

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 5 June 2023

PRESENT

Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council
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 Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform
Councillor Alex Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Children and Education

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Andrew Dinsmore

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 15 MAY 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 May 2023 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 Councillors Ben Coleman, Frances Umeh and Bora Kwon.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PETITION: CONSIDERATION OF PETITION: "LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR A FEASIBILITY STUDY INTO THE USE OF LIGHTWEIGHT, ELECTRIC AUTONOMOUS SHUTTLES TO HELP PEOPLE CROSS THE RIVER"

The Cabinet received a valid petition requesting the Council to provide a letter of support for a fully funded feasibility study into the use of lightweight, electric autonomous shuttles to help people cross the Hammersmith Bridge.

The Leader invited Mr Leo Murray, the petition organiser and director of innovation at climate charity Possible, to address the Cabinet for 5 minutes to present his petition.

Mr Leo Murray stated that he had worked with local communities and expert stakeholders to develop an alternative proposal for the future of Hammersmith Bridge which could work within the existing engineering constraints on the bridge after the stabilisation works were completed. As there was still no funding agreement for the full restoration works, the Council needed to consider contingency options for meeting the mobility needs of local people.

He stated that the bridge's closure had caused enormous problems for people in Barnes and Roehampton who lacked access to private cars or the ability to walk or cycle across the bridge. Possible had developed a plan to meet their needs which was realistic, affordable, desirable for local people, and would help to tackle the climate crisis while protecting the bridge's unique heritage. They were proposing a shuttle service to replace some of the lost bus connectivity over the bridge with autonomous vehicles, specifically aimed at supporting mobility for those who were unable to walk or cycle over the bridge. This would be alongside protected cycle lanes and pedestrian footways.

The Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (C-CAV) had outlined a potential funding opportunity for this proposal. They had announced a funding competition to support feasibility studies into the integration of autonomous vehicles into public mass transit systems which was expected to open to applications at the end of May / start of June, and close in July, with winners announced in the autumn and feasibility studies taking place during 2024. Successful bids would need a letter of support of the relevant highways authority, which in this case was LBHF. If the Council agreed to provide a letter of support for their feasibility study it would not commit them to any costs or anything beyond the study itself.

Mr Murray concluded that the Council could have three options. First, Possible could hand over their project to the Council to take forward the feasibility study to the C-CAV funding competition. Second, the Council could work with Possible to take forward the project in a partnership approach. Third, the Council could sign the letter of support enabling them to proceed with applying for funding to a full feasibility study into their proposed scheme.

The Leader thanked Mr Murray and invited questions from Cabinet Members.

Councillor Rowan Ree stressed that the Council was already in the middle of a feasibility study. A separate study would require further assessment of the bridge strength at additional costs and time. He questioned the benefit of doing a separate feasibility study.

Mr Murray replied that they were not aware of what other work was under way, but he stressed that it would be a good opportunity to have another option as this would be fully funded by C-CAV if there were additional costs involved in assessing the bridge.

Councillor Andrew Dinsmore asked when the feasibility study would be available and whether there was any indication of when it would be implemented and its costs. He was in favour of exploring all possible options to ensure everyone would be able to move across the bridge.

The Leader replied that all options would be reviewed and considered once the bridge was stabilised by the end of the summer, when there would be no longer the risk of collapsing. The Council's options were closely tied into funding streams and stabilisation was their current priority.

In answer to a question from the Leader, Mr Murray replied that their solution would work within the bridge's constraints, but if it was fully restored it would also work with cars in addition to reverting the loss of public transport connectivity.

The Leader concluded that the problem with the bridge was a London issue affecting a much wider area than just Hammersmith. The Council had been faced with multiple requests and solutions by diverse groups, however the cost for fully restoring the bridge was a major issue. Ultimately it should be up to the Mayor of London to decide on its future. The Council was looking at other schemes and would start evaluating them once the stabilisation work was concluded.

The Leader asked Mr Murray to forward them their proposal and they would willingly look at it. However, they were not supporting any particular scheme yet until the bridge was stabilised and safe. Clarity about the funding costs would be needed to help them form the options available for the future of the bridge.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note the petition included at Appendix A.
2. To note that in July 2022 the Council commissioned a feasibility study for the use of an e-mobility pod following completion of the bridge stabilisation work.
3. To not provide a letter in support of the grant competition application, given the feasibility study is already underway.

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. SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2023 - 2028

Councillor Andrew Jones introduced the report setting out a proposed programme over five years to significantly enhance the condition of school buildings, improve provision for learners with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities or in Alternative Provision and reduce carbon emissions.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To approve a schools capital budget of £17.941m over the five years 2023-2028 for the programme of works as set out in Appendix A.
2. To delegate the decision to commit expenditure within the schools' capital programme to the Operational Director of Education and SEND, in consultation with the Strategic Director of Children's Services, the Director of Finance and with the Cabinet Member for Children and Education.

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. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) STRATEGY

Councillor Alex Sanderson introduced the report setting out setting out the Council's local area commitment to improve the educational, health and emotional wellbeing and life outcomes for all young people in the borough aged 0-25 years who have SEND while promoting inclusion.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That Cabinet approves the publication of the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy attached at Appendix 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.

7. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) ORDINARILY AVAILABLE GUIDANCE, PROFILE OF NEED AND SUFFICIENCY REVIEW

Councillor Alex Sanderson introduced the report setting out setting out the Council's local area approach to ensure sufficient provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in the borough, as well as the wider regional area in the context of what is ordinarily available.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. The publication of the Ordinarily Available Guidance and Profile of Need attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.
2. The publication of the SEND Sufficiency Review attached at Appendix 3.

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. CARE EXPERIENCED STATUS AS A PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC

Councillor Alex Sanderson introduced the report requesting to agree that 'Care Experienced' be recognised as a protected characteristic by the Council. This demonstrated the Council's commitment as a Corporate Parent to ending the disparity and inequality faced by care experienced young people by going beyond the statutory requirements and ensuring that the needs of care experienced young people were at the heart of all decision-making alongside other groups who formally share a Protected Characteristic.

Care experienced people faced significant barriers that impacted them throughout their lives, often facing discrimination and stigma across housing, health, education, relationships, employment and in the criminal justice system.

The Leader added that by recognising and making allowances for this by making care experience a protected characteristic would positively impact on care experienced young people and support them to become thriving adults.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

Cabinet is asked to:

Agree to recognise 'Care Experienced' as a Protected Characteristic by the London Borough of Hammersmith and 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.

9. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Key Decision List was noted.

10. DISCUSSION OF EXEMPT ELEMENTS (ONLY IF REQUIRED)

There was no discussion of exempt elements.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 7.36 pm

Chair