

Minutes of: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 17 April 2024

Present: Councillor E O'Brien (in the Chair)
Councillors R Gold, A Quinn, T Rafiq, L Smith and T Tariq

Also in attendance: Councillors R Bernstein and M Smith

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor C Cummins, Councillor C Morris and L Ridsdale

CA.152 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Clare Cummins, Councillor Charlotte Morris, and Chief Executive Lynne Ridsdale.

CA.153 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CA.154 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

CA.155 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

CA.156 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th March 2024 be approved as a correct record.

CA.157 REVIEW OF NEIGHBOURHOOD HOUSING SUPPORT SERVICES- COMPLEX NEEDS AND FLOATING SUPPORT/DISPERSED ACCOMMODATION SERVICES

Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Care, presented the report which sought approval for the review of two lots of housing related support provision in Neighbourhood Housing Support services, namely Adullam Homes- Bury Bridges- Complex Needs Accommodation, and Calico Enterprise- Bury Gateway- Floating Support/Dispersed Accommodation.

There was a potential to bring both services together into more effective commissioning that provides a one service approach to housing related to support for people and households that are homeless or at risk of losing their tenancies but, as contract end dates do not align, this report proposed the extension of one service to bring them into line before a full review is carried out.

In response to a Member's query regarding timescales for the review, it was noted that soft market testing had begun, and co-production with both Adullam and Calico would begin upon approval tonight to ensure the review was completed early in the summer in order to meet September timescales.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Agreed to extend contractual arrangements of Calico Enterprise from the 1st July 2024 to 30th September 2024 to align with the end of contractual arrangements of Adullam at a cost of £151,233;
2. Agreed the review both services;
3. Agreed to the procurement of the services to a specification informed by the review; and
4. Noted that a further report setting out recommendations as to preferred bidders and costs would come to a future meeting.

Reasons for the decision:

There has been a significant increase of single people that require tenancy related service and households that requires interventions to sustain their tenancies. Rough sleeping has increased locally, due numerous factors which include:

- Increase in the number of people with complex needs (mental health, substance misuse and offending behaviours)
- Expensive housing market in the borough contributing to lack of access to the private rented sector and finite support of social housing.
- Regional and local challenges regarding providing accommodation to increased asylum and refugee presentations due to government policy and leave to remain cases.
- Cost of living has increased which has meant that more households are struggling to sustain their tenancies.

There needs to be a review to ensure that supported accommodation for single people and floating support for households reflects these challenges. Services must be fit for purpose, to prevent people from failing in their tenancies and provide housing solutions that develop independent living skills and improve quality of life in the community.

Other options considered and rejected:

Procurement rules do not allow any further extensions to contractual arrangements. Therefore, it provides an opportunity to review the current services and housing and homelessness pressures in Bury.

CA.158 HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL ASSISTANCE AND TRANSPORT POLICY

Councillor Lucy Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, presented the report which sought the approval and adoption of a new policy of how the Council will meet its statutory duty to make necessary travel arrangements for all 'eligible children and young people'. This policy had been co-produced with parents and had been subject to consultation with a range of stakeholders.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that the EHCP assessments would be carried out at the same time as transport assessments, therefore streamlining the process rather than creating additional appointments, and reflecting the feedback received from residents (a 'tell us once' approach'). With regards to regular reviews moving forwards, it was noted that relationships with parents had been strengthened through the co-production approach and officers would continue to build on these to ensure policies were up to date and appropriate, as part of the wider improvements to SEND governance.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the outcome of consultation on the draft home to school travel assistance and transport policy, and
2. Approved the policy for implementation on the 1st June 2024.

Reasons for the decision:

The proposed changes respond to revised guidance from the DfE in respect of home to school transport, and reflect the outcome of engagement with parents, and consultation with wider stakeholders.

Other options considered and rejected:

Following an investigation by the Local Government Ombudsman, the existing policy was found not to be compliant in respect of the post-19 arrangements. The changes are required to ensure that the policy reflects updated Government guidance and is statutorily compliant.

CA.159 CORPORATE PLAN 2024/25

Councillor Tahir Rafiq, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, presented the 2024/25 Corporate Plan, which set out the strategic delivery objectives for Bury Council, in partnership with NHS GM Bury, over the next financial year. The Plan is structured around three overarching priorities which, collectively, will also support the Council's financial sustainability. These are to deliver ongoing improvements in Children's Services, drive economic growth, and tackle inequalities.

Members discussed a foodbank in Radcliffe and the difficulties in finding appropriate premises for it after August. It was noted that the organisation had particular needs which meant identifying premises was complicated, but the asset plan in the Corporate Plan would assist with searches like this so all options could be reviewed. With regards to evidencing the Corporate Peer Review suggestions, it was noted that the action plan from the review was included in the wider Plan and the smaller set of priorities should enable them to be met and reduce timescale slippage.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the Corporate Plan for 2024-25 and plans for reporting across the year.

