

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 16 October 2023

NOTE: A recording of the meeting can be watched at on YouTube at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cyU4WWTmbU0>

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 Adrian Pascu-Tulbure
Councillor Max Schmid, Chief Whip

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 September 2023 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings, and that the outstanding actions be noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

4. FUEL POVERTY STRATEGY

Councillor Wesley Harcourt introduced the report seeking to approve a strategy to reduce fuel poverty, with the cost of heating homes being one of the major factors in the cost-of-living crisis. This strategy also linked to climate change as energy efficiency and retrofitting of homes could impact on carbon footprint.

Councillor Rebecca Harvey added that addressing fuel poverty was critical to ensure that all residents could afford to heat their homes reasonably and help with their cost-of-living.

Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure commended the strategy tackling fuel poverty and asked what specific energy efficiency measures the Council was considering.

Councillor Wesley Harcourt replied that this strategy would concentrate initially in getting all the data to target the right groups of people on the right parts of the borough. It set out the route to reducing fuel poverty across the borough through a variety of different support mechanisms, including information on the grants available, and linked to other strategies addressing these areas. This strategy focused on private housing as there was a separate strategy targeting retrofitting the Council's own social housing stock.

The Leader added that the Council had spent over £100 million on retrofitting the social housing stock; however private houses were a different matter. Part of this strategy was to map each neighbourhood with the intention of setting out cooperative energy companies using solar power and heat pumps to generate electricity to a whole neighbourhood.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. Approve the strategy (Appendix A, with Appendices C and D as annexes) and action plan (Appendix B).
2. Note the investment required to deliver the strategy, and the current funding gap that exists for future implementation.
3. Note the links to other developing strategies in the Council, and the dependencies that exist because of this.

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. CLIMATE CHANGE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Councillor Andrew Jones stated that this Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was necessary to ensure that up-to-date guidance on climate change was in place to help implement the Council's Climate change strategy, to support the adopted Local Plan and to comply with regulatory requirements. This plan included topics encompassing sustainable design and construction, air quality, flooding, energy, ecology, waste, and transport and travel.

Councillor Wesley Harcourt added that the guidance in the SPD applied to new build homes, extensions and retrofitting of homes, non-domestic and mixed-use developments. It aimed to reduce carbon footprint. He believed this would be the first dedicated Climate Change SPD produced by a Local Planning Authority in London.

Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure noted that other boroughs had created specific policies of retrofit first, when there was a choice between retrofit and demolition, and asked the Council's position on the issue on all type of properties.

Councillor Andrew Jones said that the Council did not have a blank policy approach on retrofitting, but the planning guidance set a frame to evaluate embodied carbon and the benefits of retrofit as opposed to new build. He would ask officers to provide further details on that.

The Leader stated that retrofit was a better solution whenever possible as it minimised carbon footprint, but it was important to ensure that all buildings were fit for purpose and find a solution case by case.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That Cabinet approval be given for the SPD to be adopted incorporating amendments following the public consultation. The amendments are outlined in a schedule of representations 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.

6. A NEW CULTURAL STRATEGY FOR HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM

Councillor Andrew Jones stated that this strategy followed the recommendations from the Council's community-led Arts Commission, which concluded in 2021. The Cultural Strategy was developed following extensive consultation and its structure set out an overall vision, supported by four strategic themes with actions. It aimed to develop a Cultural Compact to manage the strategy, implementation, and action plan, reporting to stakeholders and the public.

Councillor Jones added that this strategy was the foundation to make a bid to the Mayor of London's London Borough of Culture (LBOC) award in 2025 or 2027. After this Cabinet meeting there would be a low-key informal event, with a larger scale formal launch being planned to mark the submission of the bid on 30th November 2023.

The Leader noted that the following Culture Stakeholders were present at the meeting and invited Amy Belson to address Cabinet.

