

MINUTES OF MEETING Cabinet HELD ON Tuesday, 7th February, 2023, 6.30 - 7.55 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Peray Ahmet (Chair), Mike Hakata, Zena Brabazon, Dana Carlin, Seema Chandwani, Ruth Gordon, Adam Jogee and Sarah Williams

ALSO ATTENDING ONLINE: Councillors Pippa Connor and Luke Cawley-Harrison

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

Clerks note: At the start of the meeting, the Leader commented on the recent earthquakes in Turkey and Syria and, on behalf of Haringey Council, extended condolences to those affected. All present stood for a minute's silence.

The Chair referred to the notice of filming ay meetings and attendees noted this information.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors das Neves and Davies.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There was one item of exempt urgent business in respect of agenda item 20, which would be considered during discussion of that item.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5. NOTICE OF INTENTION TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IN PRIVATE, ANY REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED AND THE RESPONSE TO ANY SUCH REPRESENTATIONS

There were no representations received in respect of the exempt items.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED

To confirm and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2023 as a correct record.

7. MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The budget scrutiny recommendations were included as an appendix to the 2023-24 Budget and 2023-2028 Medium Term Financial Strategy report, and would be considered as part of agenda item 10.

Clerks note: The Chair varied the order of the agenda. The minutes follow the order of the meeting.

8. ADMISSION TO SCHOOLS – DETERMINED ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2024/25

The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families introduced the report, which outlined the proposed admission arrangements for the school year 2024/25, in respect of the borough's community and voluntary controlled (VC) schools. On 8 November 2022, the Cabinet agreed that statutory consultation should be carried out on the proposed admission arrangements between 25 November 2022 and 6 January 2023. The report outlines details and analysis of the representations received on admission arrangements, and makes recommendations based on these.

In response to questions from Councillor Cawley-Harrison, the following information was provided:

- A reduction in school rolls could have an impact on the methodology of allocating school places. A fuller response on the methodologies used and consideration for future allocations would be provided to Councillor Cawley-Harrison outside of the meeting.

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RESOLVED

1. To consider and take into account the feedback from the consultation undertaken which is set out in appendix 8 and a summary included from para. 7.1 – para. 7.6 of this report.
1. To consider and take into account the equalities impact assessment of the proposals on protected groups at appendix 7.
2. To agree the recommendation set out in this report to proceed with the proposal to reduce the published admission number (PAN) for the 8 primary schools listed in table 1 below by one form of entry (1FE) – 30 Reception pupils each from September 2024.
3. To determine the Council's admission arrangements for the academic year 2024/25 as set out in Appendices 1 – 4.
4. To agree Haringey's fair access protocol as set out in Appendix 5 to come into force from 1 March 2023.

5. To agree that the determined arrangements for all maintained primary and secondary schools in the borough are published on the Council's website by 15 March 2023 with an explanation of the right of any person or body, under the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012, to object to the Schools Adjudicator in specified circumstances¹.

Reasons for decision

In common with many London authorities, Haringey has experienced a decrease in demand for reception school places for several years. This is due, in part, to the turbulence brought about by Covid-19 and Brexit. However, the decrease in applications is likely to reflect a wider set of factors at play that have been impacting demand for primary reception places for the past few years.

Following years of rising demand due to the growth in Haringey's population, Haringey is in a position of needing to reduce capacity because of a flattening birth rate and a higher than projected increase in out-migration. This has contributed to a higher than necessary number of reception places in some of Haringey's educational planning areas where supply is predicted to outstrip demand.

This report sets out our response to the change in demand for reception places in the borough and seeks agreement from Cabinet to proceed with the proposal to reduce the published admission number (PAN) for the 8 primary schools listed in table 1 below by one form of entry (1FE) – 30 Reception pupils each from September 2024.

Background information

The School Admissions Code 2021 requires all admission authorities to determine admission arrangements every year, even if they have not changed from previous years. Regulation 17 of the School Admissions Regulations 2012 also requires admission authorities to determine admission arrangements by 28 February in the determination year.

