224. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Bonavia declared a prejudicial interest in Item 13 as Chair of the Blackheath Working Party and withdrew from the meeting.

Councillor Millbank declared a personal interest in Item 6 as a Council appointed member of the VAL Board.

Councillor Muldoon declared personal interests in Item 3 as Lead Governor of the SLAM Foundation Trust and as Chair of the London Scrutiny Network.

225. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on June 3 2015 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

226. Matters Raised by Scrutiny and other Constitutional Bodies

Matters referred by Select Committee – Comments of the Healthier Communities Select Committee on transition from children’s to adult services

Having received a presentation by the Chair of the Healthier Communities Select Committee, Councillor John Muldoon, the Mayor:

RESOLVED that the views and recommendations of the Select Committee be received and the Executive Directors for Children & Young People and Community Services be asked to prepare a response to the review’s recommendations.

Matter referred by Housing Select Committee – Communal Heating Systems Review - Report and Recommendations

Having received a presentation by the Chair of the Housing Select Committee, Councillor Carl Handley, the Mayor:

RESOLVED that the views and recommendations of the Housing Select Committee be received and the Executive Director for Customer Services be asked to prepare a response to the review’s recommendations.
Having received a presentation by the Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Alan Hall, the Mayor:

RESOLVED that the Executive Director for Community Services be asked to progress the Committee’s recommendation that a full briefing on Forest Hill Station’s second fire appliance and the relevant Mayoral Direction, be obtained from the London Fire Brigade.

227. Outstanding Scrutiny Matters

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

228. Response to consultation Remodelling Lewisham’s Adult Day services and Associated Transport

The Mayor opened the discussion by welcoming the many public members who were present to listen to this item. The Mayor recognised change was disturbing for some service users but that it had to be placed into the context of reduced public funding for all services. He further stated that even without the financial drivers it was appropriate for all services to be reviewed from time to time.

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Health, Well-Being and Older People, Councillor Chris Best, who set the context of the proposals including the intensive consultations which had been undertaken since the item had last been considered in February. She said she appreciated that some service users and their families still held deep concerns about the proposals. She stressed though that all the existing Day Centres were to be retained but that their use would be wider than before.

Greater detail about the proposals was then given by the Executive Director for Community Services and her staff. The Executive Director stated that in her professional opinion there was a firm rationale for change. Firstly she pointed out fewer families were making use of the Day Centres and there was considerable spare capacity. Secondly, opportunities could be developed that were accessible in other parts of the community and not just at Day Centres. Thirdly, Day care provision had to be set in the context of the Council’s overall budget position and the enactment of the proposals would effect a £1.3 million saving.

The Executive Director referred to the recent receipt of several letters and a petition signed by 757 persons objecting to the proposals. She confirmed those had been considered in the process and observed that since February various changes had been made to the original preferred option in light of the comments received. These included enhancing personal safety and security, providing for older residents, increasing staffing during the transitional period and working, as requested by the Healthier Communities Select Committee, with Mencap to improve the evening transportation scheme while lowering costs.
The Executive Director’s presentation was reinforced by the Joint Commissioning Manager who provided greater detail on the consultations and by the Operations Manager who reported on the assessment process.

Mr Nick O’Shea, representing Mencap next addressed the Mayor. He pointed out the anger felt by otherwise reasonable people and recognised the challenges caused by austerity across the public sector. He stated he had a clear and costed alternative which would require no savings requirement from adult day care services. He drew the Mayor’s attention to a response he had received to an FOI request which reported Lewisham had a £248M PFI debt which was being repaid at a 10.3% average interest rate. He said the Council was spending £26M in interest repayments every year. He claimed the Council could renegotiate the loans on the lines of a domestic remortgage and ensure money was available for services to vulnerable people rather than going to bankers.

