

Cabinet Minutes



Monday 7 October 2024

*NOTE: A recording of the meeting can be watched at on YouTube at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A10VshxD1_E*

PRESENT

Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council
Councillor Rebecca Harvey, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety
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 Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler

1. MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING HELD ON

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 9 September 2024 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 Bora Kwon, Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Councillor Andrew Jones and Councillor Sharon Holder.

3. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

4. FUNDING COMMUNITY BENEFITS THROUGH PLANNING OBLIGATIONS DRAW DOWN REPORT 2023/24

Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform, introduced the report setting out the projects and services to be funded from monies received through Section 106 (S.106) agreements or the Borough Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). In total £22.3m secured by the council from developers as part of their planning permission would be investment in community benefits to improve the quality of life for residents living across our borough.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked the reason that nearly half the S.106 monies were spent on the Civic Campus and whether there were plans for future use of the fund on the scheme.

The Leader replied that the Civic Campus scheme once completed would regenerate that part of the borough. However the scheme was suffering from the consequences of Brexit, the pandemic, the economy and the building industry in crisis. The Council was taking a tough approach to negotiate with developers to ensure value for residents.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That Cabinet approves the 2023/24 drawdown of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy monies as set out in this report, to fund expenditure of **£22,345,804** for a wide range of community benefits across the borough.

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. DIGITAL INCLUSION STRATEGY

Councillor Rowan Ree introduced the report which was coproduced with residents through the Digital Accessibility Group (DAG). The aim of the strategy was to address the causes of exclusion resulting from lack of access to digital connectivity, devices and skills and to enable residents to participate fully in a digital society.

Councillor Rowan Ree thanked Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier, Lead Member for European Co-operation and Digital Innovation, for his work on this strategy.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To approve the contents and publication of Hammersmith & Fulham's Digital Inclusion Strategy, attached as **Appendix 1**.
2. To approve the resourcing request for a Programme manager to coordinate the delivery of the strategy, including the data to inform the delivery of the 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.

6. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

Councillor Alex Sanderson, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Education, stated that school attendance had become an increasing concern across the country since the end of the pandemic. This was principally because attendance at school had dropped significantly with the number of children who were classified as persistently absent increasing significantly, both nationally and locally. This report set out the strategic approach to address this concern and to ensure any child, regardless of their characteristics, needs or the type of school they attended, received access to a full-time, high-quality education.

In answer to a question from Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler, Councillor Alex Sanderson replied that she would be discussing the budget to meet the demands of this strategy later in the current week with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services and officers.

Councillor Alex Sanderson stated that there had been a recent study about the number of children that would be joining the local authority/academy sector from the private sector, following the VAT addition on private school fees. The Council would be happy to provide school places to those children and they had spaces in both primary and secondary schools in the borough. She would forward this study to Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler for information.

Councillor Adronie Alford asked what the percentage in the borough of non-authorised attendance in schools was. Councillor Alex Sanderson replied that it was 1.5% at primary level and 2.8% at secondary level, which was below the

national average. Non-authorised attendance for children with health needs was 4.1%.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

That Cabinet approves the Attendance Strategy attached at Appendix 1.

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, 2024/25 (FIRST QUARTER)

Councillor Rowan Ree introduced the report setting out the details of the forecast capital programme for the financial year 2024/25 and the future years.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler asked the reason that the capital spent on Hammersmith Bridge was so much lower than the capital spent on the Civic Campus.

The Leader explained that Hammersmith Bridge had 70 years of untreated rot and severe structural problems. They would need £250 million to fix it to be able to open the bridge to cars. This Council had already spent more money than any other local authority had spent in any bridge. The Council was continuously working to find a solution to get the bridge open.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note the overall forecast of £294.1m for 2024/25 capital expenditure which is a net decrease of £17.8m in comparison to the revised budget of £311.9m at 2023/24 outturn.
2. To approve the updated four-year capital programme for 2024-2028 of £639.1m, as detailed in Appendix 1. This is a net increase of £62.7m in comparison to the four-year programme of £576.4m approved at Full Council in February 2024.
3. To approve an additional budget envelope of £8.68m for various General Fund capital schemes, funded from external grants and contributions

(£8.375m), capital receipts (£0.257m) and revenue contributions (£0.048m), as detailed in paragraph 3 of the report.

