

Cabinet

Meeting of held on Monday, 24 September 2018 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Tony Newman (Chair);
;
Councillor Alison Butler, Hamida Ali, Jane Avis, Alisa Flemming,
Simon Hall, Stuart King, Oliver Lewis and Paul Scott

Also Present: Councillor

Apologies: Councillor Stuart Collins and Manju Shahul-Hameed

PART A

64/18 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

The part A minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 16 July 2018 were received. The Leader of the Council signed the minutes as an accurate record with the amendment that the following councillors were also present:

Councillor Tim Pollard
Councillor Maria Gatland
Councillor Lynne Hale
Councillor Yvette Hopley
Councillor Vidhi Mohan
Councillor Helen Pollard

65/18 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

66/18 **Urgent Business (If any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

67/18 **Corporate Plan 2018/22**

The Leader of the Council provided Cabinet with a presentation outlining that the Corporate Plan had been inspired by the 2018 Croydon Labour manifesto. Members were given an overview of the council's priorities for the next four years including; a Healthier Croydon with increased joint commissioning, Choose Your Future being extended, delivering affordable homes, ensuring the streets of Croydon are safe despite the

backdrop of reduced policing, a cleaner and more sustainable borough, supporting employment opportunities for young residents with work to continue to delivering a university, building a strong business sector, delivering sustainable transport, and ensuring that culture remained at the heart of regeneration. The Corporate Plan ambitions were set against the context of delivering cuts of 70% over the last ten years and the associated pressures experienced; however a commitment was provided that frontline services would be protected.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources noted that councils across the country were having to reduce services to the statutory minimum to balance the budget; however it was stated that that was not the case in Croydon as the finances of the council had been taken control of. It was further noted that the Financial Strategy clearly supported the delivery of the Corporate Plan.

A presentation by the Chief Executive gave context to the Corporate Plan, noting that there were clear objectives for delivering the outcomes; including the different way the council would be working with residents in localities. The Chief Executive provided Cabinet with key statistics for the borough including that it was anticipated that the borough would experience substantial growth in population; however it was noted that there were already over 94,000 young residents which was the largest proportion of 0-17 years olds of any borough.

It was noted by the Chief Executive that since 2011/12 £5.5 million in grant funding had been lost; whilst substantial demands on services were being experienced including 627 child protection cases, 272 unaccompanied asylum seekers, and over 3,500 adults for which the council was responsible for.

The Chief Executive informed Members that £34.1 million had been spent on a variety of services to overcome social isolation, and as such there was a need to work more smartly to deliver services. Services would be delivered using an evidence based approach and a large amount of work had already been undertaken to gain a clear picture of the different residents across the borough and it was recognised that different localities required different services. The intention was to work with residents at an earlier stage before they reached crises point with a key focus on early intervention and prevention, and working closely with partners. Partnership working would be integral to the success of the locality working and would build upon work already being undertaken; such as developing the Gateway Service and further integrating with the NHS including the One Croydon Alliance.

Members were informed that three delivery pilots would be opened across the borough which would be tailored to the needs of the area and would deliver services closer to where people needed them. A hub in Thornton Heath would be launched before the end of 2018 and it was intended that the Croydon south pilot would be opened from Spring 2019.

The Chief Executive gave Members an overview of the council workforce which stood at just over 3,000 employees. The response rate to the recent staff survey had been 75%; with 88% of respondents stating that they would recommend the council as an inclusive employer and 92% feeling valued by their teams. However, it was noted that only 23% of respondents feeling there were opportunities for career progression. Members were informed that there were four leadership programmes within the council and two director posts were being ring fenced for internal recruitment only to ensure there were opportunities for employees.

The Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure & Sport drew Members attention to the arts, culture and sport section of the Corporate Plan noting that it was an important priority as culture had a positive impact and improved people's health and life chances. Furthermore, there were positive economic impacts as more businesses were wanting to move to Croydon due to the investment.

The Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services stated that an important area of work was ensuring that residents living in the private rented sector, who were increasingly those on the lowest incomes, were living in accommodation that was fit for purpose. The Cabinet Member stated she was pleased to see that the council had a strong emphasis on ensuring housing was right and fit, but also was looking at the welfare, income and education of those living in the properties.

In response to Member questions the Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway services confirmed that figures regarding the number of Landlord Licences that had been withdrawn would be provided to the Leader of the Opposition. She further stated that there had been significant progress in improving accommodation in the private rented sector as the council was working with landlords to ensure the properties were fit for purpose; however prosecutions had been made when notices had not been complied with.

Members discussed the different demographics of the borough and ensuring that the council was able to engage with all vulnerable residents to ensure no one was missed through the new locality work. The Leader confirmed that work was continuing to progress the work on the locality hubs and ensuring there was full understanding of the population and its needs.

