

# Cabinet

## Minutes



Monday 17 April 2023

*NOTE: This meeting was held remotely. A recording of the meeting can be watched at on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VuZLhNJpB50>*

### **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 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 Jose Afonso

### **ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY**

Councillor Patricia Quigley

## **1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 6 MARCH 2023**

### **RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 March 2023 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 Sharon Holder.

## **3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **4. CORPORATE REVENUE BUDGET REVIEW 2022/23 (MONTH 9 – DECEMBER 2022)**

Councillor Rowan Ree introduced the report setting out the current revenue budget forecast and action plans for the departments with forecast overspends. This was the fourth corporate revenue financial performance report compiled for 2022/23.

Councillor Jose Afonso asked a question related to page 14 on the agenda about inflation upturn and pay negotiations. He asked whether the Council would consider operating a performance related pay to encourage performance.

The Leader responded that they had had extensive conversations about performance related pay in the past but decided that it would be more beneficial to pay people fairly and expect them to work to very high standards. They introduced a performance criterion of continuous improvement involving a training and development programme seeking to pursue performance which was not related to pay. Therefore, they would not consider introducing a performance related pay and there were also many examples of its ineffectiveness across sectors.

Councillor Jose Afonso asked a question in relation to page 32 on the agenda. He asked whether the Council was seeking 66% of costs for the full repair and stabilisation works of Hammersmith Bridge.

The Leader replied that they were seeking the money to fully restore the bridge. Hammersmith Bridge had an ancient and unique structure which was riddled with rust and decay due to over 70 years of disrepair. The cost to fully fix it would be around £200m. The Government and TfL had decided that Hammersmith and Fulham tax payers should pay one third of the total cost, which was unprecedented. He stressed that residents alone should not be responsible for paying the full cost as it should be paid by all users, hence the reason they were proposing a toll on the bridge.

In relation to page 47 on the agenda, Councillor Jose Afonso asked the reason for the increase in void properties and the consequent loss of rental revenue.

The Leader explained that there were currently genuine challenges in the housing sector causing serious problems for repairing void properties. The difficulty in getting skilled labour and building materials had affected all aspects of their housing management. The new Director of Housing, Richard Shwe, was finding many innovative ways forward on this issue. He stressed that it was a priority to give residents the best council housing service in the country.

#### **AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:**

1. To delegate authority to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, to take all decisions necessary to facilitate the closing of the final accounts.

2. To note the General Fund forecast overspend of £1.890m.
3. To note that the forecast drawdown from the Housing Revenue Account general balance will be £6.329m. This is £2.279m more than budgeted.
4. To note the requirement for significant further action to reduce the forecast overspends and balance the budget.
5. To note the in-year Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block forecasted surplus of nil.
6. To approve General Fund virements totalling £0.190m 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.

**5. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

The Key Decision List was noted.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm  
Meeting ended: 7.14 pm

Chair .....