

CABINET MINUTES

12 DECEMBER 2013

Chairman: * Councillor Susan Hall

Councillors:

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------|
| * Kam Chana | * Janet Mote |
| * Tony Ferrari | * Paul Osborn |
| * Stephen Greek | * Simon Williams |
| * Manji Kara | * Stephen Wright |
| * Barry Macleod-Cullinane | |

**Non Executive
Non Voting
Councillors:**

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| * Graham Henson | * David Perry |
| Thaya Idaikkadar | |

**In attendance:
(Councillors)** William Stoodley Minute 735
[Also attended in place of
Councillor Idaikkadar]

* Denotes Member present

[**Note:** The items were taken in the order set out on the agenda. However, as was customary, the minutes are set out in the following order: Formal Business; Recommendations to Council on substantive items; Discussions and decisions on the remaining substantive items. Agenda items 10, 11 and 12 (Minutes Nos. 740-742 refer) were considered together by Cabinet but the minutes sets out the discussions separately on each of the items.]

730. Apologies for Absence

None received from Cabinet Members.

731. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interest was declared:

Agenda Item 5 – Public Question 5

During consideration of the question, Councillor Susan Hall declared a non pecuniary interest in that she owned a business in Wealdstone. She would remain in the room whilst the question was answered.

732. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the special meeting held on 18 November 2013 and the ordinary meeting held on 21 November 2013 be taken as read and signed as a correct records.

733. Petitions

(1) Alfriston Avenue/Fernbrook Drive - Petition

Councillor Kairul Marikar presented a petition signed by 50 residents with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned residents of Alfriston Avenue and Fernbrook Drive urge Harrow Council to resurface the roads and pavements of our streets, add street bumps and improve the street lighting. The reasons why we are calling for action is because of the following:

- The pavements are dangerous, with people tripping up on them, and are a hassle if you have a push chair.
- The roads are in a poor state of repair and urgently need to be resurfaced.
- The street light provisions are inadequate and residents do not feel safe walking the streets late at night.
- Without street bumps cars can speed down the road, which is a danger to children who may be playing on the street.”

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment for consideration.

(2) Ashridge Gardens, Pinner – Petition

Councillor Janet Mote presented a petition signed by 32 residents with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned, want Harrow Council to: provide a long term permanent solution to fix the poor state of the road and pavements of Ashridge Gardens in Pinner. As this road is used by both the residents

and regular pedestrians accessing the short cut, we do not believe this is just a residential issue, but a wider issue that affects everyone using these facilities.”

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment.

(3) Local Safety Parking – Kenton Park Avenue – Petition

Councillor Yogesh Teli presented a petition signed by 30 residents with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned residents of Harrow, ask Harrow Council to improve the safety of the residents, motorists and pedestrians by implementing a double yellow line at the sharp 90 degree bend in Kenton Park Avenue, between house numbers 41-55. The motorists park in such a way that it makes it difficult for the residents to come out of their

driveway, the Council bin collection vehicle getting obstructed and it also impedes the road visibility. There have been many incidents, thankfully, none have been fatal and we request the Council to act now and not wait for a fatality before addressing issues and concerns of the residents.

We urge Harrow Council to take all the points into consideration as well as the strong views and wishes of the residents since safety of all users is of paramount importance.”

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment and Enterprise and the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment.

(4) Planning Application on Anmer Lodge and Surface Level Car Park in Stanmore

Mr John Williams, Chairman of the Stanmore Society, presented a petition signed by 24 people with the following terms of reference:

“We, the undersigned, would respectfully request that the deadline for submission of the planning application on Anmer Lodge and surface level car park in Stanmore be extended well into 2014 in order to give Notting Hill Housing and the Council more time to get this right.

Furthermore, we would respectfully request that the Council give consideration to the sale price of the freehold interest to Notting Hill Housing in so far as the viability is concerned, so that a reduction in the number of residential units would be possible.”

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Corporate Director of Environment, the Director of Planning and the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Regeneration for consideration.

734. Public Questions

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

1.

Questioner: Jackie Hooper

Asked of: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing

Question: “Employment for people experiencing mental health problems is a stated priority of Harrow’s Health & Well-being Strategy and therefore what supported permitted work opportunities does Harrow Council offer for mental health service users?”

[Note: Supported Permitted Work is a DWP approved scheme allowing people in receipt of welfare benefits to work and earn income.]

Answer: Harrow is one of the most important, high performing boroughs when it comes to stated employment for people with severe mental health and health issues. The borough offers a range of options directly and through its partners and contracted providers.

Wiseworks, in particular, offers people work experience, sometimes through permitted earnings and provides a range of personalised support to helping people to access the work and to develop the workplace skills. There are central Council services also working in this area in addition to Wiseworks and we have also been working with Wiseworks and helping to secure Lottery funding to further employment and support services.

The Council is providing some funding for your own organisation, Mind in Harrow, which I think is important and we are trying to work with other third sector organisations, Rethink Mental Illness, along with Hug and various others.

CNWL also runs activities, so we are trying to open up the door and to take it seriously. It is an important area and one that we want to make sure that we are getting right, rather than getting wrong and neglecting, as it tended to be forgotten too often in the past. So we want to take it forward and try to see what we can do and to improve things.

Supplemental Question: How does the Council offer advice and support for mental health service users when they apply for permitted support work that complied with the DWP and rules?

Supplemental Answer: Currently the Council is looking to work with the sector to try and find out how it can better provide that support.

Now, I am not a particular expert on that element of support but I have been talking to Raksha Pandya, the next questioner. We are going to set up a meeting to go through and perhaps we can include that as a part of the discussion: to make sure that we have offers there to take you through and then figure out, not just explain to you but also seeing what we can do to communicate to Mind, to the other organisations within Harrow how it is that we are working and how we could perhaps improve. Perhaps we can actually sit down with you and the other organisations to ensure that what we want to do is the right thing and that it is addressing your needs correctly, rather than what we think are the needs.