Helen Bashford, the mother of a service user, made the next presentation to the Mayor. She stated people were not using Day Centres because they were not being offered to clients and that there had been numerous cases of people having providers forced upon them without a choice being given. She said she had no confidence in the consultation which she believed amounted to little more than box ticking by officers and that she had subsequently set up a parents and carers support group which now had more than 50 members. She said the written report did not adequately reflect the opposition to the proposals and she called upon the Mayor not to pass the proposals in their entirety, but postpone them until all personal assessments had been concluded and parents and carers knew what their budgets would be. She said the Council could face increased costs if carers withdrew their support and pleaded for an alternative way forward to be found.

Councillor Kevin Bonavia responded to the points made by Mr O’Shea saying the Council’s actual borrowings were £1.3B and commitments had been made to 8 PFIs. The interest payments of £26M had to be set in the context of this higher figure which included expenditure on the refurbishment of the entire school estate. Councillor Bonavia offered to speak to Mr O’Shea about his contention subsequent to the meeting.

Councillor Joan Millbank advised the Mayor of her direct experience with the community model in another borough providing services for people with learning disabilities. She said she was convinced the integrated model could work well and that it gave vulnerable people the opportunity to mix with others in a safe way.

Having carefully considered all the representations that had been made, the Mayor concluded that he firmly believed some change at some point was inevitable irrespective of any financial imperatives. He stated that halting the proposals would only lead to a bigger and more wide ranging impact later. He stated he thought the transition would be absolutely critical. In going forward collectively if things did not work he expected quick action to be taken. The Mayor wanted Helen Bashford’s new group to be engaged in the monitoring process. In order to reinforce scrutiny of the transitional arrangements, the Mayor inserted a further recommendation requiring officers to report
confidentially to him and Councillor Best on a four weekly basis detailing progress on implementation including problems encountered in individual cases.

Having considered an officer report, and presentations by the Cabinet Member for Health, Well-Being and Older People, Councillor Chris Best, Nick O’Shea of Lewisham Mencap, and Helen Bashford, the mother of a service user, the Mayor, for the reasons he had stated and as otherwise set out in the report:

RESOLVED that:

(1) officers should report to him and Cllr Best on a confidential basis every 4 weeks detailing progress on implementation including problems encountered in individual cases;

(2) the outcomes of the consultation as set out in section 6 and the Equalities Analysis Assessment in Appendix 12 be received;

(3) the report be considered in conjunction with the ‘Voluntary Sector Accommodation Implementation Plan’ report;

(4) service provision be consolidated to the three services for service users with complex needs – the Intensive Support resource (ISR), the Challenging Needs Service (CNS) and the Specialist Dementia Service;

(5) an undertaking be given to identify specific partners to work with the Council to maintain key activities in the areas of supported employment (e.g. Grow and ‘Tuck Stop’) and also performance art (i.e. ‘Uproar’ and ‘Dare to Dream’);

(6) the Intensive Support (ISR) service for people with profound learning disabilities and complex needs currently at Leemore moves to the Ladywell Centre;

(7) a service to be known as ‘A Place to Meet’ (the ‘drop in’ service) is commissioned to support people no longer eligible for Council funded day care.

(8) the older adults currently using the Ladywell Centre who have not already moved to the specialist Dementia Unit move to the Housing 21 managed day centres at Cedar Court and Cinnamon Court or other similar provision of their expressed preference;

(9) specific areas be allocated for the delivery of services to people with a learning disability in Mulberry, Leemore and Naborhood and these centres extend their use to the wider Lewisham community as community hubs for a wider range of purposes in partnership with existing third sector organisations;

(10) the three centres, Leemore, Mulberry and Naborhood be recognised as community hubs as part of the Community Services Assets portfolio, and
there be different rental and running costs and charges from those applied to general lettings;

(11) voluntary and community providers be invited to offer activities and support to people who will be receiving a direct payment or personal budget, either via the community hubs or alongside them;

(12) service users have the opportunity to use their direct payment to employ a personal assistant and make use of the community hubs;

(13) the in-house Door2Door transport be maintained only for older adults, the most complex service users with long term conditions, and the remaining Council directly managed service users (ISR, CNS, Dementia) with the travel needs of remaining eligible day service users be met by a variety of alternatives including travel training and buddying; shared escorted and unescorted taxis and volunteer drivers; and

(14) £14,000 per annum continues to be available to fund transport to evening clubs for those existing people living at home with their families.

