



MINUTES OF A CABINET MEETING
Council Chamber - Town Hall
Wednesday, 7 July 2021
(7.30 - 8.00 pm)

Present:

Councillor Damian White (Leader of the Council), Chairman

	Cabinet Member responsibility:
Councillor Dilip Patel	Deputy Cabinet Member for Business Recovery
Councillor Robert Benham	Cabinet Member for Education, Children & Families
Councillor Osman Dervish	Cabinet Member for Environment
Councillor Joshua Chapman	Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Jason Frost	Cabinet Member for Health & Adult Care Services
Councillor Roger Ramsey	Cabinet Member for Finance & Property
Councillor Viddy Persaud	Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Safety

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting were agreed as a true record of the same and the Chair was authorised to sign them.

4 CONSIDERATION OF THE REPORT OF A TOPIC GROUP - COVID-19 PANDEMIC COMMAND RESPONSE TOPIC GROUP

Cabinet were grateful to the care and work put into the Topic Group report and were very pleased to consider it.

At its meeting on 13 October 2020, Overview & Scrutiny Board commissioned a number of Topic Groups to review the impact of the COVID pandemic and the Council's response to it.

The terms of review for this Topic Group was the Council's response to the COVID pandemic; specifically, the emergency planning arrangements and Communication strategy.

Overview & Scrutiny Board recognised that the scope of the pandemic was such that commissioning a single Topic Group to assess its impact and the preparedness of the Council in responding to it was unrealistic. It therefore established three separate Topic Groups charged with exploring specific areas of interest.

The focus for this Topic Group concerned the Council's emergency planning arrangements and the operation of its Command Structure. It therefore concentrated on the following key areas.

1. Review the Council's influenza-pandemic plan and develop an understanding of the Council's Command structure. Challenge and review planning assumptions contained within the plan (was the response proportionate to the risk);
2. Understand and explore the relationship between the Command structure and the Borough Resilience Forum:
 - a. With reference to the Community Resilience Development Framework, was there sufficient support for individuals identified at being of greatest risk? How are we doing it and what worked well/not so well (lessons learnt)
 - b. Promotion of the pandemic plans/Command responses into Member organisations from the business and voluntary sector. How was it communicated and were there any areas for improvement?
 - c. Was the Resilience Plan tested pre-Covid? If so, what were the improvements gleaned from it?
3. Communication roles between Command, the Resilience Forum and elected Members. How the council communicated government guidance on responding to the pandemic and impacts on service provision.

The findings and recommendations were discussed and welcomed.

Cabinet **AGREED** to refer this matter to Full Council where all members could review and consider the recommendations.

5 DECISION TO INCREASE ALLOWANCES AND BENEFITS FOR IN-HOUSE FOSTER CARERS.

Cabinet considered the report and noted that as corporate parents it is the ambition of members and the Council to recruit and retain the best foster carers to provide the best possible care for the Looked After children in Havering.

This decision proposes to improve our offer to prospective and existing carers, by increasing some specific allowances to “in-house” foster carers, in addition to providing additional benefits such as council tax exemption, complimentary access to leisure facilities at borough leisure centres, free parking and free green bin collections for all in-house carers.

In spite of concerted efforts to recruit and retain, the Borough is no longer competitive as a destination for potential carers at levels 1-3. Many new carers come via word of mouth and feedback from the Havering Foster Carers Association is that our offer is no longer preferable to other boroughs and the independent sector. The Borough is not unique in this challenge; Ofsted published a national report in November 2020 noting that recruitment of in-house carers was a significant difficulty for all the local authorities and agencies used in their study. The shortage of suitable carers was the most significant barrier to making a good match with the child and ultimately a successful caring place for them.

The proposals were discussed and welcomed to fulfil the ambition to attract the very best carers for the LAC of the Borough. The Leader indicated this as firm intention now and for the future and all Group Leaders shared this ambition and agreed the recommendations.

Cabinet:

AGREED to increase both the support and the financial incentives provided to ‘in-house’ carers in order to increase retention of our in-house foster carers by:

- a. Increasing the financial allowances as set out in Appendix 1 one of the report and improve a comprehensive wrap-around support package as covered in this report;
- b. Approving Havering resident foster carers as a class subject to Council Tax Relief from 1 April 2021.
- c. Approving the amendment to the Council Tax Discretionary Policy to include Havering foster carers with effect from 1 April 2021
- d. Providing complimentary access to the borough’s leisure centres for in-house carers and children in their care;
- e. Waiving free green bin refuse collection charges; and
- f. Offering free parking in resident bays and council car parks borough-wide, this will not include paid for parking bays.

6 DECISION TO BEGIN A CONSULTATION IN RESPECT OF HAVERING'S STREET TRADING POLICY

The report was presented to Cabinet by Councillor Viddy Persaud. It was noted by Cabinet that Havering adopted Street Trading in 1999 as part of its Environment Strategic Policy. Following natural changes in the Borough since the adoption of the relevant provisions of the London Local Authorities Act 1990 (as amended) in 1999 a new Policy is now required for street trading in the Borough.

