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MINUTES OF A CABINET MEETING Council Chamber - Town Hall Wednesday, 7 November 2012 (7.30 - 8.30 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 Lesley Kelly

Cabinet Member responsibility:

(Deputy Leader) Individuals
Transformation
Community Empowerment
Culture, Towns & Communities
Value
Children & Learning
Community Safety
Housing & Public Protection

Apologies were received for the absence of Councillor Barry Tebbutt.

Councillors Clarence Barrett, Keith Darvill, Michael Deon Burton, Paul McGeary, Garry Pain and Jeffrey Tucker were present for the meeting.

Unless otherwise indicated, all decisions were agreed unanimously.

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

24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 26 September 2012 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25 PEER CHALLENGE

The Chairman explained that the Council had recently taken part in a 'Peer Challenge' where a team of senior officers and councillors from a variety of local authorities visited Havering to review the Council's strategic direction and its leadership, corporate capacity and financial resilience.

The review group provided positive feedback, considering that the Council had developed and implemented a strategic approach to the challenges it faced and continued to face, and that it should be proud of its achievements, particularly its

central transformation programme which had maintained customer-driven frontline services despite financial constraints.

The Chairman announced that a strategic work-plan would be formulated in response to findings due to be outlined in a report from the Peer Challenge review group which had yet to be released.

26 THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY

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

Over the course of the previous two years, the Council had agreed a package of savings to mitigate the impact of very significant cuts in central government funding to local authorities.

Government plans for radical changes to a number of areas had been announced over this period, with more detail gradually emerging. These changes would fundamentally alter the way in which local authorities were to be funded. The report updated Cabinet on a number of developments in relation to the following changes.

- Localisation of business rates
- Localisation of Council Tax support
- The Social Fund Replacement Scheme
- School Funding Reform
- Academies
- Public Health Transfer
- Local Government Pension Scheme.

The report also set out the position in the current financial year, and a number of other relevant issues, as these need to be taken into account in developing the detailed budget for 2013/14.

Reasons for the decision:

It was essential that the Council's financial strategy took due account of Government plans, and any other material factors where these were likely to have an impact on the Council's financial position. The report provided an update to Cabinet on issues relevant to the budget setting process.

Other options considered:

None. The Constitution required the submission and consideration of the report as part of the Council's budget-setting process.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. To note the current position with developments relating to the funding of local authorities and other related changes.
2. To note the Government announcement relating to a further extension to the Council Tax freeze grant and a change in the referendum level, as set out in Section 2.9 of the report.

3. To note that the budget strategy statements for the revenue and capital budgets, along with the procurement strategy, would be presented for Cabinet's approval at a future meeting.
4. To approve the corporate charging policy, as set out in Appendix A of the report.
5. To approve the proposed standard rise in fees & charges for 2013/14 as 2%, subject to any exceptions, as set out in Section 5.9 of the report.
6. To note the position in the current financial year, as set out in Section 3 of the report.

27 ARRANGEMENT FOR THE PROVISION OF DOMICILIARY CARE TO ADULTS

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

The report provided Members with an overview of the recently concluded domiciliary care tender process for which the top scoring twelve providers were recommended for inclusion in the new framework agreement.

The invitation to tender stated that twelve to fifteen providers would be chosen from the submissions. Following evaluation, the tender panel recommended awarding at the lower end of the range indicated to tenderers, given the impact of personal budget take up on the size of the commissioned homecare market and the need for providers to attract enough business to be sustainable.

It was explained that the new framework agreement would support the delivery of the personalisation agenda within Adult Social Care and offer greater control over the resources used to provide care. The new specification, to which providers would be held accountable, contains an expectation of a truly personalised service. Providers would be expected to work within enabling methodologies to improve independence and minimise dependency, thus offering opportunities to minimise cost appropriately.

In reaching its decision, members were advised that an Equalities Impact Assessment had been conducted from which it was concluded that there would be no identified adverse impacts.

Reasons for the decision:

1. To ensure the continued delivery of domiciliary care to adults in Havering.
2. To make arrangements to ensure the delivery of that care under the new framework from January 2013 onwards.

Other options considered:

1. Do nothing. The current contract arrangements would come to an end and all future domiciliary care packages would need to be procured on an individual (spot purchase) basis. This was not a practical option and would lead to a potential decrease in quality and value for money. Furthermore the vetting and monitoring of multiple spot providers on an ongoing basis would require considerably more resources than monitoring an agreed pool of framework providers.

2. Attempting to extend the current contracts would only offer the Council a short-term solution and would be in contravention of European procurement rules. The latest executive decision to extend the current arrangements had been taken to bridge the time until the new framework contract (which was still being tendered) was in place. The current contracts did not acknowledge many of the legislative changes of the past five years, the introduction of technologies to better manage the domiciliary process and did not offer the opportunity to establish real efficiency savings or allow for flexibility. All of the aforementioned were now seen as essential to deliver on the personalisation agenda.

Cabinet **AGREED:**

1. **To approve the 12 providers as listed in Appendix 1 to the report for the provision of domiciliary care services to adults under a framework agreement with the Council.**
2. **To approve the Council entering into a framework agreement with those providers in relation to the provision of domiciliary care services to adults.**
3. **To approve the Council from time-to-time and as required entering into service contracts to call-off the services on an individual basis under the framework agreement.**

28 DISUSED LAND ADJACENT TO MELVILLE ROAD ALLOTMENTS, RAINHAM

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

It was reported that at various occasions over the last few years Cabinet approval had been given to the disposal of a number of Council owned sites that had been identified as surplus, either as a result of specific projects or more general property reviews carried out by Strategic Property Services.

As the Council pursued a policy of selling surplus sites for many years it had become more difficult to identify new sites for disposal that did not pose challenges, either technically or in terms of planning, and especially in respect of objections to disposal that arise in many cases. Nonetheless, constant and ongoing appraisal of property assets to identify disposal opportunities was a requirement on all local authorities and at Havering was essential in providing capital receipts to fund spending to support and enhance Council services.

The report identified a site comprising of 2.13 acres of land adjoining Melville Road allotments that had remained unused for 24 years. It was recommended that the site could be re-used in part to extend the adjoining allotment site with the remainder being sold for residential development.

A full title search had been conducted on the land and legal advice sought on the detail of the existing covenants which did not restrict the land being used for potential planning developments.

Members were assured that the waiting list for allotments had reduced in number and that priority was given to Havering residents when sites became available.

Reasons for the decision:

In order to improve the efficiency of the Council's portfolio of land and property assets and to generate further capital receipts it was important to ensure that surplus assets continue to be identified for disposal. It was also good practice to appropriate to formally acknowledge a proposed change of use for the site.

Other options considered:

1. If the site was not sold, the most likely alternative was that it would remain in its current use or remain vacant.
2. If the site was not sold, it was likely that the capital programme would have to be reduced or funded from borrowing which would incur additional revenue costs.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. **That the disused land adjacent to Melville Road Allotments be declared surplus and authorisation be given for a disposal of about 1.53 acres and for the creation of additional allotment plots in respect of about 0.6 acres of land in accordance with the allotment waiting list requirements for the site. The disposal would be subject to obtaining any necessary planning permissions and other consents as appropriate. The Property Strategy Manager in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Democratic Services) to be authorised to deal with all matters arising and thereafter to complete the disposal of the site identified. The disposal would be subject to the approval of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.**
2. **To approve the principle that the land should be appropriated for planning purposes subject to the relevant statutory processes and that the Property Strategy Manager, in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal & Democratic Services) be authorised to undertake these processes and for the Lead Member for Value to consider any objections received and whether to confirm the appropriation.**

Chairman

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