in Common' in conjunction with the Trustees of the Ardleigh Green Family Centre.
10. Agreed to issue this report for consultation to Members, the unions and staff, local residents and other stakeholder groups.
11. Agreed that a consultative presentation would be made to a joint meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
12. Noted the financial position of the Council in the current year.
13. Agreed that any future underspends from the Corporate Contingency Fund, from the Transformation budget, and from any service revenue underspends, would be allocated to the Strategic Reserve.
14. Approved the updated version of the Corporate Plan set out in Appendix F of the report.
15. Noted the summary of the GLA's consultation budget and the expected date for the publication of the final proposals.

105 **HAROLD HILL AMBITIONS PROGRAMME**

Councillor Steven Kelly, Cabinet Member for Individuals, introduced the report

Cabinet was reminded that at the beginning of this term, ten Strategic Administration Projects had been established to help deliver services more effectively and in new ways. The Projects were each to be driven by a Member of the Cabinet, working with a select team of officers, representing a diverse variety of disciplines within the Council.

The projects were:

Council Effectiveness
Think Family
Open Government
Community Action
Harold Hill Ambitions

Neighbourhood Responsibility
Civic Pride
Future Financing
Rainham Compass
Romford Regeneration

In the last year of this Administration, it was intended that each Project would be reporting back to Cabinet for it to note the achievements attained and the progress made.

The Harold Hill Ambitions Programme remained an **on-going** 20 year programme that was working with the local community to transform Harold Hill and open up new and exciting opportunities for local people to improve their lives. The long term ambition for Harold Hill - expressed in the November 2008 Cabinet Report - was to:

- create more opportunities for local people;
- to work with the police to stamp out unacceptable behaviour and crime;
- to build a learning village to provide a centre of educational excellence on Harold Hill;
- modernise and improve community facilities for everyone;
- create new housing opportunities;
- improve health and wellbeing; and
- provide excellent new sports and recreation facilities.

The Harold Hill Ambitions Programme was drawn up following an extensive initial consultation with the community and key stakeholders during the summer of 2007 when a range of ideas and options were developed. Progress was reported to Cabinet in February 2008 and in August 2008 the Deputy Leader gave approval to consult the public on specific proposals to address the key priorities and opportunities which had been identified by the community and stakeholders. The current report set out progress since this date.

The first five years of the Programme had been highly successful in delivering and initiating a complex series of physical change projects which had improved the built environment. In taking the programme forward it was proposed that delivery of the remaining physical elements continued, while

sustaining an even stronger focus on opportunities for local people, particularly through the development of the Community Programme focussing on jobs, education, skills and health.

Reasons for the decision:

Harold Hill Ambitions in its first five years of delivery had successfully delivered investment in its physical environment. Some of these schemes had been completed, whilst other elements were at advanced contractual and development stages. Improvements to the community had been made, such as improvements to Life Expectancy at Birth and reduction in unemployment. However there was still a need to continue with a targeted approach to delivery in the area and complete the remaining elements of the November 2008 Cabinet Report.

It was envisaged that the next phase of the 20 year programme would focus on improving the life chances of local people whilst continuing to manage the delivery of the few remaining projects outlined in the November 2008 Cabinet report. As part of this phase the Council would work to support and improve the community of Harold Hill and ensure the new facilities built within the Programme were utilised and value for money is obtained.

Other options considered:

The Council, as part of its on-going management of the Programme constantly seeks to improve delivery with various options considered throughout the Programme. These include various options considered as part of the initial scoping of the Programme prior to the original November 2008 Cabinet Report.

Cabinet:

Noted the progress made to date on the Harold Hill Ambitions Programme.

106 HAVERING NATURE CONSERVATION & BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

Councillor Andrew Curtin, Cabinet Member for Culture, Towns and Communities, introduced the report

The report sought Member approval for a Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy for Havering, which would provide a framework for the Council and its partners to progress nature conservation and biodiversity work in the borough for the next three years (2014-16).

Havering's Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was now over 10 years old and was in need of updating. This update should take account of the significant progress that had been made in promoting, protecting and enhancing biodiversity in the borough in the last decade, as well as the new

challenges facing those involved in the delivery of the nature conservation agenda.

Havering had wildlife and wild places to be proud of. As an outer London Borough encircled by Green Belt land, Havering was custodian of countryside and wildlife that was important not only for those that lived and worked in the borough but for many other Londoners as well. Even among the outer London boroughs, Havering's biodiversity was notable. Its historic parks, river valleys and Thames-side marshland held a significant proportion of London's entire resource of some priority habitats. Its private gardens were home to a national priority species - the stag beetle - and Havering was also the stronghold in London for two other national priority species: water voles and great crested newts. Within Greater London, Havering had 56% of the grazing marsh, 31% of the reed beds, 31% of the floodplain grassland, 25% of the marshland and 19% of the lakes and ponds, in all cases more than any other London borough.