4. To note the prudential indicators presented in Appendix 4, as per Prudential Code requirements.

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. PROPOSED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT ORDER & LOCAL LISTED BUILDING DEVELOPMENT ORDER - SOLAR PANELS

The Leader introduced the report outlining the Council's initiative to implement a Local Development Order (LDO) for the installation of solar panels. This represented a progressive step towards sustainable development and climate change mitigation and finding more affordable ways to generate energy.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To approve the making of a draft Local Development Order (LDO) and draft Local Listed Building Consent Order (LLBCO) to allow solar PV panels to be erected on properties in the borough.
2. That approval be given for a statutory public consultation on the draft Local Development Order and draft Local Listed Building Consent Order.
3. That delegated authority is given to the Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for the Economy, to approve the final format of the consultation papers and, following consideration of representations, adopt the LDO (appendix 1) and LLBCO (appendix 2) post consultation, subject to there not being material changes to either Order as a result of the consultation.

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. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW - TIMETABLE, RESOURCING AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Leader stated that the Local Plan was the key planning document for the borough providing the framework for meeting the future development needs of the area and setting out policies and guidance to shape, plan and manage growth and guide development across the borough over a 15- year period. This plan was aligned with the Industrial Strategy.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

4. That Cabinet approves the adoption and publication of the attached Local Development Scheme (Appendix 1) and for this to be brought into effect from 1st November 2024.
5. That Cabinet approves the release of funding from planning reserves for the reasons as described within this report to enable the review of the adopted Local Plan during the remainder of financial year 2024/25 and continuing in 2025/26 and 2026/27.
6. That Cabinet approves the draft updated Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for public consultation (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.

10. NET ZERO 2030 PARKING STRATEGY

The Leader introduced the report recommending policy changes that would help tackle dangerous levels of air pollution in the borough and would help deliver the Council's Net Zero 2030 target. This report set out how to use parking charges to influence driver behaviour to meet the ambition and would bring the charges in line with other councils.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler stated that on this report there was no comprehensive analysis of the economic impact on businesses, the benefits to residents, the expected revenue generated and how the money would be spent or any improvements. She asked the reason for the Council to start charging electric vehicles for parking.

The Leader replied that parking charges were not increased to raise money, but they were altered to make changes to other policies, for environmental measures and to regulate traffic. The Council pioneered free electric car charging base to increase its numbers in the borough and had now more bases than anywhere else in Britain. But electric cars were not free from hazard as they still released some pollution and took up space on the road.

Councillor Victoria Brocklebank-Fowler stated that Appendix 3 listed the results of the consultation that took place. Less than 50% agreed with the police and was based in a small response rate. She asked how this police could be put forward with such a low support rate.

The Leader responded that this was not a statutory consultation but a debate with residents on how to improve air quality and then carry on with future statutory consultations.

Councillor Adronie Alford noted her concerns about the elderly who could not afford to buy a new car. The Leader replied that they would consider a hardship fund.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To welcome the parking strategy ambition to tackle the dangerous levels of air pollution in Hammersmith & Fulham and support meeting the Council's Net Zero 2030 targets.
2. To review the policy change options and agree with the proposals set out in this report
3. To delegate the implementation of those changes to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Realm.
4. To delegate the decision to the Executive Director of Place, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Public Realm, to review an annual increase in parking fees and charges.

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. FIRE DOOR INSTALLATION PROGRAMME (PHASE 1)

Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness, introduced the report seeking to install and upgrade fire doors across the borough to ensure safety of high-rise residential buildings but also to meet compliance requirements under UK fire safety laws.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

1. To note 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. For Cabinet to approve the procurement strategy to undertake a mini-competition via the Fusion 21, Building Safety and Compliance Framework, 'Passive Fire Protection - Fire Doors' category for works relating to phase 1 Fire Door Works.

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.

12. CIVIC CAMPUS - STRATEGIC OPTIONS

Councillor Rowan Ree introduced the report about the refurbishment of the Town Hall which would enable the delivery of the wider Civic Campus programme, creating a new and much improved space for residents and the public and revitalise the West King Street area. This project included the construction of 204 private sale/affordable homes, commercial/office facilities and an extended and refurbished historic town hall. This scheme would pay for itself because of its revenue generating aspects.

Councillor Adronie Alford asked how much delay did the accident on site cause on the delivery of the scheme.

The Leader replied that it was a serious accident on site but not fatal. The site was closed for about a year while investigations were carried out on health and safety. Other factors such as Brexit also contributed for the delay as it affected the building industry increasing prices and diminishing the number of skilled labour available.

AGREED UNANIMOUSLY BY THE CABINET MEMBERS:

To agree the recommendations contained in Appendix 1 and to agree that appendix 1 and the recommendations contained therein are 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).

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.

13. FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

The Key Decision List was noted.

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the exempt items of business on the grounds that they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of a person (including the authority holding that information) as defined in paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), and that the public interest in maintaining the exemption currently outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 8.22 pm

Chair