

## **EXECUTIVE**

Minutes of the meeting held on 10 January 2018 starting at 7.00 pm

### **Present:**

Councillor Colin Smith (Chairman)  
Councillors Graham Arthur, Peter Fortune,  
William Huntington-Thresher, Kate Lymer, Peter Morgan  
and Diane Smith

### **Also Present:**

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P., Councillor Simon  
Fawthrop and Councillor Angela Wilkins

### **380 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **381 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared that he was an employee of British Telecom.

### **382 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ATTENDING THE MEETING**

Five questions had been received for oral reply and three questions for written reply. Copies of the Questions and replies are attached in Appendices A and B to these minutes.

### **383 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 1ST, 6TH & 15TH DECEMBER 2017 Report CSD18006**

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 1<sup>st</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017 be confirmed.**

### **384 PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENTS**

The Executive Director of Education, Care and Health Services and Deputy Chief Executive gave an update on progress with implementing improvements to Children's Services. The Executive Director emphasised three issues –

(i) The next Ofsted monitoring visit was due in March 2018 and officers were working hard to ensure that this was as positive as previous visits.

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(ii) The Caseload Promise was being met in all but one team. The target was to reach 90% permanent staff, and further recruitment activities were planned to target agency social workers.

(iii) Working with HR, officers were finalising a strategy for social workers. A key focus would be on retention.

The Executive Director also commended a member of staff, Linda Whybrow, who had just retired from his Department after forty-seven years – the Leader added his thanks to her for this remarkable service.

Questioned by Members, the Executive Director explained that there were around 120 frontline staff, with about 30-35 additional permanent staff since May 2017. The Council had been particularly effective at recruiting managers, and very few permanent social workers had left.

In terms of the Adoption Service, an action plan was in place to improve the service and reduce delays, but the Executive Director cautioned against focussing too much on statistics. Bromley would persist in finding the right family for children, even if this appeared as a delay in the statistics.

The Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families reported that there would be a celebration of the achievements of looked after children on 15<sup>th</sup> February – all Members would be invited and he encouraged Members to attend.

The Leader thanked the Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families and the Executive Director and his team, and encouraged them to continue their hard work.

**385        DRAFT 2018/19 BUDGET AND UPDATE ON COUNCIL'S  
FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2019/20 TO 2021/22**  
Report FSD18001

The Executive considered the initial draft 2018/19 Budget including the full year effect of changes agreed as part of the 2017/18 Council Tax report including savings approved during the year with the resultant impact on the Council's medium term budget gap. A key part of the financial strategy was to highlight the budget issues that would need to be addressed by the Council over the coming financial years, by forecasting the level of available resources from all sources and budget pressures relating to revenue spending. Details of the capital programme would be reported to the Executive separately.

The report provided details of the third year of the four year local government finance settlement (2018/19 to 2019/20), the impact of the Chancellor's Autumn budget 2017 and the provisional local Government Financial Settlement 2018/19. There were still outstanding issues and areas of uncertainty remaining. Any further updates would be reported to the Executive's next meeting.

The views of all PDS Committees would be sought prior to the Executive making recommendations to Council on the 2018/19 Council Tax and Adult Social Care precept levels.

The report had been scrutinised by the Executive and Resources PDS Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018. The Committee had supported the recommendations with two additional suggestions – that the Council should consider raising the empty homes premium to 100% of Council Tax, and to note that action will need to be taken by Chief Officers to fund increasing costs through alternative savings in the event that inflation exceeds the budget assumptions. It was accepted that raising the empty homes premium could not be implemented for 2018/19 but Members agreed that this should be fully investigated for possible implementation for 2019/20.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources drew attention to the benefits of a four year financial settlement, and emphasised how the Council was now looking for opportunities and innovations, rather than just efficiencies. He confirmed that he was assuming a 2% pay increase for staff in 2018/19 – he would make a full statement on this to Council.

