

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 1 February 2021

PRESENT

Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council
Councillor Sue Fennimore, Deputy Leader
Councillor Ben Coleman, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care
Councillor Adam Connell, Cabinet Member for Public Services Reform
Councillor Larry Culhane, Cabinet Member for Children and Education
Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for the Environment
Councillor Andrew Jones, Cabinet Member for the Economy
Councillor Lisa Homan, Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Sue Macmillan, Cabinet Member for Strategy

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Adronie Alford
Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler
Councillor Andrew Brown
Councillor Belinda Donovan
Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris
Councillor Frances Stainton

INTRODUCTION

Covid-19

The Leader reported that the Council had already tested 20,000 local residents and the feedback of the services received had been extremely positive. He stressed that the reason for the test was not to provide assurance that people were not infected but to measure the areas of contagion in the borough, the spread and to understand the variants of the virus. The Leader thanked the Council officers who were working non-stop during this pandemic to keep residents safe.

On a happier note, 12,000 local residents had been given the vaccine and the programme was going well, but people still needed to take precautions. The Leader reinforced the need to maintain the safety measures to avoid spreading the virus, such as wearing masks, sanitising hands, keeping the 2m distance and staying at home.

Economy

The Leader stated that many people were still on furlough and unemployment had doubled since last March. There would be big challenges ahead as this year unfolded and the Council was strongly lobbying the Government for economic measures. There was a need for a big and bold plan to support all authorities across the country. The Council would be bringing forward a series of business measures in the future, in addition to the ones already taken.

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 4 JANUARY 2021

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 January 2021 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings, and that the outstanding actions be noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Max Schmid, Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

4. REVENUE BUDGET AND COUNCIL TAX LEVELS 2021/22

The Leader stated that this report would also be submitted to Budget Council on 25 February.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

That Council, for the reasons set out in this report and appendices, agrees:

1. To increase the Hammersmith & Fulham element of council tax by 1.99% for 2021/22, as modelled by the government in their spending power calculations for local government.
2. To apply the "adult social care precept" levy of 3% for 2021/22, as modelled by the government in their spending power calculations for local government.
3. To set the Council's own total net expenditure budget for 2021/22 at £124.458m.
4. To approve £7.885m of new investment on key services for residents.

5. To approve fees and charges as set out in paragraph 13 below including freezing charges in adult social care, children's services and general fund housing.
6. To note the budget projections to 2024/25 made by the Director of Finance in consultation with the Strategic Leadership Team.
7. To note the statement of the Director of Finance, under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, regarding the adequacy of reserves and robustness of estimates (paragraph 48).
8. To approve the reserves strategy and realignment of reserves as set out in Appendix J and Appendix K.
9. To require all Directors to report on their projected financial position compared to their revenue estimates in accordance with the Corporate Revenue Monitoring Report timetable.
10. To authorise Directors to implement their service spending plans for 2021/22 in accordance with the recommendations within this report and the Council's Standing Orders, Financial Regulations, relevant Schemes of Delegation and undertake any further consultation required regarding the Equalities Impact Assessment.
11. Set the Council's element of council tax for 2021/22 for each category of dwelling, as outlined in the table below and in full in Appendix A and calculated in accordance with Sections 31A to 49B of the Localism Act 2011.

Category of Dwelling	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ratio	6/9 £	7/9 £	8/9 £	1 £	11/9 £	13/9 £	15/9 £	18/9 £
a) H&F	554.64	647.08	739.52	831.96	1,016.84	1,201.72	1,386.60	1,663.92

12. To note the element of council tax to be charged by the Greater London Authority in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings as shown in the table below

Category of Dwelling	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ratio	6/9 £	7/9 £	8/9 £	1 £	11/9 £	13/9 £	15/9 £	18/9 £
b) GLA	242.44	282.85	323.25	363.66	444.47	525.29	606.10	727.32

13. That the overall Council Tax to be set at £1,195.62 per Band D property as follows

Category of Dwelling	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Ratio	6/9 £	7/9 £	8/9 £	1 £	11/9 £	13/9 £	15/9 £	18/9 £
a) H&F	554.64	647.08	739.52	831.96	1,016.84	1,201.72	1,386.60	1,663.92
b) GLA	242.44	282.85	323.25	363.66	444.47	525.29	606.10	727.32
c) Total	797.08	929.93	1,062.77	1,195.62	1,461.31	1,727.01	1,992.70	2,391.24

14. To authorise the Director of Finance to collect and recover National Non-Domestic Rate and Council Tax in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended), the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

