

LONDON BOROUGH OF WALTHAM FOREST

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF CABINET

Tuesday, 22 March 2005

7.30 p.m. to 8.25 p.m.

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 Loretta Hodges	Portfolio Holder, Housing
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

Other Councillors Present:

Councillor Narinder Matharoo	Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Commission
Councillor Marion Fitzgerald	
Councillor Diana Murray	
Councillor Bob Wheatley	

143 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Rob Pearce was welcomed to his first meeting of the Cabinet following his recent appointment with the Council as Assistant Chief Executive.

Tony Barrett, Head of Building Services, was welcomed to the meeting as the representative of the Environmental Services Directorate.

144 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

145 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

146 MINUTES OF CABINET

The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2005 were confirmed as a correct record.

147 EQUALITIES: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Councillor Wheatley presented the report in his capacity as Chair of the Equalities Scrutiny Panel.

Cabinet thanked the Equalities Scrutiny Panel for its work and the commitment that it had given to the subject, but expressed concern that the Panel had not been able to look at equalities issues in service delivery. Cabinet also pointed out that there were a number of positive current work streams within the Council at present, including work relating to Community Cohesion, the Disability Discrimination Act, changes to service delivery, as well as the appointment of a Cabinet member with the Portfolio of Community Engagement and Equalities, and recognition by the Commission for Racial Equality of models of good practice adopted by the Council. In the light of this Cabinet deferred consideration of the report and asked that the Chair of the Equalities Scrutiny Panel come back to Cabinet when the matter is considered.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed to defer the report, and requested that it be re-submitted with fuller information to a future meeting of Cabinet.

148 CALL-IN REQUESTS

None.

149 FORWARD PLAN

Cabinet noted the Forward Plan for the period April 2005 to July 2005.

150 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT - 3RD QUARTER 2004/05

The report provided an analysis of third quarter performance data for the financial year 2004/2005, highlighting where performance was good and

improving, and where performance was below target and needed to be improved.

The Portfolio Holder for Regeneration commented on the efforts being made by the Head of Planning and Transport to improve performance relating to indicator BV109: Percentage of 'minor' planning applications determined within a target time of 8 weeks', and advised that although the percentage target of applications determined would not be achieved in this municipal year, it would be achieved in the 2005/06 municipal year.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet noted the performance data and analysis contained in the report, and the action being taken to address areas where performance is below target and needs to be improved.

151 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT: MONTH 11 (FEBRUARY)

Cabinet received a report on expenditure up to the end of February 2005. The report concluded that the overall situation continued to be one of 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. Cabinet noted that although further potential pressures continued to arise, they were balanced in general by underspends and additional income. Cabinet also noted that cash flow remained very strong.

Cabinet noted with pleasure the comments of the Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Care, that the costs in the Children and Families Service had reduced, and that the Community Services budget would be in balance at year-end.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet noted the report, including the draft Efficiency Statement for 2005/06, attached as Appendix C to the report.

152 IMPROVEMENT PLAN MONITORING REPORT

Cabinet received a report that provided an overview of progress against key improvement priorities during February 2005 and set out changes, that had been agreed by the Minister for Local and Regional Government, to the Government's current monitoring arrangements. The report also provided an up-date on the Council's progress in developing its new three-year Improvement Plan, which would commence in the new financial year.

The Portfolio Holder for Culture, Learning and Leisure advised:

- (a) That an inspection of the Youth Service had taken place in the previous week, and that although the findings of the inspection could not be released at this stage, he wished to place on record his thanks

to the Council staff involved in preparing for the inspection, and in particular Colette McCann, Head of Youth Service.

- (b) That the Council's Education Service had been awarded a three star rating following the recent OFSTED inspection, and that this was a highly satisfactory result, with the service having improved by two star ratings in a period of two years. The Portfolio Holder wished to place on record his thanks to EduAction and all Council staff involved.

Cabinet also noted with pleasure the comments of the Portfolio Holder for Health and Social Care, that the Council's Fostering Service had recently been inspected, and that although the findings of the inspection could not be released at this stage, he anticipated a good result, and took this opportunity to place on record his thanks to the staff involved for their work on the matter.