The Cabinet Member for Transport, Environment & Homes (voting Job Share) confirmed that preliminary results on the 20mph zones 1 and 2 had been received and had been positive. Within the Labour manifesto there had been a commitment to extend 20mph speed limits to more roads, and as such roads would be assessed as to whether it would be appropriate to reduce the speed limit. It was further noted by the Cabinet

Member that the Mayor of London had announced that he planned to introduce 20mph speed limits on Transport for London (TfL) roads.

In response to queries regarding the TfL consultation on reducing bus services the Leader stated the council would engage with TfL; however it was important to recognise that TfL had faced significant cuts in government grants also. The Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport & Regeneration (voting Job Share) further confirmed that the council had engaged positively with TfL and had an agreement for a Croydon bus review to be undertaken to ensure services met the needs of residents.

The Cabinet Member for Safer Croydon & Communities informed Members that there had been a restructure within the Place department and the position of Director of Public Realm had been formed which would facilitate the streamlining of services and improved responses. A review of community safety had been commissioned; however it was important to recognise that safety was the responsibility of the whole organisation and increased investment was being made into the service including 50% more Neighbourhood Officers.

In response to Member questions the Leader stated that neighbourhood forums would not be introduced in the same manner as they had been before; rather there would be a focus on further community devolution so that local communities and ward councillors were more involved in decisions affecting the area for which it was hoped there would be cross party support.

The Leader of the Council delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below.

RESOLVED to:

Recommend to full Council the Approval of the Corporate Plan for Croydon, 2018 – 2022, as set out in Appendix A & B of the report.

68/18

Quarter 1 Financial Performance 2018/19

The Leader informed Cabinet that the Quarter 1 Financial Performance 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/2022 would be taken as one item at the meeting.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources stated that the Financial Strategy had been drafted against the backdrop of financially challenging times for local authorities, with a number of authorities close to being unable to balance their budgets, due to the cuts being experienced by local government.

In Croydon it was recognised there was a fast growing population which also brought a number of challenges in ensuring that services with delivered despite the reduction in government grants. The Strategy

sought to set out the service areas that would likely see a rise in demand and the areas of possible growth. However, due to the lack of concrete plans from the government in regard to funding beyond April 2020, assumptions had been made on the level of government funding that might be received, that council tax would increase by 2% each year, and that the Adult Social Care precept would also continue.

Whilst it was recognised that to ensure the budget was balanced £26 million of savings or additional income would need to be realised; the council would continue to spend an additional £17million on children's services to ensure it delivered and would be sustainable.

The Cabinet Member informed Members that key areas of savings and income over the next four years were outlined within the report. The Corporate Plan was highlighted for the focus on prevention work, working in localities and joining up services. By working to keep families out of crises there would be improved outcomes for families and a reduced pressure on the public purse.

The asset investment strategy was highlighted by the Cabinet Member for having been designed to provide net revenue to the council by using the authority's borrowing power. The revenue would be used to improve services and housing.

The Executive Director informed Members that the Medium Term Financial Strategy did not provide a detailed budget for the next four years, and reports would continue to be brought to Cabinet four times a year outlining the financial position of the council. The uncertainty of funding, in particular in regards to adult social care was noted, and as such income would be crucial to delivering the Strategy.

The Cabinet Member stated that the Quarter 1 financial performance showed continuing pressures on services with an increased number of looked after children, continued pressures on SEN transport and adult social care. It further noted that there had been £2.8 million from property income; however there was a forecast overspend of £1.5 million. Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers had an associated net cost of £7 million and despite work to get the Home Office to recognise the expenditure there had not been a response to a letter to the Home Secretary in relation to the expenditure.

In response to the forecasted overspend, the Cabinet Member informed Members that income and savings initiatives for 2019/2020 were being reviewed as to whether they could be brought forward to the current financial year.

In response to Member questions the Leader stated that the increase in Member Allowances had been the first in ten years and it was felt that it was important to ensure Members were paid allowances that reflected

their work. It was suggested that if a Member did not wish to take the increased allowance then it could be arranged that they did not receive it.

The Executive Director informed Members that when the budget was set that early estimates had been made in regards to the Brick by Brick dividends. The business plan for Brick by Brick, that had been agreed by Cabinet after the budget had been set, suggested that dividends would be received at varying levels over a long period of time. As such, it was stated that the situation would be reviewed once dividends were received as to whether the monies would be released to the general budget to deliver services or would be kept in reserves. With regards to the re-profiling of Brick by Brick schemes Members were informed that the details would be provided.