5. FOUR YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2021/22 AND CAPITAL STRATEGY 2021/22

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

1. To approve the four-year General Fund Capital Programme budget at £158.1m for the period 2021/22-2024/25 (presented in Table 2 and Appendix 1).
2. To approve the continuation of rolling programmes for 2021/22 funded from the Council's mainstream resources. For financial modelling purposes, these programmes are assumed to continue at the same level until 2024/25:

	£m
Planned Maintenance/DDA Programme [ECD]	2.400
Footways and Carriageways [ENV]	2.030
Column Replacement [ENV]	0.346
Controlled Parking Zones [ENV]	0.275
Total	5.051

3. To delegate approval of the detailed programmes for use of the rolling programmes to the relevant SLT Director in consultation with the Director of Finance and relevant Lead Cabinet Member.
4. To note the existing mainstream funded schemes previously approved, but now reprofiled to 2021/22 and future years as detailed in Table 3.
5. To approve the four-year Housing (HRA) Capital Programme at £247.6m for the period 2021/22-2024/25 as set out in Table 5 and Appendix 1.
6. To delegate the potential application of capital receipts (up to £4.4m) under the Government's Flexible Use of Capital Receipts provisions to fund Invest to Save schemes in 2020/21 and 2021/22 (as identified in Appendix 5) and to support potential match-funding opportunities, to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services.
7. To approve an additional budget envelope of £50m, from 2021/22 onwards, to provide operational flexibility, for taking forward the major projects set out in Capital Strategy. Use of this budget will be subject to Cabinet approval, agreement of funding sources and sign-off of an appropriate business case.
8. To approve the Capital Strategy 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 4.
9. To approve the annual Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement for 2021/22, as set out in Appendix 6.

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

6. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITOR & BUDGET VARIATIONS, 2020/21 (THIRD QUARTER)

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

1. To approve the proposed budget variations to the capital programme totalling £1.6m (summarised in Table 1 and detailed in Appendix 2).

2. To approve additional budget of £1,223,000 funded from borrowing (£432,000) and external grants (£791,000), to complete various transport and parks schemes (see Appendix 2 for detail).
3. To approve an additional budget of £0.9m, and funding acceptance regarding a grant award from BEIS (Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy) for Social Housing Decarbonisation and note that this will be supported by £1.6m of funding from the existing HRA Asset Management and Compliance Programme.
4. To note the potential risks regarding the Housing Capital Programme, as summarised in paragraphs 26, 27 and 28.

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2021/22

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

1. That approval is given to the future borrowing and investment strategies as outlined in this report.
2. That the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services, be delegated authority to manage the Council's cash flow, borrowing and investments in 2021/22 in line with this report.
3. In relation to the Council's overall borrowing for the financial year, to approve the Prudential Indicators as set out in this report and the revised Annual Investment Strategy set out in Appendix E.

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

8. **TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: MID-YEAR REVIEW REPORT 2020/21**

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

The Committee is asked to note the Treasury Management Strategy 2020/21 mid-year review.

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

9. **THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) 2021/22 BUDGET AND RENT INCREASE**

Councillor Lisa Homan stated that this report recommended a rent increase of 1.5% this year, including shared ownership rents (0.5% based on the Consumer Prices Index – CPI – at September 2020 plus 1% in line with government policy). The CPI had been lower than expected causing some pressures on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) going forward. However, the rents were still low compared to other London boroughs and the reserves were average.

Councillor Adronie Alford expressed her concern that this HRA account had not been provided at the last Economy, Housing and the Arts Policy and Accountability Committee (EHA PAC) in January. She had concerns about the report and thought it was unacceptable that it was not possible to scrutinise it. She was concerned about the balances going down considerably.

Councillor Homan acknowledged that the report did not go to EHA PAC, perhaps because the PAC meetings had been merged in January and this report was not included. But the report did go to the Housing Representatives' Forum, so residents had an opportunity to comment and support it.

The Leader apologised that this report was not brought forward to the PAC meeting and stressed that he would find out the reason it was missed from the agenda. Nevertheless, he was glad that residents had backed the report at the Housing Representatives' Forum. He added that the Council was determined to keep rents and service charges low and balances strong.

