PRESENT:
Chair: Councillor Chris Robbins Council Leader

Cabinet Members:
Councillor Clyde Loakes Deputy Leader
Councillor Liaquat Ali MBE JP Portfolio Lead Member for Community Safety and Cohesion
Councillor Angie Bean Portfolio Lead Member for Adult Services
Councillor Clare Coghill Portfolio Lead Member for Economic Growth and High Streets
Councillor Ahsan Khan Portfolio Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Khevyn Limbajee Portfolio Lead Member for Housing
Councillor Mark Rusling Portfolio Lead Member for Children and Young People
Councillor Naheed Asghar Junior Lead Member
Councillor Karen Bellamy Junior Lead Member

(Junior Cabinet Members are appointed by the Leader to assist Cabinet in proposing, formulating and advising upon Council policy under the guidance of the appropriate Portfolio Holder. These Councillors are not Members of the Cabinet and do not have any voting rights nor decision-making powers.)

Councillors in Attendance: Councillor Louise Mitchell and Councillor Gerry Lyons

Officers in Attendance:
Rhona Cadenhead Assistant Chief Executive
Marina Dimopoulou Assistant Director, Asset Management & Delivery
Martin Esom Chief Executive
Daniel Fenwick Director of Governance
Ken Jones Senior Housing Adviser
Althea Loderick Chief Operating Officer
Debra Marlow Acting Democratic Services Team Leader
Michele Moloney Director of Commissioning and Neighbourhoods
Linzi Roberts-Egan Deputy Chief Executive, Families
John Turnbull Director of Finance
Vala Valavan Head of Highways and Infrastructure
1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Sharon Waldron.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES OF CABINET**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20\(^{th}\) January, 2015 were agreed and signed by the Leader of the Council as an accurate record of the same.

4. **HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET AND HOUSING RENTS AND CHARGES**

Councillor Khevyn Limbajee presented the report of Ken Jones to the Cabinet. Since 2012 the Council has been planning for the long term housing interests of the Borough using the approved formula. The options set out in the report presented to Cabinet are viewed as the best for the Council at this stage. The report was recommended to Cabinet. There were no questions.

For the reasons set out in the report and its appendices, Cabinet AGREED the following, for the financial year 2015/16:

**Housing Revenue Account**

1. That from 6 April 2015 the rents for tenants in HRA dwellings and hostels are increased by 3.2% to give an average rent of £104.04 per week.
2. That the existing policy of setting rents for newly let properties at formula rent continues with the exceptions as before.
3. That service charges are set in accordance with Council policy to recover the costs from all tenants receiving the service, resulting in an average increase in charges of 2.1%, as set out in appendix 4.
4. That the HRA Budget for 2015/16 be agreed, as shown in Appendix 1
5. To make no change to heating charges in 2015/16.
6. That the sheltered housing service charge is unchanged at £15.74 but subject to review following the review of the service.
7. That no change in hostel service charges is proposed
8. To increase garage rents by 3.5% to £12.32 per week, consistent with the general increase in fees and charges approved by Cabinet on 9 December 2014.

**Housing General Fund**

9. That rents for temporary accommodation are set at the level of the Housing benefit subsidy cap (appendix 4);
10. To increase the charge for sites at the Travellers’ Site by 3.5% to £46.31 per week from 6 April 2015.
HRA and Housing General Fund

11. A Management Fee for Ascham Homes for 2015/16 of £25.905m (HRA £21.817m, and general fund £4.088m). The HRA fee includes a ring fenced repairs and maintenance budget of £8.949m.

12. Noted the proposed delegated budgets delegated to Ascham Homes for homelessness of £2.087m (comprising expenditure £20.318m and income £18.230m), and that Ascham Homes manage income of £61.063m for HRA rent and service charges and the HRA capital programme £21.223m.

5. PROPERTY PROCEDURE RULES

Councillor Clare Coghill presented the report to Cabinet which sets out the revised Property Procedure Rules. Cllr Coghill thanked Marina and her team for the hard work involved in producing the document and also the Audit and Governance Committee which had recommended amendments.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. The revised Property Procedure Rules as set out in Appendix 2 of the Report.
2. The revised rules to be put forward for adoption at Full Council meeting on 5th March, 2015.

6. BUDGET REVIEW FEES AND CHARGES 2015/16 - ADULT SOCIAL CARE

Councillor Angie Bean presented the report of Stephen Gilson to Cabinet. This report sets out the proposed fees and charges for Adult Social care 2015/16. There is an increase in charges and there may be further provisions to come to Cabinet further on in the year.

