

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2019**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council), Ian Barnes (Deputy Leader), Alev Cazimoglu (Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care), Rick Jewell (Cabinet Member for Children's Services), Mary Maguire (Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement), Gina Needs (Cabinet Member for Social Housing) and George Savva MBE (Cabinet Member for Licensing and Regulatory Services)

Associate Cabinet Members (Non-Executive and Non-Voting): Mustafa Cetinkaya (Enfield South East), Ahmet Hasan (Enfield North)

ABSENT Guney Dogan (Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainability), Nneka Keazor (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion), Mahtab Uddin (Cabinet Member for Public Health) and Claire Stewart (Associate Cabinet Member for Enfield West), Claire Stewart (Associate Cabinet Member (Enfield West)

OFFICERS: Ian Davis (Chief Executive), Tony Theodoulou (Executive Director People), Sarah Cary (Executive Director Place), Fay Hammond (Acting Executive Director Resources), Jeremy Chambers (Director of Law and Governance), Jayne Middleton-Albooye (Head of Legal Services), Joanne Drew (Director of Housing and Regeneration), Matt Bowmer (Interim Director of Finance), Geoff Waterton (Head of Collection Services), Tinu Olowe (Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development), Deanna Hobday (Strategy and Policy Officer) and Andrea De Lucy (Press and New Media Officer) Penelope Williams (Secretary)

Also Attending: Press representative

**1
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dogan, Keazor, Stewart and Uddin.

**2
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3
DEPUTATIONS**

There were no deputations.

**4
MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2020/21 AND TRANCHE TWO BUDGET
PROPOSALS 2024/25**

Councillor Mary Maguire, Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement, introduced the report of the Executive Director of Resources, Fay Hammond. (Report No: 158)

NOTED

1. This report updates on progress following on from the report on the report on the Medium-Term Plan in July and the first tranche budget proposals in October 2019. The budget was constantly being updated to ensure it was resilient, sustainable and realistic.
2. The Council was committed to investing in its most vulnerable residents.
3. New budget pressures, including in adult social care, children's services and SEN transport had been identified since the last report which had to be addressed. There had been over 100 extra special needs children identified.
4. Good news was that the Enfield Pension Fund had been found to be in surplus which has released an extra £3.6m into the budget.
5. Separate, one off, funding had been obtained from government grants and receipts from the London Business Rate Pool. This funding, although welcomed, could not replace proper regular funding, which was badly needed.
6. The current gap had been reduced to £1.565m, which would be closed using reserves, but only if absolutely necessary. Alternative solutions would be sought.
7. Concern about the ability of the Council to fund even statutory social service requirements in the future if no more government funding was provided. Ninety Four percent of Local Authority social service directors had expressed similar concerns.
8. Long term planning was difficult with so much funding uncertainty. Information about the level of future Government funding had been due on the 5 December 2019, but this was not going to be ready because of the election. After the election, the new government would call an emergency budget meeting and the Council should have some idea about future funding levels.
9. Social Care was a priority for the Council, which had increased the social care budget by 10.5m, but because of demographic pressures more money was desperately needed.

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10. Workforce was central to the quality of the service provided. Enfield was one of the lowest spenders but had excellent outcomes. There were difficulties recruiting social workers but the Council was investing in an apprenticeship scheme which should help in the future.
11. The Council's income generation projects had also helped fill the funding gap including meanwhile income from Meridian Water of £1m.
12. Despite funding pressures, the Council was continuing to invest in projects to improve people's lives, including the recent creation of a Modern Slavery Team, continuing the successful investing Summer University Programme and other measures to prevent youth crime. Enfield was number 7 in London for the incidence of modern slavery.

Alternative options considered - Details are set out in the report.

