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MINUTES OF THE MAYOR AND CABINET

Wednesday, 12 November 2014 at 6.05 pm

PRESENT: Sir Steve Bullock (Mayor), Alan Smith, Chris Best, Kevin Bonavia, Joe Dromey, Damien Egan, Paul Maslin, Joan Millbank and Rachel Onikosi.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Alan Hall and Councillor Jim Mallory.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Janet Daby.

79. Declaration of Interests

There were none.

80. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on October 22 2014 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

81. Outstanding Scrutiny Matters

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

82. Matters Raised by Scrutiny and other Constitutional Bodies

The Mayor received a referral from the Overview and Scrutiny Business and resolved that it could be accepted in full without the need for further debate.

RESOLVED that the suggestions made the Overview and Scrutiny Business Panel in respect of the Parker House Surplus Declaration and Approval to Demolish be accepted in full.

83. Extra Care Service Kenton Court and Somerville

The report was introduced by the Cabinet Member for Health, Well Being & Older People, Councillor Chris Best and officers from both the Community Services Directorate and the Customer Services Directorate.

The Mayor was then addressed by Chris Tolson, the sister of a Somerville resident who criticised the consultation process with residents which she regarded as very poor. She said the staffing support in alternative sites was inferior for the very vulnerable affected residents and she called for modifications to be made to expand the Somerville site and provide modern amenities.

She was supported by Mrs Rowley who said the proposals had been badly planned and poorly executed and failed to fully consider the needs of some very vulnerable people.

Jade Fairfax of Healthwatch Lewisham added that their findings suggested that some of the affected residents did not feel properly supported by the

Council.

In response, Councillor Best acknowledged to the Mayor that processes could be improved and that learning points for the future had emerged. She made reference to the comments of the Housing Select Committee which had been tabled and pointed out a revised equalities impact assessment had also been completed. Councillor Best explained the range of opportunities which would be available to the residents and said full engagement with the eight residents who had not yet agreed a transfer would follow once the Mayor had given his approval.

The Mayor received clarification from officers about staffing levels in alternative facilities and on the facilities that would become available to residents. The Mayor stated his belief that people's expectations were constantly changing and that the high level of voids in Kenton Court and Somerville were directly related to the inferior provision. Some residents wished to remain come what may but prospective applicants were just not interested. He recognised the proposals represented a very difficult issue which aroused a deep strength of feeling. The Mayor said he believed approving the proposals was the best course of action but that the consultation had to be measured and sufficiently supported to ensure that it was done correctly.

Having considered an officer report, and presentations by two relatives of Somerville residents, a representative of Healthwatch and the Cabinet member for Health, Well Being & Older People, Councillor Chris Best, the Mayor for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that

- (1) the information about the process that has been carried out to date, and in particular the physical conditions and shortcomings of the two schemes, the existing cost of the two schemes, and the details of the consultation process that has been carried out with tenants and their families, be noted;
- (2) the comments made during the formal Adult Social Care consultation which had taken place in line with the recommendation from the 25 June 2014 report on the Council's in-house extra care service at Somerville and Kenton Court be noted;
- (3) the comments made by secure tenants in response to the statutory consultation undertaken pursuant to Section 105 of the Housing Act 1985 in relation to the proposals be noted;
- (4) consultation taken place with staff from the in-house extra care service in line with the recommendation from the 25th June 2014 report on the Council's in-house extra care service at Somerville and Kenton Court be noted;
- (5) Having considered the comments made for the three consultations, the Council-managed extra care service at Kenton Court and Somerville should be closed;

(6) the building at Kenton Court should be closed for its current use and proposals for the Council to develop alternative general needs housing at the site be further developed;

(7) the building at Somerville should be closed for its current use and proposals for the Council to develop alternative general needs housing at the site be further developed;

(8) officers should present plans for re-development of the two sites, as part of future phases of the New Homes, Better Places Programme, to the Mayor for approval at the earliest opportunity;

(9) officers should continue to discuss with existing tenants options for other services that would meet their needs and put in place individual and personcentred plans for services which will meet those needs; and

(10) as part of this process, in due course and as a last resort, Notice of Seeking Possession be served under Ground 10 of Schedule 2 to the Housing Act 1985 and possession proceedings brought against any remaining tenants at Kenton Court and Somerville in order to protect the Council's interest and potentially to safeguard vulnerable residents.

84. Permanent Primary Places Sir Francis Drake Primary School

The Mayor confirmed he was happy to provide additional funds to ensure the expansion of the school was a success.

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:

(i) the process of engagement with the school and the Education Funding Agency to develop a satisfactory building scheme to support the enlargement of Sir Francis Drake Primary School be noted;

(ii) a maximum sum of £200,000 be committed by the London Borough of Lewisham to enhance the delivery of the scheme beyond that funded by the Educational funding Agency (EFA).

