

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

**14 October 2021 at 2.00 pm**

### **PRESENT:**

<b>Chair:</b>	Councillor Grace Williams	Leader of the Council
<b>Cabinet Members:</b>	Councillor Clyde Loakes	Deputy Leader
	Councillor Liaquat Ali MBE	Portfolio Lead Member - Transformation and Commercial Operations
	Councillor Naheed Asghar	Portfolio Lead Member - Health
	Councillor Ahsan Khan	Portfolio Lead Member-Community Safety and Communities
	Councillor Khevyn Limbajee	Portfolio Lead Member - Adult Services
	Councillor Simon Miller	Portfolio Lead Member - Economic Prosperity
	Councillor Louise Mitchell	Portfolio Lead Member - Housing and Homelessness Prevention
	Councillor Paul Douglas	Portfolio Lead Member - Culture
	Councillor Alistair Strathern	Portfolio Lead Member - Children and Young People
	Councillor Ros Flowers	Cabinet Commissioner - Jobs and Opportunities
	Councillor Vicky te Velde	Cabinet Commissioner - Equalities

(Cabinet Commissioners are appointed by the Leader to assist Cabinet in leading engagement with our community on three 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
Ian Buckle	Head of Electoral and Democratic Services
Heather Flinders	Strategic Director, Families
Anthony Jackson	Democratic Services Officer
Brian Molden	Strategic Finance Advisor
Michele Moloney	Strategic Director, Resident Services
Kim Travis	Head of Litigation and Public Law

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Sharon Waldron.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations were made.

## **3. MINUTES OF CABINET**

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9 September, were approved and signed as a correct record.

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

The Leader introduced the report and, in doing so, referred to the Dementia Hub which she had visited with Councillor Limbajee. She said that a diagnosis of dementia was difficult but the visit enhanced her understanding of the service being provided, and that it was heartening to see older people in receipt of care and their many friendships. The Leader said that excellent care was being provided by the Hub however she acknowledged that the previous 18 months had been challenging due to the pandemic. She went on to say that recovery from the pandemic was not being felt by all and highlighted the cost of living increase for many residents. The Leader confirmed the intention to lobby Central Government for more action in this area, including resources needed to ensure LBWF recovered and thrived. The Leader confirmed that the Reset Programme was a crucial part of that.

The Leader announced that the Council would be focussing on those groups most affected by the pandemic and would be expanding on the Council's existing work, like at the Dementia Hub, to respond to the emerging need that had been exacerbated by the pandemic. She said that a new social contract was needed to enable children and young people in the borough to recover and the Council were investing in expanding services to allow children to grow up safe, well connected and independent.

The Leader then referred to the end of the Furlough Scheme and highlighted a dynamic jobs programme that had been launched by the Council which would not only help residents into work but would also actively create employment opportunities. She also said that lockdown had resulted in a number of women being at home with an abusive partner and referred to the programme 'Safe and Together' which was being built upon to better connect women and girls with support and to identify abuse at an earlier stage.

The Leader stated, that under the Deputy Leader's leadership, the Council would be responding to the climate emergency and would be setting out the programme later on this meeting's agenda.

The Leader said that the Council was able to invest into the Reset Programme due to the sound management of the Council's finances over the last decade, however explained that massive challenges lay ahead, particularly with covid-related funding

pressures and increasing demand for many services which residents needed. She pointed out that it was vital to fight for a fairer deal for local residents.

## **Decision**

Cabinet:

- (1) agreed 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 July 2021 budget monitoring report;
- (2) noted that the anticipated outturn at month 5 shows £9.456 million in-year pressure. This will be considered over the coming months to achieve a balance position for the year end following service mitigation / plans provided (agreed in (1) above) and the potential use of corporate resources to maintain a balanced position at year-end;
- (3) noted the capital financial position at month 5 as detailed in Appendix 2 of the report;
- (4) noted, within Appendix 3 of the report, the update of the Strategic Reset funding and allocation of £5.5 million;
- (5) noted funding requested in Climate emergency report elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda; and
- (6) noted that the Council is not proposing to join a London-wide Pool for 2022/23.

## **5. MAYOR'S ROUGH SLEEPING ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME (RSAP)**

The Leader stated that she had visited some rough sleepers and seen, first-hand, some of the excellent care being provided by Council staff. She said that support and relationship building was paramount and thanked Councillor Mitchell for her leadership in this area.

