

**LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST  
MINUTES OF THE CABINET**

**13 October 2022 at 2.00 pm**

**PRESENT:**

<b>Chair:</b>	Councillor Grace Williams	Leader of the Council
<b>Cabinet Members:</b>	Councillor Clyde Loakes	Deputy Leader (Climate and Air Quality)
	Councillor Ahsan Khan	Deputy Leader (Housing and Regeneration)
	Councillor Paul Douglas	Portfolio Lead Member - Public Service
	Councillor Khevyn Limbajee	Portfolio Lead Member - Community Safety
	Councillor Louise Mitchell	Portfolio Lead Member - Adults
	Councillor Alistair Strathern	Portfolio Lead Member - Children and Young People
	Councillor Sharon Waldron	Cabinet Commissioner - Customer Experience
	Councillor Elizabeth Baptiste	Cabinet Commissioner - Shaping Places
	Councillor Kizzy Gardiner	Cabinet Commissioner - Youth Hubs and Engagement

(Cabinet Commissioners are appointed by the Leader to assist Cabinet in leading engagement with our community on four key priorities for the Council and to support our borough to recover from the pandemic. These Councillors are not Members of the Cabinet and do not have any voting rights nor decision-making powers.)

**Officers in Attendance:**

Martin Esom	Chief Executive
Radwan Ahmed	Assistant Director, Corporate Finance
Ian Buckle	Head of Electoral and Democratic Services
Heather Flinders	Strategic Director, Families
Joe Garrod	Director of Change
Mark Hynes	Director of Governance and Law
Anthony Jackson	Democratic Services
Stewart Murray	Strategic Director, Economic Growth and Housing Delivery

### **33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Asghar, Ashworth and Doré.

### **34. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made.

### **35. MINUTES OF CABINET**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 22 September 2022, were approved and signed as a correct record.

### **36. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 - 2025/26**

The Leader introduced the report and, in doing so, said that she was proud of the support that officers were providing to residents, particularly during the current cost of living crisis and said that it was important to keep those actions going.

The Leader referred to the difficult financial conditions that residents were currently experiencing and the Council's efforts to address those difficulties. She went on to say that she was confident that the planning and protection that was being put in place would allow the Council to continue to deliver for residents. The Leader explained that LBWF did not receive a funding settlement as do some other local authorities, however, she confirmed that the Council would continue to maintain its reputation as a sound financial planning authority. She went on to say that the report, particularly paragraph 3.18, highlighted the continued financial uncertainty and confirmed that officers would continue to review the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and report back to Cabinet later in the year following the announcements of further funding. The Leader also referred to the delay in the spending review, the fair funding review and the business rates reset which left the Council at risk of a £5 million gap in 2022/23.

Councillor Loakes acknowledged the important work that relevant finance officers would be undertaking to ensure that frontline services continued to be delivered which, he said, was likely to be increasingly relied on during such difficult financial times.

### **Decision**

Cabinet:

- (1) noted the potential funding gap of £14 million in 2023/24 as per paragraph 3.18 of the report and that due to the current financial uncertainty, the MTFS will be regularly reviewed and reported on later in the year when further funding announcements are made;
- (2) noted the continuing uncertainty resulting from likely delays to the Spending Review, Fair Funding Review and Business Rates reset and the risk of a £5 million gap in 2022/23, arising due to the delay to the Business Rates reset and which is captured in the gap in paragraph 2.1.1 of the report;

- (3) noted the outline timetable for the budget process as set out in Paragraph 3.46 of the report; and
- (4) delegated to the Strategic Director of Finance and Governance the authority to distribute any contingency budgets and/or reserves as per the Council's financial ground rules which were reaffirmed within the Month 2 Finance Monitor approved by executive decision in August 2022.

### **37. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) MAKING A LIVING DELIVERY PLAN**

The Leader introduced the report and, in doing so, thanked Councillors Ashworth and Khan for their leadership on this work. She also thanked relevant officers for their hard work on the report. The Leader said that she was pleased that the report focussed on making a living as residents were increasingly worried about the cost of living crisis. She pointed out that there was currently a low employment rate in the country and, as a result, officers were aware of the areas that the Council should focus on to boost good work and to create employment skills. The Leader also said that the report introduced a new approach as communities and residents were at the heart of the programme and have been active participants in changes that needed to be made. She stated that the interventions outlined in the report had been costed and were imbedded into the Council's service delivery. The vast majority of services would be delivered through the Council's own core service funding.

