

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 5 September 2022

PRESENT

Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council
Councillor Ben Coleman, Deputy Leader
Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology
Councillor Andrew Jones, Cabinet Member for The Economy
Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Public Realm
Councillor Rebecca Harvey, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety
Councillor Bora Kwon, Cabinet Member for Civic Renewal
Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform
Councillor Alex Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Children and Education
Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Patricia Quigley
Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure
Councillor Ann Rosenberg

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 18 JULY 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18 July 2022 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings, and that the outstanding actions be noted.

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.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

RESOLVED:

There were no apologies for absence.

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.

3. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

RESOLVED:

Councillor Bora Kwon declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of item 9, Business Objectives 2022/23, as a Governor at Flora Gardens Primary School. She considered that this did not give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests and, in the circumstances it would be reasonable to participate in the discussion and vote thereon.

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.

4. **2021/22 PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT**

RESOLVED:

Councillor Rowan Ree introduced the report looking at the spending against budget over the previous financial year. The General Fund was in a good position and progress was being made to reduce deficits. Pressures on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) were being currently addressed.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note the General Fund underspend of £6.7m.
2. To note that the draw down from the Housing Revenue Account general balance of £2.0m which was £2.4m less than budgeted.
3. To note the in-year reduction in the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block cumulative overspend of £4.9m and remaining cumulative deficit of £11.8m.

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. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITOR & BUDGET VARIATIONS, 2021/22 (OUTTURN)

RESOLVED:

Councillor Rowan Ree stated that over the last two years Covid-19 had caused delays in several schemes. In addition the rising inflation had affected a number of projects which meant the original capital budget would have to be reviewed. This report proposed a number of changes to future budgets.

The Leader expressed concerns regarding the continuous rise in inflation which would affect the Council on large capital programmes.

Councillor Ree agreed that this serious issue would need to be faced until at least next year. The inflation was often higher in the construction sector, therefore having a major impact on several Council's projects.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To approve the proposed budget variations to the capital programme as summarised in Table 1 and detailed in Appendix 2.
2. To approve £1.75m additional capital budget for the Civic Campus commercial property cinema site fit out, as detailed in the paragraphs 10-13 of the report.

3. To note the capital outturn for the year.

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. 2022/23 CORPORATE REVENUE MONITOR - MONTH 2 (MAY 2022)

RESOLVED:

Councillor Rowan Ree stated that this report outlined the forecast spend and action plans to reduce overspend for Month 2, May 2022. All departments were constantly looking at ways to reduce spend and identify new savings throughout the year.

Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure stated that paragraph 4 on the report described the £10m provision for inflation, which included provision for a 2.3% pay award for 2022/23 and corporate inflation contingency of £1.5m. He asked what the plans were to address those figures.

Councillor Ree replied that there were contingency plans built in all budgets and the Council was constantly looking for savings within budgets.

The Leader added that there was a variety of financial pressures due to the rising inflation and the 2.3% pay award was actually a pay cut. He hoped the Government would come forward with a generous approach to help front line staff dealing with the cost of living.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note General Fund forecast overspend of £4.334m.
2. To note that the forecast draw down from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) general balance is £4.453m, £0.403m more than budgeted.
3. To note the in-year Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block forecasted surplus of £0.582m, reducing the cumulative deficit.
4. To approve General Fund virements totalling £4.494m and HRA virements totalling £0.377m as detailed in appendix 10.

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 OUTTURN REPORT 2021/22

RESOLVED:

Councillor Rowan Ree stated that there had been no additional borrowing undertaken over the period of 2021/22.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That Cabinet note the annual Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2021/22.

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. ADOPTION OF THE AFFORDABLE WORKSPACE SPD

RESOLVED:

The Leader stated that affordable workspace was a key part to the Council's Industrial Strategy. They were aiming to create a stronger local economy that would provide training and job opportunities for local people and promote employment and innovation.

Councillor Andrew Jones noted that the original report was approved by Cabinet in March. This report was addressing technical changes in light of the financial pressures changing the dynamics in office and commercial market landscape.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. That Cabinet considers the technical changes to the SPD detailed in Appendix 1.
2. That Cabinet approves the adoption of the SPD (Appendix 2) which includes the technical changes.
3. That Cabinet gives delegated authority to the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economy, to make any further minor changes to the SPD prior to adoption, should they be necessary.