In view of the reservations about the London Business Rates pilot pooling arrangements it was suggested that the Executive should only agree to the proposals “in principle.” However, officers advised that this would not provide sufficient authority, and would require a further meeting of the Executive to provide final approval. Members were reassured that the delegation arrangements provided sufficient protection and the Leader accepted that advice. It was also confirmed that the arrangement committed the Council for one year only.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) The initial draft 2018/19 Budget as detailed in Appendix 7 of the report be agreed.**

**(2) The initial draft 2018/19 budget for each portfolio be referred to the relevant PDS Committees for their consideration.**

**(3) The financial projections for 2019/20 to 2021/22 be noted.**

**(4) It is noted that there are still areas of financial uncertainty which will impact on the final 2018/19 Budget and future year forecasts.**

**(5) The setting of the School Budget, mainly met through Dedicated Schools Grant, be delegated to the Education, Children and Families Portfolio Holder, allowing for consultation with head teachers, governors and the Schools Forum (section 12 of the report).**

**(6) It is noted that the outcome of consultation with PDS Committees will be reported to the next meeting of the Executive.**

**(7) The outcome of the public consultation meetings detailed in Appendix 10 be noted.**

**(8) The proposed contribution of £248,033 in 2018/19 to the London Boroughs Grants Committee (as in section 11 of the report) be agreed.**

**(9) The outcome of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement 2018/19 as detailed in the report be noted.**

**(10) The significant budget gap remaining of an estimated £38.7m per annum by 2021/22 be noted, and that any decisions made for the 2018/19 Budget will have an impact on the future year projections.**

**(11) It is noted that any final decision by the Executive on recommended Council Tax and Social Care Precept levels will normally be undertaken at the next meeting of the Executive.**

**(12) Authority be delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Director of Corporate Services, the Leader of the Council and the Resources Portfolio Holder in relation to the operational details of the London Business Rates pilot pooling arrangements with the participating authorities.**

**(13) It is agreed that the Council enters into a Memorandum of Understanding with the participating authorities as may be necessary to implement and/or regulate the pool and to delegate authority to the Director of Finance in consultation the Resources Portfolio Holder and with the agreement of the Leader of the Council to finalise the arrangement on behalf of the Council.**

**(14) It is noted that action will need to be taken by Chief Officers to fund increasing costs through alternative savings in the event that inflation exceeds the budget assumptions.**

**(15) The option of raising the empty homes premium to 100% of Council Tax be investigated for possible implementation in 2019/20.**

**386 GATEWAY REPORT 1 - MEMBERS REPORT: REVIEW OF CORPORATE CUSTOMER SERVICES IT SYSTEMS**  
Report CSD17165

(Having declared an interest as an employee of British Telecom, the Chairman of the Executive and Resources PDS Committee left the Chamber for this item and took no part in proceedings.)

On 14<sup>th</sup> September 2016 the Executive had agreed expenditure of £50k to fund a review of alternative options for the Customer relationship Management (CRM) system both in the short and long terms. The report updated Members on progress and the options considered. British Telecom (BT) had been commissioned, as part of the current IT Support contract, to

develop a new IT strategy, and upgrading the CRM system would not be in conflict with this strategy.

The Environment Portfolio Holder commented that with the re-tendering of the environmental services contracts the new contractor might want to implement a more cost-effective system.

The Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder reported that, in relation to the comments in the report about maximising digital uptake, he was investigating what needed to be done to overcome the problems that residents in some areas had with obtaining broadband.

The report had been scrutinised by the Executive and Resources PDS Committee on 4th January 2018 and the Committee had supported the proposals.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) The need to upgrade the current CRM system is noted as outlined in this report.**

**(2) BT be commissioned by variation to their existing contract to upgrade to Dynamics Version 2011 to avoid critical service interruption for the reasons set out in section 6 of the report.**

**(3) BT be commissioned by variation to their existing contract to provide a fully costed options appraisal for the longer term provision of IT services currently delivered by the current CRM system, as set out in section 7 of the report.**

**(4) The addition of £480k to the capital programme, funded from a £37k reduction to the existing capital scheme for the website upgrade, and £443k from capital receipts, be agreed.**

**387 CONTINGENCY DRAWDOWN: HOMELESSNESS AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PRESSURES**  
Report CS18116

The report updated Members on homeless pressures during 2017/18 and the range of initiatives undertaken to try and reduce the rising budget pressures wherever possible and forthcoming challenges arising from the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the roll out of universal credit in Bromley.