Councillor Khan gave thanks to Councillor Ashworth for her leadership in this area. He said he was pleased to see that the work would cut across the entire Council with actions for all departments. Councillor Khan said that he was impressed with the speed that this work had been brought forward and was pleased to see extensive engagement with residents and the community. He said that the report demonstrated that the Council was working to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion was underlining all the work that the Council undertook.

Councillor Gardiner thanked all those involved in the report and said that she was pleased to see that young people's views had been sought in formulating the delivery plan and looked forward to showing residents the difference made by taking a new approach. She stated that it was known that young people faced different barriers to other residents, particularly following the recent pandemic. Councillor Gardiner said that she was pleased to see programmes, such as youth hubs, in the delivery plan and she looked forward to seeing the difference the plan had made in the future.

#### **Decision**

Cabinet approved the EDI Making a Living Delivery Plan as set out in the report and appendix.

[The meeting was adjourned at 2.15pm for a period of 10 minutes, due to disruption by a member of the public.

The meeting reconvened at 2.25pm.]

### **38. WALTHAM FOREST'S CLIMATE ACTION PLAN: A PATH TO BE UK'S LEADING BOROUGH FOR COLLECTIVE CLIMATE ACTION**

The Leader thanked Councillor Loakes for his leadership and work in this area and referred to the importance of the climate change issue and the report which detailed how residents' lives could be improved. She also gave thanks to Luke Ravenscroft – Director of Climate Emergency and Behaviour Change.

Councillor Loakes introduced the report and, in doing so, gave thanks to the Climate Scrutiny Committee for their referral, attached as Appendix 5, to the report and confirmed that there was much reuse activity already in place. He went on to say that recent incidents of flooding, drought and wildfires were a stark reminder of the challenges to be faced and that climate change was already here and, as a result, action needed to be taken quickly. Councillor Loakes referred to the Council's commitment to reduce carbon emissions to net-zero by 2030 and said that tackling that issue would mean better air quality and better lives for residents, warmer homes and lower bills. He pointed out that the actions to be taken were a significant challenge, would cause disruption and, as a result, needed to be fair. He also stated that the issue was not the responsibility of a single organisation, it required global action and everyone had a role to play. Councillor Loakes went on to thank past and present Cabinet Members for their work on the climate agenda as well as all officers involved.

Councillor Strathern thanked Councillor Loakes and relevant officers for their work on this area and pointed out that it was not an easy journey and bold and difficult decisions were required to pursue the climate change agenda. Councillor Strathern confirmed that, within his portfolio area, he would work with young people to foster their enthusiasm for climate change, work with schools and places such as the Hive and the University of Portsmouth to pursue more 'green' agendas going forward to equip young people with the tools to continue and lead this work on in the future. He also stated that there were a number of maintained schools and academies in the borough which were not where they should be in terms of energy efficiency. He said that reviews of 12 LBWF schools were currently taking place to try and identify tangible improvements that could be funded (via the Council's loan programme in the absence of national funding) to support schools in investing in energy efficient lighting and heating.

Councillor Khan echoed words of thanks to Councillor Loakes and all officers involved. He went on to say that there had been discussions in planning and regeneration teams and confirmed that planning policies were much more focussed on green agendas. Councillor Khan referred to the retrofitting work that had been undertaken in some of the borough's council estates and the recent eco show home which indicated that such works could be done at a reasonable cost. He pointed to the Council taking leadership on this issue and gave the example of developments such as Juniper House and Central Parade which consisted of energy efficient tall

buildings where there was a focus on insulation, heat pumps and other energy efficient technology. Councillor Khan also referred to Sixty Bricks and their ambitious plans to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. He then gave thanks to Luke Ravenscroft and his team as well as relevant officers in the Housing and Regeneration team for the way they had embraced the green agenda.

Councillor Douglas welcomed the report and echoed the thanks from previous Members to Councillor Loakes and relevant officers. He went on to say that a strategy for smart cities was in the process of being created and confirmed that climate change would be a key aspect of that work. Councillor Douglas said that the strategy would be an enabler for the Council's strategic aims such as the climate action plan and 15 minute neighbourhoods. He confirmed that the primary aims of the strategy were to enable understanding of how to use technology to provide excellent service to residents, to accelerate the Council's use of data in planning, delivery and monitoring and to increase connectivity and the use of technology. In terms of the climate action plan, Councillor Douglas stated that the latest digital technology would be used to reduce energy use in buildings, to create more connecting and sustainable transport systems, to achieve better data and monitoring of climate change through the development of a Council data platform and to use modern digital incentivisation techniques to encourage residents to utilise low carbon options. He said that he hoped a draft of the strategy would be available in the New Year.