Councillor Mitchell introduced the report and, in doing so, gave thanks to all those that had been integral to the work with rough sleepers. She thanked the Mayor of London for the funding provided, Pauline Jones – Rough Sleeper Coordinator, YMCA workers, the leadership shown by Jonathan Joseph – Head of Prevention and Assessment, Modester Anucha - Corporate Director - Housing Strategy & Options and Darren Welsh – Deputy Strategic Director, Resident Services.

Councillor Mitchell then gave an example of a rough sleeper she encountered on an outreach session who was sleeping rough outside a church with no possessions. She said the individual was initially reluctant to receive help, however, now he was a guest at a night shelter where Councillor Mitchell volunteered and was safe and secure, based at the YMCA and was speaking with confidence about long-term accommodation. She said that the example was an amazing testament to the work she and her team had done.

## **Decision**

Cabinet:

- (1) authorised the Deputy Strategic Director, Resident Services to enter into Grant Agreements with the Greater London Authority for the Mayor of London's Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP) 2021-24;
- (2) delegated authority to the Deputy Strategic Director, Resident Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Lead Member for Housing and Homelessness Prevention and Portfolio Lead Member for Economic Prosperity, to undertake all necessary activities to deliver the programme including:
  - to approve the tendering and commissioning process for projects (including projects over £1million) within the RSAP programme;
  - to procure and appoint consultants to provide professional services required to deliver the RSAP projects, which could include but is not limited to the commissioning employer's agents, cost consultants, surveyors and project managers;
  - to approve the completion of the purchase of properties to be added to the Council's Housing Revenue Account;
  - to procure and appoint contractors from the Council's housing repairs and maintenance framework or other contractors to undertake the works required to bring procured and leased properties up to lettable standard; and
  - to vary the programme as may be required in order to meet funding deadlines and delivery targets;
- (3) delegated authority to the Deputy Strategic Director, Resident Services, in consultation with the Commercial Director Property & Delivery, Director of Governance and Law, and the Strategic Director, Finance and Governance, to agree terms for the procurement and lease of properties and to complete the transactions to enable the delivery of the programme.

## **6. WALTHAM FOREST'S RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY COMMISSION**

Councillor Loakes introduced the report and, in doing so, referred to the difficult past 18 months due to the pandemic and the work in relation to the climate emergency that had been lost during that period. He encouraged Council staff and residents to be proud of LBWF who had been pioneers on the climate agenda for a number of years.

Councillor Loakes said that the response needed to be a response from the people of LBWF and hoped that a strong community response could be built. He went on to say that proposals would come to Council to rename the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny Committee to the "Climate and Environment Scrutiny Committee".

Councillor Loakes praised the response by the Council's Housing Team to the climate agenda, led by Councillor Mitchell where resources from Government had enabled retrofitting of some of the poorest housing stock in the borough. He added that houses had been refurbished by Astons, a key partner, and that getting them on board with the climate agenda was a real accomplishment. Councillor Loakes

encouraged Members to visit to see the excellent technology on display. He said that the site had already attracted many visitors to view the technology, to understand how it worked and how it could be deployed in homes. Councillor Loakes stated that it was good to visit the Construction and Skills Centre in Cathall ward, with Councillor Miller, earlier in the summer to see how future heating engineers were already being trained in the borough and London so that they knew how to operate the new technology in Astons' homes.

Councillor Loakes said that LBWF were the leaders in active low carbon transport on a global platform. He said there was so much more that could be done and decarbonising transport was one of the key areas of work going forward.

Councillor Loakes stated that too many parents drove their children to school and collected them which led to increased pollution, emissions and potentially public health issues later on. He added that evidence suggested that if regular exercise was built into routines then often children retained and learned more in school.

Councillor Loakes then stated that he wished to introduce a period of biophilia to LBWF, similar to the approach that Singapore has taken with the intention of reducing the carbon footprint by planting greenery wherever possible. He said it was important to work imaginatively with partners and developers on the land within the LBWF boundary to do even more than LBWF currently does. Councillor Loakes also referred to the 100,000 bulbs that the Council were giving away to residents to create opportunities for more greenery.

Councillor Loakes also announced that for every tree lost on a Council piece of land, an additional 5 trees would be planted (one of the trees being 10 years old at the time of being planted) with the intention of improving biodiversity.