A drawdown of £844K was requested from the central contingency for homelessness and welfare reform pressures, together with the Homeless Reduction Act New Burdens funding and flexible homelessness support grant introduced in 2017/18 to replace the management fee element for temporary accommodation previously claimed through housing benefit.

The Leader noted the ongoing trend in this difficult area and commented positively in respect of the Administration's forward financial planning, which had ensured sufficient contingency funding had been set in place to meet the additional demand.

The Renewal and Recreation Portfolio Holder reported that he was aware of concern from a landlord about not being able to get his property back at the end of a fixed term lease, and in a suitable state of repair. Officers confirmed that this should not be the case.

It was noted that in paragraph 3.10, bullet point 4 of the report the missing figure relating to the refurbishment of Benedict House was 40 units of temporary accommodation.

The report had been scrutinised by the Care Services PDS Committee on 9th January 2018 and the Committee had supported the proposals.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) £844K for 2017/18 be released from central contingency set aside to offset the current homelessness and temporary accommodation budget pressures.**

**(2) Drawdown of the ring fenced grants as set out below be agreed:**

	<b>2017/18 £</b>	<b>2018/19 £</b>	<b>2019/20 £</b>
Homeless Reduction Act New Burdens	254,713	233,317	220,697
Homelessness Reduction ACT IT upgrade for new reporting requirements	9,022		
Homelessness flexible support grant	2,106,890	2,359,717	

**(3) The forecast pressures going forward in relation to homelessness, welfare reform, temporary accommodation and the new duties arising from the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 be noted.**

**(4) The release of the additional resources required for implementation and administration of the new statutory duties contained within the Homelessness Reduction Act be approved.**

**388 FEASIBILITY STUDY FOR BANBURY HOUSE, CHISLEHURST**

The Executive considered a report updating them on the feasibility assessment undertaken in respect of Banbury House for refurbishment and use as temporary accommodation to meet statutory housing need. It was

concluded that proceeding with a refurbishment scheme would not be economically viable.

The report was scrutinised by the Executive and Resources PDS Committee on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2018; the Committee supported the recommendations, subject to an additional recommendation that Officers be asked to investigate whether modular homes would be a possibility once the site has been cleared. It was confirmed that all options would be explored.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) The outcome of the feasibility assessment for use of Banbury House as temporary accommodation and the decision not to proceed with refurbishment as this does not offer an economically viable scheme and demonstrate best use of the site be noted.**

**(2) The demolition of the existing building to ensure the site is secured and prepared for future use to maximise future development opportunities be approved.**

**(3) Officers be authorised to complete a final feasibility options appraisal to be reported back in May for decision on future use of the site to meet housing need or for methods for marketing and disposal of the site to secure best value.**

**(4) The estimated cost of £166k be added to the Council's Capital Programme for demolition and site preparation - this sum will be funded from any future sale proceeds, or added to any future capital scheme for alternative use of the site.**

**389 UPDATE ON SERVICE PROPOSALS AND PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR MODULAR HOMES**

Bromley, along with all London local authorities was experiencing a significant increase in demand for assistance and accommodation. Members had received regular reports detailing the current pressures in the Housing Division including the significant increase in the number of placements and associated costs with night paid temporary accommodation.

The Council spent more than £4.5m (net) procuring temporary accommodation (TA) for homeless households every year and demand for this service was forecast to increase.

The Executive on 24th May 2017 had agreed to the principle of inviting bids from potential suppliers for the development and management of a modular constructed site on York Rise, subject to further market engagement to inform the tender and specification and feasibility study of the site considering both suitability and potential length of use.

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The report provided an update on the market engagement undertaken and a feasibility analysis, and requested permission to progress to formal tender to appoint a supplier for modular homes (as set out in paragraphs 3.6-3.10.) The final cost, and whether the units were purchased outright or leased, would be determined by the tenders received – Members expected that the scheme would produce savings and a better return than disposing of the site.

Members commented that the quality of modular homes had vastly improved, and suggested that all members be invited to a site visit to view them in situ in a neighbouring borough. Officers confirmed that arrangements were being made.

