

London Borough of Islington

Executive - 18 March 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held via Zoom on 18 March 2021 at 7.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Watts, Champion, Gill, Lukes, Ngongo,
O'Halloran, Shaikh, Turan and Ward

Councillor Richard Watts in the Chair

790 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

791 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

792 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 11 February 2021 be agreed as a correct record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

793 NON RECENT CHILD ABUSE SUPPORT PAYMENT SCHEME

The Leader agreed to revise the order of the agenda so that Item E7, Non Recent Child Abuse Support Payment Scheme, would be considered as the first item of business.

The Leader made the following statement in relation to the report:

“This report relates to the abuse of children in Islington’s care homes between 1966 and 1995. It is no exaggeration to say that this was the darkest chapter in the council’s history. Children, placed in our care, were subjected to terrible physical, sexual and mental abuse which, understandably, has had a deeply traumatic effect on those who are now adults and continue to suffer.

As Leader of Islington Council I want to say again we are deeply sorry for the council’s past failure to protect vulnerable children. Although the word ‘sorry’ feels inadequate, I offer this apology to every single person who has been scarred by the events of that terrible time. Today it is our duty as a council to do the right thing and to try to address the failings of the past.

The report recommends that the Executive agrees a proposed Support Payment Scheme for people who suffered emotional, physical and sexual abuse whilst resident in the council's children's homes from 1966-1995 and I am sure all my colleagues will strongly support this recommendation.

The proposed scheme would become part of the council's existing support offer for survivors which includes trauma counselling, specialist advice support and assistance for care, housing, appropriate welfare benefits, access to further education and employment and support to access care records.

Islington Council today is a very different organisation, and protecting children from harm is our top priority. But we rightly remain deeply sorry and ashamed of the failings of the past."

The Leader also advised that an updated Resident Impact Assessment, Appendix D to the report, had be circulated in a second despatch of papers.

The Leader provided an opportunity for members of the public present to ask questions related to the proposed scheme and invited those affected to take part in the consultation.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the options for implementing a SPS and the associated legal and financial risks be noted.
- (ii) That the proposed SPS (Appendix A to the report) be approved for the purposes of consultation with ISN and other stakeholders.
- (iii) That the consultation statement (Appendix B to the report) be approved.
- (iv) That the Corporate Director of Resources, following consultation with the Leader, Executive member for Health and Social Care, Corporate Director People and Acting Director of Law and Governance, be authorised to agree the consultation document.
- (v) That the period of consultation will be 6 weeks be noted.
- (vi) That a further report on the SPS will be submitted to the Executive detailing the outcome of the consultation exercise be noted.
- (vii) That it is recommended that one-off windfall monies and unspent contingencies be used in the first instance to fund the SPS at the discretion of the Section 151 Officer be noted. An accurate assessment

of the running costs of the SPS will need to be undertaken when the SPS has proceeded through consultation.

Reasons for decision – as specified in the report, the proposed SPS will provide financial support for eligible survivors / victims of non-recent abuse suffered when in the council's children's homes.

Other options considered – as specified in the report, the Executive considered the proposed Support Payment Scheme (SPS), a Lambeth type Redress Scheme, and implementing no scheme.

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

794 FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 JANUARY 2021

RESOLVED

- (i) That the breakdown of the forecast General Fund outturn by individual variance at Appendix 1 of the report and by service area at Appendix 2 of the report be noted, and the currently assumed approach to balancing the General Fund budget in 2020/21 (Section 3 and Table 1 of the report) be noted.
- (ii) That a transfer to the Budget Risk and Insurance reserve of the (-£1.250m) underspend on contract inflation (Paragraph 3.45 of the report) be agreed.
- (iii) That the forecast in-year HRA deficit of (+£2.822m) (Section 4 and Appendix 2 of the report) be noted.
- (iv) That the revised capital budget of £126.020m, with a revised in-year capital forecast of £94.984m, be noted; and that approval for further slippage will be sought at year-end as part of the 2020/21 financial outturn report (Section 5 and Appendix 3 of the report) be noted.

Reasons for decision – to ensure the financial resilience of the council.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

795 APPROPRIATION OF LAND ON WINDSOR STREET FOR PLANNING PURPOSES

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Corporate Director of Resources be authorised to appropriate the Land edged red on the plan at Appendix 1 to the report submitted from housing to planning purposes in accordance with section 122 Local Government Act 1972;

- (ii) That the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Acting Director of Law and Governance and Corporate Director of Housing, be authorised to agree the settlement of Rights of Light and Rights of Way claims, where relevant, with owners and occupiers of the affected properties and any ancillary affected leases, together with any associated fees;
- (iii) That it be noted that the cost of the proposed settlement of Rights of Light and Rights of Way compensation payments, where relevant and the associated fees of those affected by this scheme, will be met from the capital budget for the Windsor Street scheme;
- (iv) That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Resources to appropriate the Land back to Housing from Planning should it be deemed necessary to do so.

Reasons for decision – By exercising its appropriation powers, the council will ensure that the development of the Land proceeds in accordance with the planning permission already granted.

Other options considered – as specified in the report, if the appropriation was not granted then the development could be at risk of injunction proceedings. Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

796 EXTENSION OF SUPPORT FOR LEISURE CONTRACT

RESOLVED:

- (i) That further financial support to GLL for the period to 31 March 2022 based on the financial projections set out in Exempt Appendix [1] to the report submitted, to facilitate GLL's continued provision of the services at the leisure centres when they are permitted to re-open, be agreed. This would be a further deferral of rent for 2021/22 reflecting projected income and costs in the financial business plan reconciled through the open book process.
- (ii) That the Corporate Director of Environment & Regeneration, following consultation with the acting Director of Law and Governance, be authorised to give effect to the above additional financial support for GLL by varying, as necessary and extending the second deed of variation to 31st March 2022.
- (iii) That the projected end of year debtor position for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix [1] to the report, following the increased restrictions and two further lockdowns that have closed the Leisure Centres for an additional four months of this year meaning the contract has been unable to trade for 8 out of 12 months of the year, be noted.

Reasons for decision – a further period of support is required to allow GLL to be able to open the leisure centres when they are able to.
Other options considered – as above, if financial support is not provided then this could result in disruption to services.
Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

797 **EXEMPT APPENDIX - EXTENSION OF SUPPORT FOR LEISURE CONTRACT**

Noted.

798 **EXEMPT APPENDIX - NON RECENT CHILD ABUSE SUPPORT PAYMENT SCHEME**

Noted.

MEETING CLOSED AT 7.25 pm