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services took the opportunity of welcoming David Graaff, recently appointed as Head of Revenues and Benefits, to the Authority.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet noted the report.

153 PROPOSAL FOR JOINT SERVICE CENTRE: CHINGFORD

Cabinet received a report on proposals for the establishment of a joint service centre, containing Waltham Forest Direct and other Council and partner services, in Chingford.

Cabinet placed on record its thanks to the Council officers involved on this project for their work, in particular Maureen McDonald Khan, Head of Portfolio Management.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed:

1. That option 3, detailed in the report, be progressed for the Chingford Joint Service Centre.
2. That Friday Hill House, Simmons Lane and Louisa Oakes, Hall Lane be declared as surplus to the Council's requirements and sold in accordance with the Council's Property Procedure Rules.
3. That the capital receipts from the disposals referred to in point 2 above are ring-fenced to the Chingford Joint Service Centre build costs.

154 **WORKING FUTURE PROJECT**

Cabinet received a report proposing the payment of £50,000 to East Thames Group, a Registered Social Landlord, for the purpose of researching the barriers to employment for those homeless families placed in Private Sector Leased Accommodation. Cabinet noted that the payment proposed was a key element in a bid for match funding, and a foundation for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to provide a block grant of £2.28 million, instead of Housing Benefit Subsidy, for a pilot group of homeless households. Cabinet also noted that If successful, the Working Future Project may be rolled out nationally.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed:

1. To participate in the Working Future Project, as set out in the report.
2. To pay £50,000 from within existing budgets to East Thames Group as the partner Housing Association to carry out research for the Pilot Scheme.
3. To waive the Contract Procedure Rules requirement that all contracts valued at £50,000 or over must be subject to competitive tender.
4. To submit a bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) for match funding as a new initiative, in partnership with the Greater London Authority (GLA), East Thames Group, and the London Boroughs of Newham and Redbridge.

155 **HOUSING STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL 2004/2005 AND ALMO BID ROUND 5**

Cabinet received a report, the purpose of which was to seek endorsement of the conclusion of the Council's latest Housing Stock Options Appraisal. The appraisal concluded that an arm's length management organisation (ALMO) still represents the best option for improving the Council's housing stock to meet the Decent Homes Standard. Cabinet was aware that endorsement of the appraisal also included agreement to a bid for funding under Round 5 of the Government's ALMO programme.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed:

1. To accept the conclusions of the Housing Stock Options Appraisal, the Executive Summary of which was set out as Appendix A to the report.
2. To submit a bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) for funding under Round 5 of the Government's ALMO programme, summarised in Appendix B to the report.

156 **CHILDREN ACT IMPLEMENTATION**

The Children Act 2004 and its associated legislation will have far reaching implications on how Waltham Forest Council delivers its services to children and young people and the outcomes of those services for young people. The initial approach of how the Council would prepare for the forthcoming changes was outlined in the report.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed:

1. The initial approach, as detailed in the report, to developing the Council response to the Children Act.
2. To the following as a vision for all children and young people's services provided in the borough:

 'To maximise opportunity and life chances of all children and young people living in the borough'.

157 **EXTENSION OF THE EDUACTION CONTRACT**

Cabinet noted that the existing contract with EduAction was scheduled to expire on 31 August 2006. The report sought agreement to discussions being undertaken with EduAction with a view to extending the existing contract.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed:

1. To extend the EduAction contract from 1 September 2006 to 31 March 2008, subject to contract.
2. To negotiate on the basis that any contractual extension will make provision for the impact of the Children's Act 2004, including, but not limited to, the phased handovers of services.
3. To note that all negotiations will be subject to Cabinet approval of the finalised contract, and that a further report will be submitted to Cabinet not later than September 2005.

