

London Borough of Islington

Executive - 22 June 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Executive held in Committee Room 1, Islington Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 22 June 2023 at 7.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors** Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Diarmaid Ward, Una O'Halloran, Rowena Champion, John Woolf, Santiago Bell-Bradford, Nurullah Turan, Michelline Ngongo and Roulin Khondoker

Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz in the Chair

120 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

121 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

122 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2023 be confirmed as an accurate record of proceedings and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

123 **APPOINTMENT TO VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR COMMITTEE**

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Phil Graham be appointed as an observer to the Voluntary and Community Sector Committee, to replace Councillor Asima Shaikh, who had stepped down, for the municipal year 2023/2024, or until a successor was appointed.

Reasons for the decision – to ensure that membership of the Committee was complete.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest/ dispensations granted – none

124 **BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN**

RESOLVED:

- (a) To note the breakdown of the forecast General Fund outturn by variance at Appendix 1 and service area at Appendix 2 of the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance.
- (b) To note the overall 2022/23 General Fund net break-even position after application of reserves and contingencies.
- (c) To approve the inter-departmental virements as at month 12, detailed in Appendix 2 of the report.
- (d) To agree the creation of new reserves, the outturn transfers to/from reserves, the movements between reserves and the provisional General Fund and HRA reserves balances, and to delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to agree any further movements to/from reserves related to finalising the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.
- (e) To agree the drawdowns from the corporate transformation fund in 2022/23.
- (f) To note the Collection Fund monitoring position at month 12.
- (g) To note the Energy Price Analysis summary as at month 12.
- (h) To note progress on delivering the 2022/23 savings.
- (i) To note the HRA in-year deficit of (+£12.987), fully funded from a lower contribution to HRA reserves than planned in the original budget.
- (j) To note the 2022/23 capital outturn and financing of the 2022/23 capital programme.
- (k) To approve the re-profiling of the 2022/23 capital outturn budget variances into the 2023/24 capital programme, with the exception of variances that are underspends rather than reprofiling in nature, and to delegate authority to the Section 151 Officer to agree any further capital financing adjustments related to finalising the 2022/23 Statement of Accounts.

Reasons for the decision – to ensure the financial resilience of the Council

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none.

125 **PROPOSAL ON THE FUTURE OF POOLES PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

A number of members of the public asked questions about the proposals in the report which were responded to by the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families and officers. A member of the public queried why a document submitted by a member of staff at the School in response to the consultation and relating to financial data on pupil numbers had not appeared in Appendix B to the report. The Corporate Director for Children and Young People undertook to look into this.

All present were reminded that the Council remained keen to hear from parents, staff and interested parties in response to the consultation.

RESOLVED:

(a) That the responses to the consultation on the future of Pooles Park Primary School, as detailed in the report of the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families, be noted.

(b) To proceed with the proposal to close Pooles Park Primary School to address the significant decline in pupil numbers, if the Department for Education do not identify an academy sponsor, and on the basis that the Executive makes a series of commitments set out at resolution (d) below to address the significant concerns and issues raised during the consultation.

(c) To issue a statutory notice of the proposal, attached as a draft at Appendix D to the report

(d) Based on the feedback received during the consultation, that approval be given to the following commitments:

1. To offer individual support to pupils and their families with transition from the point a decision is taken through to the settling into a new school

2. To work with local headteachers of nearby Islington schools to support the School and its families, noting that there were places available for every child at Pooles Park in nearby Islington schools, all of which would provide this support should the proposal to close proceed.

3. To work in partnership with a local group to develop the community garden into a Forest School provision which could be accessed by local Islington schools in the area as part of their curriculum offer during school time.

4. To develop a clear plan for the ongoing use and management of the garden also as a community garden.

5. To carefully consider the long-term future of the Pooles Park Primary School site and how it could be retained for educational and community purposes.