229. Voluntary Sector Accommodation Implementation Plan

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for the Third Sector, Councillor Joan Millbank, who explained the intention of the Council was to ensure the better use of its buildings.

The Mayor received a representation from Yvonne Peart representing the Honor Oak Community Centre. She believed her Centre was earmarked for closure and redevelopment as housing, with users being relocated at a smaller facility outside the estate. She stated the Trustees were concerned about the process to date and wished to develop proposals with the Council in association with user groups.

Brian Courtney next made a representation as Chairperson of the Ewart Road Housing Co-operative Community Clubhouse and stressed his opposition to any threatened closure.

Councillor Dacres confirmed to the Mayor that the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee had agreed not to make a referral to the Mayor only after receiving categorical assurances that the proposals were draft and no closures would be contemplated without full consultation.

The Mayor ordered that the consultation outcomes had to be reported back to the Mayor and Cabinet before any implementation took place.

Having considered an officer report, and presentations by the Cabinet Member for the Third Sector, Councillor Joan Millbank, representatives of two Community Centres and Councillor Dacres on behalf of the Safer, Stronger Communities Select Committee, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that:
(1) the implementation plan as outlined in section 5 and detailed by category in Appendix A, B, C, and D be approved;

(2) further consultation on proposed closures and redevelopments take place and the outcome be reported back to Mayor and Cabinet prior to any Implementation taking place; and

(3) the amendment to the Community Asset Transfer Framework as outlined in Section 8 and Appendix E be approved.

230. Early Intervention Proposals for Children’s Centres

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Councillor Paul Maslin, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that:

(1) the responses to the consultation be received;

(2) the following Children’s Centres remain open providing services to children and families and remain on the Sure Start database: Clyde, Ladywell, Bellingham, Downderry, Eliot Bank and Kelvin Grove.

(3) the following Children’s Centres remain open providing services to children and families and are removed from the Sure Start database: Besson Street Gardens, St Swithun’s, Evelyn, Amersham, Hatcham Oak, Manor House, Torridon, Marvels Lane, Beecroft Garden and Kilmorie.

(4) Heathside and Lethbridge be confirmed as closed and that Centre be removed from the Sure Start On database.

231. Greyhound Public House Update

Officers were able to report building had commenced and appeared to be of good quality. Officers noted a delegation from the Sydenham Society was present to listen to the update.

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Alan Smith, the Mayor:

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that a further report be prepared for the 30 September 2015 Mayor & Cabinet meeting to update progress.

232. Permanent Primary Places Sir Francis Drake Primary School

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Councillor Paul Maslin, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that:
(1) the decision made on the 25 June 2014 to enlarge Sir Francis Drake Primary School from 1 to 2 forms of entry be modified with effect from September 2016, subject to the development of satisfactory building proposals in partnership with the Education Funding Agency;

(2) the enlargement of Sir Francis Drake Primary School from 1 to 2 forms of entry be deferred for a further academic year to September 2017, subject to the development of satisfactory building proposals in partnership with the Education Funding Agency;

(3) a referral be made to the Schools Adjudicator seeking a reduction to the Published Admission Number for 2016/17 in relation to Sir Francis Drake School; and

(4) funding already agreed to support additional planning requirements be retained as a commitment from the school places expansion programme.

233. Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Kevin Bonavia and by the Head of Public Services, representing the Executive Director for Customer Services.

Councillor Millbank asked if there was a special list used to consult with community groups in the borough and was informed the lists already drawn up by Community Assemblies were used.

Councillor Dromey asked that the scheme be advertised in both the hard copy and electronic versions of Lewisham Life.

A spectator asked if the information could be put in an accessible form for people with dyslexia and she was told the Head of Public Services would explain what could be done after the meeting.

