ELMBRIDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

Report of a meeting held on 19 March 2014

* J. O'Reilly - Leader
* T.G. Oliver - Deputy Leader

* J. Browne
  Mrs. C.J. Cross
* Mrs. C. Elmer
* Mrs. D.M. Mitchell
* Ms. B. A. Cowin
* G.P. Dearlove
* Mrs. J. Fuller
* Mrs. M.C. Sheldon

(* Denotes attendance)

(D.J. Archer, B. Fairbank, A.C. Kelly, Rachael I. Lake, Mrs. L. Robertson, C.R. Sadler and S.J. Selleck were also present.)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12 February 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Leader.

3. LEADER’S OPENING REMARKS

The Leader conveyed apologies for absence from Councillor Mrs. C.J. Cross.

The Leader was pleased to advise that the new Mole Hall / Molesey Centre had opened on 17 February 2014 and already over 20 new people had approached the Centre to join. There had been an increase in daily lunch numbers and new volunteers had come forward to support the additional activities being developed at the Centre. There had also been a steep rise in enquiries from potential new hirers and the one evening slot remaining had now been taken. The new facility would also enable the Council to hold training events and, as an example, a Rest Centre Training Event was recently held at the Centre with over 25 Surrey County Council colleagues.

The Leader further advised that the Elmbridge Xcel Leisure Complex had been announced as a potential 2015 Rugby World Cup Team Base in partnership with London Irish RFC and Oatlands Park Hotel.

The Cabinet noted that DC Leisure had recently been awarded Excellent in its Quest - Sports Development Assessment and had also been ranked as number one out of all other Local Authorities, County Sports Partnerships and single contract operators in the Country.

The Leader also took the opportunity to inform Members of the latest crime statistics for April 2013 to February 2014 which had been compiled. Members were pleased to
note that crime was down 8.2%, which equated to 409 crimes. In addition, anti-social behaviour was down 12.3% which equated to 489 reports.

As this was the last meeting of the Municipal Year, the Leader took the opportunity to thank Members and Officers for their continued hard work and support during the year.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL ON 2 APRIL 2014

4. MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCES: REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development introduced the item, which set out the report of the Independent Remuneration Panel on the Council’s Scheme for Members’ Allowances, in accordance with Government Regulations and guidance for Local Authority Members’ Allowances Schemes.

The Cabinet noted that the Panel, in January 2014, had conducted a light touch review of allowances for 2014/15. The Panel considered information obtained from a questionnaire completed by Members, from interviews conducted with a small number of Members and from discussions with Officers.

After careful consideration, and in light of the responses to the questionnaire together with issues arising from the interviews, the Panel recommended that consideration be given to the level of remuneration for childcare and dependant carers and, secondly, increasing the basic allowance in line with the Officers’ local pay award of 1.5%. The Panel also recommended that a comprehensive review of both the Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances take place later this year.

The Cabinet discussed the Panel’s recommendations and given that the basic allowances for Councillors had not been increased for the last four years, and as the proposed increase would be in line with the Officers’ local pay award of 1.5%, the increase in the basic allowance for 2014/15 was supported. Members also noted the recommended increase in the child-care and dependant carers allowance to £7.65.

Members also acknowledged the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel who, whilst not easy to carry out, had undertaken the role with diligence and commitment.

RECOMMENDED: THAT

(A) THE HOURLY ALLOWANCE FOR CHILD-CARE AND DEPENDANT CARERS BE SET AT £7.65;

(B) THE BASIC ALLOWANCE FOR ALL COUNCILLORS BE INCREASED BY 1.5%, IN LINE WITH THE OFFICERS’ LOCAL PAY AWARD: AND

(C) A COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF ALL MEMBERS ALLOWANCES BE COMPLETED IN DECEMBER 2014 SO THAT ANY BUDGET IMPLICATIONS CAN BE CONSIDERED BEFORE THE BUDGET IS FINALISED.
5. **REVIEW OF DISCRETIONARY PENSION POLICY STATEMENTS**

(Link to Council Priorities: All)

The introduction of the new Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) from 1 April 2014 required all scheme employers to review their existing Discretionary Pension Policy Statements and publish new Policy Statements effective from 1 April 2014.

Accordingly, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Development introduced the report that summarised the Pension Policies that required reviewing and made recommendations for the adoption of new Pension Policy Statements. These recommendations were in line with those proposed by Surrey County Council, the Elmbridge Borough Council LGPS Administrative Authority.

The report also summarised the main provisions of the new LGPS and provided a comparison with the existing scheme.

