



Cabinet

Minutes

24 January 2024

Record of decisions taken at the meeting held on Wednesday 24 January 2024.

Present:

Chair: Councillor Paul Osborn

Councillors: David Ashton
Marilyn Ashton
Stephen Greek
Hitesh Karia
Jean Lammiman
Mina Parmar
Anjana Patel
Pritesh Patel

**Non-Executive
Cabinet Member:** Thaya Idaikkadar

**Non-Executive
Voluntary Sector
Representatives:** John Higgins

**In attendance
(Councillors):** Peymana Assad For Minute 248
Graham Henson For Minute 248
David Perry For Minutes 248, 251-258
Natasha Proctor For Minute 248

**Apologies
received:** Councillor Kanti Rabadia Councillor Norman
Stevenson

Absent: Harrow Youth Parliament
Representative

243. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Norman Stevenson and Councillor Kantilal Rabadia.

244. Minute Silence

Members stood and observed one minute silence for former Mayor and Councillor John Nickolay who had recently passed away.

245. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 8 – Harrow Strategic Development Partnership (HSDP) – Approval of Overarching Business Plan and Phase Business Plans for Poets Corner (Phase 1) and Byron Quarter (Phase 1)

Councillor Stephen Greek declared a pecuniary interest in that he was a Council appointee on the Harrow Strategic Development Partnership. He would leave the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Graham Henson, who was not a member of Cabinet, declared a non-pecuniary interest in that the report mentioned previous schemes that had been considered when he had been Portfolio Holder for Regeneration. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

246. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that there were no petitions received at this meeting.

247. Public Questions

To note that one public question had been received and responded to and the recording had been placed on the website.

248. Councillor Questions

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

249. Key Decision Schedule January 2024 - March 2024

RESOLVED: To note the contents of the Key Decision Schedule for the period January – March 2024.

250. Progress on Scrutiny Projects

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

Recommended Items

251. Housing Revenue Account Budget 2024-25 & Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2025-26 to 2026-27, HRA Capital Programme 2024-25 to 2028-29 and 30 year HRA Business Plan

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Council)

That

- (1) the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budgets for 2024-25, as set out in Appendix 1 to the officer report, be approved;
- (2) HRA capital programme, as set out in Appendix 6(a) to the officer report, be approved.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposed average weekly rent for general needs and sheltered accommodation of £142.62 and £122.42 for 2024-25, respectively, which reflected increases of 7.7% in line with the national rent policy for social housing, as set out in paragraph 20 and Appendix 2 of the officer report, be approved;
- (2) the proposed average weekly rents for affordable properties of £212.69, which reflected an increase of 7.7% in line with the national rent policy for social housing, as set out in paragraph 20 and Appendix 2 of the officer report, be approved;
- (3) the proposed average weekly rents for shared ownership properties of £226.70, which reflected an increase of 7.7%, in line with the national rent policy for social housing, as set out in paragraph 21 and Appendix 2 of the officer report, be approved;
- (4) the five-year Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital programme of £186,243,545 made up of £77,715,124 planned investment, £38,714,883 Building Council Homes for Londoners (BCHfL), £75,000 Grange Farm Infrastructure, £69,738,538 Homes for Harrow Phase 2, as set out in paragraphs 48 to 56 & Appendix 6(a) & 6(b) of the officer report, be approved;
- (5) the HRA 30-year Business plan and assumptions (paragraphs 57 to 63) Appendix 7(a) and 7(b) of the officer report) be approved;
- (6) the proposed average weekly general need service charge of £8.38 and sheltered services charges of £17.46 per week, which reflected

inflation and new level of cleaning service as set out in paragraph 24 to 27 and Appendix 2 of the officer report, be approved.

