
REPORT OF CABINET

MEETING HELD ON 19 APRIL 2007

Chairman: * Councillor Chris Mote

Councillors: * David Ashton * Janet Mote
 * Marilyn Ashton * Paul Osborn
 * Mrs Camilla Bath * Mrs Anjana Patel
 * Miss Christine Bednell * Eric Silver
 * Susan Hall

* Denotes Member present

[Note: Councillors Navin Shah and Bill Stephenson attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 220, and Councillor Jerry Miles also attended this meeting to speak on the item indicated at Minute 226].

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL

PART II - MINUTES

214. **Michael Lockwood - Chief Executive:**
 Michael Lockwood was welcomed to Harrow Council and to his first Cabinet meeting.

215. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

- (i) Agenda Item 10 – Water Management and Drought Planning
 Councillor Susan Hall declared a prejudicial interest in that she had participated in the Scrutiny Challenge Panel on Water Management and Drought Planning. Accordingly, she left the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.
- (ii) Agenda Item 12 – Review of Fees Structure for Special Treatment Licensing
 Councillors Susan Hall and Eric Silver declared prejudicial interests and left the room whilst this matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Chris Mote declared an interest because of his professional interest as an Osteopath. He stated that his interest was personal because, according to his professional body, Osteopathy was not considered to be a Special Treatment under the Regulations. He would remain in the room whilst this matter was considered and voted upon.

216. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2007 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

217. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

The Chairman indicated that he would be varying the order of business on the agenda to take Items 13 - Annual Audit and Inspection Letter and 14 - Corporate Assessment after Item 9 - The Harrow Integrated Property Services Partnership.

RESOLVED: That all items be considered with the press and public present with the exception of the following item for the reasons set out below:

<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
18. Harrow's Integrated Property Services Partnership (Appendix B)	The appendix to the report at agenda item 9 contained exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) in that it related to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

218. **Petitions:**
Councillor Mrs Kinnear presented a petition signed by 25 residents of Cavendish Avenue in relation to noise nuisance on land adjacent to the David Lloyd Centre. She read the terms of the petition to the meeting, which were as follows:-

“We the undersigned as residents of the area of Cavendish Avenue request that the Local Authorities of Harrow and Ealing Council exercise their powers under the Noise Abatement Act to put an end to the use of motor powered bikes in the areas of the land adjacent to the David Lloyd Centre. The level of noise created by these vehicles in evenings and weekends is unbearable and clearly audible within a large area. These vehicles are not registered, i.e. no number plate and are therefore presumably unlicensed and uninsured, and yet appear on the public highway.

We feel strongly that it is the duty of either, or both the Local Authority and Police to ensure that the noise ceases and the danger when used on the highway is removed.”

Councillor Kinnear stated that she had given a copy of the petition to a colleague at Ealing Council and to the local police.

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Portfolio Holder for Urban Living – Community Safety and Public Realm for consideration.

219. **Public Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following public question had been received:

1.

Questioner: Illa Bhuvu

Asked of: Councillor Anjana Patel, Portfolio Holder for Community Development

Question: We are a voluntary community organisation, which has been using Vaughan Centre for the last 15 years and providing services to elderly and vulnerable members of the community for whom stability, continuity and reassurance are critical. Why has the Council completely failed to consult us on the proposals for the future of this site and on our short and long-term needs and accommodation requirements?

[Note: An oral answer was provided to the question. Under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 16.4, the questioner asked a supplementary question which was duly answered].

220. **Councillor Question Time:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following Councillor Questions had been received:

1.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor Chris Mote, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Overview, External Affairs and Property

Question: In agreeing to outsource all our major and minor works under the Harrow Integrated Property Services Partnership, it is vital that the provider is kept constantly up to scratch. Under this agreement what provision have been made to ensure quality assurance (i) involving officers and (ii) involving Councillors.

2.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor Chris Mote, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategic Overview, External Affairs and Property

Question: Under the proposed re-organisation of the Council's workforce, could Councillor Mote please give the following information separately for Tier 1 post (Chief Executive), Tier 2 posts (Executive Director/Corporate Director), Tier 3 posts (Group Manager/Head of Service/Senior Professional):

- a) The total number of posts before and after re-organisation;
- b) The total costs of the posts before and after re-organisation.