Councillor Homan stated that there were two external factors that would explain the current level of reserves. The first was the impact of the pandemic and the second was the compliance-based capital programme with targets constantly moving due to new regulations regularly being introduced by the government.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

That Cabinet agrees:

- To approve the Housing Revenue Account 2021/22 budget for Council homes as set out in Table 1.
- To approve plans to deliver on-going annual revenue savings of £3.8million per annum from 2021/22 rising to £5.7million per annum from 2024/25 (see Appendix 1).
- To approve a rent increase of 1.5% (based on the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) at September 2020 plus 1% in line with government policy) from 5 April 2021 which equates to an average weekly increase for tenants of £1.64 in 2021/22.
- To approve an increase to shared ownership rents of 1.5% (based on the CPI at September 2020 plus 1% in line with government policy) from 5 April 2021.
- To approve an increase to tenant service charges of 0.5% (based on the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) at September 2020) from 5 April 2021 which equates to an average weekly increase for tenants of £0.04 in 2021/22.
- To approve an increase to the management fee for temporary on licence properties of CPI (0.5% as at September 2020) from 5 April 2021.
- To delegate authority to the Strategic Director for Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to agree the average increase in water charges for homes supplied by a bulk meter.
- To increase garage charges for council tenants, resident leaseholders and for other customers from April 2021 by 1.5% and to uplift all the 200 accounts that are paying historic prices for their garage rents despite either living in a private property or having left the borough to be in line with standard charges.
- To note that any change to parking charges on housing estates will be considered in a separate report on the Council's parking plans.
- To increase car space rental charges for all customers by 2.2% from April 2021.
- To approve an increase in the Leasehold After Sale – Home Buy Fees from £160 to £200.

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

10. POLICING & CRIME COMMISSION REPORT

The Leader introduced the report and noted that he had received some letters from members of the public concerned about the recommendation related to Ward Panels. He stressed that the Council had no plans to abolish the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels now or in the future.

The Leader stated that over the past few years there had been a series of commissions and independent reports with residents input on a wide range of subjects to improve services and quality of life. This report was one of these independent reports, done by the resident-led Policing and Crime Commission setting out their recommendations. They were unpaid residents supported by a policy officer. The Council would consider each one of these recommendations but not all of them would be taken. It was a misunderstanding to think that the Council would accept in full all the recommendations proposed by the Commission. He apologised that the report was not clearly stating that.

Councillor Andrew Brown, the Leader of the Opposition, stated that he felt reassured by the comments made by the Leader about not taking forward all of the recommendations proposed by the Commission. He stressed that people involved with the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels and community police engagement in the borough had been very concerned about this report.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler stated that this report was the same one that went to the Community Safety and Environment Policy and Accountability Committee (CSE PAC) in September, where three of the recommendations were not supported. There had been a huge amount of emails received from the public since this paper was published. Even if the recommendations were only to be noted, she asked for this report to be withdrawn from this Cabinet agenda. Additionally, she questioned whether the Council would make changes to the Independent Advisory Group (IAG).

Councillor Amanda Lloyd-Harris believed that the Council did not have jurisdiction over some of the issues in this report. Therefore, even if this report was only to be noted, she asked Cabinet to withdraw it and bring back to Cabinet an amended version only addressing the issues she believed were within the Council's remit.

The Leader stated that each independent commission was presented to Cabinet as an independent report for noting and thanking the members of the Commission for their work. He reiterated that this report was produced by independent and unpaid members after undertaken a huge amount of field work, interviews and research to inform their final report. The Council had rejected the recommendation to abolish the Safer Neighbourhood Ward Panels as they were doing a good job. In addition, there was no intention to ever abolish the IAG. The Council would continue to work closely with the Police to ensure crime was reported. It was a longstanding priority to the Council to tackle crime in the borough. The policy development and the recommendations that would be taken forward would be a matter for discussion at PAC, where councillors and the public would have opportunities to intervene.

In relation to reporting crime, Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked whether the recommendation 2.2.1 on the appendix, about the crime helpline, had been agreed. The Leader replied that it would not be implemented as described but some better ways of reporting crime would be discussed with the Police and residents.

Sharon Lea, the Strategic Director for the Environment, clarified that this report only asked Cabinet to note the recommendations from the Policing and Crime Commission. The report that went to CSE PAC in September 2020 clearly stated that the Council was not able to support all the recommendations and the ones that would be supported would be subject to a detailed report.

To clarify this Cabinet report Sharon Lea asked for the following two amendments:

- On Appendix 1 to delete “H&F Officer Response to” from its title so it only reads “Appendix 1 – PCC Recommendations”.
- Under Financial Impact, after the first sentence to insert “Not all of these recommendations are accepted”.

NOTED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

That Cabinet:

1. Notes the recommendations of the Policing & Crime Commission (PCC), as set out in Appendix 1.
2. Records its thanks and appreciation to the residents and members of the Commission for their sterling work.
3. Notes the amendments to the Financial Impact and Appendix 1 as advised at the Cabinet meeting.

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

11. SCHOOL BUDGET (DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT) 2021/22

Councillor Larry Culhane stated that this report covered the allocation of the funding for all mainstream schools in the borough for the next academic year. This funding was provided by the Government and the Council's role was to pass on the money to the schools. The Government had promised in 2019 an increase in the education funding but that had not happened so far. This was disappointing considering the severe impact the pandemic was having on schools. The schools had been opened throughout this pandemic and they had to bear most of the cost with very little help from the Government, while also having to tackle the digital divide.

