

# MINUTES OF THE MAYOR AND CABINET

Wednesday, 13 May 2020 at 6.00 pm

PRESENT: Damien Egan (Mayor), Councillors Chris Best, Chris Barnham, Paul Bell, Kevin Bonavia, Andre Bourne, Joe Dromey, Brenda Dacres, Sophie McGeevor, Amanda De Ryk and Jonathan Slater.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Juliet Campbell and Councillor Jacq Paschoud.

## **302. Declaration of Interests**

None were made.

## **303. Minutes**

RESOLVED that the minutes of Mayor & Cabinet held on March 11 2020 and the Mayoral meeting held on March 25 2020 be confirmed and signed as correct records.

## **304. Matters Raised by Scrutiny and other Constitutional Bodies**

The Head of Business & Committee reported on the Business Panel's approval of the Single Equalities Framework which had been considered by the Mayor on March 25. He stated an assurance regarding the Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee's tabled comments had been sought. The Head of Business & Committee advised the Cabinet that the usual practice was to require officers to prepare a report for their consideration and subsequent reporting to the Select Committee.

The Mayor confirmed he was happy to follow accepted practice and asked officers to prepare a response.

RESOLVED that officers be asked to prepare a response to the comments of the Safer, Stronger Communities Select Committee tabled on March 25.

## **305. Covid-19 Recovery: Business Rates, Business & Resident Support**

The Mayor offered some introductory remarks thanking Councillor Dromey and the officers involved in formulating the proposed support package. The Mayor acknowledged that the impact locally of the global Covid-19 pandemic was unprecedented. He reported on efforts to involve local businesses in devising appropriate support packages to sustain the local economy during the crisis.

The report was then presented by Councillor Joe Dromey. He outlined the package of support measures put in place to support local businesses at significant cost to the Council. He had received confirmation that existing budgetary provisions allowed the expenditure to be made but that the course

of action undertaken was based on the understanding that Government would reimburse Councils which had offered support. Councillor Dromey and other Cabinet members expressed concern that the Government might be backing away from the undertakings they had given on March 16. The Cabinet decided that they should share their concerns with the three local MPs and press Government to deliver on their promises to ensure local councils were properly reimbursed for their outlay.

Having considered an officer report, and a presentation by the jobshare Cabinet Member for Culture, Jobs & Skills, Councillor Joe Dromey, the Mayor and Cabinet for the reasons set out in the report by a vote of 10-0:

RESOLVED that:

(1) the broad package of support to business and residents set out together with the specific recommendations indicated below be approved;

(2) Across all areas of income collection for the next three months note the Council's general approach be noted and endorse the following be endorsed:  
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- a. Generate invoices based on existing agreements and charges unless specifically waived;
- b. Hold the sending of any reminders for payments due on bills raised; with communications emphasising payment flexibility for business those struggling to pay and not referencing enforcement action;
- c. Invite all customers, businesses or residents, to contact the Council early to discuss any financial difficulties they may be facing as a result of Covid-19;
- d. Offer flexibility to vary payment schedules to waive charges for up to three months and reset future payments to recover the monies due thereafter.
- d. Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Acting Chief Finance Officer to scope the recommended options, implement processes and eligible accessibility criteria.

(3) the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Acting Chief Finance Officer be authorised to introduce temporary top-up to emergency loans to support families with unexpected Covid-19 bereavement costs, to bridge the circa 7 week delay in obtaining the £1,000 DWP 'funeral expenses payment'; this is subject to the outcome of the current all Borough's representation to DWP to reduce delays in processing applications.

(4) the Executive Director for Housing, Regeneration and Environment in consultation with the Acting Chief Finance Officer be authorised to implement

the following proposals as part of a comprehensive package of support to help protect Lewisham business and jobs:

(5) For Council commercial tenants - if requested by the tenant and having checked on a case by case basis that they have availed themselves of other available government support, to:

a. At least defer all commercial rents due up to a 3-month period - essentially terms would be agreed to recover the rent over a longer period.

b. Allow flexibility for officers to discount or forego commercial rents due for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs with fewer than 250 employees, and a turnover of less than £50 million) who have not received business rates relief or grants, voluntary groups and charities – initially - up to a 3-month period,

c. Consider in June on whether to defer or forego rent for a further quarter for businesses that - still remain vulnerable to imminent closure.

At an estimated cost to the Council from loss of income of up to £800k.

(6) For commercial waste customers - where appropriate for those not trading (e.g. excluding supermarkets), agree an initial three-month free-period on annual waste collection charges from the 1 April 2020; and if requested, defer payments for 3-months for SMEs who are still trading (e.g. shops) at an expected cost to the Council from loss of income of up to £500k.

