

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 9 September 2024

NOTE: A recording of the meeting can be watched at on YouTube at:
<https://www.youtube.com/live/DxAgKoQnW8Y>

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 and Lead Member for Inclusive Community Engagement and Co-production
Councillor Rebecca Harvey, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety
Councillor Bora Kwon, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform
Councillor Alex Sanderson, Deputy Leader (with responsibility for Children and Education)
Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness
Councillor Zarar Qayyum, Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Adronie Alford
Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 15 JULY 2024

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 July 2024 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. PROVISIONAL REVENUE OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24

Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, introduced the report setting out the revenue outturn position for the Council across the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) for the 2023/24 financial year. Despite uncertainty over government funding, increased demand for council services and at a time when most councils were taking money from reserves to balance their books, Hammersmith & Fulham had returned a revenue budget surplus which had been added to the Council's general balances. This was achieved without affecting front line services and ensuring the continued delivery of key council priorities.

Councillor Ree paid tribute to Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, for successfully managing the HRA and all Council officers who managed budgets.

The Leader also paid tribute to Councillor Ree, Sukvinder Kalsi, the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Services, and Richard Shwe, Director of Housing. He stressed that every Department across the Council had a duty to deliver the savings targets.

Councillor Adronie Alford complimented the Council for managing to balance the HRA but voiced her concerns for the future HRA due to the financial uncertainties.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note the General Fund underspend of **£0.298m** (0.02% of budget).
2. To note that the draw down of balances from the Housing Revenue Account (as set out in paragraph 4 below of this report).
3. To note the significant reduction of the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block deficit and the remaining cumulative deficit of **£2.279m**.

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, 2023/24 (OUTTURN)

Councillor Rowan Ree presented the report setting out the Council's strategy for delivering on the ambitions to transform its services and invest money to help protect high quality essential services for its residents, including significant capital investment in the infrastructure of the Borough.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note the capital outturn for the year of £184.8m.
2. To approve the proposed budget variations to the capital programme (2023/24 to 2026/27) as summarised in Table 1 and detailed in Appendix 1.
3. To approve additional budget of £0.55m for the Council's agreed contribution towards Education City Youth Zone build, funded from General Fund borrowing.
4. To approve an additional £3.277m budget in relation to pre-agreed works within the HRA asset and compliance programme, funded from HRA borrowing.
5. To approve an additional budget of £1,510m on energy efficiency works at Philpot Square across 2024/25 and 2025/26, of which £0.755m will be funded by the Heat Network Efficiency Scheme grant and £0.755m from HRA borrowing.

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. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN REPORT 2023/24

Councillor Rowan Ree presented the report providing and overview of the Council's Treasury Management Outturn over the previous financial year.

Despite the challenging strategic financial environment, the Council operated within the Treasury Limits and Prudential Indicators and met all of its prudential indicators. Councillor Ree paid special tribute to Phill Triggs, Director of Treasury and Pensions, and his team for their excellent Treasury Management.

Councillor Ree added that the Council had launched the largest ever Local Government 'Green Bond' on the previous year and had reduced the Council's overall levels of borrowing. There had been two tranches of 'Green Bonds' over the last 18 months raising £1.7m so far, with a limit set of £5m to go towards local projects dealing with climate change mitigations issues and green projects in the Borough.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That the Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2023/24 be noted and approved.

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. REVENUE BUDGET REVIEW 2024/25 - MONTH 2 (MAY 2024)

Councillor Rowan Ree introduced the report looking at spending as of Month 2 of the current financial year. The report noted a forecast overspend with mitigation measures in place. All budgets across the Council would continue to be monitored over the course of the financial year.

Councillor Adronie Alford expressed her concerns for the HRA if the contingencies failed to work due to the ongoing problems with the repairs works which was a large and undefined debt coming out of the HRA. She was also concerned by the rising cost of homelessness and temporary accommodation.

The Leader stressed that these were also their concerns, and they were determined to have the best Council Housing in Britain. He added that Councillor Umeh's leadership on Housing had been outstanding and together with Councillor Ree, ensuring the finance was robust, they had managed to get both the HRA, the repairs and the housing service in a much better state. He added that they would need to have different settlements on the temporary accommodation budget and its approach to homelessness.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note the General Fund financial forecast variance at Month 2 and mitigating actions to reduce the overspend forecast variance position (Table 1 and Appendix 1).

2. To note progress on delivering the 2024/25 agreed budget savings (Appendix 3).
3. To note the HRA forecast (paragraph section 13 to 15 and Appendix 2).

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. TRAVEL CARE AND SUPPORT TAXI SERVICES PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Councillor Alex Sanderson, Cabinet Member for Children and Education, presented the report seeking approval of the procurement strategy for Travel Care and Support Taxi Services from September 2025 for a period of four years.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To approve the procurement strategy to establish a closed framework (i.e. one that is not an 'open framework' within the meaning of the Procurement Act 2023) for the provision of travel care and support taxi services for a period of 4 years from September 2025.
2. To delegate authority to the Executive Director of People for any minor amendments required to this strategy.

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. SEMI-INDEPENDENT LIVING ACCOMMODATION (SIL) FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER, CARE LEAVERS AND YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Councillor Alex Sanderson presented the report seeking approval of a strategy to recommission, by way of a competitive procurement exercise, semi-independent living services for young people at risk of becoming homeless, sixteen and seventeen-year-old children looked after and care leavers across Hammersmith and Fulham.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That Cabinet:

1. Notes that the approximate contract value is outlined in Appendix 2 and 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. Approves the procurement strategy to run a competitive procurement exercise for the provision of in-borough semi-independent living (SIL) accommodation for young people for up to seven years from May 2025. This includes relevant leases and Housing Management Agreements.
3. Delegates any minor adjustments that may be required as result of the procurement taking place when the Procurement Act 2024 comes into force on 28th October 2024 to the Strategic Director of People.

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

The Key Decision List was noted.

11. DISCUSSION OF EXEMPT ELEMENTS (ONLY IF REQUIRED)

There was no discussion of exempt elements.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 7.21 pm

Chair