In addition, the Regulations require the admission authority to publish on its website by 15 March in the determining year the determined arrangements of all maintained primary and secondary school and academies in the borough, advising the right to object to the Schools Adjudicator, where it is considered that the arrangement do not comply with the mandatory provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021.

The Council consults on its admission arrangements annually irrespective of whether or not there is a proposed change to the arrangements. This is to ensure transparency and openness on the contents of the admission arrangements and to allow all stakeholders to make representations which can then be considered as part of the determination of the arrangements.

9. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS

¹ Paragraphs 19 – 24 of the Regulations

Mr Paul Burnham addressed the Cabinet in respect of agenda item 10 - 2023-24 Budget and 2023-2028 Medium Term Financial Strategy Report.

Mr Burnham considered that Council tenants should have been consulted on the proposed increase to rent and service charges in the 2023/24 budget. The proposed shift to the London Affordable Rent for new council homes would create a gap between the new rent and normal Council rents. This scheme was being phased out, and a report by Shelter stated that these rent levels were not affordable for typical lower income families with both parents working, one full time and one part time. Mr Burnham noted that the Shelter report did not include service charges, which would put a further burden on households. He suggested that the increase in service charge would not have an impact on the housing new build and acquisition programme. The proposed freeze in rent and light charges was welcome, but the Council could have gone further. Mr Burnham suggested all rent and service charge increases be withdrawn and proper consultation be carried out with tenants.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Private Renters, and Planning responded to the deputation. The Council did not want to increase rents and service charges, however these were as a result of years of austerity and cuts. It was a difficult choice to make, but this was the position that the Council were in. Housing Services were brought back into the Council on 1 June 2022, and the Council had a responsibility to improve Council homes and services for residents. The consultation was not invalid as consultation was only required where a contract was going to change in terms of service charges. The Cabinet Member referred to the minutes of the Cabinet meeting on 6 December 2022, where London Affordable Rents were discussed previously.

10. 2023-24 BUDGET AND 2023-2028 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Local Investment introduced the report which set out details of the final proposed General Fund (GF) Budget for 2023/24; the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/28; the draft HRA Budget 2023/24 and its draft Business Plan including estimated income (funding) and expenditure adjustments, as well as the final proposed capital programmes for both funds.

The Cabinet Member commented that despite a very challenging year, the Council were able to present a balanced budget, alongside improving the reserve position. She noted however that there were still some very difficult decisions ahead before the Council would become financially sustainable in the long term.

The Cabinet Member also pointed out an error in the first recommendation which should read:

“Consider the outcome of the budget consultation as set out in Appendix 8, to be included in the report to Council. Having taken this into account this report does not propose any amendment to the Budget for 2023/24 nor to the MTFS 2023/28.”

Councillor Connor, Vice-Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the budget scrutiny recommendations as set out in appendix 9 of the report. The Cabinet

acknowledged the recommendations made, and had no questions for Councillor Connor.

In response to questions from Councillor Cawley-Harrison, the following was noted:

- With regard to the increase in interest rates in relation to the Public Works Loan Board, the assumptions made when setting the budget for next year and future forecasts are based on both officer understanding of the market, and external advice from treasury advisors. In giving their advice, they are not only considering interest rates at the time, but also looking to what is expected to happen in the market over the forthcoming period. The Council would continue to review market conditions and adjust forecasts based on the information available at the time.
- The savings predicted to be made following the waste services review would be from a combination of different elements, some of which would be contracts and the opportunity to negotiate better terms.
- The total of Haringey's remaining reserves would be included in the report to Full Council.

