

Cabinet

Minutes

9 December 2021

Record of decisions taken at the meeting held on Thursday 9 December 2021.

Present:

Chair: Councillor Graham Henson

Councillors: Simon Brown
Varsha Parmar
Natasha Proctor

Joined Virtually: Councillor Peymana Assad
Councillor Keith Ferry
Councillor Christine Robson
Councillor Krishna Suresh
Councillor Adam Swersky (Non-Executive Member)
Councillor Antonio Weiss (Non-Executive Member)
John Higgins (Non-Executive Voluntary Sector Representative)

In attendance (Councillors): Marilyn Ashton
Paul Osborn
Pritesh Patel
Kanti Rabadia
For Minute 570
For Minute 566-582
For Minute 570
For Minute 570

Apologies received: Councillor Sue Anderson
Councillor Phillip O'Dell

566. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Phillip O'Dell (Portfolio Holder for Housing) and Sue Anderson (Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement, Accessibility & Customer Services).

567. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the declaration of interests, which had been published on the Council website, be taken as read.

568. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions had been received.

569. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that four public question had been received and responded to and the recording would be available on the website.

570. Councillor Questions

RESOLVED: That the Councillor Questions were responded to and the recording would be available on the Council's website.

571. Key Decision Schedule December 2021 - February 2022

Having noted that the reports on "People Services Strategic Commissioning - Adult Mental Health Services" and "School Streets Programme" had been deferred to January, Cabinet

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Key Decision Schedule for the period December 2021 to February 2022.

572. Progress on Scrutiny Projects

RESOLVED: To receive and note the current progress of the scrutiny reports.

573. Covid-19 Update

Having agreed to vary the order of business, Cabinet received a presentation from the Chief Executive, which provided Members with a strategic update on Covid-19 cases across the borough, the recent government announcement in relation to the Omicron variant and the necessary reintroduction of some Covid-containing measures as well as the vaccination programme acceleration. Acknowledging the significant pressures on Council services and the challenges around organisational capacity and staff resilience, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the verbal update and accompanying presentation from the Chief Executive, be noted;
- (2) a further 3-month extension to the contract with Number8 Events for the continued provision of Community Testing in line with the anticipated extension of the Community Testing programme until the end of March 2022 at an estimated value of £100k, be agreed;
- (3) the estimated cost of extending Harrow's Community Testing Programme until the end of March 2022, which included staffing, contractors, consumables, waste and communications of £262k (under the rate card cap), be noted; and
- (4) it be noted that the costs of the Community Testing programme were reimbursed by Government on a monthly basis up to a rate card maximum, with any costs above the cap funded through the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

574. Membership of the Employees' Consultative Forum

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Sharon Hayes as a Unison representative to the vacancy on the Employees' Consultative Forum, be noted.

Resolved Items

575. Harrow Digital Infrastructure Strategy - Enabling Investment in Digital Infrastructure

Having received a report on the Harrow Digital Infrastructure Strategy - Enabling Investment in Digital Infrastructure, Cabinet agreed that the recommendations be approved as set out in the officer report, subject to the following amendment:

- Recommendation (4) – the Council's telecoms policy on land owned or controlled it agreed in April 2000 preventing infrastructure for 3G and 4G masts on council premises be reversed.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft Digital Infrastructure Strategy, attached at Appendix 1 to the officer report, be agreed for consultation with external stakeholders;
- (2) the Corporate Director for Community, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business, Property and Leisure and Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources, be authorised approval of the final version of the Digital Infrastructure Strategy;

- (3) the Director of Economy and Culture in conjunction with the Director of ICT be authorised to implement the Strategy and (any related) operational issues; and
- (4) the Council's telecoms policy on land owned or controlled it agreed in April 2000 preventing infrastructure for 3G and 4G masts on council premises be reversed.

Reason for Decision: The adoption of the Digital Infrastructure Strategy will set a clear policy direction for the Borough and help it meet its Borough Plan objective that "Everyone has a quality, energy efficient and digitally enabled home in a thriving community."

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member/Dispensation Granted: None.

