
REPORT OF CABINET

MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2005

Chair: * Councillor N Shah

Councillors: * D Ashton * C Mote
 * Burchell * Marie-Louise Nolan
 * Margaret Davine * O'Dell
 * Dighé * Stephenson
 * Miss Lyne

* Denotes Member present

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS
RECOMMENDATION I - Key Decision - Council Taxbase and Collection Fund 2005-06

The Executive Director (Business Connections) introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the tabled A3 version of Appendix 1. He advised that the Council had a statutory obligation to agree a Council Tax tax base for 2005-06 and to give the figure to preceptors by 31 January 2005.

The Executive Director (Business Connections) reported that in calculating the Council Tax tax base an assumed collection rate of 99% had been used. The detailed calculation of the Band D equivalent properties was as set out in Appendix 1 to this recommendation.

In response to a Member's question in relation to the discount rate on empty properties, the Executive Director (Business Connections) confirmed that the discount rate applied each time the property became vacant.

Cabinet, having approved the estimated deficit of £845,769 on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2005 and noted that an amount of £685,711 would be transferred from the General Fund in 2005-06,

Resolved to RECOMMEND:

(1) That the Band D equivalent number of taxable properties be calculated as shown in the appendix to this recommendation and in accordance with the Government Regulations;

(2) that the provision for non-collectable amounts of Council Tax for 2005-2006 be agreed at 1.0%, producing an expected collection rate of 99%;

(3) that subject to (1) and (2) above, a Council Tax tax base for 2005-2006 of 84,309 Band D equivalent properties (being 85,160 x 99%) be approved, allowing for payment in lieu of Ministry of Defence properties;

(4) that the Council continues with its policy of varying the discount rate on empty properties to 10% discount of second homes and furnished empty properties and no discount for unfurnished empty properties.

Reason for Recommendation: To fulfil the Council's statutory obligation to set the Council Tax tax base 2005-2006.

(See also Minute 683).

RECOMMENDATION II - Crime and Drugs Strategy 2005-2008

Members considered the draft Crime and Drugs Strategy and priorities for 2005-2008. The Chief Executive drew Members' attention to the tabled letter, not to be made publicly available at this stage, from the Government Office for London and advised that the final Strategy might require amendment in light of the comments set out in the letter.

The representative of the Chief Executive advised that the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 required local authorities, police, drug action teams and the primary care trust to jointly undertake an audit of local crime and drugs problems every three years and, following that audit, to undertake a consultation process to produce a Crime and Drugs Reduction Strategy. He outlined the contents of the draft Strategy, the four priority areas and the three cross-cutting themes. The priorities and cross-cutting themes had been developed following widespread consultation with the public, stakeholders and partner agencies on the audit findings and having taken into account national and local priorities.

The representative of the Chief Executive advised that arrangements were in place for publication of the Strategy following approval by the Children's Management Committee on 28 January 2005 and the Safer Harrow Management Group on 9 February 2005. Members further suggested that the Harrow Strategic Partnership Board consider the strategy on 27 January 2005.

Resolved to RECOMMEND:

That the draft Crime and Drugs Strategy 2005-2008 be approved.

Reason for Recommendation: The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 required Local Authorities, Police, Drug Action Teams and the PCT (the "Responsible Bodies") to jointly undertake an audit of local crime and drug problems once every 3 years and, following the audit, to undertake a consultation process to produce a Crime and Drug Reduction Strategy.

Previous Years' Taxbase calculation figures:-											Gross figure BEFORE non-collection rate applied
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2004 - 2005 was											84926
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2003-2004 was											84205
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2002-2003 was											82880
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2001-2002 was											82669
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 2000-2001 was											82361
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 99/00 was											81692
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 98/99 was											81777
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 97/98 was											81951
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 96/97 was											81490
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 95/96 was											81517
Band D equivalent for taxbase calculation 94/95 was											81706
* Likely bands Estimated on ratio of existing properties											
** These are properties currently under construction or for which planning permission has been granted that are not already on our database. The figures shown is the proportion of these properties that will be completed AND BANDED during the year.											
Band @ - this is the tax set for propeties in Band A that qualify for Disabled Reduction (there are none at present)											