158 **FINAL SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Cabinet was informed that on 23rd November 2004 the Portfolio Holder for Culture, Learning and Leisure had approved a draft School Capital Programme for 2005/06 and 2006/07. The Portfolio Holder's decision was based on an anticipated DfES capital allocation and subject to consultation

with schools. The report now before Cabinet reflected the actual DfES capital allocation for 2005/06 and feedback from the consultation with schools.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed:

1. The proposed Schools' Capital Programme for 2005/06, as set out in Appendix A to the report.
2. To note the indicative Schools' Capital Programme for 2006/07.
3. The Schools Devolved Capital Contribution Policy, as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.
4. That £250,000 of the Schools Capital Programme be earmarked for the local seed challenge initiative, as set out in paragraph 5.1 of the report.

159 SCHOOLS BUDGETS 2005/06

Cabinet received a report that provided details of the annual consultation on the allocation of funding to schools for 2005/06. Appendices to the report contained recommendations from the Schools Forum, and the final schools budgets for each school based upon those recommendations.

Cabinet noted that the Local Education Authority had been required to inform schools of their budget share by 1 March 2005, and that accordingly schools had been informed of their budget share, but advised that it was subject to ratification by Cabinet.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed:

1. To note the contents of the report.
2. To the following recommendations from the Schools Forum on the allocation of funding to schools for 2005/06:
 - a) That the level of funding available to be delegated to schools should be £128.550m, which is consistent with the passporting requirements laid down by the Secretary of State.
 - b) That the local funding formula be amended from 1st April 2005 to reflect changes in allocation for split sites and transport.
 - c) That the local funding formula be amended so that from 1st April 2005 nursery classes are funded on pupil numbers and not

places and that funding for nursery schools should remain unchanged.

- d) That in accordance with DfES regulations, final school budget shares should be the higher of the minimum funding guarantee set by the Government or the local formula funding as amended above.

3. To the final split between the centrally retained and delegated elements of the £7.1m increase in the Schools Budget, as set out in the table on page 4 of the report.

160 DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Cabinet noted that the Community Strategy aimed to set out a clear, concise and accessible vision and set of priorities and targets for partnership work in the borough.

Cabinet also noted that the Strategy had been developed with partners through the Local Strategic Partnership, and was owned by the partnership and would need to be taken forward by all the partners.

Cabinet placed on record its thanks to Michael Toyer, Service Planning and Research Manager, for his work on producing the Strategy, and to Councillors Kathy Gosling, Barry Smith and Jon Wilson for their contributions and involvement in the Member Feedback Sessions.

CABINET DECISION

1. Cabinet noted the inclusive process used to adopt the Community Strategy.
2. Cabinet agreed to recommend to Full Council the adoption of the draft Community Strategy, attached at Annex A to the report.

161 REPORTS OF PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Cabinet noted the reports of Portfolio Holders.

162 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

Cabinet resolved that the press and the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following items in accordance with Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, on the grounds that it would involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 7, 9 and 12 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

163 A PROPOSAL FOR JOINT SERVICE CENTRE, CHINGFORD

Cabinet noted the contents of Appendix A, in relation to agenda item 8a(i)

above: Proposal for Joint Service Centre Chingford. (See minute number 153).

164 AWARD OF CONTRACT: PENSIONS ADMINISTRATION SERVICE

Cabinet received a report seeking approval to the award of a contract for the Provision of a Pension Administration Service.

CABINET DECISION

Cabinet agreed:

1. To award the contract for the Provision of Pension Administration Services to Capita Hartshead, subject to successful negotiations with the supplier and consultation with staff, Trade Unions and other stakeholders.
2. To delegate to the Executive Director for Corporate Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, the decision to agree the finalised contract with the successful supplier.

165 LEYTONSTONE SECONDARY SCHOOL SPORTS HALL

Cabinet received a report seeking approval to the acceptance of a tender for a new build sports hall at Leytonstone Secondary School. Cabinet noted that the project would meet the specific sporting needs of Leytonstone School and contribute to raising educational standards, and also significantly benefit other local schools and the community.

CABINET DECISION

1. Cabinet emphasised the importance of capital projects being achieved on target, and stressed that this particular project must be completed on time by April 2006.
2. Cabinet agreed to the building contract for Leytonstone School Sports Hall in the sum of £2,518,786.

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Chair

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