Councillor Loakes referred to the borough's young people and the importance of educating them in relation to climate change to ensure that they would not repeat past mistakes. He confirmed that, following the £4.5 million investment into the Suntrap Centre, LBWF were creating London's first young peoples' Climate Campus with the intention of equipping young people with the necessary knowledge in relation to climate change. Councillor Loakes then went on to explain the simple things that people could do to make a difference, including increased recycling – currently in LBWF recycling stands at 32% when up to 75 – 85% of household waste, created on a daily basis, was recyclable. He added that textile and battery' recycling in LBWF had broken records and referred to the recycling of mattresses by the North London Waste Authority. Councillor Loakes explained how polystyrene, which weighed almost nothing and was a bulky pollutant, could be repurposed in insulation/furniture production. He confirmed that no other London borough had such breadth of local recycling. Councillor Loakes stated that there were many items that needed to be removed from our residual waste as there were available solutions.

Councillor Loakes referred to flooding and some of the tragedies that had befallen many LBWF residents in that regard in recent months. He said that the Environment Agency had said that incidents of flooding would become increasingly challenging. Councillor Loakes spoke of the importance of gardens being laid with turf rather than tiles to reduce run-off and soak up water. He acknowledged that there was a maintenance challenge to be addressed and that some areas of the borough's infrastructure was quite antiquated. Councillor Loakes explained that there was now

a moratorium on paving over driveways, parking and a further review of the Council's policies in that area.

Councillor Loakes said that it was important to talk to people about climate change which could potentially bring about behavioural change. He impressed the importance of engaging those people who did not understand how their actions was affecting the climate.

Councillor Loakes gave thanks to Michele Moloney – Strategic Director, Resident services, David Beach – Director of Enforcement, Vala Valavan – Director of Highways and Traffic Management and any other officers who contributed to this piece of work. He added that, under Martin Esom's leadership of the management team, this would be a corporate response and will be at the heart of the Reset agenda.

Councillor Miller said that the climate emergency would not be effectively tackled unless green areas, drainage systems and carbon efficient homes were developed to enable residents to live clean and sustainable lives. He added that Ian Rae – Commercial Director – Regeneration, Planning & Delivery and Stewart Murray – Strategic Director, Economic Growth and Housing Development, had done much to bring forward the most green and progressive Local Plan of which he was very proud. Councillor Miller said that it was important that changed happened in a green and sustainable way.

Councillor Khan welcomed the commitments the Council had made and gave thanks to Councillor Loakes for his leadership in this area and to the officers involved. He said that the report showed that residents had been placed at the heart of the response and added that when residents and the Council worked together, much could be achieved. He gave the example of the Borough of Culture and the Citizens' Assembly.

Councillor Flowers thanked Councillor Loakes for his leadership and said that the Council would not have made the progress it had without him. She referred to a Green Skills Fair that was taken place the next day at the Walthamstow Wetlands. Councillor Flowers said that a commitment had been received from the Wetlands to ensure that local people were being lined up with green jobs. She said that 60 young people, who had been particularly affected by the pandemic, would be in attendance on this occasion. Councillor Flowers said that this was a great example of how the Council was simultaneously looking at climate change and ensuring that residents were supported following the pandemic.

Councillor Limbajee thanked Councillor Loakes for his leadership and holistic approach. He said that the Council was showing leadership and direction in this area which was incredibly important. Councillor Limbajee stated that, at LBWF, action was taken and pointed out that additional green spaces and connection to nature had an effect on people's mental health and wellbeing.

Councillor Strathern thanked Councillor Loakes for his leadership and also praised the collective leadership of the Council for pushing forward this agenda. He said that the subject had not previously been popular but he thought that the importance of climate change was beginning to become apparent to more people. Councillor Strathern said that borough was fortunate to have young people who had already

played a bold leadership role on this subject. He added that the Suntrap Centre would finally be able to do justice to young peoples' ambitions around climate change and referred to the practicalities of a school estate which presented opportunities to improve energy efficiency and drive towards a zero-carbon agenda. Councillor Strathern said that schools were now taking climate change very seriously and were being built in a way that made them fit for the future.

Councillor Asghar pointed out that health care contributed to approximately 5% of global greenhouse gases and 62% of those emissions were directly from the NHS supply chains with 24% being attributed to delivery of care. She said that the plans for the new development at Whipps Cross Hospital had been well thought out and included energy efficient building costs, climate focused supply chains and travel options to the hospital. Councillor Asghar described this as a small but much needed start and thanked Councillor Loakes for his role in getting the climate emergency message to Barts. She stated that there was a greater role for the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other health partners to have necessary conversations and to start reaching out to communities effectively. Councillor Asghar said that health partners were best placed to influence change and the HNS had a role to highlight the benefits of individual and population health. She confirmed that she would be discussing the subject further with colleagues at the CCG.