Could he also indicate the total expected savings from this re-organisation for both the current financial year and for a full financial year indicating both the estimated capital and revenue costs arising from the Council's redundancy scheme.

3.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor David Ashton, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Matters

Question: For the last financial year the Council allotted £157,500 for councillors to spend on capital projects of up to £7,500 within each ward. Can Councillor Ashton say how much of this money has actually been spent?

4.

Questioner: Councillor Bill Stephenson

Asked of: Councillor Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Legal Services and Issues Facing Young People

Question: Would Councillor Osborn agree that it is very important to have a fully staffed Communications Department with sufficient capacity to deliver a first class service in this vital area for the Council, and can he give us the (full-time equivalent) number of staff currently employed in this area?

5.

Questioner: Councillor Navin Shah

Asked of: Councillor Eric Silver, Portfolio Holder for Adult Community Care Services and Issues Facing People with Special Needs

Question: What is the current status of consultation with the staff and service users on the provision of specialist meals (kosher, Asian, African Caribbean etc) by the meals on wheels service, and when is it intended to report to Cabinet on this matter?

6.

Questioner: Councillor Navin Shah

Asked of: Councillor Anjana Patel, Portfolio Holder for Community Development

Question: Can Councillor Patel inform us what impact assessments were made arising from 10% cuts in the funding of SLAs with voluntary sector organisations, and if such assessments were made can she provide us with copies of these? In addition can she inform us which Portfolio Holder authorised the sending out of a 'deed of variation' to voluntary sector organisations, which essentially meant that they either had to agree to the cuts or have their SLA terminated?

[Notes: (i) In accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 34.1, the time limit in relation to Councillor Questions, as set out in Executive Procedure Rule 17.1, was waived to enable all of the questions to be put;

(ii) an oral answer was provided to all questions. Under the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 17.4, the questioners each asked a supplementary question which was also answered;

(iii) in accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 17.3, question 6 was answered by the Leader of the Council].

221. **Forward Plan 1 April 2007 - 31 July 2007:**

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 April – 31 July 2007.

222. **Reports from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committees:**
(See Minute 226).

223. **Key Decision - The Harrow Integrated Property Services Partnership:**

Cabinet received a report of the Executive Director (Urban Living), which set out the procurement and evaluation process undertaken leading to the recommendation to integrate the full range of the Council's Housing and Corporate property services within one joint project. The recommendation sought approval to enter into a partnering contract with Kier. Members' attention was drawn to appendix B, circulated with the agenda, which was confidential and which gave further details in relation to the proposals.

The Executive Director (Urban Living) introduced the report and congratulated his staff for their outstanding work on this project, which was delivered on time and within budget. The Executive Director highlighted the key points of the report and stated that, if approved, the Council would enter into its third and largest strategic partnership. He reported the objectives of partnering contract, details of which were set out in the report.

Cabinet received a presentation from representatives of Kier, which described the ethos of the company and its pioneering work in partnering contracts. Together with an officer, they responded to questions from Members on diversity, promoting local employment, their work in the construction of schools and Kier's 'added value' programme, which was supported by Cabinet. Members were also informed that a pilot scheme for housing and schools would be run first.

The Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning, Cultural Services and Issues Facing Older People welcomed Kier's interest to explore opportunities in the Council's Skills Centre and hoped that this would realise mutual benefits in the future.

In recommending the report, an officer stated that, if approved, the partnering contract with Kier would achieve significant synergies and provide a seamless approach to property management. Importantly, it would provide tenants with a more effective service. He added that clear and realistic performance targets had been set and that the contract would provide Kier with an opportunity of working with a progressive and forward thinking Council.

The Chairman thanked representatives from Kier for their presentation.

RESOLVED: That a partnership contract with Kier be entered into, with a commencement date of 1 July 2007, for the provision of construction minor works, major works, design and related services across the full range of the Council's property assets.

Reasons for Decision: To enable a renewed focus on customers that can be sustained and not repeatedly lost, through the unnecessary break up of successful single project teams. To reduce significantly a charge to revenue and capital budgets. To rationalise the current approach to construction and maintenance building work in Harrow and reduce the level and number of staff interfaces/overlaps with contractors, together with the risks associated with the constant introduction of new companies. To produce cost benefits through the delivery of a more effective service.