I am not an expert on that particular element of it but I think if we take it forward in that way, we can ensure that we do what is right and, with our limited funding, we make sure it goes as far as possible, rather than simply putting it where we perhaps otherwise ought not to be doing, rather than hitting the things that we should be doing.

2.

Questioner: Raksha Pandya, MIND in Harrow

Asked of: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing

Question: What has been the progress of the Harrow Council commissioned NDTi Mental Health Personalisation Project in terms of the number of people who have engaged with project to date compared to their contracted targets?

Answer: So far NDTi have consulted something like 42 people to date. There is not actually a target for numbers of people to consult, what we have been asking is not to set up targets for them in the contract and this is what Mind bid for initially as well, but we said we did not actually want targets. We did not want to have output. What we wanted to do is to achieve outcomes and so the contract was specified about improving a number of

different elements:

- Firstly, to ensure that the experience and outcomes of people who have got mental health issues and mental health concerns are improved.
- Secondly, to make sure that their accessing of Harrow social care is improved.
- Thirdly, to ensure that their personal budgets have been accurately and efficiently assessed, allocated and supported so that they are getting the support that they are due in the right way and getting the right things that they need to go forward.
- Fourthly, we are also looking to make sure that learning is gathered through this sort of process about the services that people wish to buy through greater, and more extension of, personalisation.
- Finally, there is an improved understanding, we hope, of personalisation and the self directed support amongst our mental health professionals in the area. So we want to widen that element out including the care co-ordinators and consultant psychiatrists.

So those are really much the substance of the contract. Rather than actually total numbers of people to consult with, it is actually trying to make sure that we are consulting the right people.

Now I think that 42 is perhaps on the lower side and I think we ought to be trying to raise it up and I am asking officers to actually make sure that that is followed up and checked on. We do need to push them to widen that pool because whilst it is not chasing numbers, it actually improves the quality of the work, if you have a larger pool of people that you have drawn from. So I share your concern on that.

Supplemental Question: I am disappointed to have to ask this as a supplementary.

At 17 October Cabinet meeting, we asked you about the total contract value of the project paid to NDTi to date and the current cost to Harrow for each person consulted and asked you, as a Portfolio Holder, do you regard these as good value for money. You replied "I do

not have that data to hand and will get back to you in the next few days". Why has this not happened and you proposed to meet with Mind? Will you commit a time to do this?

Supplemental Answer: My apologies, and that will not happen again. Secondly, yes I will commit to find the time and I promise to call you in the morning to set up said time and am happy to try to arrange that next week so that we can go through these details. In terms of the amount, I do not have that to hand, that particular figure. Sorry.

3.

Questioner: Mr M Talukder

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: "Can you please explain why you have implemented a caveat on a political decision when you were the opposition party this relates to the decision to overturn Parks locking; the caveat you unilaterally placed on this service, is only funding for 2013/14 which was not part of the political decision to reinstate this service?"

Written Answer: (Questioner was not present at the meeting) The original decision to cease the parks locking service as part of the 2013/14 budget was subsequently reversed by Cabinet in September of this year. Our administration then sourced the funding to allow the service to continue in its current format for the remainder of 2013/14, allowing sufficient time for the service to review operational requirements to most efficiently deliver the service in the future.

Although there is still pressure to realise the savings within the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which we inherited, you will note from our draft budget that we have committed to the future of the service by finding additional funding for it for 2014/15.

4.

Questioner: Mr Davis Searles

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: "You state that your administration has implemented and supports a fairer Council; can you please explain why operational staff at Central Depot does not receive training especially when Agency staff across the Council

are lawfully entitled thus receiving more beneficial employment opportunities against those that have been directly employed in the Council for more than TEN Years thus substantially disadvantaging staff in obtaining redeployment opportunities.”

Answer:

This is not the case. We continue to train operational staff in areas related to their job roles, specific service needs and further development.

Whilst this training is carefully controlled to meet budget and service needs, it also supports development of staff enabling them to progress as opportunities arise. Positions are filled on a fair basis in accordance with the Council’s Employment Policies which seek to minimise redundancies and directly employed staff are given priority consideration for redeployment.

Recent and current examples of training for operational staff at the Depot include:

- training of refuse loaders on driving large goods vehicles;
- training for drivers to increase or maintain their licence level;
- sports grounds maintenance;
- 1st line supervisor training to drivers;
- national vocational training in management techniques.

Additional to that, I often used to go down to the Depot for staff meetings and we were constantly giving out certification to members of staff for different training that they had undertaken and they were all receiving these certificates. So I do not recognise your comments.

Supplemental Question:

Can you please explain why the administration is misleading the residents stating that the administration will protect front line staff, yet in reality the front line staff have taken the brunt of staffing reductions?

The facts are that approximately 36+ front line operational positions are to be cut while management positions are to be cut by a diminutive amount, when compared to the front line. This is in the Towards Excellent programme which you directly intervened into.

Supplemental Answer: I asked many questions about that because anybody that knows knows that I was not happy with PRISM. I have made my thoughts on PRISM very clear. I do not recognise what you are saying about the front line staff going and I have asked numerous people to make sure that our front line is being invested in. A sum of £500,000 has gone into front line services and we are hoping to put that money through on the budget for next year. There are so many more people working on the front line as is evidenced by residents telling me that they can see so many more people on the front line. It was not this administration that removed money from front line services and that is a fact.

Mr Searles: With all due respect Councillor, the additional staff that we are seeing out on the street are agency staff. As part of this project we are going to lose 24 grounds maintenance, 12 refuse staff and 3 park keepers. Now these are areas which you profess in the press to be of high importance to you but the figures do not play that out. We have agency staff now, we have been understaffed and we are now losing more staff – 24 from grounds maintenance, 12 from refuse and 3 park keepers.

Cllr Hall: Refuse may well be because of route optimisation which is not being done at the moment. I am quite happy to have a meeting with you to discuss these issues separately but in reality, this administration has put a great deal of money into front line services.

