
REPORT OF CABINET

MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2008

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
 † Denotes apologies received

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL

PART II - MINUTES

372. **Declarations of Interest:**

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

1. Agenda Item 12 – Grants to Voluntary Organisations 2008/09

The following Members declared personal interests, as set out below, and remained in the room to participate in the discussion and decision relating to this item:-

- (i) Councillor Camilla Bath stated that her husband did voluntary work for Harrow Family Learning Network and Home Start - Harrow;
- (ii) Councillor David Ashton stated that he was on the Mencap Fund Raising Committee;
- (iii) Councillor Chris Mote stated that he was Vice-President of Harrow and Wealdstone Swimming Club.

The following Member declared a prejudicial interest, as set out below:

- (iv) Councillor Mrs Anjana Patel stated that she was a Board member for Harrow Mencap, a voluntary organisation funded by the Council. She remained in the room during discussion and decision relating to this item as there was no specific discussion relating to the organisation.

2. Agenda Item 15 – Development of Leisure and Cultural Facilities

- (i) During discussion on this item, Councillor Christine Bednell declared a personal interest in that she was a governor of Whitmore High School. She had not been party to any discussion relating to the proposals at this school. She remained in the room to participate in the discussion and decision relating to this item;
- (ii) During discussion on this item, Councillor Chris Mote declared a personal interest in that he was Vice-President of Harrow and Wealdstone Swimming Club. He remained in the room to participate in the discussion and decision relating to this item.

373. **Minutes:**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2008, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

374. **Arrangement of Agenda:**

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

<u>Item</u>	<u>Reason</u>
17. Appendices 4, 5 and 6 in relation to item 15 – Development of Leisure and Cultural Facilities – on the agenda.	The appendices contained exempt information under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, in that they contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information).

375. **Petitions:**
The Leader of the Council and the Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development welcomed Cabinet's youngest petitioner to the meeting.

1. Zoe Ram, a pupil at Kenmore Park Middle School, presented a petition and read out the nature of the petition, which was as follows:-

"To reduce traffic congestion and dog fouling around the school area at Kenton East Ward.

(a) 1,090 people have signed the petition with the full backing of the school, staff, pupils, parents, and governors.

(b) The whole community is affected by traffic problems and dog fouling around the area.

(c) Everyday we have to walk to school with the streets full of traffic, which is of danger to the public and no good for the environment. Dog fouling is taking germs into our school, homes, and is a health risk.

(d) We are requesting immediate action so we can get cleaner and safer streets, which the Local Authority will benefit from too. "

RESOLVED: That the petition be received and referred to the Portfolio Holder for Environment Services for consideration.

376. **Public Questions:**

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

1.

Questioner: Mr Brian Stoker

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

Question: "At the 13th December Cabinet meeting there was a supplemental question regarding Cedars Hall from Councillor Paul Scott:

"Would you be willing to give an indication / guarantee that when the item on Cedars Hall comes back to Cabinet, it will not be for residential use".

You are recorded in the minutes of the Cabinet meeting as replying that you could not answer "... until after the matter has gone out for consultation"

Now that consultation has started (20th February public meeting) can you now please answer and confirm that plans for the site will not include residential use?"

Councillor Mote: I have received only one question from Brian Stoker, who is unable to come tonight. I have three choices. Either I can read the question and answer it here. I can actually give a reply in writing or I can actually fail to take the question. I've decided that what I will do is to give him a written answer.

[Note: The Leader read out the Data Protection Act Notice, which had been omitted from the agenda. He stated that the Council would record items 5 and 6 on the agenda (Public Questions and Councillor Questions) to help ensure the accuracy of the published minutes.]

377. **Councillor Questions:**

RESOLVED: To note that no Councillor Questions had been received.

378. **Forward Plan 1 March 2008 - 30 June 2008:**

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Forward Plan for the period 1 March – 30 June 2008.

379. **Strategic Performance Report - Quarter 3, 2007-08:**

Cabinet considered the report of the Corporate Director of Strategy and Business Support, which summarised Council and service performance against key measures. The report drew attention to areas where further action was required.

The Portfolio Holder for Strategy and Business Support referred to the budget approved by full Council, which included £6.1m of investment to meet rising costs across key services. He referred to the Corporate Plan 2008-11 and highlighted how the Council's Corporate Priorities would drive the budget, a positive and welcome step change from previous years. Cabinet was briefed on the Improvement Programme underway, and the work supported by Price Waterhouse Coopers on Revenue Income Optimisation. The Comprehensive Performance Assessment judgement for 2007 had not been positive but work was underway to improve performance. However, he stressed that the CPA was 'backward' looking.

