

CABINET

Monday 4 October 2021 at 5.00 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillor Claire Holland (Chair), Councillor Danial Adilypour, Councillor Lucy Caldicott, Councillor Matthew Bennett, Councillor Edward Davie, Councillor Jim Dickson, Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Councillor Donatus Anyanwu and Councillor Maria Kay

APOLOGIES: Councillor Sonia Winifred and Councillor Andy Wilson

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Scott Ainslie and Councillor Nicole Griffiths

*Action
required by*

1. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were none.

2. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR (VCS) ASSET STRATEGY

Due to the number of public speakers registered to speak on this Item, this Item was taken first.

The report was introduced by Cabinet Member, Voluntary Sector and Leisure, Councillor Donatus Anyanwu who highlighted that:

- There were a limited number of Council owned properties across the borough which are occupied by a variety of Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups
- There was little consistency in terms of rent arrangements across these groups
- The proposed strategy would ensure equity for all
- The proposed Strategy would provide tenants the benefit of gradually increased rents over the next 6 years
- The Strategy would provide existing tenants, where their rents were increasing, a rent-free period to help alleviate some of the issues arising out of the pandemic.

Cabinet was addressed by Jenny Stiles, Vice-Chair of Waterloo Action Centre, Abdu Ibrahim from the Eritrean Saho Culture Association and Tedros Abay on behalf of the Community of Tigrayan in the UK who highlighted:

- Concerns regarding the cease of Lambeth Grants and asked why empty properties had not been challenged
- Appreciation for proposed renovations

- That the proposal demonstrates long-term tenancies and allows for community groups to plan in advance, and with confidence
- Issues regarding the internal mess that had been left following the completion of some repairs. In response to this issue, the Leader stated that they would take this comment away and have conversations with relevant contractors.

In response to some of the comments raised, Councillor Donatas Anyanwu, Cabinet Member for Voluntary Sector and Leisure confirmed that:

- Although the current arrangements for rent are not equitable, the new Strategy would provide a fairer rent level for each property within the Council's portfolio
- The subsidy would be more fairly split across all groups
- A lot of the empty properties within the borough are in a state of disrepair and require investment and additional resourcing to bring them back in to use – this is being looked at as a key issue in need of addressing.

Following consideration, Cabinet resolved:

1. To grant all VCS tenants an extra quarter's rent free whilst the VCS Asset Strategy was being developed, to help alleviate some of the challenges from lockdown, at a cost of £70,593.75.
2. To extend the transition period from three to six years, where rents were due to increase.
3. To provide additional independent business consultancy to tenants that most need it.
4. To incorporate feedback from the consultation into the Liaison Officer's job description, to ensure frequent interaction with tenants and reasonable contact.
5. To grant longer leases, on a case-by-case basis, subject to the usual technical and financial due diligence, including organisation governance and viability.
6. To promote a VCS Panel with wider VCS representation, to promote advocacy and support to those tenants that require capacity building across a range of potential areas.

3. LAMBETH MADE SAFER VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS (VAWG) STRATEGY 2021-27

The Leader, Councillor Claire Holland highlighted the recent tragedies of four young women who had lost their lives at the hands of violence; and that the proposed Strategy set out a vision for a safer Lambeth for all.

The report was introduced by Deputy Leader (Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety) Councillor Jacqui Dyer who highlighted that:

- This would be the Council's third Strategy relating to Violence against Women and Girls
- 5 women in Lambeth had lost their lives to violence
- 80 women had been killed by men since the murder of Sarah Everard

- The Strategy proposed a vision for Lambeth as a safe Borough for all, and a framework by which the Council aimed to achieve this
- All types of violence (domestic abuse, sexual exploitation, violence, stalking, harassment) and too often hidden and/or unreported
- The Strategy initiated the VAWG Strategy Partnership Board which would be responsible for turning the Strategy into an Action Plan to be launched on 25 November – the International Day for Violence Against Women. This was to be published alongside the Strategy and renewed annually

Councillor Nicole Griffiths, speaking on behalf of the Green Group, expressed their commendations for this Strategy, and raised a number of questions surrounding:

- The involvement with wider London
- On-going work with the Police regarding the role of the Borough Commander and ensuring these ideals are incorporated into Officer training
- The use of support forums for victims
- Advertisement of available help and whether these are accessible to all.

In response to some of the questions and comments, Deputy Leader Councillor Jacqui Dyer explained that:

- The Action Plan was being updated and any recommendations would be incorporated into the work on the Action Plan
- The Council was working closely with the Borough Commander and Met Police, and significant developments were underway, including the roll-out of Domestic Abuse Matters training to Police Officers
- Work was underway to resource and utilise existing forums, of which residents were a key central voice. The delivery of these was seen as a priority
- The Communications team has been working with residents and experts to develop their strategy around support, including language, in order to create an animation that is accessible and inclusive.

Following consideration, Cabinet resolved:

1. To adopt the new Lambeth Made Safer VAWG Strategy, attached at Appendix C, which outlines the Council's commitment as a partnership to a six-year vision for tackling all forms of Violence Against Women and Girls in Lambeth.

4. BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE REPORT - Q1 2021-22

The Leader, Councillor Claire Holland introduced the report, in which she highlighted that:

- Despite it being difficult to compare data from this year to last due to the pandemic, significant improvements can be seen

- A high percentage of senior staff hold one or more protected characteristics
- There had been an increased demand in temporary accommodation and social care needs throughout the borough resulting in pressure to budget and service delivery
- The delivery of affordable housing remains a key priority for the Council.

Councillor Scott Ainslie, speaking on behalf of the Green Group, raised concerns regarding the Budget Report, and posed a number of questions surrounding:

- Borough Plan KPI's: Concerns around the figure for Youth Violence being marked as on track despite recent events of this nature
- The number of dwellings that were offered as affordable housing
- The overspend on temporary accommodation and whether the recent regeneration estates have secured Council tenants

In response to some of the questions and comments, Councillor Edward Davie, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People highlighted that the Council's performance indicator for youth violence showed the rate of youth violence per 1000 young people aged 1-24 years old, which had fallen. Councillor Davie noted that the trend was down this quarter, but the problem is not solved, and the Council must continue to work hard to carry this trend further.

Deputy Leader, Councillor Matthew Bennett, Cabinet Member for Planning, Development and New Homes highlighted that there had been substantial progress surrounding new homes, including a number of new homes having been built in various locations across the borough. One of the developments also benefitted from 18 additional homes than the original Planning Permission agreed. Councillor Bennett also stated that the most suitable temporary accommodation is being sought, and steps are in place to work towards ending the housing strategy including using homes to house the homeless.

In conclusion to the discussion, Councillor Jim Dixon, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care explained that the Lambeth Make Safer Strategy is being implemented by priority work streams and offered support to any Cabinet Member in terms of understanding the Lambeth Make Safer Strategy.

Following consideration, Cabinet resolved:

1. To note the latest performance update against the delivery of the Borough Plan, including both the review of the activity taken place in the directorate business plans as well as the corporate performance indicator outturns.
2. To note the financial position reported for Q1 and to note the budgetary risks and mitigating measures moving forward.
3. To note the latest position of each of the directorates, looking at the budgetary position, performance and progress towards the delivery of business plans

CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 6.20 pm

CHAIR CLLR CLAIRE HOLLAND
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

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