

Decisions of the Urgency Committee

27 April 2020

Members Present:-

Councillor Daniel Thomas (Chairman)
Councillor David Longstaff (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Barry Rawlings

1. Chairman's Introduction

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Council's first ever virtual committee meeting. He outlined the procedure that would be followed and explained that the meeting would adjourn temporarily if there were any problems with connectivity. He also explained how members of the public would interact which included answering public questions.

2. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

3. Absence of Members

None.

4. Report of the Monitoring Officer (if any)

None.

5. Declaration of Members' Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Non-Pecuniary Interests (if any)

None.

6. Public Questions and Comments (if any)

The Urgency Committee noted the details of public question that had been submitted and the response that had been circulated. A supplementary question was asked by Mr Levy.

7. Approval of Emergency Decisions and Delegation to Chief Officers

The Chairman introduced this item by firstly reporting that 277 residents to date had sadly passed away in Barnet due to the Coronavirus pandemic and extended thoughts and condolences to all those affected.

The Chairman reported that the Council had taken several decisions in response to the pandemic following announcements by the Government, directions from the London Strategic Coordination Group, London Local Authority Gold and legislative changes. The Urgency Committee were requested to ratify the emergency decisions taken by officers since the onset of the pandemic and provide a delegation to Chief Officers (in consultation with the Committee Chairmen) to take decisions on pandemic related matters normally reserved to committees.

During the debate, the following matters were raised:

In response to a question regarding Government funding and whether it would cover pandemic related costs, the Chairman reported that the Government had stated that they would assist, but the full costs were not yet known.

It was clarified that voluntary and community sector contract extensions would not require a committee decision.

It was reported that the Capita contract reviews would proceed in due course.

The Executive Director for Adults & Health reported that a substantial amount of work had been carried out to deliver the additional capacity required to deliver the new hospital discharge service. The Committee noted that if demand rose then it may be necessary to apply for an easement of care, but this would be a last resort and due process would always be followed.

The Executive Director for Children & Young People outlined the approach to education for children in care including the utilisation of the virtual school.

A Member referred to the Statutory Children's Service Instrument and questioned if the Council would be utilising all the provisions (e.g. foster carers being hired without DBS checks). The Executive Director for Children & Young People reported that the statutory instruments were currently being reviewed, adding that safeguarding would not be compromised in any way.

Responding to a question about the previous estimate for the number of rough sleepers in Barnet (24) and the actual number which had been identified (more than 100), the Deputy Chief Executive reported that the Council had used the recognised methodology for estimating the number, but added that we knew the actual number.

Following the debate, Councillor Rawlings requested that the Opposition Spokespersons be consulted on any decisions being taken in accordance with the decisions of this committee to which the Chairman agreed.

Councillors Rawlings had tabled the following amendment:

“Add Recommendation 23:

That the Committee instructs officers to bring a brief report to either the next meeting of the Urgency Committee or Policy & Resources Committee on post-pandemic recovery planning to include:

- council services
- the recovery of the local economy and our high streets
- a more integrated and comprehensive approach to tackling the climate emergency in council business planning and regeneration

- maintaining and supporting the evolving partnership approach with local community organisations, networks, platforms and voluntary work that has arisen to respond to the pandemic
- a focus on tackling social isolation and the digital deficit for vulnerable groups including older people
- a sustainable plan for ensuring rough sleepers are not just returned to the streets post-pandemic
- looking at housing investment opportunities that may be good value post-pandemic and help sustain local economic activity
- planning for a second wave of the pandemic

Reasons for taking amendment at Urgency Committee:

The pandemic has had a significant impact across council service delivery and the local economy. We don't know how long the pandemic lock-down will last so recovery planning needs to start now. Elected members must be able to have formal committee oversight of this and be able to shape the recovery plans. While there is talk of possibly holding a P&R meeting in May, no actual meetings have been scheduled to meet at the moment so the only place to start the discussion about this is at Urgency Committee on Monday.”

During the debate on the amendment, the Leader proposed that the following wording be removed: “a more integrated and comprehensive approach to tackling the climate emergency in council business planning and regeneration.” Following the debate on the amendment, there was no seconder for the additional recommendation which therefore fell.

The Committee unanimously agreed the recommendations as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

1. **Ratify the decisions taken by Chief Officers during the emergency period as set out in Appendix A in relation to Policy and Resources Committee;**
2. **Ratify the decisions taken by Chief Officers during the emergency period as set out in Appendix B in relation to Adults & Safeguarding Committee;**
3. **Ratify the decisions taken by Chief Officers during the emergency period as set out in Appendix C in relation to Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee;**
4. **Ratify the decisions taken by Chief Officers during the emergency period as set out in Appendix D in relation to Environment Committee;**
5. **Ratify the decisions taken by Chief Officers during the emergency period as set out in Appendix E in relation to Housing & Growth Committee;**
6. **Ratify the decisions taken by Chief Officers during the emergency period as set out in Appendix F in relation to Community Leadership & Libraries Committee;**

