

CABINET

13 FEBRUARY 2014

DECISIONS NOTICE

(PUBLISHED ON FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2014)

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken on the substantive items at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 13 February 2014. These decisions will be implemented on the expiry of 5 clear working days, unless there is a call-in of any of the decisions (for details on how to do this, please contact Una Sullivan, Democratic & Electoral Services Officer, on 020 8424 1785 or by email una.sullivan@harrow.gov.uk or Alison Atherton, Senior Professional – Democratic Services on 020 8424 1266 or by email alison.atherton@harrow.gov.uk) in which case any such decision may not be implemented until the resolution of the call-in process. If no request for call-in is received by 5.00 pm on Friday 21 February 2014 then the decisions will be implemented.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Daksha Ghelani, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 020 8424 1881 or by email daksha.ghelani@harrow.gov.uk.

9 Key Decision: Revised Proposed West London Waste Plan: Pre-Submission Consultation Document

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the draft West London Waste Plan, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for publication for a minimum six-week public consultation period in March 2014 and, subject to representations, be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the changes made to the draft West London Waste Plan, following the original approval to proceed with consultation in June 2012, as detailed in the report, be noted;

- (2) it be noted that final approval to undertake consultations on the draft West London Waste Plan was being sought by five other west London Councils, namely Brent, Ealing, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond upon Thames, as members of the West London Waste Authority partnership;
- (3) the Corporate Director for Environment and Enterprise, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Regeneration, be authorised to make minor modification to the Draft Plan as was necessary for factual correctness and in response to representations received;
- (4) the revised Local Development Scheme, attached at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved for publication on the Council's website.

Reason for Recommendation/Decision: To enable compliance with the procedural requirements for Local Plan making and to ensure the Council made meaningful progress on the West London Waste Plan (WLWP) in order to meet targets set out in the London Plan 2011, Planning Policy Statement 10, and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The WLWP would, in due course, provide an up-to-date policy framework to assess planning applications for waste management facilities across the six West London boroughs: Brent, Ealing, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow and Richmond upon Thames. Planning applications for waste management facilities would also be assessed by each borough against their individual Local Plans, including local development management policies and any other material considerations.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation to Council and to the decisions that have been noted.]

10 Key Decision: Housing Revenue Account Budget 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2015/16 to 2017/18

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That

- (1) the Housing Revenue Account Budget (HRA) for 2014/15 be approved;
- (2) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme, as detailed in Appendix 7 to the report, be approved.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the HRA, as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;

- (2) the proposed increase of 5.1% to housing rent charges for 2014/15, resulting in an average rent of £112.43 per week for 2014/15 be approved;
- (3) a service charge increase of 3.7% (an average of £0.10) resulting in an average weekly service charge of £2.85 be approved;
- (4) in accordance with the policy recommended by Tenants', Leaseholders' and Residents' Consultative Forum in January 2012, that garage and car parking rents be frozen pending finalisation of the Garage Strategy, as set out at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved;
- (5) an increase in energy [heating] charges of 10% from 1 April 2014, as detailed in Appendix 4 to the report, be approved;
- (6) an increase in annual water charges of 4%, as detailed in Appendix 5 to the report, be approved;
- (7) increases in Community Centre charges, as set out in Appendix 6 to the report, be approved;
- (8) the four year Capital Programme, set out in Appendix 7 to the report, be approved;
- (9) the government's proposals to change national rent policy from 2015/16 onwards be noted.

Reason for Recommendation/Decision: To publish the final HRA budget and set Council rents and other charges for 2014/15.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation to Council and to the decisions that have been noted.]

11 Key Decision: Corporate Plan 2014/15

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Corporate Plan be adopted.

RESOLVED: That the Leader of the Council be authorised to make any minor amendments to the Plan as necessary prior to the matter going to Council.

Reason for Recommendation/Decision: To update the Council's Policy Framework and set out the Council's direction of travel for the year ahead.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation to Council and to the decisions that have been noted.]

