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MINUTES OF A CABINET MEETING Council Chamber - Town Hall Wednesday, 21 March 2012 (7.30 - 8.15 pm)

Present:

Councillor Michael White (Leader of the Council), Chairman

Councillor Steven Kelly (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Robert Benham

Councillor Andrew Curtin

Councillor Roger Ramsey

Councillor Paul Rochford

Councillor Geoffrey Starns

Councillor Barry Tebbutt

Councillor Lesley Kelly

Cabinet Member responsibility:

(Deputy Leader) Individuals

Community Empowerment

Culture, Towns & Communities

Value

Children & Learning

Community Safety

Environment

Housing & Public Protection

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Michael Armstrong

Councillors Clarence Barrett, Linda Hawthorn, June Alexander, Denis O'Flynn, Paul McGeary, Pat Murray, Michael Deon Burton and Garry Pain also attended.

Two members of the public and a representative of the press were present.

The decisions were agreed with no vote against.

There were no declarations of interest.

The Chairman reminded those present of the action to be taken in the event of an emergency.

57 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 8 February 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

58 REPORT OF THE TOWNS & COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - LIVING AMBITIONS TOPIC GROUP

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

Cabinet was informed that the Topic Group had conducted surveys of the Sports Development Service, the Libraries Service, the Havering Music School and the Parks Apprenticeship Scheme and had identified specific areas which would

enhance the services provided to the community which included the following specific observations that:

The Library Service consider increasing the range and stock of large print books available in the libraries.

Support be provided by the Library Service to assist and facilitate reading group members who wish to take on the running of the groups themselves.

Cabinet ensure that current funding for the music school is continued as far as is possible.

Cabinet endorse the “buy-in” system of music school services as seen at Abbs Cross Music School.

Cabinet consider changing the signage in the Borough’s parks to match that of Cottons Park and also include the history of the relevant park within each entrance sign.

Reasons for the decision:

The report of the Living Ambitions Topic Group had been referred to Cabinet for consideration.

Other options considered:

No alternative had been considered.

Cabinet thanked the Topic Group for its thorough and informative investigation and NOTED its report and its recommendations

59 THE FUTURE OF THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICE

Councillor Lesley Kelly, Cabinet Member for Housing, introduced the report

The report provided Members with the result of the recent test of resident opinion on whether Homes in Havering (HiH) should continue to manage the Council’s housing stock, or whether the service should be brought in-house. Having conducted the consultation and received 5,836 responses from 14,793 questionnaires (39.4% - a very good response), it was found that 32.1% of the respondents wanted HiH to continue providing the service, 48.3% wished it to be provided by the Council directly and 19.6% expressed no preference.

Due to the significant majority in favour of bringing the service back to the Council it was proposed that officers be instructed to negotiate the ending of the agreement with HiH and to make preparations for the Housing management service to be brought in-house.

Reasons for the decision:

- The Council no longer needed to have an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO) in order to access funding from the Decent Homes Programme
- Tenants and leaseholders had expressed their views clearly, that they would prefer their homes to be managed by the Council rather than retain the existing ALMO structure
- The integration of the housing management service with the remaining housing services would provide a more transparent and accountable structure for the housing service
- The removal of duplication in the management and governance arrangements for the service would save at least £300,000.

Other options considered:

To retain the current ALMO, Homes in Havering

This option was rejected as it was more expensive than reintegrating the service with the retained housing services in Havering. In addition it was not the preferred option of the tenants and leaseholders of Havering.

To merge with another ALMO

This option was explored with the London Borough of Redbridge. However, although this option appeared very attractive - providing a greater level of savings than the chosen option - it ceased to be available when the London Borough of Redbridge decided not to pursue it.

Cabinet:

1. **NOTED the results of the tenant and leaseholder consultation, the cost/benefit analysis and the risk analysis and AGREED that the management of the Council's housing stock be brought back in-house.**
2. **AUTHORISED the Head of Housing and Public Protection in consultation with the Group Directors of Finance & Commerce and Culture and Community and the Assistant Chief Executive to negotiate and conclude a termination of the management agreement with Homes in Havering as soon as practicable.**
3. **AUTHORISED the Group Director Culture and Community acting as the shareholder of the Council's shares in Homes in Havering Ltd to take all such steps as may be necessary to achieve the termination of the management agreement for the Council's housing stock.**
4. **DELEGATED to the Lead Member for Housing, acting in consultation with the Group Director of Culture and Communities authority to take such decisions as may be necessary to facilitate the process of bringing back the housing service in house - unless such actions would have significant financial implications in addition to those outlined in the report - in which case a further report would be brought to Cabinet.**

5. **REQUIRED that the retained housing services and Homes in Havering maintain the quality of the housing service and delivery of the programme of Decent Homes work**

60 **THE COUNCIL'S CULTURE STRATEGY**

The Chairman informed Cabinet that the item had been withdrawn prior to the meeting and would be re-presented at a later date.