Thank you for your questions.

5.

Questioner: Mrs J Lawrence-Ricketts

Asked of: Councillor Kamaljit Chana, Portfolio Holder for Business and Enterprise

Question: “Can you tell me what activities were promoted in Harrow by Harrow Council on the “Small Business Saturday” last week to help local traders and reinforce the benefits of local trading?”

Answer: Thank you for your question.

Small Business Saturday took place on 7 December. This was a national event backed by the Department of Business, Innovation & Skills, and the Department for Communities and Local Government and promoted by the business community, including the Federation of

Small Businesses. The Council works with the West London branch of the Federation of Small Businesses and took a role in promoting Small Business Saturday to both traders and residents, including distribution of a pack of information for businesses, which were received on 26 November and distributed the following day.

Activities undertaken by Harrow Council included:

- General support to the campaign through press releases, newsletters, and social media. This comprised of:
 - dedicated web page promoting the day and encourage businesses to take part;
 - press releases to highlight campaign and commitment by Harrow Council;
 - articles in the electronic Business newsletter sent to over 1,000 local businesses registered on the Business Directory; and also
- Information promoting campaign sent to local businesses
 - online to Harrow in Business and North West London Chamber of Commerce;
 - information packs were dropped off to Traders Association representatives (this in Pinner, Stanmore, North Harrow, Hatch End and so on) to encourage them to promote this amongst their members to get involved. Those interested in taking part were signposted to the campaign organisers;
 - the Federation of Small Businesses advised that packs were distributed to traders on the High Road in Harrow Weald.

**Mrs
Lawrence-
Ricketts:**

That all sounds well and good but nothing was done in Wealdstone. My business is in Wealdstone. It is in the In Shops and they will be closing down and several other traders have lost their livelihood.

I have also noticed that you have made a statement in the Harrow Observer that you are helping us and you have never been to the In Shops and we have never met you. So I was quite shocked to see that statement in the press.

Cllr Chana: Can I come back to you on that point?

Our Head of Economic Development has written to the In Shops for them to reconsider closure. The department has met with, have had 4 meetings with In Shops and in fact, they take the lead because in fact the officers are the full time staff that are able to advise on In Shop.

I have had a letter from your Chairman. I have spoken to him on the phone twice. I have spoken with him. So I dispute the fact that I have not been in contact.

I am leaving the actual advice with the Economic Development team and I am quite confident in them and the work that they are doing to support the In Shops.

So we are actively trying to support but it is an issue between the landlord and the tenants.

735. Councillor Questions

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

1.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Paul Osborn, Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources

Question: "Two Cabinet meetings ago, I raised the issue of detrimental comments made by a Mrs Melanie Lewis about a former Council Officer, Mr Andrew Trehern, on the public website "iHarrow". I was assured the accusations made in those comments are totally false and that they should be taken down.

At the time of writing this question those comments are still up on the "iHarrow" website. Why is it that, even after I have brought this to your Administration's attention, still nothing has been done after all this time about these libellous comments about Mr Trehern?"

Answer: I am not entirely sure what I am supposed to do. We have made our position clear. Paul Boakes from iHarrow was here at that meeting. We had made our position clear to him at that time.

I have to say I am very reluctant to get into the business of censoring local press or to try and make undue threats towards them. We make it clear we think that allegation is a false allegation. We think it is potentially

libellous.

As the publisher, he should be aware that he is liable for that, and my advice to him is to take it down as was Councillor Hall's advice. However, he runs his website and he can do what he likes.

Supplemental Question: I have to say I am astonished, amazed and quite frankly disappointed by that answer.

Firstly, Legal Services had no hesitation in swooping on Paul Boakes' iHarrow site when other libellous comments were deemed to be made and getting them redacted and even the Head of Corporate Estate, Phillip Loveland-Cooper, mentioned in the Whitchurch Licensing meeting in public that he was getting very tired of his officers being libelled and slandered.

Other comments have been acted upon within minutes of them going up. It is not true to say there is nothing you can do except look at it and hope that Paul Boakes takes it down. If I can quote your Deputy Leader's favourite catchphrase "what is going on here?"? You are the administration. You are in charge of the Council. There is a libellous comment about a former employee which is detrimental to this Council's service in the public domain and you are telling me that all you can do is say "well Paul was in the room when we mentioned it should be taken down and that is it", when in other circumstances action has been taken.

It is a contradiction in terms here. I am not having a go at you and altruistically I have got nothing to win. I am not Andrew Trehern. It does not bother me.

Supplemental Answer: You say, barely asking a question.

Look, first of all, this statement was made whilst you were in charge as an Independent Labour administration and did not do anything.

Secondly, whilst previous administrations may be prepared to spend large amounts of taxpayers' money going after local papers, I am not prepared to do that. I do not recognise the statement you made about us, as a Council, going after local papers, certainly since I have been a Portfolio Holder.

I do not believe it is something we should do, except in exceptional circumstances and I do not believe this is one of those circumstances.

[Councillor Stoodley makes a remark.]

I think it is important that you do not make the allegation at a public meeting because you are then making a slanderous comment.

2.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: "Do you believe that there is enough incentive, that enough is being done, to teach people to take care of, respect and appreciate their public realm?"

Answer: We are certainly trying because it is vital.

We have established the new Community Engagement team, which provides a link between a number of divisions within the Environment & Enterprise Directorate and the wider community and they are really trying. They are going round sorting out our recycling. That is part of their jobs and also attracting additional Neighbourhood Champions which I am pleased about.

As you know, we are desperately trying to get the Neighbourhood Champions Scheme up to 2,000 before we go into the purdah period. If we have one person in every single street that is watching out for these things, it is a very powerful message.

We have also re-launched the Weeks of Action and Secure Streets initiatives which involves a lot of work with the Police and the Fire Brigade because we do believe that if we, as a Council, show that we are passionate about making sure that we look after the streets, then hopefully that will have a knock-on effect to our residents. It is the bad behaviour of residents throwing litter and spitting that costs our taxpayers a fortune to clear up.

