

COUNCIL MINUTES

BUDGET COUNCIL MEETING

THURSDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2022



PRESENT

Councillors:

Attended in person

PJ Murphy (Mayor)
Iain Cassidy
Ben Coleman
Stephen Cowan
Sue Fennimore
Wesley Harcourt
Rebecca Harvey
Lisa Homan
Andrew Jones
Bora Kwon
Natalia Perez
Rowan Ree
Helen Rowbottom
Zarar Qayyum
Frances Umeh

Attended in person

Mercy Umeh
Rory Vaughan
Guy Vincent
Adronie Alford
Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler
Andrew Brown
Belinda Donovan
Donald Johnson
Alex Karmel
Amanda Lloyd-Harris
Mark Loveday
Frances Stainton
Dominic Stanton
Matt Thorley

Attended remotely

Daryl Brown (Deputy Mayor)
Sharon Holder
Ann Rosenberg
Alexandra Sanderson
Matt Uberoi
Lucy Richardson
Asif Siddique
Christabel Cooper
Jonathan Caleb-Landy
David Morton
Fiona Smith
Max Schmid
Sue Macmillan
Larry Culhane

NOTE: This was held as a hybrid meeting. 29 members attended in person and voted on decision reports.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adam Connell, Rachel Leighton, and Patricia Quigley.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Rebecca Harvey.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

7.02pm – RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on 19 January 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. MAYOR'S/CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor noted that an additional exempt urgent item (6.7) had been added to the agenda, published on the Council's website, and circulated to all members on 23 February 2022.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan, and Councillor Mark Loveday made speeches on the invasion of Ukraine.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS (20 MINUTES)

John O'Callaghan-Williamson was unable to attend the meeting, so a written response was sent to him. The question and response can be found in Appendix 1.

6. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION/COMMITTEE REPORTS

6.1 Revenue Budget and Council Tax Levels 2022/23

7.20pm – The report and recommendations were moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

In accordance with Council convention, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan, and the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler, were given unlimited time to speak on the Budget report.

Speeches on the report were also made by Councillors Andrew Jones, Helen Rowbottom, and Rowan Ree (for the Administration) – and Councillors Adronie Alford and Andrew Brown (for the Opposition).

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan, then made a speech winding up the debate.

The report and recommendations were put to the vote and a roll-call was undertaken, in accordance with Council convention when voting on the budget:

FOR	AGAINST	NOT VOTING
Cllr Cassidy Cllr Coleman Cllr Cowan Cllr Fennimore	Cllr Alford Cllr Brocklebank-Fowler Cllr Brown (Andrew) Cllr Donovan	Cllr Murphy (Mayor)

Cllr Harcourt Cllr Harvey Cllr Homan Cllr Jones Cllr Kwon Cllr Perez Cllr Qayyum Cllr Ree Cllr Rowbottom Cllr Umeh (F) Cllr Umeh (M) Cllr Vaughan Cllr Vincent	Cllr Johnson Cllr Karmel Cllr Lloyd-Harris Cllr Stainton Cllr Stanton Cllr Thorley	
--	---	--

FOR	17
AGAINST	10
NOT VOTING	1

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

9.09pm – RESOLVED

That Full Council, for the reasons set out in the report and appendices, agreed:

1. To freeze the Hammersmith & Fulham element of the council tax charge for 2022/23 and not apply the 2% increase modelled by the government for the coming year.
2. To not apply the government modelled “adult social care precept” levy of 1% for 2022/23, and to instead use council savings and income to fund growth in adult social care spending.
3. To set the Council’s own total net expenditure budget for 2022/23 at £125.657m.
4. To approve £7.434m of new investment on key services for residents.
5. To approve fees and charges, as set out in paragraph 10, including freezing charges in adult social care, children’s services and general fund housing.
6. To note the budget projections to 2025/26 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 37 of the report).
8. To approve the reserves strategy and realignment of reserves as set out in Appendix J and Appendix K (of the report).

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 2022/23 in accordance with the recommendations within this report, 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 2022/23 for each category of dwelling, as outlined in the table below and in full in Appendix A (of the report) 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, based on the Mayor of London's draft consolidated budget, 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	263.73	307.68	351.64	395.59	483.50	571.41	659.32	791.18

13. That the overall council tax to be set at £1,227.55 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	263.73	307.68	351.64	395.59	483.50	571.41	659.32	791.18
c) Total	818.37	954.76	1,091.16	1,227.55	1,500.34	1,773.13	2,045.92	2,455.10

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.
15. To note the requirement to amend the local Council Tax Support Scheme in relation to energy bills rebate payments and delegate authority to the Strategic Director of the Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services to amend and approve the detailed scheme before 11 March 2022.
16. That the Council opts-in to the sector led 'appointing person' regime operated by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of the external auditor (including Pension Fund) for the years 2023-28.

6.2 Four Year Capital Programme 2022-26 and Capital Strategy 2022/23

9.10pm – The report and recommendations were moved for adoption by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

Councillor Andrew Jones made a speech on the report (for the Administration).