RESOLVED to

1. Consider the outcome of the budget consultation as set out in Appendix 8, to be included in the report to Council. Having taken this into account this report does not propose any amendment to the Budget for 2023/24 nor to the MTFS 2023/28.
2. Approve the responses made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations following their consideration of the draft budget proposals as set out in Appendix 9.
3. Propose approval to the Council of the 2023/24 Budget and MTFS 2023/28 Budget new growth and savings proposals as set out in appendices 2 and 3.
4. Propose approval to the Council of the 2023/24 General Fund Revenue Budget as set out in Appendix 1, including specifically a General Fund budget requirement of £279.517m, but subject to final decisions of the levying and precepting bodies and the final local government finance Settlement.
5. Propose approval to the Council of the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/2028 as set out in Appendix 1.
6. Propose approval to the Council that the overall Haringey element of Council Tax to be set by London Borough of Haringey for 2023/24 will be £1,558.0 per Band D property, which represents a 2.99% increase on the 2022/23 Haringey element and with an additional 2% for the Adult Social Care Precept amount.

7. Note the Council Tax Base of the London Borough of Haringey, as agreed by the Section 151 Officer under delegated authority (Article 4.01(b), Part 2, of the Constitution), as 79,718 for the financial year 2023/24 (Appendix 11).
8. Propose approval to the Council of the 2023/24 Housing Revenue Account budget as set out in Table 9.3.
9. Propose approval to the Council of the Housing Revenue Account Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/2028 as set out in Table 9.3.
10. Approve the changes to the rent levels for residents in temporary accommodation, Council tenants in General Needs and Sheltered/Supported homes reflecting the temporary amendment to the government's policy on maximum annual increases for social housing rents which set a 7% ceiling on rent increases for 2023/24 only. This will increase the average weekly rents as set out in Tables 9.1.
11. Agree the changes to service charges to tenants as set out in Table 9.2.
12. Propose approval to the Council of the 2023/24 – 2027/28 General Fund capital programme detailed in Appendix 4.
13. Propose approval to the Council of the 2023/24 – 2027/28 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) capital programme detailed in Table 9.4.
14. Propose approval to the Council of the Capital Strategy detailed in Section 8 of this report.
15. Propose approval to Council of the strategy on the use of flexible capital receipts to facilitate the delivery of efficiency savings including capitalisation of redundancy costs (Appendix 6).
16. Propose to the Council the Dedicated Schools Budget (DSB) allocations for 2023/24 of £298.163m as set out in Appendix 7.
17. Note the funding to be distributed to primary and secondary schools for 2023/24 based on the figures advised to Schools Forum and submitted to the Education Funding Agency in January 2022 set out in Section 10.
18. Note the budgets (including the use of brought forward DSG) for the Schools Block, Central Services Block, High Needs Block and Early Years Block as per Appendix 7.

19. Delegate to the Director of Children Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families, the power to amend the Delegated Schools Budget to take account of any changes to Haringey's total schools funding allocation by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
20. Delegate to the Section 151 officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, the power to make further changes to the 2023/24 budget proposals to Full Council up to a maximum limit of £1.0m.

Reasons for decision

The Council has a statutory requirement to set a balanced budget for 2023/24 and this report forms a key part of the budget setting process by setting out the forecast funding and expenditure for that year. Additionally, in order to ensure the Council's finances for the medium term are maintained on a sound basis, this report also sets out the funding and expenditure assumptions for the following four years in the form of a Medium Term Financial Strategy. If agreed by Cabinet, it will then be presented to Full Council on 2 March 2023 for review and ultimate adoption.

Alternative options considered.

The Cabinet must consider how to deliver a balanced 2023/24 Budget and sustainable MTFs over the five-year period 2023-28, to be reviewed and ultimately adopted at the meeting of Full Council on 02 March 2023.

The Council has developed the proposals contained in this report in light of its forecasts for future income levels and service demand. These take account of the Council's priorities, the extent of the estimated funding shortfall, the estimated impact of wider environmental factors such as inflation and legacy Covid-19 pandemic, and the Council's overall financial position. It is this appraisal that has led to these options being presented in this report.

These final proposals now presented take into consideration the funding allocations announced in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, the responses to the budget consultation and the Overview & Scrutiny process.

