

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 10 January 2022

NOTE: This meeting was held remotely. A recording of the meeting can be watched at on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wsdrDTf3iRg>

PRESENT

Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council
Councillor Ben Coleman, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care
Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for the Environment
Councillor Max Schmid, Cabinet Member for Finance and Commercial Services

IN ATTENDANCE VIRTUALLY

Councillor Sue Fennimore, Deputy Leader
Councillor Adam Connell, Cabinet Member for Public Services Reform
Councillor Larry Culhane, Cabinet Member for Children and Education
Councillor Lisa Homan, Cabinet Member for Housing
Councillor Sharon Holder, Cabinet Member for Strategy

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2021

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 December 2021 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. DELIVERY OF WOOD LANE CYCLEWAY AND DEVELOPMENT OF A SHEPHERDS BUSH GREEN PUBLIC REALM SCHEME

Councillor Wesley Harcourt stated that the recommendations on this report were part of the Council's continuous support for cycling in the Borough. They demonstrated the Council's commitment to Climate Change by promoting smarter travel options and making cycling safer. They would make a positive contribution towards tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency due to an expected reduction in traffic volumes, resulting in long term improvements to air quality. This was vital in order to achieve net zero carbon from transport by 2030.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT:

1. That Cabinet approves proceeding with Option 1 to complete the design of the H&F scheme consulted upon by Transport for London (TfL) and LBHF in June 2019 between Du Cane Road and east of the Holland Park roundabout, subject to securing funding from TfL.
2. That Cabinet approves completing the design and build of Phase 1, the section between Du Cane Road up to Shepherds Bush Green as consulted on in 2019, subject to securing the required funding from TfL.
3. That Cabinet approves the development of an enhanced concept for the remaining Phase 2 section between Shepherds Bush Green and the Holland Park Roundabout to tie in with the Phase 1 section, and approve a related budget of up to £300,000, funded from eligible Section 106 contributions.
4. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Strategic Director for Environment to take all necessary steps to effect the decisions in recommendation 1, 2 and 3.
5. That Cabinet notes officers will continue to engage with the Disabled Residents Team (DRT) on accessible and inclusive design principles for the scheme.
6. That Cabinet notes the significant contributions made by the Cycling and Walking Residents Commission on the King Street and Hammersmith Road Safer Cycle Pathway in setting overall design principles for cycle schemes. Officers will need to incorporate findings into the design of the Wood Lane Cycle Scheme and, the concept for the Shepherds Bush Green area.

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. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2022/23

Councillor Max Schmid stated that this Council was investing £9m to support the Borough's lowest income families pay their Council Tax. He added that the Coalition Government had changed the policy 10 years ago to default the decision to councils to support low-income families pay their Council Tax without maintaining their financial support. This meant that many councils started changing a "minimum payment" from residents on benefits, causing them serious financial stress. However, this Council offered full Council Tax support for those in need and was the only council in the country not to use bailiffs to collect debts.

The Leader stressed that this Council seriously looked at the cost-of-living crisis with great concern. Therefore, supporting struggling low-income families was the right thing to do.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT:

It is recommended that Cabinet agree the following recommendations to be approved by Full Council:

1. That the Council Tax Support Scheme in operation in 2021/2022 (included at Appendix 1) shall continue in 2022/2023.
2. That the Council shall apply the annual uprating of allowances, applicable amounts and income, set out in the DWP Housing Benefit circular, to the Council Tax Support scheme for 2022/2023.

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. COUNCIL TAX BASE AND COLLECTION RATE 2022/23 AND DELEGATION OF THE BUSINESS RATE ESTIMATE

Councillor Max Schmid stated that this was a largely technical report, but it also showed that the number of properties in the Borough had increased by 1,333 and would result in an increased income. This was due to the Councils programme to introduce further affordable housing into the Borough to try to ease the housing crisis. He added that care leavers and foster parents would continue to be exempt from paying Council Tax.

The Leader thanked Emily Hill and her team as well as all the senior leadership team for running a business-like operation and keeping the budget under control. This meant that they were able to offer support to care leavers and foster parents.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT:

That Cabinet agrees to refer this report to Full Council and recommend approval by Full Council for the financial year 2022/23 of:

1. The estimated numbers of properties for each Valuation Band as set out in this report.
2. An estimated collection rate of 97.0%.
3. The Council Tax Base of 82,263 Band "D" equivalent properties.
4. The delegation of authority to the Director of Finance to determine the business rates tax base for 2022/23.

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, 2021/22 (SECOND QUARTER)

Councillor Max Schmid stated that this report reflected a reduced capital programme over the year from what had been budgeted. This was the result of difficult circumstances due to the pandemic and supply chain issues caused by Brexit, which

created difficulties in construction. Nevertheless, the social housing programme, EdCity and the Civic Campus were still progressing.

The Leader reiterated that these were difficult times in the building industry as the combination of Covid and Brexit had caused inflation in building prices and shortage of labour. He thanked all officers involved in delivering the current programmes on time.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT:

1. To note the net forecast decrease in 2021/22 capital expenditure of £29.7m (18.9% of the approved budget). The variations are detailed in Appendix 2.
2. To approve the updated four-year capital programme 2021-2025 of £473.4m as detailed in Appendix 1.
3. To note the potential risks regarding the Housing Capital Programme, as summarised in paragraphs 22-24.

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. 2021/22 CORPORATE REVENUE MONITOR - MONTH 6 (SEPTEMBER 2021)

Councillor Max Schmid echoed the Leader's comments of praise on the strong financial leadership of Emily Hill, the Director of Finance, and the entire leadership team by keeping the Council under budget in very difficult times. This report showed an underspend for the year when many other councils were showing overspends.

The Leader stated that he was very proud of the fact that the Council had removed record amounts of wasteful spending to be able to offer the best value for money. He was grateful also to Kim Smith, the Chief Executive, for this achievement.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS PRESENT:

1. To note the General Fund forecast underspend of £2.768m.

2. To note that the forecast draw down from the Housing Revenue Account general balance will be £0.983m less than budgeted.
3. To note the in-year High Needs Block Dedicated Schools Grant overspend of £2.173m.
4. To approve the virements of £1.565m as detailed in Appendix 9.

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

There was no discussion of exempt elements.

11. EXEMPT MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 6 DECEMBER 2021 (E)

RESOLVED:

That the exempt minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 December 2021 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings, and that the outstanding actions be noted.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm

Meeting ended: 7.15 pm

Chair