So I can see where you are coming from and I completely agree with you. We are certainly doing as much as we can.

Supplemental Question: I was finished here one night in October and I just roughly got to the tube station and the boarding by First National House, there were half a dozen lads there. One of them decided to relieve himself, which I thought was pretty gross. Just as he did, a policeman

fortunately came pedalling along on his pushbike, spotted him, told him to stop. I thought something is going to happen now, at which point the policeman just pedalled off.

So my supplementary question is: are you happy with the fact that when people are urinating on the public realm, the Police catch them and then do nothing about it? Or like me, do you think perhaps there should be a power to have on the spot fines like Councillor Idaikkadar was advocating? Or even just the inconvenience of being taken down to the Police Station to give name, address and details? I find that incredible and if there is anything you can do with your contacts in the Police, perhaps we could have a change of policy on that because now his 5 mates think that that is okay.

Supplemental Answer: Urinating on the public realm is certainly not what I would think was in any which way acceptable.

We are looking at Enfield Council's spot fines because spot fining is not as easy as it would seem. I have talked to PC Simon Evans about this because if we can use uniformed people to spot fine, then I think it is a way forward because this sort of behaviour is outrageous. So leave it with me, we are looking at different projects that are cost effective and will stop people doing these terrible things in public.

Thank you for bringing it to my attention.

3.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Stephen Wright, Portfolio Holder for Property and Major Contracts

Question: "Do you feel you can justify all the items of property that you currently propose to sell?"

Answer: Yes. The 2013-14 Property Disposal Programme was fully considered and reviewed prior to its approval at Cabinet on 17 October 2013 and as you might recall, it was largely unchanged from that previously proposed by your administration.

Supplemental Question: I do recall that. The devil was in the detail of my question when I asked "all the items of property".

There are 2 public lavatories listed for sale on that property and I was just wondering with respect to the

previous question, whether or not it might be an idea that would give the Police and on the spot fine or uniformed people a much better excuse to stop people relieving themselves in the streets if there are lavatories round the corner, whereas if you sell them off and close them, that is going to make things a lot more awkward, all round.

Supplemental Answer: I agree with you.

The only problem is that the 2 lavatories that are being sold were not anywhere near that particular scene, so they would not have been an awful lot of good.

Bear in mind that those toilets, one has been closed for 5 years and the other has been closed for over 15 years and there is a tremendous amount of anti social behaviour there. I am sure you will agree with me that it is far better for those properties to be sold and for residential properties to be built on them. We do need them in Harrow.

4.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Kamaljit Chana, Portfolio Holder for Business and Enterprise

Question: "At the time of writing this question (27/11/13) the President of the North West London Chamber of Commerce, Ms Carole Marblestein, has informed me that she has not heard from you and indeed has not even heard of you!

Bearing in mind that you are the Holder for this newly and especially created Portfolio, would you please explain why, after two whole months, you have not bothered to get in touch with one of the most significant business organisations in our Borough?"

Answer: The North West London Chamber of Commerce is one of many business membership organisations in Harrow. The Chamber have 2 members that meet quarterly with the Economic Development Officer for Business and the last meeting was 3 December.

Since coming into office as Portfolio Holder for Business and Enterprise, I have engaged directly with businesses and with those business membership groups that have had clear propositions.

This has included the Stanmore Chamber of Trade, the Pinner Traders' Association and the Federation of Small Businesses, who each had clear activities that they wanted to take forward with some Council support.

I have:

- gone directly to the workplace of local traders in the Town Centre and Station Road;
- I have personally visited over 100 businesses directly during their working hours to speak with them directly and discuss their issues and concerns;
- engaged directly with some of the largest employers;
- networked with new and established local businesses, business support organisations including Harrow Business and other business partners at the Harrow Means Business Event on 15 October which was over here in the Civic Centre, the Chamber.

In the New Year, a direct campaign and engagement of new businesses and with our largest business rate payers will commence.

Both the North West London Chamber of Commerce and Harrow in Business were briefed by officers of the plans for the New Year at the meeting on 3 December.

Supplemental Question: Be that as it may, the lady to my right apparently has not heard from you, the President of the London Chamber of Commerce has not heard from you.

Are you sure you can handle your role and do you have enough spare time to give it the dedication and attention that it deserves because if not, perhaps you should consider either giving up the day job or alternatively handing over the Portfolio Holder to somebody who does have the time to give it the attention it so deserves?

Supplemental Answer: (answer provided by Cllr Hall) There are 5,000 businesses in Harrow. I could not possibly want a Portfolio Holder for Business that works harder than Councillor Kamaljit Chana. Clearly with 5,000 businesses and us only having been in power just over 80 days, I could not expect even Superman to visit all of those in that time.

I am extremely proud of Councillor Kamaljit Chana as my Business Portfolio Holder and he absolutely does have the time and the inclination and the capability to do the job.

5.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing

Question: "As you know, because I copied you in on the email, one of our Borough's citizens complained to me about the appalling damp in her privately rented flat, the rent for which is paid for through housing benefit.

Can you please explain why we are using such appalling landlords, why we are not using our registered landlord scheme or, if he is a member then how did he qualify with such an appallingly damp property, and what plans your department has to avoid this happening in the future?"

Written Answer provided, as requested by the questioner:

The property you refer to was let via the Council's Help2Let scheme and, as usual, was inspected before the letting. It was in good condition when the tenant moved into the property in 2011.

We do not have a licensing or registration scheme for private landlords but they are encouraged to join the London Landlord Accreditation scheme. We are in regular contact with our Help2Let landlords, hold landlord forums and offer training and advice.

In this case, the tenant approached the Council's Housing Advice service in April 2013 about damp in her home. The matter was referred to Environmental Health again – they had previously been involved in 2012, when the damp and mould was treated, and they had closed the case as the problem had been dealt with.