The Cabinet noted that there would be no change to the Council’s application of its discretionary powers under the Council’s existing Pension Policies and accordingly,

**RECOMMENDED: THAT, FROM 1 APRIL 2014, THE FOLLOWING PENSION POLICIES BE ADOPTED, AS SET OUT IN PARAGRAPHS 3.4 TO 3.7 OF THE REPORT:**

- POWER OF EMPLOYING AUTHORITY TO AWARD ADDITIONAL PENSION;
- FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT; AND
- EARLY PAYMENT OF PENSION BENEFITS AT THE REQUEST OF A CURRENT EMPLOYEE AND FORMER EMPLOYEE.

6. **PUBLIC RESPONSE TO ADVERTISED PARKING CONTROLS**

(Link to Council Priorities: EC1 / LC1)

At its meeting held in October 2013, the Cabinet considered outline proposals for the introduction of car parking management schemes and charges in a number of the Council’s car parks. At that meeting, it was agreed that the Council would advertise and consult on these proposals in accordance with the statutory processes for introducing parking controls.

Accordingly, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture introduced the report and advised Members of the responses that had been received following the public advertisement and consultation undertaken regarding the Council’s proposals for the introduction of parking charges at Thamesmead car park, and the car park serving the Cowey Sale recreational facility, together with the introduction of maximum stay parking controls at a number of car parks serving recreational facilities where commuter and local parking had been identified as a problem.

With regard to the Cowey Sale car park, the Portfolio Holder advised that the consultation responses received had indicated that there was a strong feeling that charging was not favoured at this car park. Furthermore, following a response from Surrey Police who had raised a number of possible road safety issues together with
the strength of public opinion, the Portfolio Holder was proposing that the introduction of parking charges and controls in the Cowey Sale car park be not progressed.

With regard to the Cobham, Long Ditton and Walton Elm Grove Recreation Ground car parks, as no objections had been received in respect of the advertised proposals, the Portfolio Holder was proposing that 3-hour maximum stay parking controls be introduced together with a limited number of parking permits.

With regard to the Ditton Reach car park, taking into consideration the comments received from the Sea Scouts Groups, the Portfolio Holder was proposing that 4-hour maximum stay parking controls be introduced.

With regard to the West End Recreation Ground car park, the Portfolio Holder advised that whilst letters of support had been received from both the River Mole Pre-School and Princess Alice Hospice, a number of letters of objection had also been received indicating that the introduction of parking controls in the car park would result in displaced cars parking along West End Lane. In this regard, the Portfolio Holder proposed that a decision to introduce parking controls in this car park be deferred in order for further discussions to take place. Accordingly, she proposed that recommendation (B) (i), as outlined in the report, be deleted.

With regard to the Thamesmead car park, the Portfolio Holder for Highways and Transport advised that the responses received following the public consultation indicated that it was likely that some all-day parking would be displaced into surrounding streets and therefore she proposed that the introduction of parking charges and controls in the Thamesmead car park be not progressed.

The Cabinet supported the proposals put forward by the Portfolio Holders for Highways & Transport and Leisure & Culture and accordingly,

**RECOMMENDED: THAT**

(A) THE OBJECTIONS AND STRENGTH OF PUBLIC OPINION TO THE PROPOSED CONTROLS AND CHARGES AT THE THAMESMEAD AND COWEY SALE CAR PARKS BE NOTED AND THE CURRENT PROPOSALS AT THESE CAR PARKS BE NOT PROGRESSED;

(B) THE COUNCIL PROCEEDS TO MAKE THE PARKING PLACES ORDER AS ADVERTISED:

(I) TO INCLUDE THE INTRODUCTION OF A 3-HOUR MAXIMUM STAY, WITH A LIMITED NUMBER OF PARKING PERMITS, AT THE COBHAM, LONG DITTON AND WALTON ELM GROVE RECREATION GROUND CAR PARKS;

(II) TO INCLUDE THE INTRODUCTION OF A 4-HOUR MAXIMUM STAY AT THE DITTON REACH CAR PARK, AS OUTLINED IN THE REPORT; AND

(III) TO INCUDE AND CONSOLIDATE THE COUNCIL’S EXISTING PARKING PLACE ORDERS FOR THE REASON SET OUT IN THE REPORT.
7. MATTERS OF REPORT

CONTINUATION OF THE “PERFECT FIT” SCHEME

(Link to Council Priorities: H2)

The Portfolio Holder for Housing introduced the report and reminded Members that the Perfect Fit Scheme had been established between the Council and Paragon Community Housing Group (PCHG) in April 2012, to make more effective use of the social housing stock. It did this by supporting under-occupying PCHG tenants to downsize and release much-needed family-sized homes for re-letting.

Cabinet considered a report which sought agreement to commit up to £260,000 from the Affordable Housing Enabling Fund to support its continuation up to 31 March 2016; and to delegate authority to Officers to conclude a new funding agreement between the Council and PCHG.

