CABINET

Monday 12 October 2015 at 7.00 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Cabinet Members: Portfolio:
Councillor Matthew Bennett Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Jim Dickson Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Jane Edbrooke Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods
Councillor Jack Hopkins Cabinet Member for Jobs & Growth
Councillor Paul McGlone Deputy Leader (Finance and Investment)
Councillor Jackie Meldrum Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care
Councillor Lib Peck Leader of the Council
Councillor Jane Pickard Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Councillor Imogen Walker Deputy Leader (Policy)

Apologies for absence Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite

Also present: Councillor Michelle Agdomar, Councillor Mary Atkins, Councillor Alex Bigham, Councillor Tim Briggs, Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Councillor Bernard Gentry, Councillor Claire Holland and Councillor Guilherme Rosa

Action required by

1. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

   There were none.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

   RESOLVED: That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 14 September 2015 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record of the proceedings.

3. CULTURE 2020
The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Councillor Jane Edbrooke introduced the report, stating that it was a result of the unprecedented financial challenges facing the Council. There was a £4 million cut being faced by cultural services within the Council, and therefore a balancing act needed to be struck. Furthermore, there had been a 50% reduction in the grant received from central Government, and therefore the report represented a need to address these challenges whilst still meeting the Council’s statutory obligations.

Tim Odell, UNION representative for library staff, addressed Cabinet and made the following points:

- The report was an incompetent piece of work and would render the Council open to legal challenge;
- Libraries were essential for access to education and social mobility;
- The proposals put forward were designed to benefit Greenwich Leisure Ltd. (GLL, not-for-profit organisation) and represented a lack of imagination on the part of Lambeth Labour;
- The recommendations in the report would have an especially negative impact on Lambeth’s Muslim community;
- It was unacceptable that gyms were being prioritised over libraries;
- The Council should adopt a more holistic approach to the financial situation.

Laura Swaffield, a representative from Friends of Lambeth Libraries, also raised the following points:

- It was acknowledged that the Council was facing severe cuts from central Government, however the wisdom of a scheme which greatly benefited GLL by several million pounds was questioned;
- The library service in Lambeth was nationally-recognised and provided a wide range of valuable services to Lambeth’s most vulnerable residents;

Collette Thomas, Chair of Lambeth Parks Forum, also raised the following points:

- More information needed to be provided in order to understand how the parks would be maintained at basic levels;
- The necessity of cuts were recognised, but the report had not been properly thought through;
- There had not been proper resident consultation prior to the publication of the report;
- More information was needed regarding the capital investment plan.

In response to queries regarding potential legal challenges, the Director of Corporate Resources, Mark Hynes, responded that section 13 of the report contained a detailed legal analysis, covering issues such as the consultation process, requirements for Secretary of State consent for land disposals and state aid issues which should allay concerns Cabinet and residents may have about the validity of any future legal challenge to the process.

Adrian Smith, the Director of Strategy & Commissioning, Neighbourhoods,
raised the following points in response to questions from speakers:

- The report sets out the framework for needs assessment based on changing demography and outlines what residents can expect with regards to book stock, self-service, wi-fi provision, etc.
- The leisure service on offer will be similar to other Council leisure services;
- There is provision for staff retention set out in the report;
- The lease agreement with GLL would be subject to the decision taken by Cabinet at the meeting;
- There is a £20 million park capital investment programme, and the Council was in the final stages of due diligence regarding individual capital investment schemes;
- The events strategy would be subject to a separate report which would be released at a later date;
- Grants maintenance information was attached as an appendix to the report which sets out in detail the services residents can expect to see in their parks and open spaces;
- There would be no additional funding going to GLL - capital investment from GLL would go directly towards investment in library services.

Christina Burnett, a representative of Vauxhall Community Interest Company (CIC), raised the following points:

- Lambeth Libraries were leading in the country on accessible libraries. The quality of the libraries as they currently were was high;
- If the recommendations in the report were approved, work done to make the libraries of national standard would be destroyed;
- The recommendations would also hand over council-owned buildings to GLL;
- No consultation had been offered on the GLL proposal and it was developed in the utmost secrecy;
- The proposals were against all principles of open democracy and the decision process should be halted immediately until proper consultation has taken place;
- It had been proposed to create a mutual association in order to preserve the libraries, but this had not been considered by Council;
- There are no plans or feasibility studies for the new leisure centres;
- There is an oversupply of gyms in the north of the Borough.