Reasons for the decision – Surplus capacity at the School meant that the School could not remain financially viable. The Hornsey Planning Area had the second highest rate of vacancies in Islington and Pooles Park had the highest surplus capacity of all schools in the Planning Area.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

126

LETTING OF PLATFORM, THE LAUNDRY, HORNSEY ROAD BATHS, 2 TILTMAN PLACE, ISLINGTON, LONDON N7 7EE

RESOLVED:

(a) That the Corporate Director for Community Wealth Building be authorised to grant an underlease of Platform the Laundry Hornsey Road on the terms set out in exempt Appendix 2 of the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance and following consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and Corporate Director, Children and Young People.

(b) That the Corporate Director of Community Wealth Building be authorised make any decisions on non-material amendments to the detailed underlease term.

Reasons for the decision – The letting removed a significant financial pressure for the Council, whilst ensuring the building remained in use, both supporting an education organisation and the wider creative arts community in the Borough.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none.

127

REDEVELOPMENT OF FINSBURY LEISURE CENTRE

Members of the public asked a number of questions about the number and size of homes to be built, how many of these would be Council homes and which facilities would be available to local schools and the community until the football pitches were completed. Members of the public were assured that any issues of overlooking and proximity of the football pitches to homes would be looked at by Planning Department. Members of the public were encouraged to respond to the formal consultation on the planning application in due course.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to ongoing gateway reports and financial viability assessments, to:

- a) approve commitment of up to £6.75m for fees and Pre-Construction Service Agreement costs up until the end of design stage 3, including amounts already spent as described in Appendix 1 to the report of the Executive Member for Finance, Planning and Performance, and summarised in Table 1, which represented an increase of £2.85m.
- b) approve an increase in the capital budget of £2.65m in respect of fees up to design stage 2, reflecting an increase in budget from £1.6m to £4.25m funded by £0.200m from reduced costs of RIBA stage 3-4 and £2.450m additional borrowing.
- c) approve the Council entering into a Pre-Construction Service Agreement, with an estimated value of £0.9m, subject to contract.
- d) note that additional Executive approval would be sought prior to submission of a planning application and prior to award of a construction contract.
- e) note that the current estimated scheme cost through to construction was estimated at £131.757m (excluding optimism bias) and that there would be a need for additional funding to meet the optimism bias and this amount would be confirmed once a full assessment had taken place.

Reasons for the decision – The redevelopment of Finsbury Leisure Centre aimed to replace the existing leisure centre with new leisure facilities and 200 new homes, of which 100 would be council homes. This was an increase on the 176 home scheme proposed at the point of the last report to Executive. The scheme created a masterplan for the whole site and included a new medical centre and much improved public spaces.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

128 **REPORT IN PUBLIC BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND SOCIAL CARE OMBUDSMAN: INVESTIGATION INTO STAGE 2 OF THE CORPORATE COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE**

The report was amended on submission as follows:

Replace "paragraph 3.4" in recommendation 2.1(c) and "paragraph 3.5" in recommendation 2.1(d) both with "paragraph 3.6"

RESOLVED:

(a) To note the following:

(i) the contents of the report of the Interim Director of Law and Governance and the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman's (LGSCO) public report dated 2 May 2023 and its recommendations, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

(ii) the requirement for the public report to be considered in full by the Executive in accordance with the Local Government Act 1974.

(iii) the agreed remedial actions already taken by officers in response to the LGSCO's recommendations and detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report.

(b) To note and approve the proposal to progress the completion of those agreed remedial actions which are yet to be completed by officers and detailed in paragraph 3.6 of the report.

Reasons for the decision – In accordance with the Local Government Act 1974, there was a requirement for the public report to be considered by the Council's Executive.

Other options considered – none

Conflicts of interest / dispensations granted – none

129 **LETTING OF PLATFORM, THE LAUNDRY, HORNSEY ROAD BATHS, 2 TILTMAN PLACE, ISLINGTON, LONDON N7 7EE - EXEMPT APPENDICES**

Noted.

130 **REDEVELOPMENT OF FINSBURY LEISURE CENTRE - EXEMPT APPENDICES**

Noted.

MEETING CLOSED AT 7.40 pm