- (7) the proposed average weekly services charges for affordable and shared ownership properties of £4.86 and £14.72 respectively, as set out in Appendix 2 to the officer report, be approved;
- (8) an average weekly facility charge of £33.00 for sheltered properties (paragraph 27 of the officer report) be approved;
- (9) an enhanced weekly management charge for sheltered properties of £22.00 (as per paragraph 28 of the officer report) be approved and which charge reflected services provided to the Council's sheltered tenants that was over and above to that provided to general needs tenants;
- (10) an average weekly heating charge for general needs tenanted properties of £20.10 (as per paragraph 27 of the officer report) be approved;
- (11) an increase of 7% to water charges, as set out in paragraph 30 and Appendix 4 of the officer report, be approved;
- (12) the weekly parking spaces and garage charges of £10.90 and £16.60 respectively as set out in paragraph 29 and Appendix 3 be approved;
- (13) a 7% increase to the 2023/24 hourly hire charges applied to Community Halls, as set out in paragraph 31 and Appendix 5 of the officer report, be approved;
- (14) should the Homes for Harrow Phase 2 be delayed and subject to resources being available, allow the HRA to enter into an acquisition programme to maximise the use of 1-4-1 capital receipts, paragraph 53 of the officer report refers;

Reason for Recommendation: To ensure the viability of the HRA and the proposed HRA capital programme for 2024-25 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2025-26 to 2026-27. The 30-year HRA business plan had been refreshed and updated to reflect the new budget and MTFS requirements.

Resolved Items

252. Harrow Strategic Development Partnership (HSDP) – Approval of Overarching Business Plan and Phase Business Plans for Poets Corner (Phase 1) and Byron Quarter (Phase 1).

Having received a tabled reference from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the previous evening and considered the confidential appendices, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress on the core sites against the Initial Business Plan in August 2021 be noted and the forward looking activities set out in the new Overarching Business Plan at appendix 2c and 3c in December 2023 be noted;
- (2) the Corporate Director of Place, following consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, be authorised to enter any appropriate contract documents and take necessary actions to enable the delivery of the activities set out in the Overarching and Phase Business Plans over the next 12 months as set out in Appendix 2c and 3c to those plans;
- (3) the Overarching Business Plan of the HSDP be approved;
- (4) the HSDP be authorised to spend a maximum of £1.54m on Byron Quarter (Phase 1) Phase Business Plan over the next 12 months (from the date of the Cabinet meeting) (50% being the council's liability);
- (5) the HSDP be authorised to spend a maximum of £2.24m on Poets Corner (Phase 1) Phase Business Plan over the next 12 months (from the date of the Cabinet meeting) (50% being the council's liability);
- (6) the Corporate Director of Place, following consultation with the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Planning, be authorised to determine the satisfaction of planning gateways 1 and 2, to allow the project to proceed in accordance with Poets Corner (Phase 1) Phase Business Plan;
- (7) the Director of Finance and Assurance, following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Human Resources, be authorised to approve and enter into any of the financial agreements and instruments required by the Members Agreement to facilitate the new Overarching Business Plans and subsequent above mentioned Phase Business Plans in resolutions 4 and 5;
- (8) the Corporate Director of Place, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to give the Council's agreement to the submission by the HSDP of any planning application and any related documents or assessments for Poets Corner, Byron Quarter, Grange Farm and Milton Road;
- (9) the next stage approach to Grange Farm (Ph 2 & 3) as set out in Paragraph 3.2.7 of the officer report be approved and the Corporate Director of Place be authorised to take any decision and enter into any agreements required to deliver the next stage of the project;
- (10) progress be noted on the Milton Road project;
- (11) any amendments required to the 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy be referred to Council;

- (12) the Director of Legal and Governance Services, following consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to take any action necessary to ensure that the Council's continued participation in the HSDP is at all times compliant with applicable state subsidy laws;
- (13) it be noted that the Council's main offices would remain at Forward Drive for the foreseeable future.

Reason for Decision: To enable the progress of Harrow Strategic Development Partnership and Housing delivery programme to continue.

253. Managing potholes within the Borough

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the feasibility work undertaken to identify suitable options for effectively dealing with highway defects, including carriageway potholes, on a proactive, responsive, area wide basis via a "find and fix" service to be provided by the Council's highways works term service provider, JB Riney be noted;
- (2) the two tranches of the Government's highways maintenance funding for Harrow of £241,000 in 2023/24, and £241,000 in 2024/25, referenced in paragraph 3.2 of the officer report, would be used to fund highway maintenance including the activity set out in the report;
- (3) the option agreed by officers for JB Riney to provide a 'find and fix' service, including providing a dedicated 'Pothole Squad' to find and permanently fix potholes on an area wide basis, using innovative techniques and sustainable highway products be noted.