With the recurrence of damp, a Housing Adviser has now taken on the case.

Environmental Health colleagues are once again involved and should be able to determine whether the damp is due to a structural defect, or the way the family occupy the property or possibly a combination of both.

At our request the landlord has been co-operating to

remedy the problem, and has fitted more ventilators and given the tenant money to tackle the mould. Any property can suffer serious condensation problems if there is insufficient ventilation especially if clothes are dried indoors.

Environmental Health will be going back to the property to make a further assessment of the situation, accompanied by the landlord.

We have also offered to assist the tenant with moving if she wishes this. We'll pay a deposit, first month's rent and letting agency fees, for any alternative affordable private rented accommodation she finds.

6.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Janet Mote, Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools

Question: "With respect to my previous question, the tenant of the flat concerned has a Doctor's certificate confirming that both she and her two children contracted pneumonia almost certainly as a result of the damp living conditions. What machinery do you have in place for safeguarding children from living in unhealthy conditions when it is our own Council paying the rent for them to live like that?"

Written Answer provided, as requested by the questioner:

The fact a tenant receives Housing Benefit to help pay the rent doesn't affect the powers that the Council can exercise or affect their rights

We always address a resident's concerns regarding their properties when they are brought to our attention and will try to work with the landlord to remedy any disrepair. We aim to do this by agreement, offering advice and practical assistance, which can include small grants, if the landlord can't afford the repair. If this fails, we use enforcement powers through Environmental Health. Whilst most repairs are the landlord's responsibility, repairs arising from tenant damage or neglect are the tenant's responsibility.

Damp is widely recognised as having an adverse effect on health, which is why we take it seriously. This includes work with landlords and advising tenants at our tenant training sessions on steps they can take to avoid condensation problems.

In the event that the children have an allocated social worker already, we would liaise closely with health

colleagues (health visitor, school nurse, GP or paediatrician) to ensure that the children were getting the right services, and to ensure that we assisted with any applications for alternative housing if this was a viable option.

In the event that the children do not have an allocated social worker, the family could be referred for an Early Intervention Service or to access an early help offer through a children's centre depending on the ages of the children. This would include support around staying healthy and could include direct access to health professionals through the children's centres.

7.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: "If the post of Chief Executive is being deleted, should we not be reconsidering the position of Assistant Chief Executive or the post has also been deleted?"

Answer: Although Michael Lockwood, the current Chief Executive, decided to leave the Council at the end of February, no decision has been made to delete the post of Chief Executive as yet.

I can confirm that the post of Assistant Chief Executive was deleted in the senior management restructure agreed by Cabinet in December 2011. The duties and responsibilities of that post were incorporated into the new post of Corporate Director of Resources.

So you have to pay more attention Councillor Stoodley. Obviously you were not at that Cabinet meeting.

8.

Questioner: Councillor William Stoodley

Asked of: Councillor Susan Hall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Environment

Question: Since the Council is introducing cashless parking with e-permits starting in December, why can't the trial of 20 minutes free parking continue across the Borough?

Answer: I thought this was an odd question to be honest because this is totally different.

The cashless parking system provides an alternative online means of payment for pay and display parking and parking permits via the e-permits. However, the provision of free parking concessions is not related to the cashless parking system because the arrangement involves no payment for the first 20 minutes of parking. Cabinet have reviewed the impact of 20 minutes free parking in a trial undertaken in Rayners Lane and decided that it was not suitable in its current form for wider use across the borough due to the significant financial impact and you have been around for those discussions. So I am sure you know that inside out. I feel I do anyway.

Supplemental Question: As a professional and competent politician yourself, I am sure you realise that some things just do not go away and our question on this is, is it not the case that the cashless parking with e-permits stops people continually taking tickets? Therefore that being the reason for stopping the 20 minutes free parking, the reason has gone and you therefore have no reason now to reintroduce it because you have got these wonderful machines that stop the repeat taking?

Supplemental Answer: We are looking into a completely different way of producing 20 minutes free parking across the borough that would be a far better system. I am looking into that at the moment, getting the figures. We have got to do something that benefits the residents, does not cost an absolute fortune and stops fraud altogether. So that is being looked into as I have undertaken to do.

Cllr Stoodley: Is the e-ticketing part of it, what you are looking into?

Cllr Hall: As soon as it is sorted out, I will come to you with a grin on my face knowing that we have sorted it out properly.

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

736. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy - Mid-year Review 2013/14

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the mid-year review of Treasury Management activities for 2013/14. It was noted that Treasury Management operation ensured that cash flow was adequately planned, with surplus money being invested with low risk counterparties. It also ensured that adequate liquidity was provided before consideration was given to optimisation of investment return. Another function of the Treasury Management service was to fund the Council's Capital Programme.

Cabinet considered the report and resolved to recommend appropriately to February 2014 full Council meeting and to ask the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee to consider and review the report.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That the minimum credit criterion for The Royal Bank of Scotland be amended from F1 to F2 as discussed in paragraphs 5.2 and 5.3 of the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the half year Treasury Management Activity (TMA) for 2013/14 be noted;
- (2) the Governance, Audit and Risk Management Committee consider and review the report;

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. To be informed of Treasury Management Activities and performance.

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.]

RESOLVED ITEMS

737. Key Decision Schedule - December 2013 to February 2014

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Key Decision Schedule for December 2013.

738. Progress on Scrutiny Projects

RESOLVED: To receive and note the progress of scrutiny projects.

739. Key Decision - School Expansion Programme

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Schools introduced the report, which set out the outcomes of the statutory consultation on the proposals to expand Whitefriars Community School by one form of entry and to extend the age range to make provision for secondary aged pupils. The report also included an update on Phase 2 of the Primary School Expansion Programme and increased the intake in the primary phase.