Reasons for the decision:

This report sets out a clear line of sight between the in-year activities of the Council and the vision for the borough agreed in LET'S Do It! It provides clarity over the priorities for the Council which will enable effective decision making in terms of

resource planning and work allocation. This will allow for clear performance management throughout the organisation, by directorate and at an individual level.

Other options considered and rejected:

N/A

CA.160 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION CORPORATE PEER REVIEW

Councillor Tahir Rafiq, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, presented the report which summarised the approach taken by the Local Government Association and the feedback received from the Peer Review Team from the full Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) undertaken in December 2023. This visit was intended to assess progress since the last full CPC in 2018, and in particular to validate actions taken through the Finance Improvement Plan to deliver a balanced Medium Term Financial Strategy in for Full Council in February 2024.

Members noted the feedback included praise for the high level of understanding of staff regarding the Let's Do It priorities and the strong relationships with health partners in the borough. Comments were received regarding improving governance and work would continue on aspects of organisational culture (including Member development). The Leader advised that it had been very useful feedback, and thanked the LGA team and all involved with the challenge.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the progress made by the Council as captured in the Position Statement and Full Report from the Local Government Association; and
2. Agreed that the recommendations from the Challenge are accepted by the Council and incorporated into the 2024/25 Corporate Plan.

Reasons for the decision:

As participating in the Corporate Challenge is done through mutual agreement with the Local Government Association there is an expectation that all councils having a corporate peer challenge will commit to publishing the feedback report and an action plan. This report fulfils that obligation.

Other options considered and rejected:

None applicable.

CA.161 RENEWAL OF THE COUNCIL'S HR & PAYROLL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CONTRACT - PART A

Councillor Tahir Rafiq, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, presented the report which set out proposals to join the Greater Manchester framework and extend the Council's use of iTrent, the Council's current HR and Payroll Management System, for three years with the option to extend for a further two. During this period, officers will continue to explore and pursue opportunities for improvement and efficiencies in the use of the system to support the Council, enabled by the integration of Payroll and HR services into a single Service as previously agreed by Cabinet.

Members discussed the idea of, in principle, sharing HR services with other Authorities and it was noted that this was not the intention at the moment but it would be the natural first step for any such arrangements. These would be complex however, as different Councils would use different versions of the iTrent system, or use them in different ways.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved Bury's continued use of iTrent for an initial period of three years (August 2027) with the option to extend for a further two (August 2029);
2. Approved the direct award to MHR through the Greater Manchester Framework; and
3. Delegate the finalisation of the terms of the direct award to the Director of People and inclusion and Cabinet Member for HR and Corporate Affairs

Reasons for the decision:

Continuing to utilise iTrent and engaging MHR via the GM Framework allows the Council to continue to take advantage of the investment made in this product over recent years as well as the efficiencies available through the GM Framework.

Other options considered and rejected:

The alternative option would be to pursue a full re-tender process. This would take approximately 18 months and require significant additional capacity.

CA.162 CONSTITUTION UPDATE

Councillor Tahir Rafiq, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, presented the report which recommended some changes to the Local Choice Functions set out in Schedule 2 to the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000. These functions may be, but need not be, the responsibility of Cabinet.

Decision:

Cabinet agreed to recommend the updated Local Choice Functions to Council.

Reasons for the decision:

Local Choice Functions are reviewed annually to ensure the correct functions are detailed and the required delegation is in place.

Other options considered and rejected:

None, the local choice functions are reviewed annually to ensure correct and appropriate delegations are in place.

CA.163 MINUTES OF ASSOCIATION OF GREATER MANCHESTER AUTHORITIES / GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority meeting held on 23rd February 2024 be noted.

CA.164 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Decision:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100 (A)(4), Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the reason that the following business involves the disclosure of exempt information as detailed against the item.

CA.165 RENEWAL OF THE COUNCIL'S HR & PAYROLL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CONTRACT - PART B

Councillor Tahir Rafiq, Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, presented the Part B report which set out the full financial details.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved Bury's continued use of iTrent for an initial period of three years (August 2027) with the option to extend for a further two (August 2029);
2. Approved the direct award to MHR through the Greater Manchester Framework; and
3. Delegate the finalisation of the terms of the direct award to the Director of People and inclusion and Cabinet Member for HR and Corporate Affairs

Reasons for the decision:

Continuing to utilise iTrent and engaging MHR via the GM Framework allows the Council to continue to take advantage of the investment made in this product over recent years as well as the efficiencies available through the GM Framework.

Other options considered and rejected:

The alternative option would be to pursue a full re-tender process. This would take approximately 18 months and require significant additional capacity.

COUNCILLOR E O'BRIEN
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.35 pm)