(7) For Licenced premises - provide leniency on when the statutory premises licencing fee is paid, not to suspend premises for non-payment of license fees, not to chase on non-payment – but continue to invoice premises for their annual fees as normal. Council will provide a 3 month grace period after the Covid-19 lockdown regulations cease before chasing payments and suspending premises.

(8) For Commercial tenants paying service charges - If requested, defer charges due from Forest Hill Business Centre and Bow Arts Trust for up to a 3-month period, with consideration in June for a further quarter deferral – essentially terms would be agreed to recover the full service charge over a later or longer period.

(9) For Market Traders - endorse the agreed blanket approach to cease all fees and charges to support Lewisham Markets & Traders without charge penalty or loss of pitch for the first quarter at an expected cost to the Council from loss of income from all markets across Lewisham of £225k.

(10) For Business parking - endorse the four month blanket reduction on annual business parking permits from the 1 April 2020 at an expected cost to the Council from loss of income of £130k.

(11) For Shop Forecourt licences - cease all fees and charges to support Lewisham business owners without charge, penalty, or loss of shop forecourt

licence for the first quarter at an expected cost to the Council from loss of income from all licensed shops of £35k.

(12) a 'Lewisham backs Business' Task Force, comprising lead Members, representatives from the local business community, industry, and officers be established to develop and coordinate a whole Council response to supporting business and jobs recovery quickly and inclusively from the disruption of Covid 19.

### **306. 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 paragraph 3 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

6. Home Park Allocation of S106 monies as part of the Council's Precision Manufactured Homes Programme.
- 7 Smarter Technology Phase 2 Project Equipment Rollout.
8. Permission to Extend Youth Services Contract.
9. Permission to extend current Specialist Short Breaks contract – Ravensbourne Project.
10. Permission to extend current Children & Young People's Personalised Care and Support Framework Agreement.

### **307. Home Park Allocation of S106 monies as part of the Council's Precision Manufactured Homes Programme**

Having considered a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the Mayor, the Mayor and Cabinet for the reasons set out in the report by a vote of 10-0:

RESOLVED that the allocation of a stated sum of Section 106 contributions received by the Council from the Planning agreements, as set out, be approved to provide affordable and wheelchair housing delivery in the borough at Home Park.

### **308. Smarter Technology Phase 2 Project Equipment Rollout**

In presenting the report, Councillor Bonavia supported the urgent requirements for equipment necessary to support home working.

Having considered a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for Democracy, Refugees and Accountability, Councillor Kevin Bonavia, the Mayor and Cabinet, for the reasons set out in the report by a vote of 10-0:

RESOLVED that:

(1) a stated spend be approved on the Laptops, PC, Monitors and supporting items necessary for Smarter Tech Phase 2

(2) the order be placed with Shared Services using existing arrangements as set out.

### **309. Permission to extend Youth Services contract**

Having considered a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for School Performance and Children's Services, Councillor Chris Barnham, the Mayor and Cabinet, for the reasons set out in the report by a vote of 10-0:

RESOLVED that:

(1) an additional extension to the current Youth Service contract with Youth First from 01/08/2020 to 31/03/21 at a stated maximum cost be approved;

(2) the provisions around pensions and redundancy liability provided by the Council for the existing contract are maintained for the period of the extension be approved; and

(3) authority be delegated to the Executive Director for CYP to agree appropriate terms in particular any changes to the existing terms and conditions for the extension relevant to Covid 19, such as open book accounting, the right for the Council to clawback unspent monies and ability to bring the extension period to an end early

### **310. Permission to extend current Specialist Short Breaks contract - Ravensbourne Project**

Having considered a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for School Performance and Children's Services, Councillor Chris Barnham, the Mayor and Cabinet for the reasons set out in the report by a vote of 10-0

RESOLVED that the contract with Ravensbourne Project be extended to provide overnight, holiday and weekend provision of specialist short breaks from 1 September 2020 to 31 August 2021 at a total stated cost of overnight,

holiday and weekends.

**311. Permission to extend current Children & Young People's Personalised Care and Support Framework Agreement**

In presenting the report, Councillor Barnham confirmed alternatives of spot purchasing would be costly and commencing a new procurement would not be practical.

Having considered a confidential officer report, and a presentation by the Cabinet Member for School Performance and Children's Services, Councillor Chris Barnham, the Mayor and Cabinet for the reasons set out in the report by a vote of 10-0:

RESOLVED that the current Children & Young People's Personalised Care and Support Framework Agreement be extended for a period of 24 months from 01/04/2020 to 31/03/22.

The meeting closed at 6.39pm.