The Portfolio Holder added that the Council had received £12.4m for the project under the government's Targeted Basic Need Programme (TBNP),

and the funding had to be spent and places made available by September 2015. She added that this was an exciting project which would enhance school provision in Harrow and help regenerate the areas around the schools.

Cabinet was informed that whilst the responses received to the consultation were not high, the majority were in support of the proposal. The Portfolio Holder was grateful of the support from Whitefriars School. The Director of Children and Families responded to a question from a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member in relation to the location of pupil referral unit(s). She informed Cabinet that alternative sites were being explored, including associated costs and any Basic Needs Funding.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the outcomes of the statutory consultation be noted;
- (2) the publication of statutory notices to expand permanently and extend the age range of Whitefriars Community School to include provision for secondary aged pupils be agreed.

Reason for Decision: To fulfil the Council's statutory duties to provide sufficient school places in its area.

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.

740. Key Decision - Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Regeneration introduced the report, which summarised the responses received to the consultation and how these had informed the final Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was being proposed for adoption. The proposal included the amendment of the conservation area boundaries for the Little Common and Old Church Lane Conservation Area and new Article 4(2) directions were proposed for Old Church Lane, Stanmore Hill, Kerry Avenue and Canons Park Conservation Areas.

The Portfolio Holder added that the possibility of a re-evaluation of the Conservation Area to include Cavendish Road and Dorset Drive, as suggested at the Local Development Framework Panel, would be explored separately.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), attached as appendix 2 to the report, be approved;

- (2) the representations received to public consultation on the draft Stanmore and Edgware Conservations Areas SPD, provided at Appendix 1 to the report, and the Council's response to the individual comments made be noted;
- (3) it be noted that the conservation area boundaries for the Little Common Conservation Area and Old Church Lane Conservation Area had been altered, and new Article 4(2) Directions had been proposed for Old Church Lane, Stanmore Hill, Kerry Avenue and Canons Park Conservation Areas;
- (4) authority be delegated to the Divisional Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, to make typographical corrections and any other necessary non-material amendments to the SPD prior to its formal publication.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that when adopted the Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas SPD would be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The SPD would also provide useful guidance to relevant Council departments when dealing with issues relating to Stanmore and Edgware Conservation Areas.

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.

741. Key Decision - Locally Listed Buildings Supplementary Planning Document

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Regeneration introduced the report, which proposed the adoption of the Locally Listed Buildings Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to aid owners and occupiers of these buildings to conserve these important heritage assets in Harrow. He referred to the deputation received at the Local Development Framework Panel and that the deputees' suggestions had been taken on board and incorporated in the SPD.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the representations received to public consultation on the draft Locally Listed Buildings SPD, provided at Appendix 1 to the report, and the Council's response to the individual comments made, be noted;
- (2) the Local Development Framework Panel's recommendations at appendix 2 to the report be noted, including the amendments made to the SPD in response to the recommendations set out in the body of the report;
- (3) the Locally Listed Buildings SPD, attached as Appendix 3 to the report, be adopted.

Reason for Decision: To afford weight to the SPD as a material planning consideration.

To set out best practice guidance and advice to the owners and occupiers of Locally Listed Buildings to acknowledge the contribution these buildings made to Harrow's character and to promote the continue preservation of these significant local heritage assets.

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.

742. Authority Monitoring Report

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Regeneration introduced the report, which set out the Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) for the period 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. The AMR monitored the effectiveness of the implementation of local planning policies and production of Harrow's new Local Plan. He added that it was intended to analyse all the indicators, and confirmed that all data entry had now been completed. He thanked officers for having completed the significant amount of work involved in the preparation of the AMR.

The non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Members asked questions relating to the reported performance during March 2013, including any involvement of the Mayor of London on the issue of the provision of new homes, the New Homes Bonus, the Kodak site and its relationship with the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), and how the longer term achievements would be prioritised and help to shape the forthcoming budget.

In response the Portfolio Holder and the Divisional Director of Planning stated that:

- the New Homes Bonus was not something that the Council was able to control. The Council supported all growth and the CIL would bring in an excess of £1m per annum to support infrastructure and growth;
- in relation to the Kodak site, the £10m of the infrastructure would be delivered through Section 106 money. The site would not be subject to the Council CIL payments. The changes in the government's Autumn Statement did not affect the use and provision of Section 106 money;
- the majority of the targets were being achieved which was a reflection on the excellent work of the officers and the economic improvements nationally. Work was in progress in cases where the targets were proving to be a challenge. There was an issue over the quality of improvement of open spaces and this was being addressed through the Green Grid Policy, including CIL and Section 106 money;

- the effect of recent permitted development changes was hard to quantify. Whilst there were new proposals for permitted development extension, the market had not seen a significant reduction in householder planning applications. There was an issue over the conversion of office buildings to residential properties. It was difficult to put a figure on the offset in real income but it was likely to be in the region of £150k of fees being forgone. Because of the relatively short period since these changes, the statistics in relation to officer permitted development were still being captured, the situation was dynamic and sampling was being done. Reliable indicators would be available at a later stage.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Authority Monitoring Report 2012/13, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved for publication on the Council's website;
- (2) authority be delegated to the Divisional Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, to make further minor changes to the Authority's Monitoring Report prior to publication.

Reason for Decision: To comply with the requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

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.

743. Key Decision - Draft HRA Budget 2014/15, Draft MTFS 2015/16 to 2017/18, Draft HRA Capital Budget 2014/15 to 2017/18

The Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing introduced the report, which set out the Draft Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2015/16 to 2017/18. He added that the HRA was in 'good health' since the introduction of the reforms by government, as it allowed Councils to do more to improve the quality of their estates. He explained that the Retail Price Index (RPI) was 3.2% in September, which had resulted in a proposed average rent increase of 5.1% for 2014/15. There would be no increase in garage rents pending finalisation of the Garage Strategy Review. Additionally, a proposal from the Tenants', Residents' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum (TLRCF) meeting held on 11 December 2013 to introduce a pilot scheme in which estate residents and voluntary groups paid a reduced rate for hire of community halls would be explored and reflected in the budget.