The Strategy focused on the work that the Council and the Havering Wildlife Project, in partnership with a wide range of stakeholder organisations and residents, could do to address 18 objectives - key issues that were identified in the strategy contained within the appendix to the report. An Action Plan was included to ensure that nature conservation and biodiversity work in Havering was significantly enhanced in the future.

Reasons for the decision:

To provide a strategic framework for Havering Council and its partners to work within, in order to better address a number of nature conservation and biodiversity issues in the borough.

To help ensure that the Council considered biodiversity issues in exercising its functions, as required by the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

Other options considered:

The option of not providing a strategic framework was rejected as it would result in a diminution of the work that Havering Council and partners would be able progress, to address the nature conservation and biodiversity issues facing the borough.

Cabinet:

Agreed to the Havering Nature Conservation and Biodiversity Strategy as set out in in the appendix to the report.

107 **UPMINSTER WINDMILL**

Councillor Andrew Curtin, Cabinet Member for Culture, Towns and Communities, introduced the report

Cabinet was reminded about the development of a project to restore the Upminster Windmill Heritage Site following a successful Stage 1 application for development funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). In November 2012 funding of £128,920 had been granted to progress plans to restore the windmill and build an Education & Training Centre.

The report sought approval to make a Round 2 application to the HLF Heritage Grants Programme in partnership with the Upminster Windmill Preservation Trust (the Trust), for £1,384,500.

The Round 2 bid would build on the work undertaken during the development phase outlining in detail the delivery plans to restore the windmill and build the Education & Training Centre. The bid would also encompass the range of community activities that would meet the HLF learning, participation and conservation aims.

The Council had worked closely with the Trust to develop plans for the site and an integral part of the project had been the volunteer time allocated during both the development stage and the delivery stage.

Reasons for the decision:

Upminster Windmill was a Grade II* listed building, currently registered by English Heritage as in poor condition and priority D on their At Risk Register (Priority D was classified as: "slow decay; solution agreed but not yet implemented"). English Heritage had been consulted during the development phase and awareness of the project had raised expectations of delivery from English Heritage.

In order to maximise the benefits of HLF funding, a decision by Cabinet was required to authorise the submission of funding bids in excess of £500k. The Constitution set out that pursuant to the delegated authority for corporate functions in Part 3 Section 2.2 in the following paragraphs to Cabinet:-

- (a) To take decisions on all matters relating to the Council's finances including but not exclusively:
 - (i) budgetary control
 - (q) To approve applications for the submission of bids for grants and other financial assistance which require the provision of additional finance or match funding or are likely to lead to residual costs or implications for the Council or where the amount of the grant application exceeds £500,000

Other options considered:

Submitting external funding bids above £500k required Cabinet approval, without which there were no other options available.

Cabinet:

Agreed that a submission of a Round 2 grant funding application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, Heritage Grants Programme for £1,384,500 be made.

108 **COMMUNITY ACTION MEMBER PROJECT**

Councillor Andrew Curtin, Cabinet Member for Culture, Towns and Communities, introduced the report

Cabinet was reminded that at the beginning of this term, ten Strategic Administration Projects had been established to help deliver services more effectively and in new ways. The Projects were each to be driven by a Member of the Cabinet, working with a select team of officers, representing a diverse variety of disciplines within the Council.

The projects were:

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In the last year of this Administration, it was intended that each Project would be reporting back to Cabinet for it to note the achievements attained and the progress made.

The **Community Action** project had now been completed, although many of the initiatives it put in place would continue to be delivered as it now formed the mainstream work for a number of council services.

The project:

- **Strengthened relationships with the voluntary sector** by developing, in partnership, volunteering projects such as Cold Weather Befrienders, that utilised the specialisms of local organisations and community groups to help reach isolated older people
- **Saw over £250,000 awarded to local grassroots groups** through the Community Chest small grants programme

- **Capitalised on the Olympics and Paralympics legacy** by galvanising the huge interest the Games brought about in volunteering, and put in place the Community Clean-Ups programme, part of the 'Cleaner Havering' Campaign
- **Put in place the Active Living over 50s programme**, designed to help older people stay healthy, social and safe for longer
- **Improved the Council's offer for young people**, through the new 'Assets Framework'
- **Looked at ways of removing barriers to engagement**, by making volunteering, particularly in cultural activities, as inclusive as possible.

The Community Action Project left a legacy of positive outcomes and a new way of working with the community to help Havering continue to be the great place it was in which to live - even in difficult economic times.

Reasons for the decision:

This report was being brought to Cabinet to provide Members with an overview of the Council Effectiveness Member project.

Other options considered:

N/A

Cabinet:

Noted the outcomes delivered by the Community Action project.

109 **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

Cabinet decided on the motion of the Chairman that the public should be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the ground that it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within the meaning of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 and it was not in the public interest to publish the information.

110 **AWARD OF THE WASTE & RECYCLING COLLECTION CONTRACT - CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION**

Councillor Barry Tebbutt, Cabinet Member for the Environment, introduced the report.

Cabinet received a report containing exempt information and not available to the press or public. **The details of that report are set out in the Appendix**

to these minutes containing exempt information (and not available to the press or public)

Chairman

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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