Councillor Clare Holland also raised the following points:

- The Council was facing savage cuts to its budget introduced by the former Coalition Government and with more to come from the current administration. Things cannot stay as they are as there is no money;
- As challenges are faced it is important that Council prioritise residents most at risk from social isolation and to take account of the local needs;
- South Lambeth road area is affectionately known as “little Portugal” due to a large Portugese community – the library is a vital means of integration for this community;
- Queried whether an Equality Impact Assessment had been carried
Patrick Roberts, a Thornton Ward resident and Trustee for Extant also raised the following points:

- At no time during consultations was shared services between gyms and libraries discussed;
- Queried whether a feasibility study had been carried out;
- Refurbishment of Streatham library had a downside as wheelchair users can now only access one computer – there were therefore questions as to whether or not the refurbished libraries would be fully accessible for disabled people.

Adrian Smith, the Director of Strategy and Commissioning, Neighbourhoods, responded and raised the following points:

- Community-based activities such as those relating to the Portuguese community could be continued. Paragraph 5 of the report states how Council will work with communities at Tate South Lambeth to secure ongoing provision of work with people with visual impairments and disabilities;
- There will be provision in terms of staffing to be able to curate each neighbourhood library and ensure stock meets the needs and diversity of local communities. The Equalities Impact Assessment was appended to the report;
- There is a possibility of creating a staff mutual which has not been rejected, however there has not been a detailed business case submitted to the Council on this matter yet. On 1st April 2016 £800,000 drops out of the cultural services budget – therefore any proposal needs to be financially viable. If we did not deliver on this there would be a risk of not achieving the Council’s statutory obligations. Given these issues, a recommendation could not be made to Cabinet to consider the staff mutual at this time.

Helen Hayes, Member of Parliament for Dulwich and West Norwood, raised the following points:

- She fully recognised the financial constraints that the Council was facing. Council faces a series of very difficult choices, particularly with regards to services provided to most vulnerable within our communities;
- It is not right that a council with such a high level of deprivation should have to undergo these decisions, which are a result of the current and previous Government’s fiscal policies;
- Nearly 100 residents have written to her since the report was published expressing their disagreement;
- The Council needs to work creatively to deliver services for residents;
- She would rather see libraries remain open rather than close or alternatively see them run on a different basis;
- Carnegie residents had overwhelmingly told her that it is a library that needs to be at the centre of the future of that building. It isn’t clear that proposals for a gym fit particularly well into the physical building or are a sustainable financial mode as there are already too many gyms in the area;
- The plan needs to be a sustainable plan for the long term, and she
expressed concern about the lack of detail within the proposal;  
• The concern is that the funding coming out of the proposed endowment hasn’t the potential to provide long-term sustainable funding.

Robert Gibson, the Chair of the Upper Norwood Library campaign, also raised the following points:

• The libraries should be professionally-staffed and properly-funded;  
• Lambeth is proposing a postcode lottery in destroying a comprehensive library service just when the service is getting better and better;  
• The report lacks in coherence and vision and won’t deliver the £4m savings it is designed to achieve;  
• The Council has ended up doing worse for libraries than the Conservatives did;  
• The Council could have not wasted hundreds of thousands supporting the garden bridge;  
• The funding proposed for Upper Norwood library is insufficient;  
• The local community should be working with the Council in order to better deliver services;  
• The proposals will prove costly in terms of legal challenges.

Helen Holmes, a representative from the Friends of Tate South Lambeth Library, also raised the following points:

• With respect to cultural activities; the Council’s plan is to have a holistic framework – encouraging people to have a healthy mind and to target specific at-risk groups in the community. Council has stated it is important to have a healthy place for cultural activities. However, Tate South Lambeth currently meets all the council’s stated criteria;  
• Regarding alternative proposals - documents submitted by residents allow the Council to still provide services and retain staff;  
• She challenged the Council’s authority on this matter and stated that the legal advice offered to the public was insufficient;  
• Regarding an external contractor – it was queried whether the contract was put out to open tender;  
• With respect to interim library plans – it was queried what the justification was for spending £800,000 on improving Durning Library, and it was further queried where the money for free gym services would come from.

Bill Linskey, the Chair of Lambeth History Forum, also raised the following points:

• He had felt slight relief upon reading the report that the worst possible treatment of the archive in terms of moving it was not happening;  
• He was not opposed in principle to the archives changing as there needs to be more space and there should have been better planning before the financial crisis hit;  
• The forum is ready to help find a suitable location for the archives which meets all the standards set out in the report.
Councillor Tim Briggs, the Leader of the Opposition, also raised the following points:

- He asked Council to reconsider closures in a different way;
- Libraries had been badly-run under Labour’s stewardship - 50% of library budgets had been spent even before libraries had seen any of it;
- There was no proper consultation in the report;
- More money should be spent on making services better as opposed to more Council staff;
- Budget pressures were being used by other Councils to provide services in an innovative way;
- There is a difference between GLL turning libraries into gyms and allowing them to run libraries as libraries – GLL does the latter effectively;
- The Labour administration has insisted on running libraries in-house as they are scared to upset the unions – libraries should be run by not-for-profit organisations.