In response to Member questions the Cabinet Member confirmed that the overspend of £700,000 on street lighting had been due to the increase in energy costs, however the contract was due to be re-procured and the cost of energy would be reviewed to reduce the pressure experienced.

The Leader of the Council delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below.

RESOLVED to:

1. Note the current revenue outturn forecast at the end of the first quarter of 2018/19 of £1.468m, this is before exceptional items of £1.131m, resulting in a total overspend of £2.599m;
2. Note the ongoing engagement with and lobbying of Government by the Council for additional funding for Croydon, both in general terms and specifically Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children given Croydon's gateway status, fire safety measures and mitigation of the impact of the Universal Credit implementation.
3. Note the HRA position of a £0.725m forecast underspend against budget;
4. Note the capital outturn projection of £466m, forecast to be an underspend of £37.9m against budget;
5. Approve the changes to the capital programme, as set out in paragraph 7.4 and Table 6.
6. Note the letter that was sent to Home Secretary, attached at appendix 3, requesting a review of our UASC funding rates for 2018/19.

The Leader informed Cabinet that the Quarter 1 Financial Performance 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/2022 would be taken as one item at the meeting. The minutes for the item can be found at minute 68/18.

The Leader of the Council delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below.

RESOLVED to:

The Cabinet recommend to Full Council:

1. The approval of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2018/22 including the establishment of a £100m asset acquisition fund as referenced in the MTFS which is set out in Appendix 1 to this report.
2. Subject to recommendation 1.1 being approved, to agree that the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, acting in consultation with the Leader, be given authority to approve asset acquisitions made pursuant to the Asset Investment Strategy referenced in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/22 and set out in full in Appendix 2 to this report.

70/18

Croydon's Partnership Early Help Strategy Update Report

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning informed Members that the final draft of the Strategy would be agreed by the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board on 25 September 2018, and the aim of the Strategy was to strengthen provision for children and families by supporting them as early as possible.

Cabinet was asked to note that the name of the service in paragraph 3.7.10 of the report should read 'Best Start Family Solutions Service', a service that recognised and would support different families with different needs.

Zoe Harris, the Headteacher of Elmwood Infant School, stated that she had worked in all three localities and felt confident that the Strategy would meet the needs of children across the borough. It was recognised that often schools were the first point of contact for schools and could often provide advice as to which organisations could be contacted for additional support; including housing. Ms Harris stated that there was a responsibility for all partners to meet the needs of a family before they reached crises point and it was felt that the Strategy would provide clarity on how to provide the support at an early stage.

The Interim Head of Early Help informed Members that following the Ofsted inspection in 2017 there was a recognised need for an all age strategy and a significant amount of work had been undertaken to develop

the Strategy by all partners. By working in localities, in partnership and with communities it was felt that families would be supported at an earlier stage before they reached crises point, and would support work to ensuring families were resilient.

Members were informed that work was ongoing on developing the performance frameworks and how matrixes for how the impact of the Strategy would be assessed. It was anticipated that analysis would be undertaken at the launch of the Strategy and that performance would be assessed quarterly and reviewed.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning stated she was pleased to see that the Strategy had been developed as it was a key policy for delivering positive outcomes for families and would assist in budget savings. Furthermore, the Shadow Cabinet Member was pleased that the Strategy would be locally based and was all-age; however concerns were raised with regards to the partnership work and how it would be measured. It was noted that previous strategies had not been as successful due to the fragility of partnership work.

In response the Cabinet Member noted the concerns; however it was felt that the success of the Strategy would be due to all partners recognising it was the responsibility of all to meet the needs of the family, and all partners had been active in the development of the Strategy. It was noted that measuring the impact of the Strategy would be important and the framework would evolve as would the Strategy to ensure that the needs of the children in the borough were being met.

The Leader confirmed that the Chair of the Safeguarding Board was working with partners to ensure there was a robust plan in place ahead of the implementation date of September 2019, and there was a commitment to go beyond the statutory guidance to ensure the safeguarding of children.

Cabinet thanked officers and partners for their work in developing the Strategy.

The Leader of the Council delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below.

RESOLVED to:

1. Note the progress made in development of Croydon's Partnership Early Help Strategy and proposed plan for implementation.
2. Endorse the Final Draft of the Partnership Early Help Strategy which will be considered for finalisation and agreement at the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board in September 2018.

The Leader noted that there had been cross party support to take the review forward while the Leader of the Opposition stated he felt that there was room for improvement in the Council's governance arrangements which would enable better participation by all councillors and the public.

The Leader of the Council delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below.

