



**MINUTES OF A CABINET MEETING**  
**Council Chamber - Town Hall**  
**Wednesday, 27 January 2021**  
**(7.30 - 8.44 pm)**

**Present:**

Councillor Damian White (Leader of the Council), Chairman

Councillor Robert Benham

Councillor Osman Dervish

Councillor Joshua Chapman

Councillor Jason Frost

Councillor Roger Ramsey

Councillor Viddy Persaud

**Cabinet Member responsibility:**

Cabinet Member for Education,  
Children & Families

Cabinet Member for Environment

Cabinet Member for Housing

Cabinet Member for Health & Adult  
Care Services

Cabinet Member for Finance &  
Property

Cabinet Member for Public  
Protection and Safety

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillors .

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were none.

**2 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest. Councillor Viddy Persaud left the meeting after agenda item 7 and did not play any part in the discussion or decision making.

**3 MINUTES**

The minutes for the meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2020, were agreed and signed by the Chair as an accurate record of the same.

**4 ASSET RATIONALISATION**

The report was presented and summarised to Cabinet by Councillor Roger Ramsey detailing the rationalisation of the office accommodation used by the London Borough of Havering. The model behind this has come about following the Covid 19 pandemic, which has seen the vast majority of office staff working from home and virtually utilising the Smart Working model. Currently only 10% of office space is being used and so there is an opportunity here to rationalise the Borough's assets and make substantial savings as a result.

Focus will be on the Town Hall itself as the main office area. Funding from capital of £1.5 million together with savings of 3 million from the modernisation of Mercury House will be saved. The report sets out how this will be done and what the Human Resources needs of the Council will be once the new normal is established. There will be staff attending the Town Hall but this will be greatly reduced and estimated at 35%.

Remodelling of the Town Hall in the near future will minimise the disruption staff whilst the majority continue to work successfully from home.

Mark Butler, the Director of Asset Management indicated that, the extensive transition to remote working and more flexible delivery of Council services prompts the opportunity to re-assess the Council's future needs for operational accommodation and scope to achieve consolidation of assets, delivering broader benefits in the form of:

- Reducing accommodation costs to alleviate revenue pressures and contribute to the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- Aligning the Council's asset base to support the future operating model and related proposals e.g. Digital Council, Customer Access.
- Less duplication of facilities across buildings e.g. IT, photocopiers – cost reduction.
- Reduced silo based working between services previously spread across multiple buildings – fostering a culture of collaborative working.
- Focussing future investment into fewer assets.
- Reduced carbon footprint resulting from a consolidated office estate.
- Reduction in travel time/cost between sites
- Re-use of surplus assets to support regeneration/housing initiatives or potential capital receipts.
- Potential opportunities to encourage further co-location by partner organisations to embrace the One Public Estate principles.

- Recruitment and retention benefits as a result of the Council offering greater flexibility and improved facilities for employees.

Consultation has taken place across directorates to gain insight into the Council's reduced accommodation requirements based upon the principle of a Smart Working organisation, recognising nonetheless the particular needs of specific services. The Council is increasingly delivering integrated services in conjunction with partner agencies who are, in many cases, conducting similar accommodation reviews across their own organisations.

There followed discussion and it was noted from Andrew Blake-Herbert that staff would be looked at on a case-by-case basis to ensure their mental health, and wellbeing is considered. The opportunity for team working and socialisation will be catered for. Some staff are identified as struggling with loneliness and some younger members of staff have little space in home accommodation. These issues will all be considered through regular engagement with the unions. There are links into other matters on the agenda for Smart Working and office digitalisation ensuring all staff have the best possible connectivity and work models. There are no concerns at this stage of not being able to recruit staff into integral roles and it may even improve this aspect giving access to a broader recruitment pool.

#### **Cabinet :**

1. **Approved** the principle of rationalising the Council's administrative accommodation, generating revenue savings to support the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, delegating authority to the Director of Asset Management to take such actions necessary to negotiate the re-use of surplus assets.
2. **Approved** the immediate programme of building works necessary to provide the new Appointment Centre on the lower ground floor of the Town Hall other measures to facilitate the rationalisation of buildings, including the commencement of related procurement processes.
3. **Recommended** the allocation of additional capital funding in the sum of £1.5m within the Council's capital programme to fund the immediate investment proposals within this report, subject to endorsement by Full Council.
4. **Noted** that detailed proposals for the re-use of surplus assets will be the subject of individual business cases to be brought forward subsequently for each building.

## **5 SMART WORKING PLUS**

On the invitation of the Leader of the Council, Darren Rose, SmartWorking Manager presented the report to Cabinet building on the information regarding the Asset Rationalisation matter to develop the Council into a modern and agile organisation.

This report progresses SmartWorking Phase One which saw the roll out of 70% of laptops (amounting to around 2500) last March just before Covid which was most fortuitous allowing members of staff to work seamlessly from home following the grip of the Pandemic. There is further work to do to make Havering a digital first organisation with the full roll out of Office 365.

This is a revised approach to continue the journey forward for a fully digitalised Council where flexibility of approach is embedded as the new norm, achieving more with less.

The Scan it, Scrap it, Store it project (S4) is working towards the Council being paperless or paperlite transferring all analogue records into digital making the way things are stored safe and more secure. SmartWorking supports this new approach and is imperative for all projects across the Council in pursuit of a resilient and sustainable basis for agile working.

The existing information technology serving the organisation is not sustainable so the roll out of full Office 365, together with S4 will initiate the change needed to support this approach.

Jane West the Council's s151 Officer noted that this represented a significant investment, which is crucial to the direction of travel of attaining the full gambit of Office 365. Over time there will be savings coupled with a far greater efficiency for staff and residents.