224. **Annual Audit and Inspection Letter:**

The Chairman welcomed the Council's Relationship Manager from the Audit Commission and the External Auditor from Deloitte to the meeting.

The Relationship Manager reported that, each year, the Audit Commission made an assessment of each Council's performance and that there had been improvements in Harrow, particularly in housing and benefits areas. She drew attention to the Authority's scorecard and the need to make improvements in key service areas that

were important to local people. She also highlighted the need to improve the financial standing of the Council, which would give an impetus to improvements in other key areas, such as environmental services. The Relationship Manager drew attention to the action required, as set out in the report, and on which the Audit Commission would assess progress. Performance Management underpinned all the areas where improvements were required. She thanked the Director of Financial and Business Strategy and the Director of People, Performance and Policy for a constructive working relationship with the Audit Commission. The Relationship Manager looked forward to working with the Council in meeting its key challenges.

The External Auditor drew Members' attention to those paragraphs of the letter relating to financial management and value for money. He was pleased to see that the accounts were finalised in time and that financial reporting had improved. The External Auditor also highlighted the need for the Council to improve its financial position.

The Chairman/Leader of the Council stated that the Council would take on board the comments made and improve on the challenges. He referred to the Capital Ambition Project from which money had already been secured to support improvement.

In response to suggestions from the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Matters, the Relationship Manager and the External Auditor noted the request for more contact with Members. The External Auditor agreed to consider bringing elements of the process forward and highlighted some of the problems associated in doing this. The Portfolio Holder and the External Auditor agreed to liaise further on this matter.

The Chief Executive looked forward to working with the Council's Relationship Manager and the External Auditor in making improvements in the areas required. He highlighted the need for a performance management culture in order to improve the quality of life for residents of Harrow.

RESOLVED: That (1) the recommendations of the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter be noted;

(2) officers incorporate responses to the Inspection Letter in the Council's new improvement programme to be reported to June 2007 Cabinet.

Reason for Decision: The Council was required to report the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter to Cabinet. To allow Members to review the feedback received from external regulators and ensure officers were taking adequate action in response.

225. **Corporate Assessment:**

The Council's Relationship Manager highlighted areas for improvement, as set out in the Corporate Assessment Report of the Audit Commission. There was a particular need to improve services for the residents of Harrow thereby improving their quality of life.

The Chairman/Leader of the Council stated that the Council had accepted the Audit Commission's findings and he looked forward to working together to improve the services provided. He referred to a letter received about the Director of Children's Services which congratulated the Council on providing value for money and which showed the Council's ability to respond positively.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Matters stated that the report was pivotal to the future of the Council and would form the basis of the work required. However, whilst the Council had accepted the findings, it had been disappointed with the quality of the inspection team which appeared to have had limited experience. The tone of the Audit Commission's report was overtly negative and therefore not motivating. In response, the Council's Relationship Manager stated that she was disappointed with the comment made by the Portfolio Holder but assured the Council that the inspection had been robust. She undertook to raise this matter with the Audit Commission and stressed the need for Harrow to focus on moving the organisation forward.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Corporate Assessment final report be noted;

(2) officers develop an improvement plan for agreement at the June 2007 Cabinet meeting.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Council to respond to the improvement recommendations made through the Corporate Assessment.

226. **Water Management and Drought Planning:**

The Cabinet received a report of the Executive Director (Urban Living), which set out the report of the Scrutiny Challenge Panel on Water Management and Drought Planning. The Chairman of the Challenge Panel introduced the report of the Panel and thanked Members and officers for their contributions. He highlighted the key aspects of the report and welcomed Cabinet's support for the recommendations of the Scrutiny Challenge Panel.

In welcoming the report of the Scrutiny Challenge Panel, Cabinet asked that Scrutiny revisit their recommendations in relation to the concept of compulsory metering because of its implications.

The Chairman/Leader asked that scrutiny might want to carry out work on the implications of water metering on vulnerable people. He stated that in the UK it was illegal to cut off water supplies for public health reasons and that, in Australia, facilities existed to reduce water pressure to non-paying households.

The Director of Lifelong Learning and Cultural Services commented that this particular Scrutiny review had been highlighted as an example of best practice at a recent national run by SOLACE (Society for Local Authority Chief Executives).