DECISION

1. To note
 - 1.1 The continued financial uncertainty facing local government.
 - 1.2 The reduction in the funding gap from £3.322m to £1.565m.
 - 1.3 An increase in the estimated funding of £2.225m following confirmation of the CPI increase on the SFA (£1.000m), that the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant (£0.800m) maintained at current levels and the London Business Rate Pool will continue (£0.425m).
 - 1.4 The increase proposed in Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care budgets of 9% (£10.549m), investing to support the most vulnerable in the Borough as exemplified in paragraph 6.13.
 - 1.5 Updated savings proposals of £9.743m and income generation proposals of £1.653m for 2020/21.
 - 1.6 It is proposed that the gap of £1.565m will be met by the one off use of reserves in 2020/21. However, work will continue on options to reduce the call on reserves but will only be proposed where achievable.
 - 1.7 The next update on the Budget to Cabinet in February which will provide a further update on funding levels, additional savings and income generation proposals.
2. To approve the updated savings and income generation proposals in Appendix 2B of the report for further development and consultation.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet need to manage the 2020/21 to 2024/25 financial planning process with due regard to the available resources.

5

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2020/21

Councillor Mary Maguire (Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement) introduced the report of the Executive Director Resources (No: 157)

recommending Council approval on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21.

NOTED

1. This scheme is about how we help the poorest families with their council tax.
2. For 202/21 it was proposed to make a 2% reduction in the amount the poorest would have to pay, which would affect about 12,000 council tax payers, and increase the income taper. Some people will have to pay 60p less and others affected 49p more.
3. It was also proposed to make an administrative change to respond to alterations in the way universal credit is implemented and make it fairer to those in receipt of universal credit compared to those who are not.
4. One hundred and eight people responded to the public consultation.
5. There will be a transitional hardship fund supplementing the existing discretionary Council Tax Hardship Scheme, available to those who need it. The Citizens Advice Bureau receives a grant from the Council of £345,000, including for the provision of debt advice to Enfield residents
6. The scheme will help those of working age in certain protected groups, including war widows and care leavers.
7. Work is being carried out to further support those in debt. The Council is reducing the use of bailiffs and providing help to get people out of debt.
8. Members were pleased to have been able to reduce the amount the poorest households will have had to pay, after a number of years of increase. They hoped to reduce it further in the future.

Alternative Options Considered: Included within the report.

DECISION

1. That Cabinet recommends to Council that Council agrees the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2020/21 as summarised in Appendix A to provide financial support for households on low incomes in paying their Council Tax taking into account the Equality Impact Assessment (Appendix B) and the results of the customer consultation shown at Appendix C. The 2020/21 scheme is based on the 2019/20 scheme, updated for legislative amendments, income uprating and administrative changes and the following changes which were the subject of public consultation:

For the 2020/21 scheme:

- Reducing the council tax support minimum payment for working age claimants from 26.5% to 24.5% and increasing the excess income taper from 20% to 22.5%, and

- To reduce the earned income threshold for working age council tax support claimants receiving Universal Credit from £1,265 to £1,100 per month (note the one-year transitional protection for existing claimants to be provided as part of the council tax support hardship scheme).

Reason for Recommendations:

The recommendations contained in this report follow an assessment of options, experience of operating the scheme to date and the Equality Impact Assessment. The recommended changes introduced in 2014 for defined protected groups and the further extension of care leavers under the Equality Impact Assessment support the Council's aims to build strong, stable communities and are recommended to be continued next year.

**6
PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

Councillor Needs (Cabinet Member for Council Housing) introduced the report of the Executive Director Place (No: 156) on the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

NOTED

1. Since 2011 there had been a 246% increase in the number of homeless in Enfield. Enfield has the second highest number of households in temporary accommodation nationally.
2. This strategy sets out the Council's ambitions to end homelessness in Enfield.
3. The most common reason for people becoming homeless is through evictions in the private rented sector. Welfare reforms have also had a significant impact on these tenants.
4. The strategy sets out 5 ambitions for the Council, with prevention at the heart.
5. These were to make homelessness prevention a priority for everyone, to treat people with empathy, dignity and respect, to support people to access the right accommodation, to support people to plan for their lifetime housing needs and to end rough sleeping in Enfield.
6. The proposed Homelessness Prevention Partnership Board would oversee the delivery of the strategy.
7. Members welcomed the strategy to help those most in need and congratulated officers for their work.
8. The strategy aimed to proactively target those who are most likely to become homeless using special software, to enable the Council to intervene at an early stage.
9. This strategy was part of a wider Housing and Growth Strategy which would be brought to Cabinet in January 2020.

