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MINUTES OF A CABINET MEETING Council Chamber - Town Hall Wednesday, 16 January 2019 (7.30 - 8.05 pm)

Present:

Councillor Damian White (Leader of the Council), Chairman

Cabinet Member responsibility:

Councillor Robert Benham

Cabinet Member for Education,
Children & Families

Councillor Osman Dervish

Cabinet Member for Environment

Councillor Joshua Chapman

Cabinet Member for Housing

Councillor Roger Ramsey

Cabinet Member for Finance &
Property

Councillor Viddy Persaud

Cabinet Member for Public
Protection and Safety

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillor Jason Frost.

27 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest.

28 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 13 November 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29 BUSINESS RATES - DISCRETIONARY REVALUATION SUPPORT SCHEME

Councillor Roger Ramsey, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, introduced the report.

The report set out the Council's proposals for administering the remaining two years of the Governments Revaluation Support Scheme (RSS) for the financial years 2019/2020, and 2020/2021 and the principles of the scheme for the remaining period up until 2020/2021.

In the Budget statement on 8 March 2017, the Chancellor announced that the Government would provide £300m to support those business most adversely affected by the recent revaluation of commercial properties. The funding was provided over a period of 4 years.

The RSS adopted in 2017 is in addition to the changes announced in the budget on 29 October 2018, which provides further support to businesses from April 2019. Local Authorities were able to use their current powers with regards to Discretionary Business Rate Relief under Section 47 of the Local Government Act 1988 to develop and administer this new relief.

It was explained that the Government did not prescribe how this relief was to be applied as they considered that Local Authorities were best placed to design their own relief schemes to determine eligibility and how best to distribute this support.

Havering received Government funding of £1.696m. The funding for 2017/2018 & 2018/2019 which had to be applied in year, has been fully allocated to the eligible properties in accordance with the scheme approved by Cabinet on 9 August 2017.

Reasons for the decision:

The Council is required by central government to fully implement the Discretionary Revaluation Support Scheme. The Council does not have the ability to abstain from the implementation of the scheme.

Other options considered:

The report proposes a continuation of the Governments Revaluation Support Scheme as agreed at Cabinet on 9 August 2017. The proposal is in-line with the Governments criteria to help small businesses.

Cabinet approved the continuation of the Governments Discretionary Revaluation Support for the remaining two years of the relief as set out in the report, and previously agreed by Cabinet in August 2017.

30 HOMEBUILDING CAPACITY FUND - APPLICATION FOR GRANT FROM THE GREATER LONDON AUTHORITY (GLA)

Councillor Damian White, Leader of the Council, introduced the report.

The report sought approval to enable the Council to submit a bid to obtain grant funding under the Greater London Authority (GLA) Homebuilding Capacity Fund. The scheme is to develop capacity, skills and expertise to develop new affordable housing. The approval to progress any or initiatives and commit Council funding will be sought separately in accordance with the Councils constitution. The deadline for bid submission being 25 January 2019.

Reasons for the decision:

The funding is revenue funding for additional staff for a period of 2 years. The additional staff will have the levels of skills and experience needed to deliver good quality affordable housing and enhanced place shaping. This will also build expertise and skills for a lasting improvement in delivery. The approval to progress schemes and commit Council funding will be sought separately in accordance with the Councils constitution.

Other options considered:

Not to Bid was rejected as a viable option as it would mean the Council would not be able to benefit from the programme to support the delivery of local housing priorities and regeneration activities.

Cabinet approved the submission of a bid of £940,000 as set out in the report to the GLA for the Homebuilding Capacity Fund.

31 ADOPT LONDON EAST

Councillor Robert Benham, Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families, introduced the report.

The purpose of the report is to propose a model for the future delivery of East London's Regional Adoption Agency.

It is proposed that the East London Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) is created through combining the adoption services for the four East London Boroughs of Havering, Tower Hamlets, Newham and Barking and Dagenham.

These agencies wish to build on the success of their existing services to improve performance in meeting the needs of children who require permanence through adoption, by bringing together the best practice from each authority within the RAA. This proposal forms part of an overarching project to develop four RAAs across London.

Each of the four RAA's will have a host/lead authority. It is proposed that Havering will be the lead authority for East London. All local authorities in England are statutorily required to join a regional adoption agency by April 2020.

