

Cabinet

Minutes



Monday 4 December 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=Lqf8qJDfBPA>

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 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 Alex Karmel
Councillor Genevieve Nwaogbe

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 November 2023 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

Councillor Bora Kwon declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Item 5, The Temporary Relocation of Flora Gardens Primary School, as a Governor at the School. 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. H&F CORPORATE PLAN 2023 - 2026: A STRONGER, SAFER, KINDER BOROUGH FOR EVERYONE

Councillor Rowan Ree introduced the report setting out the Council's values and vision over the short and medium term, building on the Business Objectives 2022/23 plan published in September 2022, which included a commitment to develop a longer-term plan.

Councillor Alex Karmel asked for an outline of the changes since the last Corporate Plan was put forward.

Councillor Ree replied that this Plan was largely based on the existing major policies, strategies and plans co-produced with residents and partners as well as key commitments made in the Administration's 2022 Manifesto. It included priorities such as law and order, keeping our streets safe, with the help of the LETs Team, Gangs Unit and CCTV operation. It also included promises to keep free Homecare and providing free breakfast for school children.

Councillor Karmel asked which areas would have a revenue expenditure increase and which ones would have a decrease.

The Leader explained the development, successes, and challenges of the Corporate Plan. He replied that despite the reduction in the Council's budget not only no services had been cut but more had been provided. This had been achieved by using new technologies and work practices to make savings and put that back into services. Their actual budget was being finalised and would be put forward shortly for consultation via the Policy and Accountability Committees.

Councillor Karmel noted that Imperial West was excellent for the Borough, and added that he would be looking closely at the budget.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That Cabinet:

1. Adopts the H&F Corporate Plan 2023 – 2026 (A Stronger, Safer, Kinder Borough for Everyone) as the overarching strategic plan for the Council.
2. Endorses the approach to report annually to Cabinet on progress against delivery of the Plan.
3. Notes that any new council initiatives set out within the Plan will be subject to the normal governance, budget setting and decision-making processes of the Council before they are enacted, as set out in the constitution and relevant legislation.

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. THE TEMPORARY RELOCATION OF FLORA GARDENS PRIMARY SCHOOL

Councillor Bora Kwon declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Governor at Flora Gardens Primary School. 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 Alex Sanderson stated that the Council was committed to give young people the very best start in life so that they could learn and grow in the right environment that was conducive to learning. This paper was seeking approval for the temporary relocation of Flora Gardens Primary School to the Lena Gardens site following its refurbishment, and fund the allocation and support cost to assist Flora Gardens with the temporary move to the Lena Gardens site.

Councillor Karmel asked how long would the decant last and the relocation take place.

Councillor Sanderson replied that they were hoping that the Lena Gardens site would be ready for the students by the following summer holidays. This was only a temporary relocation.

Councillor Andrew Jones added that they were still looking for options for the redevelopment of the school in the long term, but this report only related to moving the school out of unsuitable accommodation.

The Leader reiterated that this paper was only requesting approval for the temporary relocation of Flora Gardens Primary School and further reports would come back for approval setting up the exact timeline and next steps. A procurement process would also need to be carried out. Further plans were being developed and would go to the Policy and Accountability Committees.

Councillor Karmel stated that the relocation was likely to impact on the children's education and it would be useful to know the timescale. He asked for an assurance that extra support would be provided to the pupils to minimise the impact.

The Leader assured that the Council not only prioritised children and education but had also added extra services, such as offering free school breakfast and lunch, and was fortunate to have great teachers. They were determined that no child would fall behind with their education and had a school that was fit for

purpose. He added that the school had asked for the refurbishment, and the Council was working with them to find the best possible standards for children and to minimise disruption.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To approve the temporary relocation of Flora Gardens Primary School to the Lena Gardens site, following refurbishment of Lena Gardens.
2. To approve £200,000 S106 contributions to fund relocation costs associated with the disruption as a result of the temporary move of Flora Gardens Primary School to the Lena Gardens Site.

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. LBHF COMPANIES UPDATE

Councillor Ree stated that as the Commercial Revenue Committee had been abolished, Cabinet would now receive regular updates on the status and purposes of the Council's companies.

Councillor Karmel asked about the performance of the four companies at the end of the financial year.

Councillor Ree replied that they were all currently performing as expected. He would forward Councillor Karmel further information.

The Leader added that the Audit Committee would be the correct forum to discuss the companies' financial position, not at a public Cabinet meeting.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note that Appendices 1-9 are not for publication on the basis that they contain 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 note the status of the companies.

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: 7.06 pm
Meeting ended: 7.35 pm

Chair