FOR	17
AGAINST	10
NOT VOTING	1

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

9.15pm – RESOLVED

1. To approve the four-year General Fund Capital Programme budget at £187.6m for the period 2022/23-2025/26 (presented in Table 2 and Appendix 1 of the report).
2. To approve the continuation of rolling programmes for 2022/23 funded from the Council's mainstream resources. For financial modelling purposes, these programmes are assumed to continue at the same level until 2025/26:

	£m
Corporate Planned Maintenance	2.400
Footways and Carriageways	2.030
Column Replacement	0.346
Controlled Parking Zones	0.275
Total	5.051

3. To delegate approval of the detailed programmes for use of the rolling programmes, in recommendation 2, to the relevant SLT Director in consultation with the Director of Finance and relevant Lead Cabinet Member.
4. To approve the four-year Housing (HRA) Capital Programme at £389.6m for the period 2022/23-2025/26 as set out in Table 5 and Appendix 1 (of the report).
5. To delegate authority to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services to approve the potential use of up to £4.3m of capital receipts under the Government's Flexible Use of Capital Receipts provisions for funding of Invest to Save schemes in 2022/23 and 2023/24 (as identified in Appendix 5 of the report) and potential match-funding opportunities.
6. To approve the Capital Strategy 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 4 (of the report).
7. To approve the annual Minimum Revenue Provision policy statement for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 6 (of the report).
8. To note the existing mainstream funded schemes previously approved, but now reprofiled to 2022/23 and future years as detailed in Table 3 (of the report).

6.3 Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022/23

9.15pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote.

FOR:	17
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	10

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

9.16pm – RESOLVED

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 2022/23 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 (of the report).

6.4 Pay Policy Statement 2022/23

9.16pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote.

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

9.18pm – RESOLVED

1. That Council approve the pay policy statement for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 1 (of the report).
2. That Council note the benchmarking of the Council's median pay multiple against the average of other Inner London Boroughs contained in section 2.5 (of the report).

6.5 Members' Allowances Scheme Annual Review 2022/23

9.18pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

Speeches on the report were made by Councillors Ben Coleman and Stephen Cowan (for the Administration) – and Councillor Alex Karmel (for the Opposition).

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote.

FOR:	17
AGAINST:	10
NOT VOTING:	1

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

9.28pm – RESOLVED

1. That the recommendations of the Independent Panel on the remuneration of Councillors in London (January 2022) be noted.
2. That the Members' Allowances Scheme 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 1 (of the report) be adopted.

6.6 Review of the Constitution

9.28pm – The report and recommendations were formally moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote.

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

9.28pm – RESOLVED

1. That Full Council approve the updates to the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

6.7 Appointment of an Interim Chief Executive and Interim Head of Paid Service (Exempt)

9.28pm – The Mayor noted that the report had been classified as exempt within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and so was circulated to councillors only.

The proposed resolution to exclude the public and press from the meeting was put to the vote.

FOR:	UNANIMOUS
AGAINST:	0
NOT VOTING:	0

The resolution was declared **CARRIED**.

9.30pm – RESOLVED

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business, on the grounds that it contains the likely disclosure of exempt information, as defined in paragraph 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act, and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption currently outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

The Mayor thanked members of the public for attending or watching the open part of the meeting before moving into private session.

9.30pm – The exempt report and recommendations were formally moved by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Cowan.

A speech on the report was made by Councillor Alex Karmel (for the Opposition).

The report and recommendations were then put to the vote.

FOR: UNANIMOUS
AGAINST: 0
NOT VOTING: 0

The recommendations were declared **CARRIED**.

9.31pm – RESOLVED

1. The Council approves the appointment of Sharon Lea as the Interim Chief Executive and the Interim Head of Paid Service.
2. The Council approves the appointment of the Interim Chief Executive as the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 9.32 pm

Mayor

Public Questions and Responses – 24 January 2022

Question 1 – Historic Water Overcharges to Council Tenants

From: John O'Callaghan-Williamson, Resident

To: The Leader of the Council

“To ask the Council when the ‘Key Decision’ will be tabled and made regarding refunding historic water overcharging to council tenants arising from the cases London Borough of Southwark and Kim Jones and Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames and Derek Moss.

I raised this matter in December 2020 and was informed that although too late for that financial year it was likely to fall in this financial year 2021/22 by the then Assistant Director – Housing Finance. Recent enquires still state it is being worked through.

The Council has already set aside a ‘Utilities Reserve’ in the HRA and covered this matter in the meeting on the 1st of February 2021. Residents are facing a ‘cost of living crisis’ and many other councils have already completed this process for their residents.”

Response from the Cabinet Member for Housing

Like multiple other authorities, the Council is still considering the legal and financial implications of the Court of Appeal decision. Any final decision will be a Key Decision that must therefore be approved by Cabinet. We still do not have a date for a report to Cabinet, but we will publish this in the Key Decision list as soon as it is confirmed. A Cabinet decision is required before anything can be processed and the Council must go through its governance process.

We have worked through calculations of rebates and also need to consider them within the financial plan for the Housing Revenue Account as a whole as set out in the [Financial Plan for Council Homes report](#) which was approved by Cabinet on 7 February. Rebates will, by law, need to come from the Housing Revenue Account.

We recognise the cost-of-living pressures faced by tenants and this is why Cabinet have approved a real-terms reduction in council homes’ rents and service charges for next year.