12 Key Decision: Final Revenue Budget 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2014/15 to 2016/17

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That

- (1) the budget be approved to enable the Council Tax for 2014/15 to be set;
- (2) the Medium Term Financial Strategy at Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be endorsed;
- (3) the policy on the use of the contingency at Appendix 5 of the report be approved;
- (4) in relation to schools, the schools' budget at Appendix 6 of the report be approved;
- (5) the Members' Allowance Scheme at Appendix 14 of the report be adopted for 2014/15.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), at appendices 1 and 2 to the report, be approved;
- (2) the planned investment in services and efficiencies, as set out in Appendix 2 and summarised in table 5 of the report, be noted;
- (3) the sum, £3.560m, of NHS Transfer funding to be received by the Council, as set paragraph 17.1 of the report be noted;
- (4) the risk assessment at Appendix 7 to the report be agreed and referred to the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee for consideration and monitoring.

Reason for Recommendation/Decision: To ensure that the Council sets a balanced budget for 2014/15.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation to Council and to the decisions that have been noted and to the decisions that have been noted.]

13 Key Decision: Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2017/18

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Capital Programme, as detailed within Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

Reason for Recommendation: To enable the Council to have an approved Capital Programme for 2014/15 to 2017/18.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation to Council and to the decisions that have been noted.]

14 Key Decision: Treasury Management Strategy Statement, Prudential Indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2014/15

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Prudential Indicators for 2014/15 be approved;
- (2) the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2014/15 be approved;
- (3) the Annual Investment Strategy for 2014/15 be approved;
- (4) the lower limit for borrowing of between 5 and 10 years be reduced from 10% to 5%;
- (5) the limit of investments for over one year be increased to £30m for 1-2 years and £10m for over 2 years.

RESOLVED: That the report be referred to the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee for review.

Reason for Recommendation/Decision: To promote effective financial management and comply with the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations 2003 and other relevant guidance.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation to Council and to the decisions that have been noted.]

15 Key Decision: Revenue and Capital Monitoring for Quarter 3 as at 31 December 2013

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That an increase in the Empty Property Grants budget of £0.100m, as detailed in paragraph 58 of the report, in respect of additional grant funding received in the current year be approved.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revenue and capital forecast outturn position at the end of Quarter 3, December 2013, be noted;
- (2) the Capital virements, detailed in paragraphs 55 of the report, be noted.

Reason for Recommendation/Decision: To ensure that Cabinet was updated on the forecast revenue and capital financial position for 2013/14, that budget virements were agreed in line with the Financial Regulations and available external funding was fully utilised to achieve Council priorities.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation to Council and to the decisions that have been noted.]

16 Key Decision: External Fees and Charges 2014/15

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Fees and Charges, set out at appendices 2-5 of the report, be agreed and implemented from April 2014;
- (2) the Director of Finance and Assurance and relevant Corporate Director be authorised, following consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, to amend fees and charges in-year.

Reason for Decision: To ensure the Council set a schedule of fees and charges for 2014/15.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

17 Customer Services - Scrutiny Review Group Report and Recommendations

RESOLVED: That the actions recommended by officers in response to the recommendations made in the Customer Service Scrutiny Review Group report be approved.

Reason for Decision: To improve customer service across the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

18 Key Decision: Buildings Insurance for Residential Leaseholders

RESOLVED: That the contract for buildings insurance for residential leaseholders be awarded to Zurich Municipal for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2017.

Reason for Decision: As freeholder, the Council was obliged to arrange buildings insurance for its residential leaseholders. The Long-Term Agreement (LTA) with existing insurers would expire on 31 March 2014, hence it was necessary to re-tender the contract on behalf of leaseholders.

An open tender process was conducted according to EU procurement rules for Part A Service contracts.

A pre-defined evaluation model was constructed to fairly evaluate each tender against a set of criteria, which was approved by Procurement, Leasehold Services and leaseholder representatives.

Zurich Municipal achieved the highest total scores in the evaluation process.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

19 Key Decision: Financial Hardship Fund - part of the Harrow Help Scheme

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Financial Hardship Fund Policy and application pack, incorporating the guidance notes, be agreed and adopted;
- (2) the Financial Hardship Fund assessment criteria be agreed and adopted;
- (3) the decision-making process for awarding Financial Hardship Grants be agreed and adopted.