The Portfolio Holder responded to questions from the non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Members who asked about his involvement in the HRA Budget process. He explained that he had taken a longer term view at the nature of the HRA, including how the Capital Work Programme and that the structure of the debt was being maintained. Additionally, it was important

the double-entry system was done on a 4-year basis/programme cycle and he intended to roll this out in order to save money.

A non-voting non-Executive Member enquired about the Portfolio Holder's vision as he felt that the report did not set out a strategic view and the key priorities, including how stakeholders would be consulted. The same Member referred to recent government announcements on the Right to Buy Scheme and enquired about its impact on the HRA. The Portfolio Holder replied, as follows:

- the TLRCF had been consulted the previous evening, which he had reported upon;
- the impact on the HRA was difficult to predict and was dependant on the change in relation to the Retail Price Index (RPI) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as future rent increases would be based on the CPI;
- there was a need to lobby the government to ensure better outcomes, and look at revaluing the housing stock and abolish the cap imposed. Currently, there was a requirement to service the debt;
- he was examining ways in which there would be a sharing of services, including the carrying out back office functions for Housing Associations. Additionally, new build schemes were being explored, including the leveraging of money by working with other organisations, as it would help to finance the remainder of the development and increase the income stream.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft HRA Budget be approved for consultation;
- (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 for consultation;
- (3) the proposed increases in facility and water charges set out in appendices 4 and 5 to the report be approved for consultation;
- (4) the draft four year Capital Programme be approved for consultation;
- (5) with final approval being sought from Cabinet and Council in February 2014;
- (6) the government's proposals to change national rent policy from 2015/16 onwards be noted.

Reason for Decision: To publish the draft HRA Budget and Capital Programme for consultation.

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.

744. Key Decision - Calculation of Council Tax Base for 2014/15

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the requirements placed on the Council to formally calculate the Council Tax Base and to pass this information to precepting authorities by 31 January 2014. The requirement was to set the Tax Base by between 1 December 2013 and 31 January 2014.

RESOLVED: That, having considered the information given in the report, the following be agreed:

- (a) the Band D equivalent number of taxable properties be calculated as shown in accordance with the government regulations;
- (b) the provision for uncollectable amounts of Council Tax for 2014-2015 be agreed at 2.50% producing an expected collection rate of 97.50%;
- (c) subject to (a) & (b) above, a Council Tax Base for 2014-2015 of **78,550** Band D equivalent properties (being 80,565 x 97.50%) be approved, allowing for payment in lieu of Ministry of Defence properties.

Reason for Decision: To fulfil the Council's statutory obligation to set the Council Tax Base for 2014-2015.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

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

745. Key Decision - Calculation of Business Rates Income for 2014/15

The Portfolio Holder requested that the report be withdrawn, as the government's recent Autumn Statement had changed the rules on the Calculation of Business Rates Income for 2014/15. A revised report would be submitted to Cabinet in January 2014.

RESOLVED: That the report be withdrawn and a revised report be submitted to the next Cabinet meeting.

[Call-in does not apply].

746. Key Decision - Draft Revenue Budget 2014/15 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2014/15 to 2016/17

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the draft Revenue Budget for 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2014/15 to 2016/17, with the report on the budget returning to Cabinet in February 2014 prior to the final approval by Council. The Portfolio

Holder added that £30m savings had to be identified and shortfalls had to be addressed. He was critical of the way the savings and the shortfalls had been handled by the previous administration(s) and outlined the savings that had not been achieved previously. As a result, the new administration was presenting a modest set of proposals in order to ensure that the budget was fair.

The non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Members were critical of the proposed reduction in the welfare contingency budget and the message this sent out to residents. They enquired about the long term strategy, in view of the possible changes in welfare entitlement. They also asked about the proposed freeze on the Council Tax for 2014/15 which one of them considered to be irresponsible, claiming it was electioneering, which would create problems for future administrations. He was of the view that at some point the Council Tax would need to be increased and that this proposal could increase the deficit for future years with rate payers having to pay in later years.

In response, the Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that the claims against the welfare contingency budget had been modest and a £1m contingency was still available to help mitigate the impact of welfare changes. He added that the new administration would go as far as to say that it would freeze or reduce Council Tax during the next administration should it be elected. The Portfolio Holder explained that the argument put forward by a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member that as prices generally went up he expected the Council Tax to go up as well was an invalid one, as it did not equate with the inflation figures which were 5% and 1.3% in 2012/13 and 2013/14 respectively. He added that well established practices on spending would ensure that officers were compelled to manage budgets and confirmed that the new administration would reduce or freeze Council Tax in future years.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the amount of money that was spent on servicing the debt on the £250m Capital Budget, which had risen during by £10m under the previous administration(s). This issue needed to be resolved.

The Leader of the Council stated that her administration would freeze or reduce Council Tax at every opportunity and it was the way this administration would be moving forward; which was warmly received by her colleagues.

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources added that Harrow had one of the highest Council Taxes in London and there had been a time when a Labour administration had increased Council Tax by 21% and still had run out of money. It was important that budgets were controlled and managed appropriately, with Value for Money being a key driver. The Portfolio Holder stated that the administration would "Listen" to the residents' views as part of the budget consultation process instead of the "Let's Talk" approach taken by the previous administration(s) which continued with the implementation of proposals that the residents had not supported, such as the outsourcing of the libraries. In response, a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member cited the example of what he felt was the administration's lack of proper consultation on the post of the Chief Executive. He considered the budget to be unfair and that the previous Labour administration's priority had

been to centre the budget around the people of Harrow. He enquired about the long term plans of the new administration in respect of the budget.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Adults and Housing paid tribute to the work done by officers, including his most recent predecessor as Housing Portfolio Holder. He added that the role of the Councillors was to develop and innovate services and he cited examples of Re-ablement and My Community e-Purse as fine examples of such work. It was important that the social care fund was used to support services and that services provided helped to improve outcomes and the quality of life. A strategic goal was to focus on needs and provide choice to the users.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance stated that the administration was “Working for a Cleaner, Safer and Fairer Harrow” and had increased the Adult Social Care budget and provided additional social workers. It would therefore not take any lessons from the previous administration(s), particularly in regard to the “fair agenda”. The Leader of the Council added that this was not a reckless budget as was being insinuated by the non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Members, and challenged them on whether it was reckless to have cleaner and safer streets, which was one of the new administration’s priorities.