Councillor Mitchell gave thanks to Councillor Loakes for his leadership. She pointed out that a recent report published by the *Centre for Aging Better* which highlighted that, nationally, half a million homes were lived in by people over the age of 55 and many of those homes were excessively cold which had an impact on their health and quality of life and had the knock-on effect of additional costs to the NHS. Councillor Mitchell then referred to work being undertaken in her portfolio area where small modifications to homes was being looked at to make them more energy efficient and less cold, such as draft excluders and insulation. Such modifications would also have a direct impact on reducing energy costs.

Councillor Limbajee echoed thanks to Councillor Loakes, Luke Ravenscroft and his team. He then went on to say that the pedestrianisation of streets and the encouragement of cycling had linked local communities together. Councillor Limbajee referred to the fact that the Police were now planning to patrol the streets on bicycles which added a social element and would link communities further.

## **Decision**

Cabinet:

- (1) noted and consider the latest modelling of Waltham Forest's carbon emissions, as in Appendix 1 of the report, including the estimate of the share of the carbon reductions that the Council can influence and note the Council's commitment to reduce the net carbon emissions in the borough to zero by 2030;
- (2) approved Waltham Forest's Climate Action Plan, as in Appendix 2 of the report, which sets out how the council will support residents and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions, and commit to the actions set out therein; and

- (3) approved annual funding of £1.1m to deliver the commitments in the Climate Action Plan. This includes £577k for staff resourcing which will be incorporate within the 2023/24 MTFS and the £571k for investment in Climate Actions from the Reset reserve.

### **39. PROCUREMENT OF IN-BOROUGH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

Councillor Strathern introduced the report and, in doing so, gave thanks to Heather Flinders and her team for their hard work. He confirmed that the transition of the contract had gone very smoothly and that positive feedback had been received from providers. Councillor Strathern added that the borough's young people deserved the best provider possible.

#### **Decision**

Cabinet approved the procurement of In-borough Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Home to school transport as set out in paragraphs 3.1– 3.10 of the report.

### **40. MAYOR OF LONDON'S HOMES FOR LONDONERS AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAMME 2021-2026**

Councillor Khan introduced the report, and in doing so, confirmed that the grant was welcomed as it would maximise the number of affordable homes available in the borough which was much needed as apparent by those waiting on the housing register. He gave thanks to Darren Welsh – Director of Housing Delivery, and his team for their hard work.

#### **Decision**

Cabinet approved that the Council enter into a Grant Agreement with the Greater London Authority for the Mayor of London's Homes for Londoners Affordable Housing Programme 2021-2026.

### **41. ASTON GROUP CONTRACT EXTENSION**

Councillor Khan introduced the report and, in doing so, gave thanks to Darren Welsh, Sumitra Gomer – Director of Assets, and their teams for their hard work.

#### **Decision**

Cabinet approved that the Mechanical & Electrical Contract with Aston Heating Limited (trading as Astons Group) is extended for a further four years from 1 April 2023.

## **42. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Cabinet agreed to exclude the press and public from the meeting by resolution during consideration of agenda items 11 and 14 in accordance with Section 100 (A) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended, on the grounds that consideration of the appendices may involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in the relevant paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the Act.

## **43. FINANCIAL MONITORING: MONTH 5 (AUGUST)**

The Leader introduced the report and, in doing so, referred to the Chancellor of the Exchequer's new budget and, as a result, confirmed that a special task group had been set up to ensure that she and the Chief Executive were fully briefed.

