

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 2 November 2020

NOTE: This meeting was held remotely. A recording of the meeting can be watched at on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8MtkbeqAWI&feature=youtu.be>

PRESENT

Councillor Sue Fennimore, Deputy Leader
Councillor Ben Coleman, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care
Councillor Adam Connell, Cabinet Member for Public Services Reform
Councillor Larry Culhane, Cabinet Member for Children and Education
Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for the Environment
Councillor Lisa Homan, Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Sue Macmillan, Cabinet Member for Strategy
Councillor Max Schmid, Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 12 OCTOBER 2020

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12 October 2020 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 Stephen Cowan and Andrew Jones.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Sue Fennimore subsequently declared a significant interest in respect of Item 8 on the agenda - Education City Update – as she was a member of the board of OnSide Youth Zone. 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.

4. CORPORATE REVENUE MONITOR 2020/21 MONTH 4 - 31 JULY 2020

Councillor Max Schmid presented the report and thanked the finance officers for managing to keep the projected non Covid-19 overspend lower than in previous years under difficult budget pressures.

RESOLVED:

1. To approve the General Fund virements of £4.884m and £0.276m HRA virements as detailed in appendix 9.
2. To note General Fund forecast overspend of £8.691m, £5.844m of which arises from the in-year impact of Covid-19 on the General Fund.
3. To note the Housing Revenue underspend of £1.006m.
4. To note the in-year Dedicated Schools Grant overspend of £3.582m.
5. To note the need to develop and implement mitigation measures to close overspends.

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. FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE COUNCIL

Councillor Max Schmid stated that as the government had broken its promise to fully fund councils for the financial impact of the pandemic, this Council now had a deficit of £13.7 million, even before moving into a second wave of the pandemic. The financial impact of the pandemic had been aggravated by a decade of austerity due to previous reductions in government funding. Therefore, the Council should avoid entering into any significant new unfunded financial commitments. The Council had a good level of reserves retained over the last few years that would need to be used if significant additional government grant was not made available. Many councils around the country were not in this fortunate position and were cutting down services to residents and making large scale redundancies. Thus, Councillor Schmid appealed to the government to honour the commitment it had originally made to fully fund councils to meet the financial cost of Covid-19.

Councillor Sue Fennimore stated that it was deeply disappointing that England did not have a short lockdown of two to three weeks to bring the rising rate of coronavirus under control, that Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer called for a few weeks ago. It would have made sense to the public to do that over the half-term. Now the second lockdown would have a significant impact on residents and on the Council's finances.

Councillor Ben Coleman provided an update on what the Council was doing to prepare for the second lockdown, which he agreed should have started earlier and be shorter. The Council had a strong plan to manage this second wave and was focusing on supporting the community and ensuring critical services were maintained. He thanked all officers involved in preparing this plan, particularly Linda Jackson, Director of Covid-19 response & recovery, Dr Nicola Lang, Director of Public Health, and Lisa Redfern, Strategic Director of Social Care. He informed that the Council was stepping up contact tracing to mitigate and manage local outbreaks, as the national test and trace system was proving to be inadequate and was only reaching 60% of people with the virus. The Council was reaching 90% of the unreachable people by knocking on the doors of residents who the central system had failed to contact, encouraging them to self-isolate. Councillor Coleman strongly believed the government should use the four weeks of the lockdown to turn NHS Test and Trace into a locally led service, putting local authorities and local public health officials in the driving seat in the battle against this pandemic, with appropriate delegated powers and funding. He added that H&F CAN was still supporting residents and would shortly be sending a letter to all residents who were previously shielded to offer their support. He also stated that flu immunisation was being made accessible and available to all vulnerable residents to reduce the impact of Covid-19.

Councillor Sue Fennimore stated that Professor Kevin Fenton, London regional director for Public Health England, had praised the Council for the work being done regarding test and trace, which exceeded other areas of the country; despite not having received the amount of money originally promised by the government.

Councillor Larry Culhane informed that following the government decision to refuse to fund children free school meals during half-term, the Council had stepped in and created a scheme to provide free school meals for over 5,000 students plus an additional 20% for schools to use at their discretion. He thanked all officers who managed to create this scheme in less than one day, Tesco for providing the vouchers in such a short notice and particularly the schools for distributing them on time. The Council was already beginning plans to step in during Christmas to carry on providing free school meals as it was expected the government would also refuse to provide them over that period.