The Director of Strategy and Business Support referred to the key challenges facing the Council and highlighted some notable improvements in planning and children's services.

Individual Portfolio Holders reported on the improvements made in their service areas and drew attention to the key challenges they faced. They highlighted the measures that had been put in place for improvements and acknowledged the areas that required improvement.

Members were satisfied with the presentational style of the report, and it was

RESOLVED: That (1) the report be noted;

(2) the Portfolio Holders work with officers to achieve improvement against identified key challenges and receive monthly updates;

Reason for Decision: To identify and assign corrective action where necessary in relation to performance against key measures.

380. **Motor Vehicles Insurance Tender:**

The Corporate Director of Finance introduced the report, which set out progress made in reviewing the Council's motor insurance and sought approval to delegate authority for a final decision to the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Portfolio Co-ordination.

RESOLVED: That the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Portfolio Co-ordination be authorised to make any such decision as might be necessary to enter into a new insurance contract for motor insurance with the most favourable tender submission.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Council meets statutory requirements with respect to insurance of vehicles.

381. **Key Decision - Determination of Admission Arrangements 2009:**

The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Children's Development introduced the report, which sought to determine the admission arrangements for Harrow's community primary and high schools for the 2009/10 academic year, as set out in the consultation document, taking into account the recommendations of the Council's Harrow Admissions Forum meeting held on 4 February 2008.

The Portfolio Holder referred to the consultation that had been carried out and highlighted the specific arrangements proposed for Bentley Wood School, which were supported by the school. She commended the High Schools of Harrow.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Schemes of Co-ordination for 2009 be agreed;

(2) the following changes to the admission arrangements for 2009 be agreed:

- to offer places at Bentley Wood throughout the year by undertaking a fresh random allocation to decide which child was to be offered a place from the waiting list. This would be after places had been allocated to Children Looked After, girls with a Statement of Special Educational Needs naming Bentley Wood, any agreed medical claim, girls with sisters attending Bentley Wood at the same time;
- to maintain Harrow's relevant area as the administrative area of the London Borough of Harrow;
- to agree the closing date for receipt of applications for Reception class as 27 February 2009;
- to adopt Harrow's Revised Fair Access Protocol.

Reason for Decision: To determine admission arrangements by 15 April 2008 in the determination year, as statutorily required under the School Standards and Framework Act 1988.

382. **Key Decision - Housing HRA Capital Programme 2008 -10:**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing introduced the report, which detailed options for varying and enhancing the Council's housing capital programme.

The Divisional Director of Adults and Housing Services identified key aspects of the report and stated that the proposals therein would ensure that the Council would achieve the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 and would provide an increased opportunity for tenants and leaseholders to influence the work carried out. The Director stated that, if approved, the £500,000 referred to in recommendation 2 of the report would allocate Section 106 funding to the provision of increased bedrooms in over-crowded Council homes. It was noted that there were some 600 over-crowded households in the Council housing stock.

Members were informed that the Tenants' and Leaseholders' Consultative Forum had been given the opportunity to discuss the report but had not considered the report at its meeting held on 28 February 2008.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing commended the report to Cabinet and it was

RESOLVED: That (1) the introduction of a revised Harrow standard for decent homes be approved;

(2) the use of £500,000 funding from the Affordable Housing Fund (AHF) to meet the costs of extensions/conversions to individual properties be approved;

(3) amendments to the Housing Capital programme to provide increased tenant involvement be agreed;

(4) tenants' priorities on aspects of the capital programme be taken account of.

Reasons for Decision: (1) The 2007 review of the HRA Business Plan identified opportunities for enhancing the Council's housing capital programme while continuing to offer tenants decent homes works of a higher specification than that required to meet the Government's definition of a decent home;

(2) use of the AHF would assist the Council in increasing the potential for more family sized homes.

383. **Key Decision - Grants to Voluntary Organisations 2008/09:**

The Director of Community and Cultural Services introduced the report, which set out the recommendations of the Grants Advisory Panel meeting held on 5 March 2008 on the grant applications received for 2008/09. He referred to the increase in the overall funding allocation of the grant agreed by Council.

The Leader of the Council stated that he appreciated, from his own experience, how much effort went into dealing with the many requests for funding received by the Council, both from an officer and Member perspective. He thanked all those involved in the process.

