

Minutes

Cabinet

Thursday, 23 July 2015

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



Published on: 24 July 2015

Decisions come into effect: 31 July 2015*

Members Present:

Ray Puddifoot MBE (Chairman)
David Simmonds CBE (Vice-Chairman)
Douglas Mills
Scott Seaman-Digby
Keith Burrows
Philip Corthorne

Members also Present:

Beulah East
Henry Higgins
Jan Sweeting
John Hensley
John Riley
Mo Khursheed
Nick Denys
Richard Lewis
Susan O'Brien
Tony Eginton
Wayne Bridges
Brian Crowe

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Jonathan Bianco.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS BEFORE THIS MEETING

Councillor Scott Seaman-Digby declared a pecuniary interest in Item 8 (budget monitoring report) because of a connection with a contract ratified at the meeting. He left the room for the discussion and decision on the item.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST CABINET MEETING

The minutes and decisions of the Cabinet meeting held on 18 June 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

4. TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 2 IN PRIVATE

This was confirmed.

5. CORPORATE SERVICES & PARTNERSHIPS POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE - REVIEW INTO TACKLING SOCIAL HOUSING FRAUD

The Chairman of the Corporate Services & Partnerships Policy Overview Committee, Councillor Richard Lewis, presented the Committee's review into Tackling Social Housing Fraud, which was welcomed by the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet welcomes the Committee's findings from their review into tackling Social Housing Fraud and agree the following recommendations from the Committee:

- (1) That the Corporate Fraud Investigations Team be congratulated for the work they have carried out in relation to the detection of Social Housing Fraud and for the reclaiming of housing resources for residents of the Borough.**
- (2) That officers be asked to approach other Registered Social Landlords (Housing Associations) which provide social housing for residents of the Borough to enable investigations to take place into any potential Social Housing Fraud.**
- (3) That officers be asked to investigate those measures which were raised during the review to make unsuspecting sub-letters aware if they were about to rent a social housing property.**
- (4) That consideration be given to the Council applying for Compensation Orders when people are convicted of Social Housing Fraud, to enable compensation to be paid to the victims of this crime.**
- (5) That officers be asked to consider witnesses counter-signing tenancy agreements for social housing tenants and to send annual reminders to tenants explaining their responsibilities under their tenancy agreements.**
- (6) That training is offered by Council officers to local Magistrates on the complexities involved in social housing and on the issues which local authorities face as social housing landlords.**
- (7) That officers be asked to include a Social Housing Fraud Policy within the Council's Anti-Fraud Strategies and Policies.**

Reasons for decision

Cabinet received a comprehensive report from the Committee aimed at strengthening the detection of social housing fraud to save the Council money and recover social housing accommodation for those in most need.

Cabinet agreed the recommendations of the report as Council policy and praised the work of the Committee. The Cabinet Member for Community, Commerce and Regeneration indicated officers should utilise existing mechanisms to liaise with Magistrates Courts on one of the recommendations made. Additionally, Cabinet ask that its thanks be passed onto relevant officers for delivering a very effective service to combat fraud locally; a service of national excellence.

Alternative options considered and rejected.

Cabinet expressed its determination to target those who commit fraud and therefore did not amend or reject any of the Committee's recommendations.

Officers to action:

Garty Coote, Residents Services
Khalid Ahmed, Administration Directorate

Classification: Public

The report relating to this decision by the Cabinet is available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.

6. SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1. Note the action being taken by the Council to work with Hillingdon schools to develop a schools-led improvement strategy and targeted improvement plan;**
- 2. Agrees the proposed role of the Local Authority in school improvement, noting that the final strategy will be reported back to Cabinet later in the year, following further feedback from schools.**

Reasons for decision

Cabinet received a draft of Hillingdon's school improvement strategy, which had been developed by a working group of head teachers and the Council. It was noted that the intention of the strategy would be for it to be schools-led and to deliver targeted school-to-school support to raise educational standards whilst challenging under-performing or

coasting schools to do better. Cabinet welcomed the further consultation with schools in the Borough and agreed to receive a further report back to approve the Strategy later in the year.

Alternatives considered and rejected

Cabinet could have opted for a different approach to school improvement, as set out in the draft Strategy or decided not to have a Strategy, which in Cabinet's view would be detrimental to the learning aspirations of children in the Borough.

Officer to action:

Dan Kennedy, Residents Services

Classification: Public

The report relating to this decision by the Cabinet is available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.

7. LICENSING OF TWO STOREY HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1. Approve the renewal for a further five year term the Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (that are not covered by the national Mandatory HMO Licensing scheme) which covers the 13 wards south of the A40 as set out in Appendix 1.**
- 2. Amend the existing approved fees for HMO licensing which came into force on the 1st April 2015 (£980 for a new licence and £735 for a renewal) to apply to all HMO licences whether mandatory or additional.**

Reasons for decision

Cabinet noted that the Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation was an important part of the Council's overall Housing Strategy. Following consultation, Cabinet agreed the continuation of the Scheme, which would enable greater controls and enforcement to be applied such premises to the benefit of the tenants and surrounding neighbourhoods.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Cabinet could have decided not to approve the Scheme, which would have resulted in a loss in enforcement powers to deal with rogue landlords and poor management.

Officer to action:

Dave Youngs, Residents Services

Classification: Public

The report relating to this decision by the Cabinet is available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.