RESOLVED:

1. To note the contents of the report which detail the financial impact of Covid-19 on the council and the actions being taken to mitigate pressures.
2. Agree that, as a result of these financial pressures, that the council should not enter into any significant new unfunded financial commitments.

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. THE SUSTAINABLE DELIVERY BY THE COMMUNITY OF THE BRAND-NEW SANDS END ARTS AND COMMUNITY CENTRE

Councillor Ben Coleman, on behalf of Councillor Andrew Jones, presented the report. The Sands End Arts and Community Centre (SEACC) replaced the Sands End Community Centre, that was closed in 2013, with a brand-new architect designed building run by and for local people. Funding had been negotiated from developers for the construction and start-up costs and the SEACC Trust, which Councillor Coleman would be the Chair, would raise its own long-term funding, so the facility did not represent a cost to residents. The centre would be fully open at the beginning of the new year. It would develop, thrive and strengthen local citizenship and community engagement. He thanked all residents involved in helping to deliver this centre.

RESOLVED:

1. To grant the lease of SEACC and the Seed Bank to the proposed SEACC Trust, for an initial term of 60 years with an option to extend to 99 years in accordance with the Heads of Terms and conditions contained in Appendix 1.
2. To delegate authority to the Interim Strategic Director for the Economy in consultation with the Head of Law and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services, to finalise and complete negotiations with the SEACC Trust in order to give effect to the decision in 1 above.
3. To approve a grant of the balance of £400,000 after the deduction of costs of fit-out of SEACC by the Council, to be funded by a combination of remaining Tideway grant balances and s106 receipts in hand, to the SEACC Trust for equipment and cash flow.
4. To delegate approval of the actual grant amount to the Strategic Director for the Environment.
5. To delegate approval of the Business Plan of the proposed SEACC Trust to the Strategic Director of Environment in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy, following its approval from the Charities

Commission, for the sustainable running of SEACC buildings, contained in Appendix 2.

6. To approve the Council entering into a grant agreement with the Trust, to ensure that the requirements of third-party funders are complied with.

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. BUSINESS CASE & PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR THE MAJOR REFURBISHMENT OF THREE HOUSING ESTATES: SULIVAN COURT SW6, BECKLOW GARDENS W12, AND EMLYN GARDENS W12

Councillor Lisa Homan presented the report on behalf of Councillor Andrew Jones. She stated that the project at Sullivan Court was one which the Council had committed to deliver as part of the Asset Management Compliance Strategy and Capital Programme approved by Cabinet in July 2019. The proposed projects at Becklow Gardens and Emlyn Gardens were similarly guided by the principles of the strategy to improve the Council's estates.

RESOLVED:

It is recommended that Cabinet approves the Business Case & Procurement Strategy for procurement of each of the following works contracts:

1. The major refurbishment of Sullivan Court estate SW6 at an estimated value of £6.081m.
2. The major refurbishment of Emlyn Gardens estate W12 at an estimated value of £4.5m
3. The major refurbishment of Becklow Gardens estate W12 at an estimated value of £4.3m
4. Approves a £5.8m capital budget, funded by HRA borrowing, to progress Becklow Gardens and Emlyn Gardens with the remaining £3m funded from uncommitted and unallocated budgets identified within the overall programme.

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. EDUCATION CITY UPDATE

Councillor Sue Fennimore subsequently declared a significant interest in respect of this item, as she was a member of the board of OnSide Youth Zone. 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.

Councillor Max Schmid presented the report on behalf of Councillor Andrew Jones. He noted that this scheme had previously been approved by Cabinet in April 2019 and Full Council in May 2019, but the changes to the tenure and the funding of the youth zone required additional capital budget, for which Cabinet approval was required and the awarding of a commercial loan would require Full Council approval. This project had been amended to deliver 100% affordable housing.

Councillor Larry Culhane spoke about the positive impact this scheme would have on young people. Some of the key aspects of the scheme were that ARK Swift primary school was being rebuilt, ARK head offices would be moving to White City, an adult learning centre and nursery would be provided and there would be a brand-new Youth Zone, in addition to the 100% genuine affordable housing. He thanked Councillor Sue Macmillan, his predecessor, who had worked on the wider scheme.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet

1. Notes 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. Approves an additional £5,114,000 to the council's capital budget giving a total capital budget of £72,622,000 for the construction of 132 residential units, Adult Learning Centre, Nursery and associated professional fees and development management costs.