576. Draft Revenue Budget 2022/23 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 to 2024/25

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft budget for 2022/23 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2022/23 to 2024/25 be approved for general consultation as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the officer report, so that Cabinet may later consider the budget in light of the consultation responses and the equality impact assessment (s) before it is referred to Council in February 2022;
- (2) it be noted that the Spending Review 2021 confirmed broad plans for public spending for 2022/23, which would impact on local government, and that the draft budget would be updated when the detail was announced in the Indicative Financial Settlement (was expected mid to late December 2021 followed by the Final Settlement no later than January 2022);
- (3) the balanced budget position for 2022/23, the estimated budget gap of £14.847m for 2023/24 and an estimated balanced budget for 2024/25 based on the scenario of a Council Tax increase of 2.99% per annum over all three years of the MTFS, be noted;
- (4) the use of £15.7m Budget Planning Reserve MTFS to achieve the balanced budget position for 2022/23 which was reversed out in the following year, be noted;
- (5) the proposal to increase core Council Tax by 1.99% per annum 2022/23 to 2024/25 in line with Central Government spending power calculations, be noted;

- (6) the proposal to increase Council Tax by 1% per annum 2022/23 to 2024/25 in line with Central Government spending power calculations in respect of the Adult Social Care Precept, be noted;
- (7) the requirement to develop a fully costed budget and implementation plan to support the estimated financial challenges over the MTFS for presentation to Cabinet, be noted;
- (8) no proposed structured changes to the schools funding formula for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 3 and paragraph 1.47 to the officer report, be noted;
- (9) the draft Public Health budget for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix 4 to the officer report, be agreed;
- (10) the assumed funding for the protection of social care 2022/23 through the Better Care Fund (BCF) as set out in paragraphs 1.51 to 1.54 in the officer report, be noted; and
- (11) the Director of Finance and Assurance, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, be authorised to agree Harrow's 2022/23 contribution to the London Borough's Grant Scheme.

Reason for Decision: To ensure that the Council publishes a draft budget for 2022/23 and a draft three Year MTFS to 2024/25. Final approval will be sought from Cabinet and Council in February 2022.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member/Dispensation Granted: None.

577. Draft Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2024/25

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the new proposed draft capital proposals, as detailed within Appendix 1 to the officer report, which will be brought back to Cabinet in February 2022 for approval, be noted; and
- (2) the final version of the Capital Programme 2022/23 to 2023/25 be brought back to Cabinet in February 2022 for recommendation to Council.

Reason for Decision: To enable the Council to have an approved Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member/Dispensation Granted: None.

578. Quarter 2 Revenue & Capital Budget Monitoring 2021/22

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revenue and capital forecast positions set out in paragraphs 1.2 and 1.3 in the officer report, be noted;
- (2) the proposed amendments to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraphs 3.34 to 3.39 in the officer report be approved and paragraphs 3.31 to 3.33, be noted;
- (3) the Council's Trading Update as detailed in Appendix 6 to the officer report, be noted; and
- (4) the Director of Strategy and Partnerships, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Community Cohesion, Crime and Enforcement, be authorised to spend the expected grant received from the Government to support the Afghan Resettlement Programme (expected to be in the region of £1.5m over the three-year period of the funding programme)

Reason for Decision: To report the 2021/22 financial forecast position at Quarter 2 and to update Cabinet on trading company performance.

Afghan Resettlement Programme

The Council will receive £20,520 over three years per family member. Given the average size of families in Holding Hotels was 6.6, if the Council took 10 families, then this would equate to £1.35m over the three years of the programme. As this amount exceeded the £500,000 delegated authority for revenue spend, it was necessary to seek Cabinet approval for overall spend for the Afghan Resettlement Programme. The programme will be agreed in consultation with the Portfolio Holder of Community Cohesion, Crime and Enforcement.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member/Dispensation Granted: None.