PART II - MINUTES

673. **Asian Tsunami:**
Cabinet stood and observed a minute silence in memory of the victims of the Asian Tsunami.
- The Chair advised Cabinet that currently he was aware of one member of staff who had been directly affected by the disaster. Members requested that their best wishes be conveyed to the member of staff concerned.
- The Chief Executive advised that staff would be invited to contribute to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Fund via their monthly payslips or to support longer-term projects. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) had advised that the Council, as an organisation, could not make a cash donation to the fund. However, the Authority was offering assistance to local community groups.
- A Member suggested that Councillors also be invited to contribute to the DEC Fund via their payslips.
- The Chief Executive reported that a publicity leaflet produced by Directors of Social Services in relation to overseas adoption would be published shortly. She advised that the Director of Learning and Community Development and a head teacher would be visiting India, with a view to offering support and advice in respect of education. She added that there would be a report back to a Conference scheduled for the end of February. The visit had been planned for some time but it was now hoped that it might be possible to send two additional representatives.
- A motion in the name of Councillor N Shah was moved and it was
- RESOLVED:** That a resolution, to be drafted and agreed at a later date, be submitted to Council, setting out the Authority's view/position in relation to the Asian Tsunami.
674. **Declarations of Interest:**
- RESOLVED:** To note that no interests were declared.
675. **Minutes:**
- RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2004, having been circulated, be taken as read and signed as a correct record once published in the Council Minute Volume.
676. **Arrangement of Agenda:**
The Chair indicated that he was prepared to consider items 16(a) and (b), the Council's representation on Rayners Lane Estate Committee, and the Appointment of Reserve Members to the Housing Improvement Options Advisory Panel, as matters of urgency in order to reconfirm the Council's nominations to the Committee and to enable the appointments to take immediate effect respectively.
- Members noted that items 8 and 9, Calculation of the Council Tax Tax base 2005/6 and the Estimated Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit as at 31 March 2005, had been merged into one report.
- RESOLVED:** That all business be considered with the press and public present.
677. **Petitions:**
- RESOLVED:** To note that no petitions had been received.
678. **Public Questions:**
- RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions had been received.
679. **Forward Plan 1 January - 30 April 2005:**
- RESOLVED:** To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 January – 30 April 2005.

680. **Lorraine O'Reilly:**
The Chair welcomed Lorraine O'Reilly, the Executive Director (People First) to Cabinet and to the Council.

681. **New Year's Honours:**
The Chair advised that the following Harrow residents had received awards from the Queen in the New Year's Honours list and he congratulated them on their contributions in their various fields:-

Max Caller	CBE	Former Chief Executive of the London Borough of Hackney
Pamela Singh	CBE	Headteacher of Pope John School, Shepherds Bush
Michael Turvey	MBE	Organist & pianist, St. John the Baptist, Pinner
Derek Roy	MBE	Gardener, Harrow Council
Ray Cooper	MBE	Site manager, Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Language College, Wealdstone

682. **Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committees - Home Care Review:**

The Director of Organisational Performance introduced the report, which set out the recommendations from the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee's review of Home Care Services.

In response to a Member's question, the Executive Director (People First) advised that that an 80% target for telelogging had been set with the agencies and acknowledged the Member's comment that this issue was about safety.

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Partnership and Human Resources, who had chaired the Scrutiny Sub-Committee at the time of the review, emphasised the importance of developing the role of scrutiny further. She stated that as well as considering the criticisms levelled at the service, it was important to note the positive comments received about the high quality service from care workers and to acknowledge the difficult area in which those staff worked. She added that she looked forward to seeing how the recommendations of the review would be implemented.

Members welcomed the report.

RESOLVED: (1) That the Council and Home Care Agencies work together to develop:

- (a) a plan by 31 March 2005 to address issues that require urgent attention through the Council's new service and financial planning process; and
- (b) a service strategy by 1 June 2005 to improve services by addressing strategic issues (highlighted in Table A of the review report) over the next 3 years in line with the Council's Medium Term Budget Strategy.

(2) that People First (Community Care Services) lead this work in collaboration with Business Connections (HITS and Income Payments);

(3) that Cabinet consider the resource implications of the Plan to address urgent issues and the service strategy once completed;

(4) that the Social Care and Health Portfolio Holder and the Director of Community Care Services report to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee on progress in June 2005.

Reason for Decision: Cabinet had requested that the Sub-Committee carry out a review of Home Care Services in March 2004. The Committee had referred its report and recommendations to Cabinet for consideration and acceptance of the recommendations would lead to improvements to home care services commissioned by the Council.

683. **Key Decision - Council Taxbase and Collection Fund 2005/06:**
(See also Recommendation I).

The Executive Director (Business Connections) introduced the report and advised that the Cabinet had a statutory obligation to approve the estimated surplus/deficit on the collection fund by 15 January 2005.

In response to a Member's question, the Executive Director (Business Connections) confirmed that if, instead of a deficit a surplus was achieved on the Collection Fund, there would be a credit in the next year. Similarly, if the number of houses used to calculate the Collection Fund was underestimated the credit would be carried forward to the following year.

Cabinet, having made recommendations to Council in relation to the Council Tax tax base,

RESOLVED: (1) That an estimated deficit of £845,769 on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2005 be approved; and

(2) to note that an amount of £685,711 would be transferred from the General Fund in 2005/2006.

Reason for Decision: To approve the Collection Fund estimate by 15 January 2005 in accordance with the requirements of Section 99(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

684. **Key Decision - Funding Voluntary Organisations 2005/06:**

The Executive Director (Business Connections) introduced the report and drew Members' attention to the addendum report, which provided additional information about the Council's support to voluntary organisations.

RESOLVED: (1) That the provisional Association of London Government (ALG) Grants Committee budget for 2005/06 be approved in order that the Council's acceptance could be provided to the ALG within their deadline; and

(2) that the saving on the London Borough Grants Scheme be added to Harrow's budget for grants to voluntary organisations for 2005/06.