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources explained how people would engage with the consultation process which would be conducted through various Committees and the Council’s website. There would be extensive consultation on the budget which would reflect residents’ priorities. The Leader of the Council stated that she had made representations in regard to the settlement that the Council received from the government and would continue to lobby on this important matter.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft budget for 2014/15 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as set out in appendix 3 to the report, be approved for general consultation including an anticipated 0% Council Tax increase;
- (2) the current remaining budget gaps of £19.481m in 2015/16 and £18.612m in 2016/17 be noted;
- (3) the draft Public Health Budget for 2014/15, as set out in Appendix 5 to the report, be approved;
- (4) the statutory changes to schools funding for 2014/15 be noted and the proposed arrangements for the 2014/15 school funding formula as set out in Appendix 6 to the report be approved;
- (5) the sum of £239,219 be approved as Harrow’s contribution to the London Grant Scheme in 2014/15;
- (6) a Capital Financing Risk Reserve be established to allow for delays in capital receipts in the current financial year.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Council publishes a draft budget for 2014-15.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

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

747. Key Decision - Draft Capital Programme 2014/15 to 2017/18

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the proposed Capital Programme for 2014/15 to 2017/18 for consultation. The report also set out the Council's proposals for Capital investment over the 4-year period, including a substantial investment of £248m in infrastructure on General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) services.

The Portfolio Holder added that a rigorous regime was applied when setting the Programme and that it did not include vanity projects. He responded to various questions, including a question on consultation and confirmed that consultation would be carried out in a traditional manner and on individual projects as it was difficult for residents to appreciate and identify various projects within an overarching theme. The Director of Finance and Assurance explained that the Council was paying off more of its debt.

RESOLVED: That the draft Capital Programme, as detailed within Appendix 1, be approved for consultation, with the final version being presented at the February 2014 meeting of Cabinet.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Council to have an approved Capital Programme for 2014-15 to 2017-18 and to enable preparation work to be undertaken for future years.

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.

748. Key Decision - Revenue and Capital Monitoring for Quarter 2 as at 30 September 2013

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, which set out the Council's revenue and capital monitoring position as at 30 September 2013.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Revenue and Capital forecast outturn position at the end of Quarter 2, September 2013, be noted;
- (2) the Capital virement detailed in paragraphs 49 and 50 of the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that Cabinet was updated on the forecast revenue and capital financial position for 2013/14 and that budget virements were agreed in line with Financial Regulations.

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].

749. Key Decision - Collection Fund 2013/14

Cabinet received a report of the Director of Finance and Assurance, which set out the estimated financial position on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2014 and how it was shared amongst the constituent precepting bodies and the government.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) an estimated surplus of £2,095,937 on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2014 of which £1,676,274 was the Harrow share be noted;
- (2) an amount of £1,676,274 be transferred to the General Fund in 2014/15.

Reason for Decision: To be informed of the Council's statutory obligation to make an estimate of the surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund by 15 January 2014. Approval to the recommendations set out was a major part of the annual budget review process.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

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

750. Procurement of Banking Services

The Portfolio Holder for Finance introduced the report, including a confidential appendix, which set out the project management and procurement tender process undertaken for the provision of Banking Services.

RESOLVED: That, having taken into account appendix 1 in respect of the supply of banking services for the term of five years beginning on 1 April 2014 and ending on 31 March 2019 with an option to extend for a period of up to a further two years to 31 March 2021, the Royal Bank of Scotland be awarded the contract for the supply of banking services for the term of five years beginning on 1 April 2014 and ending on 31 March 2019 with an option to extend for a period of up to a further two years to 31 March 2021.

Reason for Decision: The Council's current banking contract was due to expire in March 2014. In compliance with the Council's Standing Orders, an open tendering procedure had been followed and, based on the results, a decision has been made to award the contract to the most economically advantageous tender.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

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

751. Strategic Performance Report - Quarter 2

The Portfolio Holder for Communications, Performance and Resources introduced the report, which summarised the Council and service performance for Quarter 2 against key measures and drew attention to areas requiring action. He identified the following three main challenges facing the Council:

- Children's Services – that he had been assured that the position in relation to the number of referrals was appropriate. He was concerned about the outcome of the recent Ofsted Inspection which was awaited;
- IT Transformation – the Transformation Programme was significantly behind schedule and he was personally dealing with certain issues directly with the provider, Capita, and how issues could be mitigated;
- Clean Streets – the previous administrations had set unachievable targets with reduced budgets. As a result, the streets were not kept clean, and increased litter and graffiti were also an issue. The new administration had put money back into street cleaning so that the issues could be addressed.

The Portfolio Holder responded to questions from a non-voting non-Executive Cabinet Member and pointed out that the new administration had inherited a budget framework from the previous administration(s), including targets set. The new administration would set out its priorities in the Corporate Plan and the budget as it moved forward and would focus on areas which residents had identified as their priorities. He added that this administration was looking at the whole performance management infrastructure as the current one was backward looking and reflective of the old Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). He re-iterated that poor target setting under the previous administration(s) had been particularly unhelpful. There was a need for the performance management infrastructure to be focused and forward looking and the data supplied for the quarter that was under consideration.

RESOLVED: That Portfolio Holders continue working with officers to achieve improvement against identified key challenges.

Reason for Decision: To be informed of performance against key measures and to identify and assign corrective action where necessary.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: None.

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 8.36 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR SUSAN HALL
Chairman