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Kevin Bonavia, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that consultation on a local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2016/17, that passes on a cut in government funding to working age claimants, be undertaken.

234. Homeless Allocations Policy

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damien Egan, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that

(1) the new legal responsibilities for the council in relation to the
development of a locational priority placement policy be noted;

(2) the rationale for the development of an interim policy be noted;

(3) the interim locational priority placement policy be approved; and

(4) officers be authorised to proceed with consultation to develop a full locational priority placement policy to be presented to Mayor and Cabinet in November 2015.

235. Parks Byelaws

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for the Public Realm, Councillor Rachel Onikosi, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that the Council be recommended to make new byelaws for parks and open spaces in the form attached and that they revoke the existing byelaws made in 1980.

236. Blackheath byelaws

Councillor Bonavia withdrew from the meeting room while this item was discussed.

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for the Public Realm, Councillor Rachel Onikosi, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that the Council be recommended to make the new byelaws for parks and open spaces in the form attached and that they revoke the existing byelaws for Blackheath made in 1932.

237. Deptford Southern Sites Appropriation

Councillor Dromey asked if retention of the community garden was possible. Officers explained it was actually a school garden that had been taken over by guardians on an interim basis and that following the competitive dialogue process it was not possible to leave the garden in situ but it was hoped the expertise that had been developed could be used in the locality.

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damien Egan, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that:

(1) subject to Secretary of State’s consent under Section 19 of the Housing Act 1985 being obtained, the appropriation of Council owned land shown hatched black on attached plan 1 be approved from housing purposes to planning purposes under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972;
(2) the appropriation of the Council owned land shown in bold edging on the attached plans 1 and 2 be approved from education purposes to planning purposes under Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972;

(3) the consent of the Secretary of State under Schedule 1 of the Academies Act to the appropriation of the education land has already been obtained; and

(4) the making of an application to the Secretary of State under Section 19 of the Housing Act 1985 be approved for consent to the appropriation referred to above.

238. Waste and Recycling Consultation

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for the Public Realm, Councillor Rachel Onikosi, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that the proposed consultation approach and timetable be approved.

239. Reconstitution of Governing Bodies St Mary Magdalen

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Councillor Paul Maslin, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that:

(1) the Instrument of Government for St. Mary Magdalen’s Catholic Primary School be made by Local Authority order dated 15 July 2015; and

(2) the Instrument of Government the Local Authority is proposing to make by order be also agreed by the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education, Trustees, Foundation Governors and the Local Authority.

240. Appointment of LA Governor

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Councillor Paul Maslin, the Mayor, having considered the information relating to the candidate:

RESOLVED that Stephen Kenny be nominated as a Local Authority Governor to the Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School and the information concerning the recommended nominated governor be noted.

241. Sheltered Housing Investment and Improvement Programme

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damien Egan, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:
RESOLVED that

(1) the rationale for considering a change to the service delivery model in the Council’s sheltered housing stock, and the three potential models for a new model as set out be noted;

(2) the proposals include the provision of a service charge assistance fund, to assist tenants with the financial transition;

(3) if finally approved, these proposals would all see a management and operational transfer of the service from the Council to Lewisham Homes;

(4) Officers immediately commence a comprehensive consultation exercise, with all tenants currently residing in sheltered housing and their representatives, regarding those three options;

(5) the outcome of this consultation be brought before Mayor and Cabinet for final decision making before any change be implemented; and

(6) the plans for capital investment within the 18 sheltered housing Schemes come forward separately to the consultation relating to the service model, and all 18 schemes be brought to the Decent Homes standard and in the following six schemes a new investment standard be trialled.