85. Financial Forecasts and Treasury Mid Year Review

The report was presented by Councillor Kevin Bonavia who outlined the measures being put in place to combat a £10.6M budgetary overspend.

Having considered an open 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:

(i) the financial forecasts for the year ended 31 March 2015 and the action being taken by the Executive Directors to manage down the forecasted year-end overspend be noted;

(ii) the mid-year treasury strategy and the Council's Minimum Revenue Provision Policy be noted; and

(iii) Council be recommended to approve the following amendments to Treasury Management Strategy:

- Inclusion of Certificates of Deposits as a specified treasury instrument,
- Increase in the limits of Treasury Bills from £20 million to £60 million.

86. Revenue Budget Savings 2015-16

The report was presented by Councillor Kevin Bonavia who highlighted the significant level of savings that had to be achieved which he attributed directly to what he considered the mistaken and unnecessary policies of the Coalition Government.

Councillor Joe Dromey reported to the Mayor the initial outcomes of the big Budget Challenge which he was to present in greater detail to the Council meeting at the end of November.

Councillor Alan Hall, Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee, next addressed the Mayor and presented the written views of the Public Accounts Select Committee which also summarised the considerations made by all the other Select Committees. He said he expected scrutiny members to be able to assist in the detailed examination of certain proposals and in respect of two areas, Public Health and the Youth Service, task and finish groups would be established to facilitate this. He emphasised that equalities reports would be needed on all proposals.

The Mayor responded by stating he found the work undertaken by scrutiny very helpful as it had opened up the detail on many proposals and he expected it to be reflected in the decisions made. He also said he found the Big Budget Challenge to have been a useful exercise and while it had not discovered solutions to the Council's financial problems, it had raised awareness of the immensity of the task the Council faced.

The Mayor then considered each service area individually and agreed the recommendations shown below. In doing so he highlighted the following aspects

Savings A6 & A8 – Public Health Programme Review – the Mayor noted these would be considered by the Health & Well Being Board, the Healthier Communities Select Committee and the Scrutiny Task & Finish Group.

Savings F1 & I1 – Corporate Business Support Service & Management and Corporate Overheads – the Mayor required future consideration of shared services to begin.

Saving G1a –Blue Badge Charges – this was to be removed from the consultation process with resubmission in 2015.

Saving K1 – Prevention and Inclusion Service – although this was to be delegated to officers for decision the Mayor expected an update report to be provided for Mayor & Cabinet and for Overview & Scrutiny.

Saving M1 – Housing Strategy and non-HRA funded services the Mayor stressed that he expected all decisions delegated to officers to be taken on the basis of the consideration of full reports with legal and financial implications.

Saving O1 – Discretionary Freedom Pass scheme – this was to be removed from the consultation process with resubmission in 2015.

Saving Q2a – Review of Youth Services – The Mayor was addressed by Mr David French, the Chair of the Children and Young People’s Voluntary Sector Forum. He urged the Mayor to reject Option 2 and consider Option 1 as a starting point to talk about the future of the service. He believed a staff seeded mutual could work but that it was important to ensure safeguards were in place to prevent any mutual from undercutting voluntary sector providers. He suggested a duty of co-operation be considered with board seats for the voluntary sector on any mutual created and set funding for a number of years for that part of the voluntary sector that provided youth services.

In response the Mayor concurred with the suggestion that Option 1 be rejected and accepted advice from the Head of Law that no implementation of any savings could take place until consultation had been completed and considered.

As an additional piece of work to the savings items he had considered the Mayor asked officers to set up a way of reviewing the Council’s use of consultants and an explanation of the reasons for their use.

The Executive Director for Community Services mentioned there would be a consultation on the reorganisation of the Probation Service which would involve the Council.

Having considered an officer report, and presentations by the Cabinet Member for Resources, Councillor Kevin Bonavia, the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, Councillor Alan Hall, and by Mr David French on the Youth Service, the Mayor, for the reasons set out in the report:

RESOLVED that:

- (i) the officer proposals for budget reductions set out in Appendix 1 be noted;
- (ii) officers be authorised to carry out consultation where public/stakeholder

consultation is necessary in relation to any of those proposals;

(iii) consultation with staff be authorised in respect of any proposal which would involve staff reductions;

(iv) following due process decision making in relation to the following proposals be delegated to officers:

A5	£275,000
A7	£250,000
A10	£600,000
E2	£1,125,000
E3	£200,000
E4	£595,000
E5	£134,000
F1	£1,900,000
G1	£950,000
I1	£2,090,000
J1	£751,000
K1	£594,000
K3	£200,000
L2	£280,000
M1	£1,000,000
O2	£50,000
O3	£600,000
P1	£229,000

(v) in respect of all other savings, officers be required to bring a full report on the budget savings proposals back to Mayor and Cabinet for decision at the earliest opportunity, but in any event not later than 11 February 2015; and

(vi) savings previously earmarked for 2015/16 in earlier years' budget reports, as summarised, be approved.

The meeting closed at 8.35pm.