61 **ADOPTION OF THE LONDON PERMIT SCHEME (LOPS) FOR ROAD WORKS AND STREET WORKS**

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

Cabinet was informed that the report considered the rationale behind the LB of Havering joining the London Permit Scheme (LoPS), and provided details of the steps that would need to be taken to join the scheme. Joining the LoPS would enable greater control and regulation of Street Works, allowing the Borough to meet its Network Management Duty under Part 3 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and the Traffic Management Permit Schemes (England) Regulations 2007 (the Regulations).

The LoPS had been designed to encourage better planning and management of road works, which was driving forward reductions in congestion across London's road network. This in turn was delivering benefits for the economy and the environment and improving the quality of people's daily journeys.

26 London Boroughs, TfL and the City of London had joined the LoPS in a series of three previous phases of implementation. The pathway to adopting LoPS was now clearly set up, with a standard route to implementation established. The earlier adopters had not faced any challenges or significant difficulties in operating the scheme.

Reasons for the decision:

It was recommended that the Council agree to the introduction of the Permit Scheme to control and manage potential disruption on the Borough's streets as part of its statutory responsibility under the Traffic Management Act to manage the road network to secure, as far as may be reasonably practicable, the expeditious movement of traffic.

The Permit Scheme would serve to move towards this objective and would be adopted by all other London Highway Authorities by the end of the current tranche.

Overall there would be no net financial cost to the Borough and there was the potential to make significant improvements in managing and controlling unacceptable obstructions of the highway.

The scheme would contribute to the delivery of a number of Council objectives since better management of street works and consequent reductions in congestion would support economic activity, increase safety and improve conditions for residents. The use of permit fees to cover the

costs incurred would allow the Council to deliver an improved service at no additional cost to local residents.

Other options considered:

The Council could continue to manage street works under the current noticing system indefinitely, or could opt to join LoPS at a later date. Both of these options might contain risks for the Council.

Within the current tranche of entry to LoPS, a high level of support was being provided by colleagues from the lead borough (Hammersmith and Fulham) and from TfL. Should Havering choose to defer joining the scheme until a later date, it would be likely that the level of external support available would be reduced and the Borough could face increased joining costs.

In the current economic climate there was increasing pressure on Local Authorities to reduce costs through the adoption of working practices that delivered efficiencies, with joint procurement of services by groups of boroughs becoming increasingly common. Should Havering decide not to join LoPS, it would be managing street works in a different way to all other London Highway Authorities. This could create problems for Havering in future joint procurement exercises for highway services.

The London Mayor placed a high priority on the effective management of street works and the outstanding boroughs were being actively encouraged to join LoPS. Havering had close links with the Mayor, GLA and TfL, and given this context of strong partnership working arrangements with these groups, it was considered prudent for the Borough to progress towards entry of LoPS.

Cabinet AGREED to

1. **Proceed with an application to the Secretary of State for Transport to join the London Permit Scheme, subject to the outcome of consultation.**
2. **Delegate authority to the Group Director for Culture and Community, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Members, to take all actions necessary to implement the London Permit Scheme and to vary permit fees as required to ensure that permit fees met, but did not exceed, the operating costs of the scheme.**
3. **Delegate authority to the Group Director for Culture and Community, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Members, to recruit additional staff to the New Roads and Street Works Act team or revise existing structures as required to meet the needs of the service, in accordance with Council policies and procedures, on the basis that posts would be self-financing.**

62 REVIEW OF BEAM PARK DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY

Councillor Robert Benham, Cabinet Member for Community Empowerment, introduced the report

The report reviewed the development opportunity at the Beam Park site in Rainham and South Dagenham in the light of market interest in the comprehensive redevelopment of the site for a strategic leisure-led project, instead of the residential-led approach contained in the existing planning policies for the site.

The report recognised that strategically significant leisure proposals, in conjunction with transport improvements and further appropriate development, could create high levels of new employment and provide the essential catalyst to secure regeneration and deliver growth in the wider area.

Staff had prepared a Planning Prospectus jointly with LB Barking & Dagenham and in consultation with the Greater London Authority and the site owners, the London Development Agency. The prospectus described the development opportunity; the reasons why the boroughs wished to consider a leisure-led redevelopment; the planning benefits the boroughs wished to see delivered and a summary of planning and transport requirements.

Cabinet was asked to approve the publication of the Beam Park Planning Prospectus as guidance for potential developers.

Reasons for the decision:

There was an opportunity to capitalise on market and development interest in strategically significant leisure proposals which, in conjunction with transport improvements and further appropriate development, could create high levels of new employment and provide the essential catalyst to secure regeneration and deliver growth in the wider Rainham and South Dagenham area.

Other options considered:

The alternative was to continue to promote the existing planning policy of housing-led regeneration of Beam Park, however the complexity and cost of acquiring and redeveloping the existing industrial and commercial sites in the context of residential property values and the need for public transport improvements would make it unlikely that housing schemes of an acceptable form and density would be feasible in current conditions.

Cabinet APPROVED the Beam Park Planning Prospectus for use as guidance for potential developers.

Chairman