Reason for Decision: The Financial Hardship Fund was created as a direct result of feedback to the Localisation of Council Tax Support consultation carried

out over the summer of 2012 and was put in place to support those experiencing most hardship from the current economic situation and/or those who needed assistance to transition to the reformed welfare system. It also coincided with the transfer from the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) to Harrow of a £489k un-ring-fenced Social Fund grant which previously provided emergency support to claimants and was administered by the DWP.

The Financial Hardship Fund was a pot of funding of £100,000 that sat within the overall banner of the Harrow Help Scheme. The intention of the Financial Hardship Fund was to commission community projects that would help to mitigate the impacts of welfare reforms and the current economic situation.

The draft policy, including the assessment criteria, had been developed in partnership with the Welfare Reform's multi-agency Community Reference Group and Officer Project Board.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

20 Key Decision: Implementation of Risk Based Verification (RBV) Policy and Electronic Claiming for Housing Benefit & Council Tax Support Assessments

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Risk Based Verification policy at Appendix A to the report be agreed and take effect from April 2014;
- (2) the Electronic Claims policy at Appendix B to the report be agreed and take effect from March 2014;
- (3) the policies apply initially to Housing Benefit/Council Tax Support new claims and extend to change of circumstances notifications in due course, as detailed in the report, without the need for Cabinet to review the policies again;
- (4) the policies remain as approved unless an annual review by officers identified a need for change;
- (5) the Acting Head of Paid Service be authorised to sign an Electronic Communications Direction, Appendix A to Electronic Claims Policy refers.

Reason for Decision: Implementation of Risk Based Verification and electronic communications supports the savings requirement within the Resources Directorate. Adopting the policies would reduce the necessity for benefit claimants to contact the Council through more expensive methods such as face to face, and decrease the need to produce original documents to support their claim, resulting in a reduction in the number of customer contacts in Access Harrow, lower volumes of scanning and indexing within the Business Support hub and less information requests made by the Housing Benefit Service.

Through online claims, Risk Based Verification allowed the targeting of resources from low risk cases to those which were at higher risk of potential fraud and error. By identifying these cases at the point of entry, the process should help to reduce fraud and error from entering the system.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

21 Proposed new Museum Building adjacent to West House, Pinner

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the Council, acting as trustee of the Pinner Memorial Park Trust,

- (1) authorise the Director of Finance and Assurance to transfer to The West House and Heath Robinson Museum Trust without recoupment the current balance of funds of circa £25,000 held by the Pinner Memorial Park Trust for the purpose of the construction of the new museum facility, subject to any necessary approval of the Charity Commission;
- (2) authorise the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise, acting in the best interests of the Council as trustee, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts, to take all necessary steps to agree and implement changes to the existing lease of West House in order to enable the construction and use of the new museum building.

RESOLVED: That the Director of Finance and Assurance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, be authorised to make available a loan facility to The West House and Heath Robinson Museum Trust on the terms set out in paragraph 5.10 of the report.

Reason for Recommendation/Decision: To facilitate the construction of a new museum and arts facility for the benefit of Harrow residents and the wider community.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

[Call-in does not apply to the Recommendation to Council and to the decisions that have been noted.]

22 Recruitment Process Contract

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Director of Resources be delegated authority to enter into a contract with Pertemps Recruitment Partnership Ltd for the supply of recruitment services, as detailed within the report, for a period of up to 18 months

to co-terminate with the Pertemps Recruitment Partnership Ltd contract for agency workers, which expires in September 2015.

Reason for Decision: The contract with Pertemps Recruitment Partnership Ltd for the supply of recruitment services would improve the efficiency of the Council's recruitment processes and reduce spend on recruitment advertising enabling delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Savings (MTFS) of £100,000.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

23 Calendar of Meetings 2014/15

RESOLVED: That, subject to 7 May 2015 Cabinet being deleted, the Calendar of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2014/15 be approved.

Reason for Decision: The Calendar of Meetings was approved on an annual basis for the succeeding Municipal Year. Advance approval of the Calendar facilitated the planning and forward commitments of both Members and officers, and allowed the room booking arrangements to be put in place at the earliest opportunity.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member / Dispensation Granted: None.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.25 pm).