Councillor Ali thanked Councillor Loakes for his leadership and echoed the words of previous colleagues. He pointed out the importance of partners and businesses getting involved in the climate agenda and said that educating residents was key to taking the agenda forward. Councillor Ali stated that he was pleased to see that the borough was going in the right direction and said that the biggest issue was the impact that climate change potentially had on health.

Councillor Mitchell offered her and her team's full support to Councillor Loakes and thanked him for his leadership. She referred to the eco-show home that Members would be invited to visit and pointed to the work undertaken with partners to ensure an A rating in energy efficiency. Councillor Mitchell also referred to the good work across council estates in terms of increased recycling and reducing waste. She pointed out that residents were keen to have recycling facilities and confirmed that the Council was looking at the use of pesticides, placement of cycle hangers and planted greenery wherever possible. Councillor Mitchell said that there was a huge responsibility to those that lived in the private rented sector and said that the landlord licensing scheme could be used to increase the use of more efficient energy.

The Leader said she was pleased to see a practical plan with practical actions and that the Council would deliver what was promised in 2019. She said that there had been a huge effort from everyone in the community and it was important to consider how to engage with those that did not consider the climate change as a priority. The Leader also paid tribute to Councillor Loakes for his leadership, describing him as bold, innovative and pioneering in the face of opposition. She also gave thanks to the Management team led by Martin Esom. She said that she hoped it would soon be the case that young people were leading on the climate agenda with the Council. The Leader stated that the Council challenged the Government to match LBWF in their ambitions for residents. She said that everyone was needed to tackle the issue.

The Leader said that young people were starting to worry about climate change and it was important to give them a role.

## **Decision**

Cabinet:

- (1) noted the contents of this report and the steps that the Council has taken, and the approach it intends to take, in response to the Climate Emergency Commission's report;
- (2) noted the key projects and initiatives that the Council intends to deliver over the next 18 months that will make a positive contribution to the reduction of carbon emissions;
- (3) approved the recommended allocation of monies from the Climate Emergency Capital fund to finance the project programme set out in Appendix A of the report;
- (4) agreed the advancement of funds from the consolidated Climate Emergency Capital Fund into 2021/22 to fund the projects referenced in (3) above;
- (5) noted the projects that are proposed to be funded as part of the Reset Programme, as detailed in the Financial Monitoring report, elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda;
- (6) agreed to consider future funding recommendations made by the Climate Emergency Member Board via the regular Finance monitoring report or, if there is a specific Climate Emergency-themed Cabinet report on the agenda, via that report;
- (7) delegated to the Portfolio Lead Member with responsibility for Climate Emergency and the Strategic Director for Resident Services responsibility for developing the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan; and
- (8) agreed to receive a future report which sets out the Council's detailed action plan to achieve its ambition of being net-zero carbon by 2030 by Spring 2022.

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

Cabinet agreed not to exclude the press and public from the meeting for consideration of item 8 as Members present agreed not to discuss the content of the exempt appendices.

## **8. HIGHWAYS & LIGHTING MAINTENANCE TERM CONTRACT AWARD**

Councillor Loakes introduced the report and, in doing so, pointed out that demands were made of contractors and people the Council worked and negotiated contracts with. He said it was important to consider how they can embed, in their way of doing things, a better approach to the climate emergency. He said that he was pleased to report that the bidders for the contract did take those comments onboard, including



the social value elements. Councillor Loakes paid tribute to Michele Moloney, Vala Valavan, Jarlath Griffin – Director of Neighbourhoods, Anthony Hall – Head of Parking, the Procurement Team and any other officers involved for their work and overseeing the process.

## **Decision**

Cabinet:

- (1) agreed to award the consolidated Highways Maintenance and Highways Lighting Term Contract, as scheduled to commence on 01 April 2022, to J. B. Riney & Company Ltd subject to the standstill period of ten days prescribed by Regulation 32 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended); and
- (2) delegated, to the Strategic Director, Resident Services and Director of Highways & Traffic Management, authority to complete any documentation required to validate (1) above in consultation with the Strategic Director, Finance Governance.

**The meeting closed at 2.58 pm**

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

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