Reason for Decision: The ALG Grants Committee budget for 2005/06 must be agreed by two thirds of the constituent Council's before 1 February 2005. If it was not agreed, the overall level of expenditure would be deemed to be the same as that approved in 2004/05 which would not be in the Council's best interests.

685. **Key Decision - Capital Programme 2005-06 to 2007-08:**

The Executive Director (Business Connections) introduced the report, drawing Members' attention to the tabled A3 version of Appendix 1, which sought approval to the draft capital programme for 2005-06 to 2007-08 for consultation. He added that this report would form part of the final budget proposals submitted to Cabinet and Council in February 2004.

Members noted that the Budget Review Working Group, which had considered the paper the previous evening, had suggested that the format of the report be improved prior to its circulation for consultation.

Members noted a correction to the figure in appendix 1 for Waste Management in 2006-07 to (213,000).

RESOLVED: That the draft capital programme for 2005-06 to 2007-08 be approved for consultation.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Capital Programme was approved in a timely manner.

686. **Special Needs Transport:**

The Executive Director (People First) introduced the report, which outlined the review of Special Needs Transport policy, practice and provision, which had been commissioned by the Director of Strategy. The Executive Director (People First) expressed her hope that the new policy would look at individual needs rather than being a blanket policy, as at present.

In response to a Member's question in relation to persuading parents to allow their children to be transported to school, the Executive Director (People First) advised that this issue required a great deal of sensitivity and that the level of funding provided to parents who took their children to school required revision.

An amendment in the name of Councillor Stephenson was moved and it was

RESOLVED: (1) That a new SEN Transport policy be drafted based on the latest DfES (11/04) guidance which focuses on assessment of individual need and regular review of provision;

(2) that consultation, including the appropriate scrutiny sub-committee(s), on the revised SEN transport policy for pupils be undertaken;

(3) that the new policy be implemented with effect from September 2005;

(4) that the post of Travel Solutions Co-ordinator be created to co-ordinate transport across People First Services, promote travel-training initiatives, work with other agencies to improve disability awareness and provision and develop an integrated transport strategy;

(5) that funding from the 16-19 Partnership grant be used to recruit a travel trainer to work with schools and colleges on transition training pending establishment of a travel training partnership.

Reason for Decision: The report addressed the key corporate priorities and ensured more effective compliance with Government legislation and guidance, as well as linking with the People First Strategic Plan for development of three new Learning Disability Local Resource Centres.

687. **Key Decision - Crime and Drugs Strategy (2005-2008):**
(See Recommendation II).

688. **London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003 - Delegation of Powers:**

A representative of the Executive Director (Urban Living) introduced the report, which outlined details of the authority to be delegated to the Executive Director to exercise the new powers in respect of certain sections of the Act. He emphasised that these were enhancements to existing enforcement powers to deal with a range of highway, parking and traffic problems.

RESOLVED: That the scope of the new enforcement provisions be noted and that powers be delegated to the Executive Director (Urban Living) in respect of Sections 4, 8, 14, 16 & 17 of the Act as detailed in his report.

Reason for Decision: The delegation of powers to the Executive Director (Urban Living) was essential to complement current day-to-day enforcement operations and provided an opportunity to increase the level of highway enforcement activity by Community Safety and Maintenance Services public realm and enforcement teams.

689. **Strategic Planning Advisory Panel - Revised Terms of Reference:**

Members considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Strategic Planning Advisory Panel held on 2 December 2004 in relation to their revised terms of reference.

RESOLVED: That the revised terms of reference for the Strategic Planning Advisory Panel set out below be agreed:

1. To give detailed consideration to and make recommendations in respect of:
 - (a) the Local Development Framework and its Development Plan Documents and matters incidental thereto;
 - (b) representations received to Development Plan Documents and any amendments proposed;
 - (c) monitoring the implementation of the Framework, its review and modification as necessary.

2. To make recommendations in respect of the development of such individual sites as may be referred to by the Panel by the Cabinet.
3. To give detailed consideration and to make recommendations in respect of all other planning policy matters such as the designation of Conservation Areas and amendments to their boundaries and the designation of locally listed buildings.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Panel's Terms of Reference reflected its new remit.

690. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

(1) **Rayners Lane Estate Committee - Council Representation**

RESOLVED: That Councillors Currie and Ingram be re-confirmed as the Councillor nominations to the Rayners Lane Estate Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Reason for Decision: To re-confirm the Councillor nominations to the Committee.

(2) **Housing Improvement Options Advisory Panel – Appointment of Reserves**

That the following Members be appointed as reserves to the Housing Improvement Options Advisory Panel:-

	<u>Labour</u>	<u>Conservative</u>	<u>Liberal Democrat</u>
<u>Reserve Members</u>	1. Idaikkadar 2. Margaret Davine 3. O'Dell	1. Billson 2. Arnold	1. Branch 2. Thornton

Reason for Decision: To enable the Reserve Members to be appointed to the Panel with immediate effect.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.43 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR NAVIN SHAH
Chair