- 7. Ratify the decisions taken by Chief Officers during the emergency period as set out in Appendix G in relation to Constitution & General Purposes Committee;**
- 8. Ratify the decisions taken by Chief Officers during the emergency period as set out in Appendix H in relation to the Director of Public Health;**
- 9. Delegate authority to Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Policy & Resources Committee any decisions within the remit of that committee that need to be taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters, or in response to directions given by HM Government, London Strategic Coordination Group and London Local Authority Gold. In the event of the Chairman's absence, the Committee Vice-Chairman shall be consulted. Any and all such decisions shall be reported back to Committee for post-decision scrutiny;**
- 10. Delegate authority to Executive Director of Adults & Health and/or Director of Public Health in consultation with the Chairman of the Adults & Safeguarding Committee any decisions within the remit of that committee and public health related matters that need to be taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters, or in response to directions given by HM Government, London Strategic Coordination Group and London Local Authority Gold. In the event of the Chairman's absence, the Committee Vice-Chairman and Leader shall be consulted. Any and all such decisions shall be reported back to Committee for post-decision scrutiny;**
- 11. Delegate authority to Executive Director of Children & Young People in consultation with the Chairman of the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee any decisions within the remit of that committee that need to be taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters, or in response to directions given by HM Government, London Strategic Coordination Group and London Local Authority Gold. In the event of the Chairman's absence, the Committee Vice-Chairman and Leader shall be consulted. Any and all such decisions shall be reported back to Committee for post-decision scrutiny;**
- 12. Delegate authority to Executive Director of Environment or Director of Assurance in consultation with the Chairman of the Environment Committee any decisions within the remit of that committee that need to be taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters, or in response to directions given by HM Government, London Strategic Coordination Group and London Local Authority Gold. In the event of the Chairman's absence, the Committee Vice-Chairman and Leader shall be consulted. Any and all such decisions shall be reported back to Committee for post-decision scrutiny;**
- 13. Delegate authority to Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Housing & Growth Committee any decisions within the remit of that committee that need to be taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters, or in response to directions given by HM Government, London Strategic Coordination Group and London Local Authority Gold. In the event of the Chairman's absence, the Committee Vice-**

Chairman and Leader shall be consulted. Any and all such decisions shall be reported back to Committee for post-decision scrutiny;

- 14. Delegate authority to Director of Assurance, Deputy Chief Executive or Executive Director for Children's Services in consultation with the Chairman of the Community Leadership & Libraries Committee any decisions within the remit of that committee that need to be taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters, or in response to directions given by HM Government, London Strategic Coordination Group and London Local Authority Gold. In the event of the Chairman's absence, the Committee Vice-Chairman and Leader shall be consulted. Any and all such decisions shall be reported back to Committee for post-decision scrutiny;**
- 15. Delegate authority to Director of Public Health in consultation with the Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Board any matters within the remit of the Board and public health related matters that need to be taken in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters, or in response to directions given by HM Government, London Strategic Coordination Group and London Local Authority Gold. In the event of the Chairman's absence, the Board Vice-Chairman and Leader shall be consulted. Any and all such decisions shall be reported back to Committee for post-decision scrutiny;**
- 16. Delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer (Director of Finance) approval of any virements required directly in response to the Coronavirus pandemic or other related matters;**
- 17. Notes the advice of the Director of Finance in respect of the estimated additional operating cost arising from the Coronavirus pandemic emergency response period (assumed to be April – June 2020) and net cost to the council arising from this (set out in section 5.2);**
- 18. Delegate authority to Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Housing & Growth Committee to approve the outline business case for the Little Strand and Broadfields Estate sites, two development sites on the GLA 87 funded programme;**
- 19. Delegate authority to Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Housing & Growth Committee to approve the recommended land transfer and appropriation/CPO (compulsory purchase order) routes for the Fosters estate project;**
- 20. Delegate authority to Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of the Housing & Growth Committee to approve the recommended land transfer route for the Hermitage Lane project;**
- 21. Delegate authority to the Director of Assurance in consultation with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Environment Committee to amend the Enforcement Policy;**
- 22. Delegate authority to Head of Parking, Assistant Director Highways or Director of Environment in consultation with the Chairman or Vice-Chairman**

of the Environment Committee to temporarily revise the Parking Enforcement Policy.

8. Replacement for London Borough of Barnet Highways Asset Management System

The Committee considered a report which sought approval for the urgent replacement of the Council's Highways Asset Management System. The current asset management system, Exor, would not be supported by the system's supplier after December 2021. It was therefore necessary to urgently replace this system so that asset data which was critical to the maintenance, safety and overall management of the borough's Highway service could be effectively stored. Additionally, Exor would not be compatible with the Department for Transport's new Street Works system, which was being introduced on 1 July 2020.

In response to a question, the Interim Executive Director for Environment assured the Committee that he was confident about implementation and the robustness of costs and emphasised that best value for money would be paramount.

The Committee unanimously agreed the recommendations as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- 1. Delegates authority to the Interim Executive Director for Environment to commence Phase 1 and procures the Pitney Bowes Confirm DfT Street Manager Solution and to direct award a contract to Pitney Bowes Confirm in line with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Regulations 32(2) (b) and (c);**
- 2. Agrees to the allocation of £304,400 Capital Investment to support the implementation of Pitney Bowes Confirm DfT Street Manager Solution;**
- 3. Agrees to the commencement of Phase 2 of the procurement exercise to progress the replacement the entire Exor Asset Management System;**
- 4. Notes that reports on the progress of the replacement Asset Management System will be brought to future meetings of the Environment Committee and Policy and Resources Committee;**
- 5. Notes the Department for Transport (DfT) requirement to charge the Council an estimated £15,000 per annum for the licence fee to access the DfT Street Manager System.**

The meeting finished at 8.02pm.