The Leader asked Councillor Culhane to pass his congratulations on to his team, and indeed to everyone working in education, as despite the funding cuts measures were still taken to offer children school meals while the schools were closed, along with offering technology to the most disadvantage children to ensure that all children could continue with their education.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

1. Schools Block and Central Services Schools Block Budget 2021/22 Financial Year
 - a. To approve the Local Authority formula for allocating resources to Hammersmith & Fulham schools for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix 1, the Authority Proforma Tool (APT) for setting school budgets.
 - b. To approve the National Funding Formula (NFF) transitional funding factors (as set out in Appendix 1) as the basis for calculating the 2021/22 schools funding formula, together with a 0.5% per pupil Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) protection for individual schools versus 2020/21 pupil led funding levels.
 - c. To approve the disapplication request to transfer £0.528m (0.5% of the total schools block allocation) from the schools block to the high needs block in the 2021/22 financial year as confirmed by Schools Forum on 12 January 2021.
 - d. To approve the proposal to top-slice the 2021/22 Schools Block to the value of £0.200m or 0.18% of the total for the Falling Rolls protection fund in 2021/22, as confirmed by Schools Forum on 12 January 2021.

- e. To approve de-delegation budgets of £0.696m for maintained mainstream schools only, as confirmed by Schools Forum on 12 January 2021.
- f. To approve the education functions budgets of £0.273m for maintained mainstream schools only, as confirmed by Schools Forum on 12 January 2021.
- g. To approve the proposed budget allocation for Central Services Schools Block DSG totalling £3.313m.

2. Early Years Block Budget 2020/21 and 2021/22

- a. Agree deployment of the revised 2020/21 Budget for 3 and 4 year olds including additional funding received for the 2019/20 financial year. The increase is £0.412m from 2019/20 and £0.888m for 2020/21 based on the revised allocation received in July 2020.
- b. Agree 2021/22 initial budget allocation of £14.860m for 3 and 4 year olds in line with grant conditions, including an increase in the hourly Base Rate paid to providers from £6.20 to £6.26 and the high level central Early Years budget of £0.743m.

3. High Needs Block Place Commissioning 2021/22

- a. To delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children and Education to increase high needs place funding to special provision in Hammersmith & Fulham up to the levels indicated in the report and to a total of 920 FTE places in 2021/22 financial/academic year and following negotiation with specialist providers in Hammersmith & Fulham.

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

12. IMMEDIATE SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME OF WORKS TO MARCH 2021

Councillor Larry Culhane stated that there would be a further paper going to Cabinet in 2 months to agree the medium-term strategy and programme of works from the detailed stock condition surveys from April 2021. This report was seeking approval for the immediate programme of works up to and including Easter 2021 to ensure essential works could be undertaken across the maintained school estate. Some of the works strongly focused on enhancing health and safety and Covid security in schools.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

To approve capital budget of £548,100 and revenue budget of £85,700 for the programme of works detailed in Appendix A, which includes a strong focus on works that contribute significantly to enhancing health and safety, Covid security and school condition, to be funded from a combination of School Condition Allocation grant and Special Provision Capital Fund grant balances.

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

13. 0-19 PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Councillor Ben Coleman stated that the Council was taking a new approach for the provision of the health visiting and school nursing service, with the aim to improve outcomes in this area and reduce costs. This report recommended the approval of a Procurement Strategy for the re-procurement of a single contract. A direct award for 5 months until the end of August was also recommended for the continuation of service provision until the procurement process was completed. He added that 10% of the value of the contract would be the Social Value.

The Leader stressed that getting this service right was extremely important and thanked Councillor Coleman and his team for this excellent work.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY CABINET:

1. Appendix 2 and Appendix 4 are not for publication on the basis that they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) as set

out in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

2. To approve a direct award to Central London Community Healthcare Trust ('CLCH') for a period of 5 months from 1 April 2021 to 31 August 2021, for the total sum of £2,304,275.
3. To approve the Procurement Strategy for the re-procurement of a single contract for the delivery of the health visiting and school nursing service from 1 September 2021 as set out in Appendix 1, in accordance with the Council's Contracts Standing Order 18.1

Reason for decision:

As set out in the report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As outlined in the report.

Record of any conflict of interest:

None.

Note of dispensation in respect of any declared conflict of interest:

None.

14. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Key Decision List was noted.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Leader asked everyone to stay safe and stressed that the Council would do everything in its power help the community through this pandemic and to support the local economy and the residents afterwards.

Meeting started: 6.30 pm
Meeting ended: 7.20 pm

Chair