A Street Trading Policy enables the authority to control various factors such as:

- **Economic promotion**
- **Public order and decency**
- **Prevention of crime and disorder**
- **Public safety**
- **Effective traffic and pedestrian progress on the highway**

Before the authority can introduce a new Street Trading Policy there is a requirement under the London Local Authorities Act 1990 to consult on the proposed policy.

It is intended that this consultation follow the standard public consultation format and that additional direct consultation be focused on business users. In accordance with the London Local Authorities Act 1990 there will also be consultation with the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, existing street trading licence holders or bodies representing them, Highways, British Railways Board, London Regional Transport, Network Rail Infrastructure Limited and Transport for London.

There followed general discussion and particular concern was expressed regarding the safety of children around ice cream vans. This should be addressed in particular.

Cabinet:

APPROVED the commencement of a 10 week public consultation on a draft Street Trading Policy beginning on 1st September 2021.

7 EAST LONDON JOINT RESOURCES AND WASTE STRATEGY - APPROVAL OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Councillor Osman Dervish was delighted to present this report to Cabinet and recommend the proposals within it.

The Preliminary Draft of the new East London Joint Resources and Waste Strategy (ELJRWS) had been developed in close cooperation between officers and Members of the Partner Authorities and could be seen at Appendix 1 of the report.

The Preliminary Draft of the ELJRWS will be subject to public consultation to understand the public opinion on its priorities and actions. Future service changes will be subject to consultation as appropriate in line with statutory obligations.

Councillor Dervish stated that this will allow residents who are increasingly more concerned with the reuse and recycling of waste to be sure that all available options are explored for the disposal of waste with a particular focus on ensuring that waste is reused and recycled where ever possible.

There followed discussion and Group Leaders were all in agreement with the recommendations.

Cabinet:

1. **APPROVED** the release of the Preliminary Draft of the East London Joint Resources and Waste Strategy (ELJRWS) and associated documents to the four statutory consultees (Environment Agency, Greater London Authority, Historic England and Natural England).
2. **APPROVED** the start of wider public engagement in line with the proposals in this report.
3. **DELEGATED** to the Director of Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment, the decision to make minor amendments to the proposal set out in this report. Such amendments will be limited to changes in the public consultation timeline and minor changes within the Strategy document.

8 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Cabinet resolved to exclude members of the public and press for agenda item 10 and so the webcast was closed.

9 PUBLIC REALM TRANSFORMATION- NEW OPERATING MODEL

Councillor Osman Dervish presented the report to Cabinet who were addressed by the report author Peter Gay who gave a history of this matter to Members.

In September 2019, the Council started the procurement process for an integrated public realm services contract, tendering for a single contract to include waste and recycling collection, street cleansing, grounds and tree maintenance and associated services. Tendering had commenced but the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic introduced a period of uncertainty with bidders concentrating on service delivery and not new business jeopardising the procurement project plan timetable, leading to a significant risk that the programme would fail with severe disruption to services. Consequently, in September 2020 Cabinet agreed to stop this procurement.

The Public Realm Transformation programme has been reviewed again, concluding the market has now recovered to restart a procurement exercise.

In the light of the previous Options Appraisal, Business Case and the present circumstances, three main service delivery models have been reconsidered:

- Continuing with the current operating model, with waste and recycling collection services and tree maintenance outsourced while street cleansing and grounds maintenance remain in-house. The Tree maintenance contract was extended for one year and is due to expire on 31st March 2022. The Waste and Recycling Contract will expire on 29th July 2023.
- Conduct a procurement exercise and engage an external contractor to deliver waste and recycling collection, street cleansing, grounds and tree maintenance and associated services in a single contract, or various permutations of these services to be included in the procurement with waste services
- Deliver public realm services through a Local Authority Company either by setting up a new company, using an existing company founded by the Council or partnership arrangement to deliver the services.

Assisted by Eunomia, a recent review indicates that the option likely to deliver the best outcome for the Council is to tender a waste and recycling collection service combined, and integrating, the street cleansing service. The research also indicated that retendering a standalone waste and recycling collection contract was likely to reduce bidder participation, reducing competition.

An integrated waste and recycling collection and street cleansing service contract will provide the Council opportunities to:

- Remove demarcation inefficiencies about who is responsible for litter and spillages in the street scene to achieve cleaner streets.
- Improve supervision across waste collection and street cleansing services
- Share processes, procedures and ICT systems for swifter rectification of waste and street scene issues
- Lower its carbon footprint and improve local air quality with the introduction of ULEZ compliant vehicles, and may include electric and/or hydrogen vehicles where practicable
- Improve service performance within a framework of best value for money
- Increase value of the potential contract to the market which could lead to improved competition demonstrating value for money.

The recommendations were discussed and the other options available considered.

Following this consideration:

Cabinet:

1. **APPROVED** the new operating model whereby waste and street cleansing, trunk road cleaning, recycling collection and weed control services are combined in one single integrated contract offering and the commencement of the procurement of that contract; and
2. **DELEGATED** authority to the Director of Neighbourhoods, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment and Director of Legal & Governance, to take all necessary steps to award the contract post procurement at the estimated value of £10 million per year and deliver an integrated contract for street cleansing, trunk road cleaning, waste and recycling collection and weed control.

Chairman