There were no questions.

Cabinet AGREED:

1. The schedule of Fees and Charges as set out in Appendix A so far as they relate to fees and charges that are not reserved for Council decision by the provisions of the Local Authorities (functions and Responsibilities) Regulations 2000 (as amended).

7. REDEFINING WALTHAM FOREST - DIGITAL SERVICES

Councillor Clyde Loakes presented the report of Sally Hodgson to Cabinet. The report details the proposed model for digital customer services. These are proposed to help deliver savings by improving back office provision and the way customers access services.
Cabinet:

1. AGREED the adoption of the proposed model for Digital Customer Services as set out in Appendix 1 of the Report.
2. AGREED the continued investment in Business Support and Digital Customer Service up to a maximum of £5.9m in the financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17 from the Budget Reserve
3. DELEGATED the approval of individual projects or contracts within the Digital Customer services Programme and Business Support (agreed at (1) to the Director of Operations in consultation with the Deputy Leader and subject to the release of funds at (4).
4. DELEGATED authority to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Deputy Leader to release the investment at (2) to fund the decisions at (3).

Cabinet NOTED:

5. It is intended that Digital Customer Services and Business Support will deliver annual savings to the Council of £5.3m (net of on-going costs).
6. An Assisted Digital Service will be put in place to mitigate the risk of specific groups being excluded by the move to digital services. This will include face to face support, telephone contact and supporting customers to learn the skills they need to get online and self-serve in future.

8. REDEFINING WALTHAM FOREST - PROCUREMENT OF AN EXTERNAL PARTNER

The report was presented to Cabinet. There were no questions.

Cabinet:

1. APPROVED the procurement of an external partner to support the delivery of the digital services and business support workstreams within the redefining Waltham Forest programme using the ConsultancyONE framework as set out in paragraph 3.9 and 3.10 of the Report.
2. DELEGATED authority to the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the deputy Leader, to award the contract to the successful supplier.

9. MINI HOLLAND PROGRAMME: CONSULTATION OUTCOME AND APPROVAL SCHEME

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Highways and Infrastructure.

At the invitation of the chair, Cabinet received representations from members of the public as follows:

Amanda Parnell of Vestry Road said that if the aim of Mini-Holland was to increase safety, this was misplaced as the Village is safe. Vehicle monitoring during the trial was potentially misleading as the same vehicle driving through the area could be
counted twice. She gave the example of a resident who might need to attend Whipps Cross Hospital, whose journey could be increased by two miles, which would be multiplied on each occasion, thus increasing CO₂ emissions and pollution. Access to schools would also be adversely affected, for example in Addison Road.

Ms Parnell said the proposal was very different from the trial and disregarded Vestry Road and Orford Road. The consultation was inconclusive and overcomplicated, and did not take account of especially elderly people, many of whom would be unable to cycle.

Jakob Hartman of Pembroke Road asked the Cabinet to consider the situation 15 years ago, and whether encouraging an influx of traffic into what was an increasingly pleasant area would have been a good idea. The Village is essentially about people, not cars. Change is necessary. London’s population is growing, and there is a need to find alternatives to driving, with its effects on pollution, congestion and safety. Mini-Holland may not provide the whole answer but it is a first step. The Village is the right place to start it and the Council should be brave.

Mr Shah of the Sakina Trust Mosque in Vestry Road said that people come from all over the country to that place of worship. The proposal will reduce just two points of entry and exit to one, from Shernhall Street and left at the end of Vestry Road. It will effectively kill off the mosque as well as local businesses. The Village is a rare and beautiful place, the most expensive in Walthamstow, and if changes are made, they must be for the right reasons. Britain – or England – is a car country, whereas Holland is a pushbike country.

David Giusti of Folkestone Road said he had helped start a residents’ group in his road, including people of all ages and those who walk, cycle and drive. Traffic has become worse year on year, as had the behaviour of certain motorists. During the trial scheme, the streets were much quieter, it was safer cycling through the area and traffic noise was reduced at night. The Council listened when Folkestone residents explained they had not been involved in the consultation. Mini-Holland should be the start of a solution for Walthamstow and the borough as a whole that will improve everyone’s lives.