Ben Plant the Director of Human Resources stated that the HR implications on this approach were significant but the Council were set to reap the rewards of very positive impact across the Council including reduced sickness absences and much improved staff engagement and morale. These outcomes will be measured and reported back.

The Leader welcomed this change to a much more nimble and efficient Council to the benefit of officers who are the life blood of the Borough and in turn this will empower residents to access vital services as required in a much more proficient way.

**Cabinet:**

1. **Agreed** the implementation of all elements of the Smart Working Plus programme as detailed within this report
2. **Approved** and agree to recommend to Full Council the allocation of additional capital funding in the sum of £1,665,500 profiled in 21/22 financial year to deliver the programme

**6 DIGITAL PORTFOLIO BUSINESS CASE**

Maxine Brown, Digital Portfolio Director, presented the report to Cabinet detailing the delivery of this project.

The Digital Portfolio's objectives are to:

- Stabilise and rationalise Havering's current technology ecosystem
- Create the various enabling digital and data capabilities (people, skills, technology, data, and processes) for the organisation to deliver its corporate strategy (including recovery) and the MTF5.
- Promote and experiment with disruptive approaches to working with our residents, businesses, and communities in new ways.
- Challenge traditional approaches to the delivery of services by using digital tools and ways of working to unlock our organizational capacity to execute much more high value activity
- Encourage bolder and informed risk management mind-set to realise this change
- Become much more customer-centric, placing the user at the centre of service design.
- Improve employee satisfaction and morale by providing the appropriate tools, empowerment and choice to the way work is done.
- Reduce the overall cost of services and property using technology
- Reduce the risk of technology failure impacting service delivery.
- Provide the enabling environment (e.g. connectivity, skills) for economic growth in the digital, technology and data sectors.
- Expand flexible connectivity options for resident and user alike, increasing access to services by "lighting up" the borough
- Reduce the risk of data breach or data release by improving core connectivity and security as well as improving the connections to all users, irrespective of connection platform

The programme will be introduced over three phases:

- *Fixing the Plumbing – addressing immediate technological needs and "stabilising the stack"*
- *Unleashing Havering - short to medium time projects*
- *Pushing the Boundaries – looking at evolution as a digital Borough leading to an even better Borough for the residents we serve.*

These phases are all detailed in the full business case and will complete the process of taking the Council forward to the modern, flexible and sustainable organisation. The Pandemic has transformed the way we work and this is to be built on to take the Borough through this period of exceptional change, being smarter and collaborative and place digital at the centre of everything we do to enable us to be customer obsessed.

It was acknowledged that this will have an impact on the Capital for the Council and that there are competing aspects for this. The Leader

emphasised how important this investment was but reiterated that the administration would continue to invest in roads and parks.

Cabinet thanked Maxine for giving an excellent presentation of the programme, acknowledged the work of Omid Shiraji, and wished him well in his future endeavours.

**Cabinet:**

1. **Approved** the release of additional capital funding of £6.3 million in Year 1, as part the 2021/22 Budget Medium Term Financial Strategy, to resolve urgent technical needs and begin to prioritise and deliver further enabling projects for the support of ongoing transformational and enabling Digital programmes of work; and
2. **Approved** the direction of travel set out in the Digital Portfolio Business Case, at Appendix A of the report, to allow the development of an extensive infrastructure renewal programme and the development of the Digital Portfolio for the benefit of stable, secure and enabling technologies to be realised throughout the borough, realising positive step change for corporate functions, as well as residents and businesses in the community. direction of travel as set out in this Digital Portfolio Business Case, to allow the development of an extensive infrastructure renewal programme and the further development of the Digital Portfolio for the benefit of stable, secure and enabling technologies to be realised throughout the borough of Havering, realising a significant and positive step change for corporate functions, as well as residents and businesses in the community.

**7 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The meeting moved into closed session to facilitate discussion regarding exempt agenda items.

**8 TEMPORARY AGENCY WORKER CONTRACT AWARD REPORT**

Ben Plant, the Director of Human Resources presented this report to Cabinet. This report asks Cabinet to approve a contract award for the supply of temporary workers to Matrix via the ESPO Mstar3 London Collaboration call-off. It is also recommended that the Council's contract with Adecco, the incumbent supplier, is extended by a period of six months.

These recommendations were made to Cabinet following an extensive exercise to evaluate the different options available to the Council for sourcing temporary workers. Of all the options considered, a contract award to Matrix via the London Collaboration call-off delivers the greatest financial benefit, estimated at £180k – £350k per annum. In addition, the Matrix model includes the introduction of an innovative technology platform which,

over time, will reduce the Council's spend on agencies by directly connecting hiring managers and temporary workers.

Transitioning to a new supplier and delivery model requires careful planning and change management, and a rushed implementation of the new contract would carry significant risks. A substantial implementation period was factored into the original procurement timetable, but that plan was unexpectedly disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, a six month extension of the Council's contract with Adecco is recommended. This will ensure a transition to the new provider and delivery model can be effectively managed alongside the Council's Covid-19 response, which continues to place exceptional demands on the Council and its workforce.

The Leader invited all Directors to comment on how this contract will impact on their services and staffing levels. Providing services to residents was always the uppermost priority and the transition to permanent staff was always the goal. However, temporary staff were necessary to put residents and the services they receive at the heart of everything we do.

Following discussion:

**Cabinet:**

1. **Approved** a contract award for the supply of temporary workers to Matrix via the ESPO Mstar3 London Collaboration call-off for a duration of two years with the option to extend for a further two years
2. **Extended** the Council's existing contract with Adecco, the incumbent supplier, by a period of six months

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**Chairman**