- Amy Belson – Executive Director, Lyric Hammersmith Theatre
- Claudia Suckling – Chief Executive Director, William Morris Society
- Harry Fisher Jones – Deputy Director, HQI
- Angelique Schmitt – CEO, Kindred Studios
- Rosie Whitney-Fish – Chief Executive, DanceWest

Amy Belson stated that she had just attended the launch of the Theatre for Every Child - a project seeking to ensure every political party ringfenced funding to help make sure every child went to the theatre by the time they left school. This made her realise that Hammersmith & Fulham was leading the way in access to culture. The Lyric Theatre partnership with the Council ensured that every primary school child would get the opportunity to see their Panto. As this Culture Strategy rightly stated, "culture is at the heart of this borough's identity". The Lyric Theatre was proud to have been the creative heart of the borough for nearly 130 years. This strategy and LBOC bid crystallised the role of culture in the borough.

Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure asked the reason for the strategy aiming to develop partnerships only with European cities and not worldwide.

The Leader replied that the Council was currently twinning with many European cities and were looking into other cities around the world. The reason for European cities was that they were closer and shared values.

Councillor Jones added that they were also considering global twinning as the borough had a rich global diversity.

The Leader complimented Councillor Ben Coleman's work on this strategy as Chair of the Policy and Accountability Committee. Over 60 people from different arts organisation came to a meeting of this Committee to tell the Council what they would like to see on the Cultural Strategy.

The Leader added that the Council had provided significant support to help the cultural sector thrive during challenging times (including the Irish Cultural Centre, Lyric Theatre, Bush Theatre, and other organisations). The Civic Campus would also provide an artistic rejuvenation of the area with a cinema, arts gallery, concert hall and arts taking place in the new square. Arts at Hammersmith & Fulham was not seen as a luxury but as fundamental to life.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That Cabinet:

1. Approves and adopt the draft Cultural Strategy, included at Annex One.
2. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director for the Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy, to complete a designed version of the strategy and publish the document.
3. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director for the Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy, to develop an implementation and action plan.

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. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITOR & BUDGET VARIATIONS, 2023/24 (FIRST QUARTER)

Councillor Rowan Ree introduced the report detailing the capital programme for the financial year 2023/24, including the financing of this spend, and the future programme. This was the first of four reports published throughout the year.

Councillor Adrian Pascu-Tulbure asked the reason for the £3.4m increase to the Clean Air Neighbourhoods scheme.

Councillor Ree replied that paragraph 7 on the report stated that the money had been spent on improving air quality and people's health such as tree planting, traffic reduction trials, sustainable drainage schemes, school streets initiatives and improved infrastructure for walking and cycling. This would be funded from a combination of TfL funding, S106 and parking reserve contributions.

The Leader added that flooding following heavy rain was a serious issue as, apart from the losses incurred, people might not be able to get insurance for their properties, making it difficult to sell it. Thames Water was not dealing with this issue and the Council had to take all possible measures to stop these challenges. Some streets in the borough had poor infrastructure and needed investment. The Clean Air Neighbourhoods scheme was not only meant to clean the air but also to protect the environment and to put measures in place to limit catastrophes such as flooding.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note the net increase in forecast capital expenditure of £10.7m for 2023/24.
2. To approve the updated four-year capital programme for 2023-2027 of £653m as detailed in Appendix 1.
3. To approve £4,890,000 additional budget with regards to Hammersmith Bridge stabilisation works, funded from General Fund borrowing.
4. To approve £3,389,000 additional budget for Clean Air Neighbourhoods scheme, funded from Transport for London (TfL), Section 106 and parking reserve contributions.
5. To approve £176,000 additional budget in relation to Business Intelligence (BI) development work, funded from General Fund borrowing.
6. To approve the additional budget in relation to the self-financing schemes as noted in Appendix 4.
7. To note the potential risks regarding the General Fund Programme, as summarised in paragraphs 18-23.
8. To note the potential risks regarding the Housing Capital Programme, as summarised in paragraphs 24-28.

9. To note prudential indicators presented in Appendix 5, as per Prudential Code requirements.

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. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Key Decision List was noted.

9. DISCUSSION OF EXEMPT ELEMENTS (ONLY IF REQUIRED)

There was no discussion of exempt elements.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 7.35 pm

Chair