Councillor Bernard Gentry also raised the following points:

- The financial situation was not good and savings needed to be made, but how and where those savings were made was up to the Council and not anybody else;
- With all the new investment coming into the borough, business rates will increase, as will the Council Tax base. It is therefore premature to look at cutting these services when the financial situation may improve;
- Other decisions such as building a new town hall demonstrate the Council’s financial priorities;
- The Communications budget never gets cut, and 33 Councillors receive a Special Responsibility Allowance which is never reduced.
- There needs to be greater financial clarity and therefore some of these decisions are premature.

In response to Councillor Bernard Gentry’s comments, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Lib Peck, stated that whilst investment into the Borough was welcomed, it was very unlikely to significantly change the financial outlook for the Borough with respect to the recommendations in the report.

Adrian Smith the Director of Strategy and Commissioning, Neighbourhoods, responded to comments and raised the following points:

- The buildings would be leased to GLL and modifications to buildings would require going through planning processes but arrangements were still being made on this matter;
- There had been no need to tender for services as the Council had an existing contract with GLL for the provision of leisure services, the three new healthy living centres would be provided through that contract. There were no additional services being transferred to GLL nor any additional funding to GLL for the leisure provision;
- The report set out the funding arrangements for the Upper Norwood Joint Library (UNJL). A point of clarification was made
that the proposal was not to lease the UNJL building to GLL, but to continue the process of Asset Transfer to the UNJL Trust through Croydon Council. The service offer in the building would be provided through Lambeth Library Service;

- Regarding Carnegie – the Council would work with local groups to shape the leisure offer, any proposal must however be at no cost to the Council as there was no budget available after the 1st April;
- Regarding the staff mutual - the preference was to retain an in-house service delivery model. Any proposals have to be financially viable and provide assurance that statutory duties would be met;
- Regarding releasing legal advice – that had been raised as a Freedom of Information request and this would be taken forward;
- Regarding capital funding – this could not be used in any other way besides what it was provided for and was not available to pay for staffing or revenue-based services. The allocation to Durning Library relates to decisions Cabinet made a number of years ago, these were the final stages of that capital investment programme;
- Regarding the archive - Council would need to find a new permanent home for the archives subject to a permanent review. The report sets out the process by which Council would do that, reporting in September 2016;
- Regarding parks grounds maintenance, the core offer was outlined in the report, this has been discussed over the last year with Friends of Groups and the Forum.
- Regarding the parks capital programme, that refers to decisions made in December 2014, which was a £20m programme based on needs assessment across the whole of the Borough. The proposals in the report represent the first phase. It was difficult to go into details of those proposals because they are still going through appropriate due diligence, but it was expected that the Council would continue to work through the needs assessment that takes the Council through phases two and three.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Lib Peck, invited Cabinet members to make comments. The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Jim Dickson, raised the following points:

- Cabinet was appreciative of the efforts of residents and those who work in the libraries – the administration wishes to maintain and improve town libraries and neighbourhood libraries;
- Libraries are the centre of our communities – they create cohesion and are vital for physical and mental health;
- The only disagreement is how we pay for them - if Council had the power as an administration to put up council tax then they would do;
- If Council had more Government grant they would take advantage of that.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Jim Dickson, further requested that assurances around Carnegie libraries be added as an amendment to the report:

- That GLL will be instructed to work in partnership with local people to develop a community hub and library;
- That the final decision of mix of uses of the building will be taken in full consultation;
• That Council will consider introducing an earlier break clause than the current seven years;
• That closure of building for improvements or changes will be kept to a minimum.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Matthew Bennett, further stated that the proposals would enable the Upper Norwood Library opening hours to be extended.

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth, Councillor Jack Hopkins, stated that he was willing to work directly with all groups that operate out of Tate South Lambeth Library. He further expressed a willingness to work with community centres in local areas to make sure they were accommodated in the time that Tate South Lambeth Library was unavailable. He further stated that Councillors did fight back and lobbied the Government regarding budget cuts.