Reason for Decision: The decision enabled the Council to meet its statutory duty to maintain the local highway in a safe condition, as prescribed in the Highways Act 1980, s41. It also supported the council's strategic aim to ensure a borough that is clean and safe.

[Call in did not apply to the decision above as it was for noting.]

254. Strategic Performance Report Q2 2023-24

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Portfolio Holders continue to work with officers to achieve improvement against identified key challenges (Appendix 1 to the officer report refers);
- (2) the report be noted.

Reason for Decision: To keep Cabinet informed of performance against key measures and to identify and assign corrective action where necessary.

255. Calculation of Business Rates Tax Base for 2024-2025

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the approach and assumptions for the calculation of the Council's business rates yield as set out in the officer report be noted;
- (2) in accordance with the Non-Domestic Rating (Rates Retention) Regulations 2013, the amount calculated by the London Borough of Harrow as its business rates yield for the year 2024-2025 shall be **£13.221m** as shown in the table below be agreed.

		£m
	Projected NDR Income 2024/25	44.071
Less	Payable to DLUHC (33% Central Share)	(14.544)
Less	Payable to the Greater London Authority (37%)	(16.306)
Equals	Amount to be retained by Harrow (30%)	13.221
Add	Section 31 Grant	5.220
	Total	18.441

- (3) the Council's Chief Finance Officer (section 151 officer), following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, be authorised to submit the notification of the calculation of the estimated Non-Domestic Rates income to the Secretary of State and Greater London Authority (GLA), or revised figures (from those above) if further clarification was received from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) on the financial impact of the proposed changes to the authority and how this was to be calculated;
- (4) the Council's Chief Finance Officer (section 151 officer), following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, be authorised to implement the announced Autumn Budget business rates measures, namely potential new or adjusted reliefs as may be described once the detail was known;
- (5) the policies set out in Appendices 1 & 2 to the officer report be agreed and the Chief Finance Officer be authorised to implement these and to make minor changes to them as needed.

Reason for Decision: To fulfil the Council's statutory obligation to provide estimates and calculations in relation to NDR for 2024-2025.

256. Fees and Charges 2024/25

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the implementation of the Fees & Charges from April 2024 (Appendices 2 to 4 to the officer report), except those fees and charges marked 'Statutory prescribed' or 'for noting only – non-Cabinet approval' be agreed;

- (2) the Director of Finance and Assurance be authorised to amend fees and charges in year and agree new fees and charges, following consultation with relevant Corporate Director(s) and approval of relevant Portfolio Holders.

Reason for Decision: To ensure the Council sets a schedule of fees and charges for 2024/25.

257. Procurement of a Software licence, Support and maintenance for revenue and benefits software applications.

Having considered the confidential appendix, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the procurement of a service contract for a Software licence, Support and maintenance for revenue and benefits software applications be approved;
- (2) the award of contract to NEC Software Solutions UK Limited be authorised for a Software licence, Support and maintenance for revenue and benefits software applications to commence on 01/04/2024 to 31/03/2029 for a period of 5 years noting that the total value of the contract including any options to extend was £787,000.

Reason for Decision: This was a critical system for income collection and not procuring an external partner for support and maintenance, would potentially leave the authority with limited ability to collect approximately £260m per annum in relation to unpaid Council Tax, Business Rates, Benefits and unpaid Housing Benefit overpayments, which would impact adversely on the Council's budget.

258. Timetable for the Development of the Council's Policy Framework

RESOLVED: That the timetable for the preparation and consideration of the plans and strategies set out at Appendix A to the officer report be approved and the Monitoring Officer be authorised to vary the timetable if appropriate.

Reason for Decision: To comply with paragraph 3 of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules in Section 4C of the Council's Constitution.

259. Termination of Meeting

In accordance with the provisions of Executive Procedure Rule 22.2.1.2 (Part 4D of the Constitution), it was

RESOLVED: At 8.53 pm to continue until 9.10 pm.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.34 pm, closed at 9.06 pm).

Proper Officer

Publication of decisions:	25 January 2024
Deadline for Call-in:	5.00 pm on 1 February 2024 (Please note that Call-in does not apply to all decisions). To call-in a decision please contact: Democratic Services via email: democratic.services@harrow.gov.uk
Decisions may be implemented if not Called-in on:	2 February 2024