### **Decision**

Cabinet:

- (1) noted that, in the wake of the Chancellor's recent mini budget and the unprecedented impact it has had on the financial markets, a special Task Group has been formed to ensure the Leader and CEO are fully briefed by the Council's s151 Officer on any significant financial risks to ongoing capital projects and service delivery in order that any urgent decisions can be taken to ensure that the financial stability of the Council is maintained;
- (2) approved that Strategic / Executive / Service Directors continue to identify management actions to mitigate any reported pressures and report those mitigations to the Director of Financial Services, which is in line with financial ground rules reaffirmed by Cabinet in May 2022 budget monitoring report;
- (3) approved a lease of the Soho Theatre Walthamstow – Unit B to Soho Theatres Community Interest Company on the following terms:
  - a) £300k fit out of Unit B to be funded through an annual "fit out lease" payment for years 1 through to 11 after opening;
  - b) the first 5 years is rent free (except the fit out lease above) for an initial 5-year period followed by a rent thereafter set at market value (in addition to the fit out lease);
- (4) noted the proposed change to construction phasing for Fellowship Square, to mitigate cost price inflation, including associated impacts to include; temporary reduction in on-site car parking, temporary closure of access to Chestnuts Field;
- (5) noted the additional cost for phase 2 of Fellowship Square relating to design developments for the new Civic building and public realm to include but not limited to; the incorporation of Child Case Conferencing rooms, separation of Council reception and restaurant/café, improvement to restaurant/café offering, CCTV, War Memorial improvements and creation of a Sensory Garden (all endeavours will be undertaken to manage this increase within the original budget envelope);

- (6) approved the extension of our participation in the eight borough pool for business rates retention for 2023/24;
- (7) approved funding of £162,000 from contingency to fund the additional bank holidays cost of waste collection for the Queen's Jubilee and funeral;
- (8) noted that the anticipated outturn at month 5 shows £12.110 million in-year pressure (this will be reviewed over the coming months and actions taken to achieve a balance position for the year end, following service mitigation / plans provided and the potential use of corporate resources to maintain a balanced position at year-end); and
- (9) noted that from month 3, the format for reporting of services is revised to reflect the new senior management restructure.

#### **44. APPROPRIATION OF LAND REQUIRED TO DEVELOP LEA BRIDGE STATION SITES FOR NEW HOUSING AND STATION ENTRANCE**

Councillor Khan introduced the report.

#### **Decision**

Cabinet:

- (1) authorised the Commercial Director of Property and Delivery in consultation with the Director of Governance and Law to appropriate the land outlined in red on the plan attached at Appendix A ("the Land") for planning purposes under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 227 Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The appropriation of the Land will trigger the protection of Section 203 of the Housing and Planning Act (HPA) 2016 which will allow the Council to interfere with third party rights that may affect the Land and convert them into a right to claim compensation. This is subject to:
  - (i) the Land being stopped up as a public highway under s.247 Town and County Planning Act 1990 (as amended);
  - (ii) due consideration being given to any representations that are made in respect of the proposed appropriation and disposal of the open space land that is situated within the Land that has been advertised pursuant to the requirements of Section 122(2A), Section 123 and Section 123 (2A) of the Local Government Act 1972;
  - (iii) No material matters arising in the engagement process as set out in Appendix C of the report which substantially alter the Council's factual case as set out in this report so that the Council considers that the criteria for appropriation are no longer met;
- (2) authorised the Commercial Director of Property and Delivery in consultation with the Director of Governance and Law to take all necessary steps and deal with all necessary legal arrangements, including (but not limited to) entering into an indemnity agreement with London Square, making compensation payments in line with the statutory framework, responding to any claims and dealing with any disputes. To note that, London Square are responsible for negotiating and settling any compensation associated with Rights to Lights.



#### **45. ACQUISITION OF NEWBUILD UNITS**

Councillor Khan introduced the report and, in doing so, stated that the report was an example of one of the ways the Council was bringing forward affordable housing.

##### **Decision**

Cabinet:

- (1) subject to affordability in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2023/34, authorised a budget, as set out in the exempt Appendix A of the report, for the acquisition of up to 58 affordable rent units; and
- (2) delegated the final number of units to be acquired and agreement of the financial terms to the Director of Housing Delivery, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead Member for Housing & Regeneration, the Commercial Director – Property and Delivery, and the Strategic Director of Finance and Governance.

#### **46. AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR AGENCY WORKERS**

Councillor Douglas introduced the report and, in doing so, gave thanks to Ben Browne - Director of People & Organisational Development and his team for their hard work.

##### **Decision**

Cabinet approved the Direct Award Call-Off contract to Matrix SCM from the MSTAR3 (Managed Services for Temporary Agency Resources) framework agreement (London Collaboration) set up by the Eastern Shire Purchasing Organisation (ESPO), commencing 1 December 2022 until 30 November 2025 with the possibility of extending for a further one year, until 30 November 2026.

**The meeting closed at 2.57 pm**

**Chair's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_