

Cabinet

Minutes

Monday 8 December 2025

PRESENT

Executive Members

Councillor Stephen Cowan, Leader of the Council
Councillor Florian Chevoppe-Verdier, Cabinet Member for Public Realm
Councillor Wesley Harcourt, Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Ecology
Councillor Rebecca Harvey, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion and Community Safety
Councillor Bora Kwon, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Councillor Zarar Qayyum, Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills
Councillor Rowan Ree, Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform
Councillor Frances Umeh, Cabinet Member for Housing and Homelessness

Other Councillors

Councillor Adronie Alford
Councillor Paul Alexander
Councillor Trey Campbell-Simon
Councillor Callum Nimmo

Officers

Bram Kainth, Executive Director – Place
Grant Deg, Director of Legal Services
David Abbott, Head of Governance

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alex Sanderson, Councillor Andrew Jones, and Sharon Lea.

2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 November 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. REVENUE BUDGET REVIEW 2025/26 - MONTH 6 (SEPTEMBER 2025)

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report which presented the financial performance review at Month 6 (September 2025), following the previous update provided at Month 2 (May 2025). The outcomes of the review continued to reflect the challenging macro-economic conditions and were based on a pragmatic assessment of the Council's financial performance. The estimated financial position incorporates known and emerging budget pressures and potential risks. Councillor Ree noted that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) was in a better position than previous years, with a balanced budget set for 2025/26 (without the use of balances). He noted that a prudent approach had been adopted in the forecasts for 2025/26, with an in-year pressure projected due to historical disrepair claims and works. He said a number of mitigations had been implemented to manage the projected pressure.

Councillor Adronie Alford asked for an explanation of why garden waste income was lower than expected, suggesting it could be due to the high price. Councillor Stephen Cowan (Leader of the Council) recounted the history of garden waste in the borough, noting previous approaches had been unsuccessful and a previous administration had withdrawn the service entirely. He explained that the new service was aligned with the Council's goal to be the most environmentally positive local authority in the Country - and it aimed to compete with more expensive private sector offerings. He said the Council was planning a marketing push to increase take-up.

Councillor Alford asked why reported parking income was lower than expected. The Leader said the Council had put a lot of effort into deterring traffic from using the borough as a cut-through to improve air quality and protect residents' health. He added that the success of active-travel schemes with more people walking and cycling, and fewer young people driving, had also contributed.

Councillor Alford raised concerns that traffic schemes were also deterring people from shopping and impacting the viability of some local shops. The Leader said the Council was not trying to stop people who need cars from driving, but rather encourage people who were able to walk and cycle. Regarding shop closures, he noted that while the high-street had faced challenges across the Country, the areas of the borough with the most serious restrictions such as the South Fulham Clean Air Neighbourhood had seen an increase in shops. He also highlighted new cafes and shops on Wandsworth Bridge Road since it had become more pedestrian friendly, and the success of the traffic-free North End Road market.

Councillor Alford noted the continued strain of temporary-accommodation on the HRA budget and asked if the Council had a plan to address it. The Leader agreed that it was an important problem for all local authorities. He paid tribute to Councillors Rowan Ree and Frances Umeh who had seen the problem early and had taken serious measures to address it, including 17,000 new properties being built in the borough with over 35% of them being affordable homes. He said the scale of demand was a genuine problem and the Council was speaking with the Government about this issue. Councillor Ree added that the purpose of the newly created

Housing Company, agreed at the previous Cabinet meeting, was partly to address this issue and provide additional temporary accommodation.

The report and recommendations were unanimously approved.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet noted the General Fund financial forecast variance at Month 6 (Table 1 and Appendix 1).
2. That Cabinet noted progress on delivering the 2025/26 agreed budget savings (Appendix 3).
3. That Cabinet noted the HRA forecast (paragraph section 24 to 26 and Appendix 2).
4. That Cabinet noted and approved the budget movements (Appendix 4).

The reasons for decision and alternative options are set out in the report.

There were no declarations of interest and no dispensations in respect of any declared conflict of interest.

5. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITOR AND BUDGET VARIATIONS 2025/26 (SECOND QUARTER)

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report which detailed the forecast capital programme for the financial year 2025/26 (including the financing of the programme for the year) and the future years. He highlighted some of the key areas of spend that were helping to build a better borough, including economic regeneration projects, more affordable and greener homes, and an expansion of CCTV infrastructure to prevent and deter crime.

The report and recommendations were unanimously approved.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet noted the overall forecast of £270.9m for 2025/26 capital expenditure which is a net decrease of 9.8m in comparison to the revised budget of £280.731m at Q1 2025/26.
2. That Cabinet approved a total additional investment of £34.5m (of which £33m is s106 funded) across the revised four year programme, including new additional borrowing, the details of this investment are set out in Appendix 1.
3. That Cabinet approved the updated four-year capital programme for 2025-2029 of £714.325m, as detailed in the report. This is a net increase of £34.5m in comparison to the forecast four-year programme as at Q1 2025/26 (£679.9m).

The reasons for decision and alternative options are set out in the report.

There were no declarations of interest and no dispensations in respect of any declared conflict of interest.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY: MID-YEAR REVIEW 2025/26

Councillor Rowan Ree (Cabinet Member for Finance and Reform) introduced the report which provided an update on the implementation of the 2025/26 Treasury Management Strategy, approved by Full Council on 26 February 2025, and presented the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 mid-year review.

The report and recommendations were unanimously approved.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet noted:
 - the Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26 mid-year review;
 - the forecast capital financing requirement (CFR) for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA);
 - the current split between external and internal borrowing.

7. KEY DECISIONS LIST (TO NOTE)

The Key Decision List was noted.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 7.20 pm

Chair