10. The new policy acknowledged that the private rented sector had a role to play and to enable the Council engage with landlords to help prevent evictions. To be able to offer help before people become homeless which was a change from previous policy where people had to actually be homeless before the Council could offer to help.
11. Rough sleeping was a particular problem. There had been some success with reducing the numbers of rough sleepers. Out of 78 people found earlier in the year 31 had now found homes. The winter shelter would provide much needed support.
12. The consultation had found that the Council needed to be better at communicating with the community about the help was available.
13. Preventing homelessness saves lives and money.
14. London was underfunded and the Council had been lobbying the government for more money for more early intervention.
15. The current service model was a reflection of funding arrangements.
16. Poor housing had a major impact on health and wellbeing.

Alternative Options Considered:

An alternative option considered was to not renew the 2013 Preventing Homelessness strategy. However, under the Homelessness Act 2002, local authorities are required to have a Homelessness Strategy that is updated at least every five years and that includes plans for; preventing homelessness, ensuring sufficient accommodation and satisfactory support services for people who are, or who may become, homeless. If we decided to not renew our Preventing Homelessness strategy, we would not meet our statutory duty. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government has advised that our new Preventing Homelessness strategy must be approved and implemented by December 2019.

With the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017 (HRA), the Council has a duty to focus on prevention and early intervention, requiring an emphasis on joined-up, partnership working. Without the renewed strategy, it would be unlikely that we could achieve these aims, homelessness would continue to rise and costs to the Council would increase.

DECISION

1. To approve the strategy for adoption and implementation
2. To note the establishment of a multi-agency Homelessness Prevention Partnership Board to take forward delivery of the strategy.

Reasons for Recommendations:

Increasing homelessness; a growing private rented sector which in many cases is offering sub-standard accommodation; a growing population and ambitious new housing targets mean that we require a bold new approach to deliver more and better homes and prevent homelessness in Enfield.

Homelessness in Enfield has increased significantly in recent years, with a 250% increase since 2011/12. We have seen a 74% rise in temporary accommodation rates since 2012 and rough sleeping has increased from 7 in 2017/18 to 78 in 2018/19. The human cost of homelessness and households spending years in temporary accommodation is enormous. At the same time the financial cost to the Council of an ever-increasing number of households in temporary accommodation is growing.

As such, we require a radically different approach to preventing and ultimately ending homelessness. This strategy sets out our approach for preventing homelessness, giving an overarching vision and guiding principles that will ensure consistency across relevant Council departments and set out how we will work in partnership to achieve our vision. The new strategy provides the opportunity to design and develop our services to intervene as early as possible to prevent homelessness and to facilitate partnership working across the Council, with partners and with the community to prevent homelessness. The strategy aims to prevent and reduce homelessness which will improve outcomes for residents and reduce costs to the Council.

This strategy takes a 'Health in all Policies' (HiAPT) approach in how we propose to work together to prevent and address homelessness.

The strategy will significantly contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan, addressing all key priorities; Good Homes in Well-Connected Neighbourhoods, Sustain Strong and Healthy Communities & Build our Local Economy to Create a Thriving Place.

7

CABINET AGENDA PLANNING - FUTURE ITEMS

NOTED, for information, the provisional list of items scheduled for future Cabinet meetings.

8

MINUTES

The minutes for the meetings held on Wednesday 6 November and Wednesday 13 November were agreed as a correct record.

9

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

NOTED the date agreed for the next meeting of the Cabinet:

- Wednesday 22 January 2019