

LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CABINET

Thursday 25th January 2005

7.30 pm – 7.50 pm

PRESENT:

Chair:	Councillor Clyde Loakes	Council Leader
	Councillor Keith Rayner	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder, Corporate Services
	Councillor Liaquat Ali	Portfolio Holder, Community Engagement and Equalities
	Councillor David Blunt	Portfolio Holder, Environment
	Councillor Jenny Gray	Portfolio Holder, Strategic Innovation, Performance and Learning
	Councillor Chris Robbins	Portfolio Holder, Culture, Learning and Leisure
	Councillor Barry Smith	Portfolio Holder, Community Safety and Protection
	Councillor Graham Smith	Portfolio Holder, Health and Social Care
	Councillor Simon Wright	Portfolio Holder, Regeneration

110. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Loretta Hodges Portfolio Holder, Housing.

111. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

112. MINUTES OF CABINET

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th December 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

113. WHIPPS CROSS UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL TRUST REDEVELOPMENT

Cabinet noted that liaison with Whipps Cross University Hospital Trust to help realise the full potential of all regeneration funding opportunities currently took place through the work of a number of Council officers including the Section Manager, Development Control, the Head of Regeneration Programmes and the Transport Policy Manager.

114. STATEMENT BY THE DEPUTY LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER CORPORATE SERVICES – SINGLE PERSONS HOUSEHOLD DISCOUNT FOR COUNCIL TAX

Councillor Keith Rayner referred to a letter, recently sent by the Revenue and Benefits Service to local residents regarding entitlement to the single person

household discount, which had been poorly worded. A letter had been sent to Members of the Council and Members of Parliament providing an explanation and an apology for the tone and content of the earlier letter. Councillor Rayner confirmed that a more detailed report would be provided to Cabinet Members. He further confirmed that a letter of explanation and apology had also been sent to all recipients of the first letter. He reported that he had made two statements to the press, and this had been publicised through the Council's website and through Waltham Forest Direct. He assured Cabinet that this would not happen again.

115. FORWARD PLAN

Cabinet noted the Forward Plan for the period February 2005 to May 2005.

116. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT: MONTH 9 (DECEMBER)

Cabinet received a report on expenditure up to the end of December 2004. The report concluded that the overall situation appeared to be one of widespread pressures on a variety of demand-led and income budgets, but no large scale single problems, as seen in previous years, had so far emerged. Cash flow remained very strong, and the 2003/04 outturn had provided some funds which were being held to deal with unavoidable pressures.

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Care advised Cabinet that he would be writing to the Home Office on the matter of funding arrangements for asylum seekers.

Cabinet placed on record its thanks to the Portfolio Holder, Health and Social Care and the Executive Director, Community Services for their efforts in keeping relevant budgets under control and dealing with the large overspend that had been identified at the end of 2003.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet noted the report, including the position on major procurement exercises as detailed in Appendix C to the report.

117. IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

Cabinet received a report that provided an overview of progress against key improvement priorities up to 31st December 2004.

Cabinet noted that the Leader of the Council, Deputy Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive and Executive Director, Corporate Services would be meeting the Government Monitoring Board on the following day, to discuss disengagement arrangements.

Cabinet further noted that following disengagement, it would be important to ensure that new opportunities for funding for which the Council would be eligible, were identified and sought.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet noted the report.

118. ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER – DECEMBER 2004

Cabinet received a report informing it that the Council's External Auditors and the Audit Commission had produced a joint annual summary of their audit work for the year ended 31 March 2004 and inspection work during the calendar year 2004. The letter covered work on the financial statements, systems, corporate governance and performance.

Cabinet noted with pleasure the Auditor's comment that 'cash flow has improved considerably and that the Council's finances continue to be well managed'.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet noted the report.

119. 14 – 19 LEARNING STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report regarding 14 – 19 age group learning developments. Cabinet noted the actions proposed, and the outcomes sought in the strategy, seeking aspiration and success for the Borough's young people. Further reports on elements within the Strategy will be submitted to Cabinet as appropriate.

REASON FOR DECISION

The 14 - 19 Learning Strategy has significant implications for all young people in the borough in helping to determine their achievement and participation rates. The strategy also has significant implications for the key funding agencies and providers of learning in the borough, including planning and delivering learning provision for 14 to 19 year old young people.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed the Waltham Forest 14-19 Learning Strategy, developed with key partners, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

120. EARLY YEARS STRATEGY

Cabinet received a report proposing the adoption of an Early Years Strategy for the period 2005/08. Cabinet noted that it was expected that the Strategy would meet the following objectives:

- Improving the availability, accessibility and affordability and quality of childcare,
- Improving learning;
- Improving social and emotional development;

Improving children's health;
Strengthening families and communities.

Cabinet was informed that the Strategy, which supported the Council's Vision, was key to providing integrated services for children and their families. The areas concerned being early education and integrated childcare, family support and outreach, children and family health services, employment, information, consultation, training and advice.

Cabinet noted that in the period of the strategy six children's centres would be developed, being located in the central and south of the Borough, and would cover all families living in these areas as well as Valley Ward.

Cabinet further noted the actions proposed, and the outcomes sought in the Strategy, seeking integrated services for children.

REASON FOR DECISION

The early years strategy 2005/08 will offer a significantly improved family focused service, and presents a very different way of working with partner agencies.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed the Early Years Strategy, as set out in the appendix to the report.

121. REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Cabinet noted the following reports, and further information, provided by Portfolio Holders:

- a) The Leader
- b) Deputy Leader and Corporate Services Portfolio Holder
- c) Community Engagement and Equalities Portfolio Holder
- d) Environment Portfolio Holder
- e) Housing Portfolio Holder
- f) Culture, Learning and Leisure Portfolio Holder
- g) Health and Social Care Portfolio Holder
- h) Regeneration Portfolio Holder
- i) Community Safety and Protection Portfolio Holder

Cabinet noted with pleasure that the Council had been accredited with the Disability 'two ticks' symbol.

122. REVISED PROPOSAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARCADE SITE

This item was withdrawn.

(Chair)