• Commodore Court
• Fairfields
• The White House
• The Vineries
• Lawrie Park Road
• Talbot Court

242. Discretionary Licensing Private Rented Sector

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damien Egan, the Mayor for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that

(1) relevant evidence be noted gathered for Housing Select Committee which suggests the worst private rented sector housing in the borough is located in flats above commercial premises, particularly concentrated in secondary and tertiary shopping streets across the borough;

(2) if it is decided to proceed with an additional licensing scheme for flats above commercial premises, there will be costs to the council of between £350k and £480k per year for a period of 5 years, i.e. a total of up to £2.4m over 5 years;

(3) consideration of “additional” licensing in the area of the London Borough of Lewisham be approved and that the required public consultation be commenced by officers;
(4) officers develop the public consultation document containing the detailed proposals and terms of the scheme and report back on the results of the consultation to Mayor & Cabinet later this year.

243. Financial Forecasts 2015-16 and Medium Term Financial Strategy

Both reports were presented by Councillor Bonavia who advised that substantial strategy changes were likely to be required once the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review were known.

Having considered officer reports, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Kevin Bonavia, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the reports:

RESOLVED that

(1) the current financial forecasts for the year ending 31 March 2015 and the action being taken by the Executive Directors to manage down the forecasted yearend overspend be noted; and

(2) the updated capital programme budgets as set out be noted.

(3) the 2016/17 to 2019/20 Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted and a further update be brought back as part of the savings and budget setting process to reflect any changes arising from the CSR 2015 expected in the Autumn.

244. New Lewisham Local Plan Consultation

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the Deputy Mayor Councillor Alan Smith, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that

(1) the Lewisham Local Plan: Consultation on Main Issues be approved for public consultation and recommend the Council do the same; and

(2) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Resources and Regeneration to make any minor alterations to the consultation document prior to the start of the formal consultation.

245. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that in accordance with Regulation 4(2)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012 and under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs [3, 4 and 5] of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Act, and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public
interest in disclosing the information.

23 Homeless Hostel Investment Programme.

24 Disposal of Land interest at Arcus Road/Chingley Close.

25 Milford Towers Leasing Scheme.

246. Hostel Investment Programme

Having considered a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the
Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damien Egan, the Mayor, for the
reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that

(1) the two potential investment opportunities to improve both the quality and
the quantity of hostel provision for single homeless clients as set out be noted;

(2) having considered the relevant benefits and risks associated with the two
potential options for the funding of the Deptford Reach development project,
agrees that the Council should directly grant fund the development, using a
stated amount of S106 funding; and

(3) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Customer Services, in
consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Asset Management and
Head of Law, to finalise the terms of the grant agreement with Deptford Reach
for the S106 funding.

247. Disposal Arcus Road Allotment and Swiftsden Way Strip

Having considered a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the
Deputy Mayor Councillor Alan Smith, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the
report:

RESOLVED that

(1) the old allotment site at Arcus Road and the strip of land at the rear
of Swiftsden Way/Chingley Close BR1 (Plots C and D on an attached plan),
be declared surplus to requirements;

(2) the proposed land swap with Phoenix Community Housing be approved at
nil consideration, whereby the Council acquires the freehold interest in two
parcels of land on Launcelot Road (Plots A and B on an attached plan ) to
enable the expansion of Launcelot School and simultaneously disposes of its
freehold interest in the land referred to at recommendation 2.1 above; and

(3) authority be delegated to the Director of Regeneration and Asset
Management, in consultation with the Head of Law, to negotiate and agree
the final terms of the disposal.

248. Milford Towers Leasing Scheme
Having considered a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Damien Egan, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that

(1) the environmental and financial benefits of the leasing arrangement with Notting Hill and the rationale for extending the current arrangements be noted;

(2) subject to Secretary of State’s consent being obtained under Section 32 of the Housing Act 1985, approval be given for the leasing arrangement to be extended for up to a further three years to December 2018, with reviews to be held annually, and the ability for both parties to end the arrangement at the annual review stage;

(3) Council be recommended to apply to the Secretary of State for permission under Section 32 of the Housing Act 1985 to extend the leasing arrangement in the manner set out; and

(4) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Customer Services, in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Asset Management and the Head of Law, to agree the final terms of the extension with Notting Hill and all associated legal documentation.

The meeting closed at 9.25pm