The report had been scrutinised by the Care Services PDS Committee on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2018; the Committee supported the recommendations, subject to proposing that support for the proposals should be “subject to appropriate planning permission being agreed.” Comments from ward councillors had been submitted to the PDS Committee and were tabled for the Executive. These are attached as Appendix C to these minutes.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) The proposals proceed to formal tender for provision of modular build accommodation together with a management contract for a period of 15 years as set out in paragraph 3.6 of the report.**

**(2) The use of the identified site at York Rise for the use of modular constructed accommodation be approved.**

**(3) It is agreed in principal that officers look to identify other suitable sites for use of modular homes which will be reported back to the Executive as and when identified.**

**(4) It is noted that capital funding may be required for the preparation, construction and planning of any modular home site and this will be dealt with in the award report.**

**390 HEALTH SUPPORT TO SCHOOL AGE CHILDREN**  
Report CS18114

At its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2016, the Council’s Executive agreed to fund a new service to support the health of school age children for 2 years, funded by the Better Care Fund to a total value of £606k. The first £303k was released for the new service in 2017/18. The new service started 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017. The drawdown of a further £303k for 2018/19 was subject to a further report to the Executive.

Bromley CCG had procured the service from Bromley Healthcare on behalf of the Council under a Section 75 agreement.

An evaluation of the new “Health Support to Schools Service” in October 2017 showed that the small team were only able to offer very limited safeguarding support due to capacity. The Designated Safeguarding leads in Bromley CCG and Public Health worked together to identify the gaps and risks to safeguarding in the new service.

Five of the proposed six additional posts were for safeguarding. Schools had indicated that they would not be willing to pay for statutory School Nurse functions such as safeguarding. The contribution from schools to the Health Support to Schools Service would be explored in a paper to the Executive in spring/summer 2018.

Officers explained that the new contract was a more modern and responsive service built around the needs of children and schools; the provision of data from schools was much improved. Health partners recognised the need to provide additional resources and their role with the Council in jointly safeguarding children. The Leader drew attention to the recommendation which was to release up to £300k, and commented that if all the money was not needed it should be diverted to other services.

The report had been scrutinised by the Care Services PDS Committee on 9th January 2018 and the Committee had supported the proposals.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) The drawdown of £303k from the Better Care Fund for continuing the existing service into 2018/19 be agreed.**

**(2) The drawdown of up to an additional £300k from the Better Care Fund to appoint an additional 6 nurses for the remainder of the existing Health Support to Schools contract, to end March 2019, be agreed (in line with paragraph 1.4 and the issues outlined in Section 3 of the report.)**

**391            CONTRACT AWARD FOR ADVOCACY SERVICES - PART 1**  
Report CS18118-1

The Executive considered a request to approve a contract award for a single Advocacy Service for all client groups, replacing seven contracts with four different providers. This would ensure better access to Advocacy Services through a single point of access. This was a three year contract with a 1+1 year extension option to start on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2018. A part 2 report had also been provided with additional details, including the evaluation of the tenders received.

The report had been scrutinised by the Care Services PDS Committee on 9th January 2018 and the Committee had supported the proposals.

**RESOLVED that**

**(1) The contract award for Advocacy services for a period of 3 years starting 1 April 2018 with the option of two one year extensions (3+1+1)**

at a whole life contract value of £1,430,635 be approved as recommended.

**(2) Authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Education, Children and Families, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Care Services, the Director of Commissioning, the Director of Finance and the Director of Corporate Services, to extend this contract for the two one year extension options.**

**392            CONSIDERATION OF ANY OTHER ISSUES REFERRED FROM  
THE EXECUTIVE AND RESOURCES POLICY DEVELOPMENT  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no additional items reported from Executive and Resources PDS Committee.

**393            LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AS AMENDED BY THE  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)  
(VARIATION) ORDER 2006 AND THE FREEDOM OF  
INFORMATION ACT 2000**

**RESOLVED** that the Press and public be excluded during consideration of the items of business referred to below as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the Press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information.

**The following summaries  
refer to matters  
involving exempt information**

**394            EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 1ST AND  
6TH DECEMBER 2017**

**RESOLVED** that the exempt minutes of the meetings held on 1<sup>st</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> December 2017 be confirmed.

**395            CONTRACT AWARD FOR ADVOCACY SERVICES - PART 2**

The Executive considered exempt information relating to the proposed award of a contract for Advocacy Services – see minute 391 above.

The Meeting ended at 8.16 pm

Chairman