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Councillor Jane Edbrooke, summed up and made the following points:

• She thanked all residents and stakeholders who addressed Cabinet;
• The decision was difficult, as these are the deepest cuts to local government since the Second World War;
• Other boroughs have cut services such as domestic violence services and disadvantaged the most vulnerable people without a voice;
• Council should aspire for 100% of libraries to be accessible by disabled individuals and this will be a priority in any refurbishment;
• Council should aspire for the archives to only have to move once, not a ‘double shuffle’.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Lib Peck thanked all those who had attended.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Jim Dickson’s amendment set out below be agreed:

• That GLL will be instructed to work in partnership with local people and the shadow trust board to develop community hub and library;
• That the final decision of mix of uses of the building will be taken in full consultation with the shadow trust board;
• That the council will consider introducing an earlier break clause than the 7 years proposed in the report to be invoked when the trust board are ready for the Carnegie building to be transferred to the trust;
• That any time required for the closure of the library for improvements or changes to the building will be kept to a minimum

The following was agreed:

**Culture 2020**

2. The creation of the Lambeth Cultural Board with a view to undertaking an options appraisal and business case prior to establishing the Lambeth Cultural Trust.

Priority 1: Safe and Interesting Spaces
3. The provision of five town centre libraries at Brixton, Streatham, West Norwood, and Clapham libraries. A four week consultation period during November 2015 to help determine if Durning Library rather than Tate South Lambeth Library will provide a temporary fifth town centre library in the north of the borough until 2022.

4. The existing library service at Waterloo, Minet, and Upper Norwood and Carnegie libraries is replaced by the new neighbourhood library service as specified in the report.

5. Pending consultation the existing library service at either Tate South Lambeth library or Durning library is replaced by the new neighbourhood library service as specified in the report.

6. The capital funding towards the delivery of the Nettlefold project, including a new West Norwood library.

7. The business case for the new library service is now developed and implemented by April 2016.

Priority 2: The Great Outdoors
8. Phase 1 of the Parks Improvement Plan is instigated with a value of £3.8m capital.

9. The revised specification for the grounds maintenance contract.

10. The governance arrangement for Partnership Parks.

11. A one off £100,000 capital contribution towards the development of a stage 2 Heritage Lottery application for Brockwell Hall.

12. The plan for skate parks.

Priority 3: Let's Get Active
13. The Active Lambeth Plan, including indoor and outdoor sports facilities.

14. The leisure management contract with Greenwich Leisure Limited, which runs until 2022 be revised in 2016 and include the establishment of three healthy living centres at Minet, either Tate South or Durning (subject to further consultation) and Carnegie library buildings.

Priority 4: Be Inspired
15. The establishment of a Cultural Sector Task and Finish Group with the aim to support a borough wide forum to strengthen ties
throughout the borough.

16. A one off capital contribution of £300,000 to the Old Vic Theatre.

17. A loan of facility of up to £250,000 for the South London Theatre.

**Priority 5: Showing off**

18. A one of capital contribution of £300,000 towards the Garden Museum.

19. An options appraisal on the future of the Borough Archives.


**Priority 6: The Bigger Picture**

21. To note progress on the redevelopment of the Nettlefold site, West Norwood, including a commercial cinema and cafe.

**Endowment**

22. The development of the Lambeth Community Fund and initial contribution of £1.5m towards the underpinning endowment no later than March 2016 to be funded from Phase 2 of the Community Asset management plan.

**Financial resource allocation**

**Revenue**

23. The revenue budget for 2016/17 and 2017/18 as set out in section 12 of this report.

24. The creation of an earmarked reserve to hold the net contribution to the transitional funding of healthy living centres in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

**Capital**

25. Reprofile of £4,181m of capital allocated by cabinet in 2012 as part of Phase 1 of the community asset management plan and the allocation of a further £4.5m from Phase 2 of the community asset management plan.

26. Earmark £4.1m onto the capital Pipeline Commitments as match funding for the Heritage Lottery application for Brockwell Hall.

4. **SOUTH LAMBETH – ESTATE REGENERATION**

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Matthew Bennett, introduced the report and made the following points:

- There had been much consultation on the estate in which 163 households had participated;
- It was previously not known if Wimbourne House would be included in the programme and the rebuilding has now been excluded following a stock condition survey which determined that
the issues with Wimbourne House could be addressed under guarantee;

- Council could rebuild the homes and rehouse every tenant and rebuild at least 100 extra homes for council rent and at least 100 for private rent.

Councillor Alex Bigham addressed the meeting and raised the following points:

- The proposals were very good for local residents and those on a housing waiting list;
- The Wimbourne House residents decanted in a prior refurbishment had a bad experience, it was queried therefore what reassurances would be provided that this time would be better;
- It was further queried what provision there would be for disabled access and a community center.