RESOLVED to:

Cabinet recommends to the Council to –

1. Approve the establishment of a cross party governance review panel to assess and review the Council's governance arrangements as set out in the draft scoping document and terms of reference for the governance panel as set out in Appendix 1.
2. To appoint a maximum of 7 councillors (4 Labour 3 Conservative) and 1 independent member to the governance review panel (together with independent external chair and such other expert independent members external to the Council as the panel may wish to co-opt in a non-voting capacity).
3. To require the governance review panel to report its findings and make recommendations within the 2018/2019 municipal year on options and improvements to the Council's governance arrangements, and in any event to report on progress to the Cabinet and Council, as advised.

72/18

Care Leavers' Local Offer

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning noted that it was a statutory requirement for councils to publish their Local Offer by the end of September 2018, and that the proposed Offer had been developed in collaboration with care leavers. Members were introduced to Ashley who was a Croydon care leaver and who had supported officers in developing the Offer.

Ashley informed Members that she had been working with officers to develop the Local Offer by giving the view of a care leaver and her experiences. In working to develop the Local Offer, Ashley stated that she had found the experience interesting and had learnt about services that were on offer that previously she was unaware of. It was noted that there were 732 care leavers in the borough and it was important that they were made aware of the support that was available to them; as such Ashley informed Members that the Local Offer document would be available in different formats to ensure it was accessible and would be continually updated following feedback from care leavers to ensure it remains a functioning and useful document.

The Leader thanked Ashley for her work on developing the Local Offer and for speaking so passionately to Members.

The Shadow Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning congratulated Ashley for her excellent work. The Shadow Cabinet Member further recommended that the Local Offer be read by all councillors to support them in their role as Corporate Parents.

It was noted by the Cabinet Member for Homes & Gateway Services that housing was an important area and that the council had a responsibility as corporate parents to support care leavers; as all young people required support when leaving home.

The Opposition Lead for Scrutiny stated it was an important document which all councillors should be recommended to read. It was suggested that there was an opportunity for the Corporate Parenting Panel to have a more enhanced role to proactively monitor the delivering and bring to the attention of all councillors information relating to their role as a Corporate Parent. In response the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Learning stated that a copy of the Local Offer could be provided to all new councillors when elected, and that training sessions on the responsibilities of a Corporate Parent would be reintroduced for all councillors. Furthermore, the Cabinet Member stated that the Corporate Parenting Panel would be reviewed to establish what could be done to strengthen the Panel further.

The Leader of the Council delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below.

RESOLVED to:

The Cabinet is recommended to approve the Offer and the Council's commitment to prioritising the needs of Care Leavers, and to note that the offer will be regularly updated and enhanced.

73/18

Stage 1: Recommendations arising from Scrutiny

The Leader of the Council delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below.

RESOLVED to:

Receive the recommendations arising from Scrutiny and Overview Committee (10th July & 4th September 2018) to provide a substantive response within two months (ie. at the next available Cabinet meeting on **19 November 2018**).

74/18

Stage 2: Response to recommendations arising from Streets, Environment & Homes Scrutiny Sub-Committee 20 March 2018 & 26 June 2018

The Leader of the Council delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below.

RESOLVED to:

Approve the response and action plans attached to this report at Appendix A and that these be reported to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or relevant Sub-Committees.

75/18

Investing in our Borough

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources stated that a number of contracts listed within the report were to be extended to ensure that all contracts relating to early help expired at the same time. It was planned that this would facilitate ensuring the early help offer was coordinated when all the contracts were let.

The Leader of the Council delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out below.

RESOLVED to:

The Cabinet is requested to note:

1. The contracts over £500,000 in value anticipated to be awarded by the nominated Cabinet Member, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources or, where the nominated Cabinet Member is the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources, in consultation with the Leader.
2. The list of delegated award decisions made by the Director of Commissioning and Procurement, between 02/06/2018 – 08/08/2018.
3. The list of delegated award decisions for contracts over £500,000 in value and procurement strategies over £5,000,000 in value made by the nominated Cabinet Member in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources or, where the nominated Cabinet Member is the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in consultation with the Leader since the last meeting of Cabinet.
4. Property acquisitions and disposals agreed by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in consultation with the Leader since the last meeting of Cabinet.
5. The Cabinet recommends to the Leader of the Council that prior to the next meeting of Cabinet in October, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in consultation with the Leader, be

authorised to agree the award in respect of the contracts related to the Good to Great ICT transformation programme in line with the strategy approved by Cabinet on 20th November 2017 (reference: 91/17 Investing in our Borough c. ICT sourcing strategy) for the reasons set out in para 4.5 and 4.6. Note that any awards made under this delegation will be notified in the standard contracts report to the next meeting of Cabinet.

76/18

Exclusion of the Press and Public

This item was not required.

The meeting ended at 8.19 pm