Whilst noting that the Affordable Housing Member Panel had endorsed both the continuation of the Scheme and the further allocation of monies from the Enabling Fund, the Cabinet fully supported the continuation of the Perfect Fit Scheme for a further two years, up to 31 March 2016.

RESOLVED that

(a) the Perfect Fit Scheme be continued up to 31 March 2016;
(b) the allocation of £260,000 from the Enabling Fund to provide capital funding to Paragon Community Housing Group to support the delivery of approximately 80 additional moves through the Scheme in 2014/15 and 2015/16 (over and above those already funded), be agreed;
(c) a new Funding Agreement between the Council and Paragon Community Housing Group (PCHG) be entered into, to reflect the continuation of the Scheme until 31 March 2016; the proposed additional investment; and the increased number of moves to be delivered; and
(d) authority be delegated to the Head of Housing Services to conclude a funding agreement with PCHG.

8. GROUNDS MAINTENANCE PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

(Link to Council Priorities: P1, P2, P3)

Given that the grounds maintenance and related contracts were due to expire on 31 March 2015, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture introduced the report and advised Members of the Procurement Strategy that had been developed in this regard together with the options now available to the Council. The report set out an outline timetable to consider the best options available which would lead to a successful retendering of the green spaces contracts whilst achieving an overall saving for the Council and maintaining the current high standards.
Members noted that other green spaces contracts had also been aligned to the same expiry date to provide the option to consider a larger contract, with opportunities for greater savings as part of the procurement exercise.

The Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise (IESE) had been supporting the Council and had undertaken a light touch review of the current contract arrangements and had made recommendations on the most advantageous tendering options moving forward.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the current contractual arrangements had served the Borough well and a good, assured standard of service had been delivered to residents across the green spaces contracts. However, it was now recommended that this could be delivered at a lower cost while protecting the high standard of service provided. In light of advice from IESE, it was proposed that the existing contracts be consolidated and taken to market as a single, substantial service bundle.

With regard to the Security and Patrol Contract which commenced on 1 April 2005, as part of the procurement of the new contract, it was suggested to include the provision for the locking of selected parks as a part of the main contract tender document to maintain this valuable element of the service. Furthermore, it was proposed to tender the remaining Security and Patrol Contract as a separate specialist contract, alongside the ground maintenance contracts. Consultations with the Community Safety Partnership would be undertaken and a decision on whether to continue with this service would be considered at a later stage.

Prior to consideration of the item, the Leader invited Councillor S.J. Selleck, Group Leader of the Residents’ Associations Political Group to address the meeting. Councillor Selleck raised the issue of the provision of dog waste bins and asked whether a review could be undertaken on how many extra dog waste bins were required in the Borough. The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture agreed to look at this when the new contract was being developed.

RESOLVED that

(a) the proposed Procurement Strategy for the Green Spaces Contracts be noted; and

(b) the Security and Patrol Contract be included in the tender process as a stand-alone contract and the viability of including this moving forward, be considered at a later date.

9. WW1 COMMEMORATIONS

(Link to Council Priorities: P1, P2, P3)

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Culture introduced the report and advised the Cabinet that 2014 was the centenary of the start of the First World War (WW1). Accordingly, this would be marked with a four year programme of events to mark the national commemoration of this historic centenary.

Members noted that a small group of Officers had considered a joined up approach to the commemorations. In this regard it was proposed that a range of Elmbridge...
projects be considered across the four years which would be developed over the coming months, details of which were outlined in the report.

A co-ordinated campaign entitled “Elmbridge Remembers” would be promoted widely using both social media and traditional methods. Further engagement would be undertaken with community groups who would be encouraged to promote their events alongside those organised by the Council.

The Cabinet noted that the projects that had been identified could be delivered within existing revenue budgets and the opportunity would also be taken to seek external funding.

The Portfolio Holder highlighted the Community Poppy planting project and whilst a number of sites had already been identified for planting, asked Ward Councillors to let either her or the Leisure Services Team know of any further sites that would be suitable for planting bearing in mind that poppy seeds could not be planted where daffodil bulbs were already in situ.

The Cabinet fully supported the proposed four year programme of events which it was felt would be an excellent opportunity for the Borough to mark the national commemoration of the First World War.

RESOLVED that the plans to commemorate the centenary of the start of the First World War (WW1) be noted.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m. and concluded at 7.45 p.m.

J. O’REILLY
Leader of the Council

Committee and Member Services Officer

Mrs. T. Hulse - Principal Committee and Member Services Officer

Other Officers in attendance

R. Moran - Chief Executive
Mrs. S. Selvanathan - Strategic Director and Deputy Chief Executive
R. Lee - Strategic Director
A. Harrison - Head of Legal Services
Mrs. C. Hall - Head of Personnel