579. Estimated Surplus / (Deficit) on the Collection Fund 2021-2022

RESOLVED: That

- (1) an overall net estimated deficit of £21.069m on the Collection Fund as at 31 March 2022, including a deficit of £421k on Council Tax (Harrow share -£343k and a deficit of £20.648m on Business Rates (Harrow share (£6.194m), be noted; and
- (2) Harrow's share of £6.537m be agreed and transferred to the General Fund in 2022-23.

Reason for Decision: To report to Cabinet on the Council's statutory obligation to estimate the surplus or (deficit) on the Collection Fund for the year end. Approval to the recommendations set out was a major part of the annual budget review process.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member/Dispensation Granted: None.

580. Calculation of Council Tax Base for 2022- 2023

RESOLVED: That the information provided in the officer report be noted and the following be agreed:

- (1) the band D equivalent number of taxable properties be calculated as shown in the officer report and in accordance with the Government regulations;
- (2) the provision for uncollectable amounts of Council Tax for 2022-2023 be agreed at 2% producing an expected collection rate of 98%;
- (3) subject to (1) & 2) above, a Council Tax Base for 2022-2023 of 88,785 Band D equivalent properties (being 90,597 x 98%) be approved, allowing for payment in lieu of Ministry of Defence properties;
- (4) that having considered to review the local Council Tax Scheme (CTS), it be agreed that no change was required, and continuation of the existing CTS scheme be agreed, as previously adopted by Full Council, for the 2022/23 financial year; and
- (5) continuation with the inflation negating scheme applied in 2021/22 and 2021/22 for working age households who were in receipt of council tax support as at 1/4/2022, and that the Director of Finance be authorised to administer awards under the provisions of Section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 2012).

Reason for Decision: To fulfil the Council's statutory obligation to set the Council Tax Base for 2022-2023.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member/Dispensation Granted: None.

581. Application to the Living Wage Foundation to become an accredited authority

Having noted the confidential appendix to the officer report, Cabinet

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the submission of an application to the Living Wage Foundation (LWF) for Harrow Council to become an accredited Real Living Wage payer which incorporated a transition plan to ensure that the Council's supply chain paid the Real Living Wage to their employees, be approved;
- (2) the Corporate Director of Resources, following consultation with the Director of Finance & Assurance and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, be authorised to take all decisions pertaining to the finalisation of the application to become accredited by the Living Wage Foundation;
- (3) the Corporate Director of Resources, following consultation with the Director of Finance & Assurance and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, be authorised to take all decisions pertaining to ensuring all our employees are paid the London Living Wage (LLW) as a minimum and to implement a transition plan that ensures that the Council's supply chain paid the Real Living Wage to their employees; and
- (4) the estimated financial impact on the Council of its transition plan to ensure its suppliers paid the Real Living Wage (RLW) to their employees and the budget provided for in the draft Medium-Term Financial Strategy, be noted.

Reason for Decision: To be recognised, through successful accreditation, by the LWF as an LLW employer and put in place a plan to implement the payment of the RLW into the supply chain to support the Council priorities of:

- Tackling poverty and inequality;
- Addressing health and social care inequality; and
- Building a thriving economy.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member/Dispensation Granted: None.

582. Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2021/22

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Treasury Management Mid-Year Review for 2021/22, be noted; and
- (2) the report be referred to the Governance, Audit, Risk Management and Standards Committee for review.

Reason for Decision:

- a) To promote effective financial management and comply with regulations issued under the Local Government Act 2003, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance, along with meeting the requirements of the Council's Financial Regulations.
- b) To keep Members informed of Treasury Management activities and performance to date for 2021/22.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: As set out in the report.

Conflict of Interest relating to the matter declared by Cabinet Member/Dispensation Granted: None.

583. Application to the Living Wage Foundation to become an accredited authority

See Minute 581.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.30 pm, closed at 8.25 pm).

Proper Officer

Publication of decisions:	10 December 2021
Deadline for Call-in:	5.00 pm on 17 December 2021 (Please note that Call-in does not apply to all decisions). To call-in a decision please contact: Mwim Chellah via email : mwimanji.chellah@harrow.gov.uk
Decisions may be implemented if not Called-in on:	18 December 2021