Mark Harrington of East Avenue said the proposal did not deal adequately with east-west flows of traffic or parking. The Council wanted to close the bridges to save money. He questioned the traffic statistics shown in the tables: a single vehicle could be counted several times; the W12 bus passes through 55 times a day but the tables show 544, and the measurements for example the Shernhall Street junction and for grove road do not match up. These led people to believe there was more traffic than there really is, and the two road closures are supported by a very small majority. Voting for better street-lighting and traffic calming does not amount to support for the scheme. The consultation therefore needs independent verification.

Paul Gasson of Eden Grove emphasised the health, safety and reduced pollution and obesity benefits of the scheme. Children’s lives are blighted by traffic and they are forced into a sedentary lifestyle. The car is an inefficient use of roadspace which affects other forms of transport. The scheme will enable local people who want to walk by discouraging rat-running by motorists who do not live in the area, in
which many people do not have the use of a car. At a time of climate change, Mini-Holland reduces CO₂ emissions, while creating more attractive streets which are welcoming to children and families.

Councillor Loakes reminded the Cabinet that Waltham Forest had been one of three successful boroughs out of 18 which bid for Mini-Holland funding, and won because the Council had a bold and ambitious programme that represented a step-change in how people get around. As well as Walthamstow Village, it includes Markhouse and Blackhorse villages and the gyratory system, as well as linking town centres. It will improve use of the Lea Bridge Road, which is at present a wholly inefficient thoroughfare. It comes at a time when car use is on the decline in Waltham Forest, and makes better use of a roadscape which is not increasing. People do not currently feel safe on bicycles, or walking with children along narrow pavements: this proposal puts people first.

This has been the most significant consultation on a public realm project, and has elicited the highest response, at twenty per cent. The Council used numerous means to engage the public over a considerable period and find out what residents thought: 900 emails were received and considered, as well as a lively debate in local and social media.

Councillor Loakes assured the Cabinet that the Council has met the emergency services and Dial-a-Ride, and that their responses are documented. A number of businesses are in favour of the scheme and are looking forward to the benefits it will bring, as well as building on the gains that The Scene is bringing to the Walthamstow

The Council wants something that is bold and ambitious. Creating safer streets will encourage cycling and walking, with all their health and environmental benefits. It will take five thousand vehicles out of the Village, and only rat-runners will be inconvenienced: residents and visitors will see the benefits.

The proposal and the consultation are not overcomplicated: this represents change. As it becomes settled, and satnavs are updated, there will be an improvement, and there is no ban on getting from A to B by car.

Councillor Loakes commended the proposals to the Cabinet.

Councillor Khan welcomed the proposal and underlined the public health benefits, as underlined by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment of public health particularly in relation to tackling obesity. He asked that residents be involved in the design of the public space improvements.

Councillor Rusling noted that there was some disquiet about emergency vehicle access, and asked that these be subject to final checks to provide the necessary assurances. He added for the record that the proposals are subject to a six-month review, and said that emissions and safety around schools and playgrounds should be monitored.

Councillor Coghill thanked residents for their views. She noted the growing number of homes in Waltham Forest and its impact on population density, which is now 17,000 per square mile. This demanded a paradigm shift in approaches to transport
policy, which in London could not depend on a car culture. The Netherlands has managed its density in a different way, and she said this approach would encourage local shopping and services. It also built on the opportunities demonstrated by traffic controls in parts of the borough during the Olympic Games.

Councillor Loakes undertook to engage with established residents’ groups in taking the policy forward, and to address in particular concerns arising out of the partial closure of certain roads, as well as involving them in achieving good design. Emergency services access would be monitored and concerns about signage and numbering would be addressed. Emissions and safety around schools and playgrounds should be monitored.

Councillor Loakes thanked the officer team led by Vala Valavan and acknowledged their support from the Communications Team.

The Chair assured residents that the Cabinet had been closely involved in the proposals. This formed a major part of the administration’s vision for improving the quality of life in the borough. He thanked Councillor Loakes and the team for their work in securing the bid and proposal.

CABINET:

(a) Noted the representations of local residents;

(b) Approved the final scheme design for the Walthamstow Village area-wide improvements scheme as part of the Mini-Holland Programme, for the reasons set out in the report and subject to the undertakings given above; and

(c) Delegated authority to the Director of Neighbourhoods in consultation with the deputy leader to approve future individual schemes of the Mini-Holland Programme including the award of any contracts that are key decisions.

10. MONTHLY FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Cabinet agreed to receive the report regarding financial Monitoring for the month of December, 2014. There were no questions.

CABINET NOTED the revenue financial position at month 9.

The meeting closed at 2.52 pm

Chair’s Signature

Date