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. BUSINESS OBJECTIVES 2022/23

RESOLVED:

Councillor Bora Kwon declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Governor at Flora Gardens Primary School. She considered that this did not give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests and, in the circumstances it would be reasonable to participate in the discussion and vote thereon.

With the Leader's permission Richard Farthing, Chairman of The Hammersmith Society, addressed the Cabinet for 5 minutes, having submitted a valid deputation request. He spoke on behalf of: The Hammersmith Society, The Avonmore Residents' Association, The Avonmore and Brook Green Ward Action Group, Ravenscourt Action, Palace Mansions Residents' Association, Friends of Ravenscourt Park, The Brackenbury Residents Association.

Mr Farthing confirmed their opposition to the Communities Schools Programme, as they did not agree that building housing on school grounds was the right way to finance schools. They supported the redevelopment of Avonmore and Flora Gardens Primary Schools, but not at any loss of open spaces. His predecessor had written several letters to the Council raising a number of specific points of concerns but had received no written response. They were not convinced that the financial case for building on school land had been demonstrated and they had seen no alternatives. The provision of more

affordable housing was welcome but would create a need for more school places. Education was liable to change over time and they believed better economic values could be achieved by looking at the way school was designed and using it for a wider range of purposes, not just for primary school. They believed that there were more economic, environmental, and cost-effective ways to build a replacement for those schools, such as offsite wood construction.

The Leader stressed that there had been continuous dialogue with the former Chairman of The Hammersmith Society and understood that many of the issues raised had been dealt with. But he acknowledged that a formal written letter would be a more appropriate response.

Councillor Jones replied that he had attended four meetings with diverse groups, including the Hammersmith Society, and had done a great deal of engagement with the communities to address their views over several years, including a consultation of the original proposal and another one in 2021. They were on the process of bringing back a revised proposal after having listened to the community views and concerns. The valid points raised around carbon, scale and use of school space had now been incorporated on the schools redesigns. He stressed that currently there were no alternative sources of finance for the funding for those schools. The Council remained committed to provide affordable housing and they would continue to engage with the community to discuss the revised proposals of the redevelopment of the schools. He added that he would submit a written response to the Hammersmith Society addressing their concerns.

The Leader asked whether Mr Farthing's only concerns were about the environment and sustainability of the development in addition to the financing, or whether he also objected to affordable housing on the sites.

Mr Farthing replied that the sites, especially at Avonmore, were very constrained and mixing housing and schools with all the safeguarding issues would be a challenge, in addition to losing school land.

The Leader stated that the schools were asking the Council for the redevelopment and with the substantial cuts in the Council's budget over the past 12 years, the closing down of the Building for Schools Programme that used to provide funding for schools, and other cuts created huge financial challenges. The Council was investing a lot of money into schools but there were also other critical areas that needed investment. Therefore an alternative plan had to be found to finance the redevelopment of the schools. The affordable homes had not been built yet because the Council was trying to create a consensus amongst the community and redesigning the scheme to a high standard, whilst maintaining sustainability and outdoor space.

The Leader moved to the Council's Business Objectives which responded to the manifesto pledges, setting out a range of business objectives that would be delivered or progressed in 2022/23.

Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure asked whether there was a proposal to give residents further detailed information on how these plans would be taken

forward, such as increasing the number of housing units and the public realm, in particular dealing with rubbish on the streets.

The Leader replied that the manifesto was a consulted-on document that listed the issues that people would like the Council to deal with. It was then up to officers to develop these policies that would go to the Policy and Accountability Committees to be scrutinised at open public hearings. The final product should be a robust policy that would come to Cabinet for approval. To get a policy right it was fundamental to consult and listen to people's views.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That the Cabinet approves the Hammersmith & Fulham Council Business Objectives document for 2022/23.

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. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

RESOLVED:

The Key Decision List was noted.

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. DISCUSSION OF EXEMPT ELEMENTS (IF REQUIRED)

RESOLVED:

There was no discussion of exempt elements.

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.

Meeting started: 7.03 pm
Meeting ended: 7.46 pm

Chair

RESOLVED:

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.