

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 15 April 2024

NOTE: A recording of the meeting can be watched at on YouTube at:
<https://youtube.com/live/u7IYlvddN90?feature=share>

PRESENT

Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council
Councillor Ben Coleman, Deputy Leader
Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology
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 Adronie Alford
Councillor Trey Campbell-Simon

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 4 MARCH 2024

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 March 2024 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 Andrew Jones.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

4. DECARBONISATION OF THE COUNCIL'S NONDOMESTIC PORTFOLIO - APPROVAL OF APPROACH TO CONTRACT AWARD/S

Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology, stated that this was a joint report with Councillor Andrew Jones, Cabinet Member for the Economy. This report requested to delegate authority to the named directors, in consultation with Councillor Jones and himself for award of contracts to enable the expediting of a major decarbonisation capital investment programme of works that would be part funded by grant.

Councillor Harcourt added that the timeframe for spending the entirety of the grant was very short and, without the action being recommended in this report, there was a risk of not being able to spend the full grant amount before the expiry of the grant.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. That Cabinet delegates approval for award of contracts to the Strategic Director of the Economy and Strategic Director for Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology with contracts awarded after the announcement of grant funding in March /April 2024.
2. That Cabinet notes the contracts will be up to a value of £ 12 m (subject to the size of the PSDSC grant awarded by Salix), but where the total value of the contract will not exceed the combined amount of grant funding received (£5.465m or less) and Council funding available to be allocated to the scheme.
3. If the current application with Salix is unsuccessful, for Cabinet to confirm the same delegation for future Salix applications up the same value of £ 12 m without returning to Cabinet again for approval.

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. REVENUE BUDGET REVIEW 2023/24 - MONTH 9 (DECEMBER 2023)

Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform presented the report outlining the fourth financial review of 2023/24. It described the pressures on the budget, mitigations, and contingencies.

Councillor Adronie Alford stated that there was a larger pressure this year on homelessness and asked what the impact on both the General Revenue Account and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) would be and the contingencies made for it.

Councillor Ree replied that an additional budget on £1.5m had been allocated as part of the Housing Solutions to help with the increase in homelessness demands. This sum came out of the General Revenue budget rather than the Housing Revenue budget. He stressed that he was confident that the HRA budget would balance this year, as predicted, and there would be no need to use reserves.

The Leader emphasised that following many years of austerity it was a great tribute to Councillor Ree, Councillor Umeh and officers that they had managed to not only maintain a balanced budget each year but also to invest significant capital into refurbishing homes across the borough.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note the General Fund financial forecast at Month 9 and the significant improvement in the position since the previous report at Month 6.
2. To note that the position on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) as set out in paragraph 11.
3. To note the in-year Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block forecasted surplus of £0.056m (thereby reducing the cumulative deficit).
4. To approve General Fund budget changes totalling £6.139m (this includes £3m of balances transferable to reserves) 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.

6. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR THE HOUSING CLEANING SERVICES CONTRACT

Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness presented the report requesting approval to re-procurement the Housing Caretaking service. This service maintained clean, tidy, and safe surroundings for residents in council housing stock across the borough through cleaning and inspection regimes to internal communal and shared external residential areas. The re-procurement was necessary to update the existing service specification in response to new legislation such as the recent Social Housing Act as well as resident and officer expectations.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note that Appendix 1 is not for publication on the basis that it contains 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 the re-procurement of the Housing Caretaking service, via a competitive procedure with negotiation, to start on 12 May 2025, for a period of 5 years with the option of up to 2 years extension, for an anticipated total cost of up to £35,000,000.

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. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Key Decision List was noted.

8. DISCUSSION OF EXEMPT ELEMENTS (ONLY IF REQUIRED)

There was no discussion of exempt elements.

Meeting started: 7.02 pm
Meeting ended: 7.13 pm

Chair