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CABINET

Wednesday 18 September 2019 at 5.00 pm

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Cabinet Members:

Councillor Donatus Anyanwu

Councillor Matthew Bennett

Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite

Councillor Edward Davie

Councillor Jim Dickson

Councillor Jacqui Dyer

Councillor Paul Gadsby

Councillor Claire Holland

Councillor Jack Hopkins

Councillor Mohammed Seedat

Councillor Andy Wilson

Councillor Sonia Winifred

Portfolio:

Cabinet Member for the Voluntary Sector & Partnerships (job share)

Cabinet Member for Planning, Investment & New Homes

Deputy Leader of the Council (Children and Young People)

Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

Cabinet Member for the Voluntary Sector & Partnerships (job share)

Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety (job share)

Cabinet Member for Housing

Deputy Leader of the Council (Environment and Clean Air)

Leader of the Council

Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety (job share)

Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Cabinet Member for Equalities & Culture

Apologies for absence

Also present:

Action
required by

1. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST

There were none.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the meeting held on 22nd July 2019 be signed and agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

3. LAMBETH CHILDREN'S HOMES REDRESS SCHEME UPDATE

The report was introduced by Leader of the Council who highlighted that:

This report followed on from previous cabinet updates on the Scheme, reported at six month intervals since its introduction, and provided an update on the Scheme as of the end of June 2019.

The Scheme had been operational for eighteen months and some of the main points contained within the report were noted:

- A total of 1,250 applications had been received since the Scheme was introduced.
- Over £16m had been paid in redress directly to applicants.
- 83% of the money spent had been paid directly to applicants

Councillor Hopkins further stated that:

There had been difficulties encountered in the course of setting up and running the Scheme as this was a challenging issue and as the first council in the country to bring forward such a scheme.

He advised that the Council took on board feedback from the experience of applicants and their representatives and made improvements to the Scheme's operational procedures which included:

- Reviewing all open applications to see if they can be progressed, identifying potential processing delays, removing these and liaising with applicant solicitors to move cases forward.
- Introducing interim redress payments to eligible survivors to ensure that they receive some of the compensation sooner.
- Appointing an independent external expert to gain insight into survivors' experiences of engaging with the Scheme, and to examine what further work can be undertaken to encourage and build confidence in others who had not yet come forward to apply.

Concerns were raised at the last cabinet meeting about the effectiveness and approach taken to the making of redress settlement offers and the settlement of applications. Taking this on board, the Council has instructed a barrister with expertise in sexual abuse litigation to undertake a review of a random selection of settled applications. Further details of the findings

were detailed in the report.

Councillor Hopkins recommended that the Scheme be extended by a further two years with a revised closing date of 1 January 2022 for applications to be received.

In response to questions from Cabinet Member, officers advised that:

- Individual redress payments took longer to process as more information and evidence was needed in order to progress.
- Of the total amount paid in redress and legal costs over 83% has been paid directly to applicants in compensation.
- 169 letters of apology have been prepared and sent to applicants with 13 applicants so far having taken up the offer of a meeting with a senior representative of the Council.
- Advertise the scheme in both national, targeted and specialist publications in recognition that many affected individuals live outside London in other parts of the UK.
- Applicants to the scheme would be provided a choice of where they could access counselling which was through Oxleas or closer to where the applicant lived.
- The Council had worked with the National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) and reviewed all of our communications to ensure it was easier to understand some of the details.
- Lambeth were the only Local Authority that had introduced a Redress Scheme, other authorities were keen to learn how Lambeth had approached this.

In closing the meeting Councillor Hopkins stated that The abuses of the past could not be absolved but he and Cabinet were determined and committed in ensuring that the Scheme was a success for claimants and that it helped in some small way to providing redress and, hopefully, some sense of justice to those that endured such horrific abuse.

The meeting ended at 5.35 pm

CHAIR
CABINET
Monday 7 October 2019

Date of Despatch: Friday 27 September 2019

Call-in Date: Friday 4 October 2019

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