3. Approves a further capital budget of £1,750,000 to be funded by section 106 contributions for the Council's additional contribution to the Youth Facility giving a total contribution of £5,250,000 subject to receipt by the Council of the section 106 contributions.
4. Agrees that the Council enters into a funding agreement and agreement for lease with OnSide Youth Zones and any subsidiary company, which are required to facilitate the development of the Youth Zone and Education City subject to receipt of satisfactory state aid advice.
5. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director for the Economy, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy and the Arts and the Head of Law, to finalise and complete negotiations with OnSide Youth Zone and any subsidiary company in order to give effect to the decision in 3 above.
6. Notes the proposed changes to the master development agreement required in order to facilitate the development moving forward.
7. Notes the proposed the change of residential tenure of 61 private rented units to 61 Shared Ownership units, subject to any necessary planning approval.

That Cabinet recommends to Full Council

1. That the Council approves a loan of up to £35 million to Ark for the construction of the office block at Education City, based on the heads of terms attached at confidential appendix 1, subject to receipt of satisfactory legal and financial advice, and state aid advice
2. To approve a capital budget of £35m be added to the capital programme to fund the loan to Ark.

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. INVESTMENT IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND APPROPRIATION OF LILLIE ROAD SITE

Councillor Lisa Homan presented the report on behalf of Councillor Andrew Jones. This was part of the Building Homes and Communities Strategy, which the Council was committed to using its assets to meet its strategic objective of delivering genuinely affordable homes. This report recommended Option B because it delivered a higher quantum of affordable housing as it proposed a 45-home scheme comprising 23 (50%) affordable homes.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

1. Notes 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. Approves a capital budget of £1,802,000 in the General Fund (GF) to facilitate the redevelopment of the Lillie Road Site, to the planning and procurement stages.
3. Delegates authority to the Strategic Director for the Economy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy authority to approve any drawdowns of the approved capital budget above £1,000,000.
4. Notes that the remaining budget of £802,000 will be funded from a combination of capital receipts and borrowing and delegate final confirmation of funding to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Finance and Commercial Services.
5. Resolves that the area of land shown edged red on the plan at Appendix 2 of the report are no longer required for the purpose for which it is currently held (General Fund purposes).
6. Approves the appropriation of the Lillie Road site shown edged red on the plans at Appendix 2 from the General Fund to the Housing Revenue Account subject to securing external valuations and approval of the Head of Asset Strategy and Portfolio (Borough Valuer).
7. Delegates authority to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Head of Asset Strategy and Portfolio (Borough Valuer) and the Cabinet Member of Finance and Commercial Services to take the necessary steps, including securing external valuation of the site in order to facilitate the decision in 6 and consequently, re-assign the development budget and spend to the HRA from the General Fund.

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. NORTH END ROAD GOOD GROWTH FUND

Councillor Ben Coleman presented the report on behalf of Councillor Andrew Jones. He stated that it was part of the Administration Manifesto commitment to revive North End Road. He informed that the Council had been successful with an application to the Mayor of London's Good Growth Fund. The fund would allow access to £1m of external funding to implement a range of improvement projects for North End Road. This would enable to improve the safety and space for pedestrians and cyclists, would support the growth and viability of the street market and high street, provide support for existing market traders, attract new market traders, increased customer choice, amongst other benefits. This report requested approval to establish a budget for the project and how the Council intended to provide match funding. Prior to implementation of the projects and throughout delivery there would be extensive engagement with stakeholders to review the emerging priorities for North End Road.

Councillor Sue Fennimore stated that the revival of North End Road and the market would offer significant support to local residents and affordable, healthy food. She reminded everyone about the great importance of the local markets across the whole borough.

RESOLVED:

1. To note that Appendix 2 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 strategy to provide match funding equivalent to £1,350,000, required to draw down the Good Growth Fund from the GLA as set out in the detailed analysis section of the report.
3. To approve a new capital budget of £2,220,000 which is funded by the GLA's grant and capital receipts if available or borrowing, with final confirmation of funding delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Cabinet Member of Finance and Commercial Services.

4. To approve a new, one-off, revenue budget of £30,000 for North End Road seasonal markets and training and development for new and existing market traders, funded by Neighbourhood CIL.

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. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Key Decision List was noted.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There was no other business.

Meeting started: 6.30 pm
Meeting ended: 6.56 pm

Chair