Julian Hart, the Housing Delivery Programme Manager, raised the following points in response to questions:

- Following steer from the decision taken around Cressingham Gardens at the 13 July 2015 Cabinet meeting (Investing in better neighbourhoods and building the homes we need to house the people of Lambeth - Cressingham Gardens estate), it was hoped that in instances where residents would need to be decanted, these would be single decants only;
- With respect to the proposed community center, there was scope to provide this going forward;
- Disabled access will be prioritised at every step of the process.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

(1) Authorise officers to progress the project on the basis of a partial redevelopment of the South Lambeth estate, in accordance with the approach set out in Section 2 of this report and Appendix B, and to procure a development management team to progress the redevelopment of the estate as set out in paragraph 2.2 and 2.11 of the report.

(2) Authorise inclusion of additional land holdings within the masterplan for South Lambeth estate, where such land lies on the boundary of the Estate, and where such inclusions would improve the place-making outcomes and deliver a net increase in the number of homes (see paragraph 2.12 of the report).

(3) Require officers and the procured development management team to work closely with residents in the procurement and formulation of the masterplan, including a phasing strategy and a local lettings policy for the Estate.

5. HOMES FOR LAMBETH: A SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLE FOR LAMBETH
The Cabinet Member for Housing, Councillor Matthew Bennett, introduced the report. He stated that the proposed Homes for Lambeth Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) would be a 100% Council-owned company with the purpose of addressing the housing crisis in Lambeth, which will be exacerbated by central Government policy.

Gerlinde Gniewosz, a resident of the Cressingham Gardens Estate, addressed the meeting and made the following points:

- The SPV would not be a single wholly-owned entity, but would be a complex structure with several separate legal personalities;
- There were questions regarding the cost of set up and overall management of the structure;
- Members were currently being asked to sign a blank cheque with respect to the SPV.

Neil Vokes, the Regeneration Project Manager (Housing), raised the following points in response to questions:

- The structure of the SPV would be complex, but this was necessary to ensure delivery across a range of tenures and enable the Council to access different types of funding;
- The cost of the SPV would be put forward in a future business plan;
- Officers had currently identified three potential developments to go through the SPV;
- The future of the project was highly dependent on the content of the upcoming Housing Bill.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

(1) Note the business case and key benefits identified for establishing Homes for Lambeth, a Special Purpose Vehicle for housing and regeneration delivery.

(2) Approve the proposed strategy for the formation and mobilisation of the primary group of companies that make up Homes for Lambeth and to delegate authority to Officers to set up these companies.

(3) Delegate authority to Officers (and subsequently the Board of the Special Purpose Vehicle) to proceed to develop the 60-month, Rolling Business Plan for the Special Purpose Vehicle and Scheme-Level Business Plans for each development scheme proposed. These documents will inform the formal Business Case to be considered by the Council prior to it granting approval for each respective scheme to be delivered.

(4) Agree in principle to grant a long-lease to the Special Purpose Vehicle for the delivery of new homes on the Lollard, Fenwick & Westbury (Phase 1) schemes within 6 months of the formation of the Special Purpose Vehicle, subject to the formal agreement of business plans and the agreement of transfer arrangements for
each of these schemes

6. IMPROVING HOUSING MANAGEMENT SERVICES AND WIDER INTEGRATION

In accordance with Cabinet Rule 2.3.5, Cabinet agreed to debate this item at the next Cabinet meeting.

7. PERFORMANCE Q1

In accordance with Cabinet Rule 2.3.5, Cabinet resolved to agree the recommendations in the report without further debate.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

(1) Endorse the conclusions and recommendations for improvement activity.

8. LAMBETH LEWISHAM AND SOUTHWARK COUNCIL’S JOINT COMMITTEE

In accordance with Cabinet Rule 2.3.5, Cabinet resolved to agree the recommendations in the report without further debate.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet note the report and attached appendices and agree to the establishment of a joint committee between the three boroughs of Lambeth, Lewisham and Southwark with the terms of reference set out in this report at Appendix 1 and the Memorandum of Understanding as laid out in Appendix 2.

To appoint the following councillors to the joint committee:

(1) The Leader of the Council; and,

(2) Cabinet Member for Jobs and Growth as his/her substitute

To agree to enter into a governance agreement with the London Boroughs of Lewisham and Southwark in accordance with the principles set out in this report, and to request that the approval of the terms of that agreement is delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Director of Corporate Affairs.

The meeting ended at 9.28 pm

CHAIR
CABINET
Monday 9 November 2015

Date of Despatch: Friday 16 October 2015
Call-in Date: Friday 23 October 2015
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