Following the recent news regarding Waltham Forest's cabinet decision to join 'Ambitious for Adoption' an alternative Regional Adoption Agency, the report recommends a four local authority model. The remaining four local authorities are committed to establishing the model proposed in the report and full business case.

In Havering, the average annual spend for adoption services over the last three years (plus a projected spend 2017/18) was £340,929.00 this includes

£27k (net) that was spent on inter-agency fees – the cost of placing a Havering child with an adopter approved outside of the adoption agency.

It was reported that under the proposed formation of an East London RAA a contribution of £313,929 is required to fund future costs within the RAA. Inter-agency fees will remain the responsibility of each Local Authority and will not form part of the budget for the RAA – a budget will be retained to cover interagency fees within each constituent Local Authority including Havering.

Each member of the RAA will need to provide a one-off contribution to the set-up costs of the RAA – these are costs that are not currently covered by individual adoption budgets including the Head of Service for the RAA, and the centralised business support function. The Havering contribution will be a one-off payment of £47,089, with the other three Local Authorities also making one-off contributions.

As the host authority, Havering will receive an income of circa £200k in the first year to cover the cost of transition, a new head of service and hosting costs.

The business case to support this model enables each Local Authority partner to reduce the amount it spends on inter-agency fees, as the RAA recruits more of its own adopters, and places more of its children with its adopters.

It was noted that alongside the reduction in expenditure, the model also projects an income that will be derived from other Local Authorities placing their children with East London Adopt carers, thus attracting a fee income to the RAA. This projected income will allow the transition costs to be tapered off to £0 in year 2 of the RAA going live. The combined effect of an inter-agency fee income (which will be retained by the East London Adopt RAA), and the reduction of inter-agency expenditure (the costs of which will be allocated proportionately, and budgetary responsibility retained by each of the constituent Local Authorities) enables the model to project a reduced overall cost of delivering adoption services over the next three years.

Reasons for the decision

In March 2016, the government announced changes to the delivery of adoption services setting a very clear direction that all local authorities' adoption services must be delivered on a regionalised basis by 2020. The premise of regionalisation is to:

- Increase the number of children adopted
- Reduce the length of time children wait to be adopted
- Improve post-adoption support services to families who have adopted children from care
- Reduce the number of agencies that provide adoption services thereby improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Other options considered

An options appraisal was undertaken in the initial stages of development of the Pan London model for regionalisation of adoption. This model was subsequently refined into four 'Adopt London' Regional adoption agencies with a central hub providing further opportunities for efficiencies of scale. The detailed modelling benefitted from experience in Yorkshire; an early adopter with a similar model:

The rationale for the pan London approach:

- A Pan London resource for London children and families
- 4 Regional agencies providing responsive services at a local level within a recognisable geographical area
- London boroughs who understand local need and challenges to host each agency
- Ability to recruit adopters to meet identified need within the local area
- Opportunities for further economies of scale through working Pan London
- Opportunities for further funding for innovation through Practice Improvement Funding

In order to further test the proposed model consideration has been given to joining a regional adoption agency with other local providers. The only local provider who may be available for consideration is the Coram led regional adoption agency in partnership with Redbridge and other Local Authorities. The Council made an informal approach to Coram to establish whether they have the capacity to consider Havering as a partner and source information on the delivery model and associated costs.

The local authority model has now been determined as the preferred option due to the following factors:

- Significant reputational risks of pulling out of the model, as the host authority at such a late stage
- Staff across all local authorities have been involved in the design of the new system for three months and there is a commitment from those staff to make this model work
- The likelihood that the DFE would want to claim back project development funds if the model of delivery were to change now
- Targets for performance improvements in the East London model will achieve better outcomes and larger scale efficiencies.

Cabinet

1. Approved the business case at appendix A to this report to proceed with an East London Regional Adoption Agency led by the London

Borough of Havering to commence by July 2019 agree the budget commitment set out in the body of the report;

2. Delegated authority for the implementation of the project to the Director for Children Services including but not limited to entering into partnering agreements, agreeing the final terms of any Inter-authority risk and partnership sharing agreement and agreeing and arranging TUPE of staff between the authorities.

Chairman