The Leader stated that two of the recommendations concerned him; those relating to Girl Guides and KSIM, as neither application appeared to meet the Council's eligibility criteria. He proposed that these groups be awarded the sums of money awarded last year. This would be fair given the history of funding and the current scrutiny review of grants. The Deputy Leader of the Council duly seconded this proposal.

The Leader added that the proposal would also increase the 'pot' of money available to the Grants Advisory Panel to deal with appeals and any other applicants for support who did not meet the Council's criteria, but who might wish to apply. He added that, in the future, the applications would set out the eligibility criteria and give organisations an opportunity to apply for discretionary grants from the remaining funding 'pot'.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services thanked officers for their work in relation to the grant giving function of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations of the Grants Advisory Panel meeting held on 5 March 2008 be agreed, subject to Girlguiding Middlesex North West and KSIM Senior Citizen Association receiving the funding that was awarded to them last year.

Reason for Decision: To confirm the funding to voluntary organisations for 2008/09.

(See also Minute 372(1)).

384. **Key Decision - New Vehicle Crossings Policy:**

An officer introduced the report, which set out proposed amendments to the existing Vehicle Crossings Policy dated 13 March 2001. It was intended to streamline existing policy and introduce amendments in line with corporate priorities and for environmental sustainability reasons. The changes would also afford residents greater flexibility in cases where highway trees were involved.

RESOLVED: That the Vehicle Crossings Policy 2008 be adopted.

Reasons for Decision: (1) To strengthen control and consistency in determination of vehicle crossing applications;

(2) to improve public service in this area.

385. **Key Decision - Street Lighting PFI Scheme:**

An officer introduced the revised report of the Corporate Director of Community and Environment circulated with the Supplemental agenda. The officer referred to the minor amendment made to recommendation 3 therein, which had been necessary to reflect changes in interest rates. He briefed Members on key aspects of the report.

RESOLVED: That (1) the full commitment of existing budgets of £1,291,400 per annum (2006/07 prices) for the duration of the contract term be approved;

(2) the procurement budget of £650,000 be approved;

(3) the funding of the base case affordability gap of £824,805 per annum (2006/07 prices), for the duration of the contract term, as set out within the Council's Outline Business Case, be approved;

(4) it be noted that the base case assumes that the project will be off balance sheet under Financial Reporting Standard 5.

Reason for Decision: To reaffirm Harrow's commitment to funding the Private Finance Initiative contract for the benefit of the Department for Transport. This was required in advance of the HM Treasury Project Review Group's approval of Harrow's PFI credits, due at their 18 March 2008 meeting.

386. **Key Decision - Development of Leisure and Cultural Facilities:**

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services introduced the report, which further clarified the development plans and cost implications for achieving the extensive Leisure and Cultural facilities programme agreed at Cabinet on 8 November 2007. The Portfolio Holder described the Council's vision for the borough in this regard and stated that it was intended to achieve the proposals at no cost to Council Tax payers. She identified the package of measures, which would help improve the leisure and cultural facilities in the borough, details of which were set out in the officer report.

The Director of Community and Cultural Services stated that the proposals reflected the needs of residents and users following consultation. He referred to the plans titled

'The new Byron Leisure Centre Revised Plan' circulated at the meeting, which set out the additional facilities that would be provided and the advantages of the new proposals.

In reaching their decision, Members gave due consideration to the confidential appendices circulated with the agenda.

RESOLVED: That (1) the updated plan and facilities for the new Leisure Centre and general leisure plans for Harrow be noted;

(2) the updated funding plan to develop the new leisure and cultural facilities in Harrow be agreed, including the addition of £1.175m to the approved capital programme to be split equally between 2008-2009 and 2009-2010;

(3) the planning application for the Leisure Centre amendment, as proposed in the officer report, be noted;

(4) the Corporate Director of Community and Environment, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Portfolio Co-ordination and the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, be authorised to vire individual budget line items, up to £500k, as needed within the overall leisure sites programme to accommodate any further changes that might arise during the course of the project;

(5) it be noted that there would be continuing consultation with stakeholders regarding the development of the detail of the proposals put forward in the report, specifically to develop the full range of projects in the November 2007 report, which included a feasibility study at Hatch End, Masterplanning for Byron Park, relocation of Gayton Road library and a range of other related projects;

(6) the confidential appendices be noted.

Reasons for Decision: (1) To reflect the recommendations received during consultation with users and the public, in order to provide better use and more flexible spaces;

(2) to consider the additional amount to cover the costs of the improved design;

(3) to ensure that the project would achieve timescales target and be within the overall leisure sites budget.

(See also Minute 372(2)).

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.27 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CHRIS MOTE
Chairman