8. COUNCIL BUDGET MONTHLY MONITORING REPORT - MONTH 2

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

1. Note the forecast budget position for revenue and capital as at May 2015 (Month 2).
2. Note the treasury management update as at May 2015 at Appendix E.
3. Continue the delegated authority up until the 24 September 2015 Cabinet meeting to the Chief Executive to approve any consultancy and agency assignments over £50k, with final sign-off of any assignments made by the Leader of the Council. Cabinet are also asked to note those consultancy and agency assignments over £50k approved under delegated authority between the 23 April 2015 and 23 July 2015 Cabinet meetings, detailed at Appendix F.
4. Agree that during the intervening period between the 2015 July and September Cabinet meetings, to delegate full authority to the Leader of the Council, in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member(s) and Corporate Director(s), to make any decision that would otherwise be reserved constitutionally to the Cabinet, if a delay would prejudice Council projects or service delivery. Such decisions to be reported to the next Cabinet meeting. Furthermore, request that the Chairman of the Executive Scrutiny Committee agree to waive the scrutiny call-in period for this to take immediate effect.
5. Approve the addition of £80k Transport for London funding for Bus Stop Accessibility to the 2015/16 capital and revenue budgets within Residents Services.
6. Approves the addition of £12k Food Standards Agency funding to Residents Services budgets to support additional food sampling.
7. Approves the addition of £60k Environment Agency funding to Residents Services budgets to fund studies to mitigate flooding in the Charville area and The Common, West Drayton.
8. Approves the acceptance of the gift funding from developers detailed in Appendix G to this report.
9. Agrees to allocate £25k from General Contingency to Residents Services budgets for costs associated with traveller incursion.
10. Delegates to the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services, in conjunction with the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Residents Services, full authority to acquire and purchase private properties in order to supplement affordable housing provision

within the Borough. Furthermore, that following any acquisition, this be reported back to Cabinet for ratification and public record at the appropriate time.

11. Agrees to provide a £25k grant to the Hillingdon Brain Tumour & Injury Group utilising Public Health resources.

12. Ratify an Emergency Contract Decision made by the Leader of the Council and Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Residents Services on 21 July 2015 to revoke both the decision and contract awarded under a Special Urgency dated 14 July 2015 to P A Finley & Co Ltd and award a new contract to 1st Choice Facilities Services Limited to undertake kitchen refurbishment works at Frithwood Primary, Harlyn Primary and Harefield Infant schools for £158,177.08.

Reasons for decisions

Cabinet was informed of the latest forecast revenue, capital and treasury position (Month 2) for the current year 2015/16 to ensure the Council achieved its budgetary and service objectives.

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services informed Members that he had instigated a review of the fees in relation to the three Early Years Centres in the Borough following feedback from parents during the 2015/16 budget planning process, which would report back very shortly.

Cabinet made a range of decisions including the acceptance of grants and allocation of new funds to transportation, flooding, consumer protection and traveller incursion budgets.

Cabinet made some technical decisions around delegating its authority during the summer period to the Leader of the Council to ensure continuity of decision-making. It agreed to delegate the Leader of the Council the authority to procure private sector properties, when required, to supplement the Borough's affordable housing stock. Additionally, Cabinet ratified a recent Emergency Contract Decision to revoke a previous tender and accept a new tender for urgent kitchen refurbishment works to three schools in the Borough.

Furthermore, Cabinet approved an external grant to the Hillingdon Brain Tumour & Injury Group for their continued efforts in supporting those with such illnesses.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Officer to action:

Paul Whaymand, Finance Directorate

Classification: Public

The report relating to this decision by the Cabinet is available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.

9. SCHOOL CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1. Note the progress made with primary and secondary school expansions, the school condition programme and other school capital projects.**
- 2. Delegate to the Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director of Residents Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance, Property and Business Services the authority to proceed with the preferred design option for each individual project in the Phase 4 of the Primary School Expansion Programme.**

Reasons for decision

Cabinet received its monthly update, tracking progress on London's largest school building programme which would invest over £300m in new local education facilities by 2020. This would ensure that every child in the London Borough of Hillingdon would have a quality place at a local school. Cabinet approved the necessary delegated authority to progress Phase 4 of the programme.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Officer to action:

Bobby Finch, Residents Services

Classification: Public

The report relating to this decision by the Cabinet is available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.

10. ACADEMY CONVERSION - HILLINGDON TUITION CENTRE

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet approve the grant of a 125 year lease of Hillingdon Tuition Centre on the main terms outlined in the report, as part of the process of conversion of the centre to an Academy.

Reasons for decision

Cabinet agreed the grant of a 125 year lease of the land at Hillingdon Tuition Centre to the Orchard Hill College Academy Trust as required as part of the process for the conversion of the school to Academy status.

Cabinet noted that decisions regarding academies were made by the Secretary of State for Education and therefore, the Council had no choice other than to progress with the transfer of land in relation to the premises.

Alternative options to consider and action

None.

Officers to action:

Mike Paterson - Residents Services

Classification: Private

Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it (exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 as amended).

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN AGREES ARE RELEVANT OR URGENT

No additional items were considered by the Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 7.19pm.

*** IMPLEMENTATION OF CABINET'S DECISIONS**

For Members and Officers only

Meeting after Cabinet, the Executive Scrutiny Committee did not call-in any of the Cabinet's decisions.

Cabinet's decision on Item 8 (budget monitoring report) to delegate Cabinet-level authority to the Leader of the Council comes into immediate effect.

All other decisions can be implemented from 5pm, Friday 31 July 2015 unless notified otherwise by Democratic Services.

The officers to implement the decisions are indicated in the minutes.