The Leader of the Council thanked Scrutiny for their work in this area.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the comments in the preamble above, the contents of the report of the Executive Director (Urban Living) be noted and endorsed and that the report be forwarded to Three Valleys Water.

Reason for Decision: To ensure closer partnership working with Three Valleys Water, and to identify service areas which might be at risk.

(See also Minute 215(i)).

227. **Key Decision - Management of the Public Mortuary at Northwick Park Hospital:**

The Portfolio Holder for Urban Living – Community Safety and Public Realm introduced the report, which set out Brent and Harrow Councils' intention to jointly operate and manage the Public Mortuary at Northwick Park Hospital under a 'refreshed' Agreement.

RESOLVED: That (1) Brent and Harrow Councils continue their arrangement whereby Brent Council provide services to Harrow Council under The Local Authorities (Goods and Services) Act 1970, relating to the management of the public mortuary, as set out in the Agreement at the Appendix to the officer report;

(2) the Director of Legal and Governance Services delegate/be authorised to take all necessary steps to seal and complete the Agreement.

Reason for Decision: To ensure provision of a Public Mortuary in Harrow.

228. **Key Decision - Review of Fees Structure for Special Treatment Licensing:**

Cabinet considered a report of the Executive Director (Urban Living), which informed Members of the existing circumstances with regard to Special Treatment Licensing and made proposals to review the fee structure.

RESOLVED: That the new fee structure be implemented from January 2008, as proposed in section 4 of the officer report, subject to a minor amendment to remove Osteopathy and Physiotherapy from the list of special treatments as they no longer fell within regulations.

Reason for Decision: To enable the development of the service to better support Special Treatments' Practitioners and those accessing the treatment provided.

(See also Minute 215(ii)).

229. **Service Reviews:**

The Director of People, Performance and Policy introduced the report, which provided an update on service reviews for 2007/08. The Director outlined the importance of this paper in the context of the comments made by the Council's Relationship Manager from the Audit Commission during the discussion on items elsewhere on the agenda. He emphasised the requirement to produce outputs on the review by Autumn 2007 in order to inform service and budget planning.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Matters stated that the timings of the reviews were critical and that it was crucial that the process was Member-led/driven.

The Portfolio Holder emphasised the need to submit regular reports to Cabinet outlining the progress made on the reviews and stated that slippage would not be accepted. An amendment was made to the report and it was

RESOLVED: That (1) for clarity, the Children's Health and Social Care Service Area be amended to Health and Social Care for Children;

(2) the outline scopes for each project review be noted;

(3) the service review framework be agreed.

Reason for Decision: To enable the delivery of Phase 1 fundamental service reviews for 2007/08.

230. **Key Decision - Extended Schools Strategy:**

The Portfolio Holder for Lifelong Learning, Cultural Services and Issues facing Older People introduced the report, which set out the background to the development of an Extended Schools Strategy for Harrow and which, if approved, would contribute to the Council's Corporate Priorities. The Portfolio Holder stated that Harrow's successful education system was as a result of the schools co-operating and working together in clusters. The Strategy set out the broader role for schools, providing a range of services for the local community. She mentioned that the DfES' (Department for Education and Skills) standards fund element of funding for this initiative was only confirmed until March 2008 and hoped that funding would be available for future years.

The Portfolio Holder for People First – Children's Services endorsed the comments made above. She informed Cabinet that, as part of the organisational review, it was currently proposed that the responsibility for supporting and developing the Extended Schools Strategy would move to the Children's Services Directorate.

RESOLVED: That the Extended Schools Strategy be approved.

Reason for Decision: To link to the Children's Centre Strategy and contribute to achievement of targets set out in the Harrow Children and Young People's Plan.

231. **Any Other Urgent Business:**

- (i) Strong and Prosperous Communities – The Local Government White Paper
The Leader highlighted the need for the Council to respond to the Local Government White Paper and for all parties to be briefed on the White Paper and to form a view on what was the best way forward for Harrow.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

- (ii) St George's Day Celebrations
The Portfolio Holder for Community Development invited Members and officers to join in the celebrations in Pinner on Sunday 22 April 2007.

RESOLVED: That the above be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.50 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CHRIS MOTE
Chairman