The Housing Revenue Account section of the report includes a consideration of the challenges presented by adverse economic changes on the HRA, including the increased cost of borrowing and inflation, meaning that the Council has had to consider how best to be able to maintain financial sustainability and continue a strong new build programme. A number of options have been modelled, including for some new homes, changing from formula rent to Shared Ownership or London Living Rent or London Affordable Rent. The option which best ensures the long-term sustainability of the HRA is to use London Affordable Rent for some homes.

11. FEES AND CHARGES 2023-24

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Investment introduced the report which set out the Fees and Charges (F&Cs) proposed from the start of the financial year 2023/24, proposing increases in line with inflation to offset the costs increases associated with

those service, or alternatives where circumstances indicate this is appropriate. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the pressure that the cost of living crisis is putting on households, but added that there was little choice other than to look to ensure that the Council maintained its income in real terms, therefore continuing with the policy of annual increases linked to CPI inflation rates.

In response to questions from Councillor Cawley-Harrison, the following was noted:

- Appendix 7 – waste transfer notes increased in cost by 66% over two years. This was following benchmarking with neighbouring boroughs and the commercial sector. This increase was incremental over two years.
- Appendix 8b – standard charges have increased by 10% but environmental impact fees have only increased by 5%. This was following benchmarking with neighbouring boroughs. The increase would ensure affordability but remain competitive in the commercial sense.

Following a question from Councillor Cawley-Harrison, it was noted that appendix 2 of the report, listing Traffic Management, was incorrect and a further decision would be required to approve this appendix. The Director for Finance proposed that the rest of the report be approved, without appendix 2, and that when the budget was presented to Full Council, an amended appendix could be presented at that meeting.

Post meeting note: Following further consideration on the appropriate route for approval of appendix 2 after the meeting, an additional 28-day notice was published on 13 February 2023 to allow for the decision to be taken by a Cabinet Member Signing. This is in accordance with the executive responsibilities as set out in the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED

1. To **agree** the proposed non-statutory fees and charges to be levied by the Council with effect from 1 April 2023, unless otherwise stated, and as detailed in Section 8 and Appendices I – XIII taking into account the findings of equalities assessments as set out in section 10 of the report. *(Note, this does not include the approval of appendix II, which would be subject to approval separately once amended)*
2. To **delegate** the final decision on staff parking charges for 2023/24 to the Director of Culture, Strategy and Engagement in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance and Local Investment (paragraph 8.23)
3. To **authorise** officers to undertake the statutory process required under Section 46A of the Road Traffic Regulation Act to increase parking charges in line with the recommended inflation (paragraph 8.11).
4. To **note** the statutory fees and charges to be levied by the Council with effect from 1 April 2023.

5. To **note** that the Council's draft 2023/24 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2023/24-2027/28 assumes that the changes to Fees and Charges set out in this report are agreed.

Reasons for Decision

Under the Council's Income Policy, it is a requirement to review fees and charges as a minimum annually. Given the ongoing challenges facing the Council, this is even more appropriate.

Alternative options considered

This report summarises the conclusions after consideration of a range of alternative approaches dependent on particular services and relevant factors. As such a range of alternative options ranging from no increase to differentiated rates of increases or decreases have been considered and reflected in this report.

12. APPROVAL TO CONSULT ON A COMMUNITY SAFETY AND HATE CRIME STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development, Jobs and Community Cohesion which sought approval to begin a period of formal engagement on the six key priority areas that will inform the new Community Safety Strategy and the five key objectives that will inform the new Hate Crime Strategy. Both of the above priorities and objectives were co-designed with the community during a two-week informal pre-engagement period.

Councillor Hakata commented that the report underlined the important role that the administration had towards tackling violence against women and girls, hate crime, crimes against people and increasing community safety.

In response to questions from Councillor Cawley-Harrison, the following was noted:

- Further information would be provided in relation to the number of drug offences in the Stroud Green ward compared to the rest of the borough.
- The pre-engagement process took place over a period of two weeks and consisted of online engagement, surveys, discussions with key stakeholders and community groups. There were also a series of engagement events in libraries. The team felt that the level of engagement within that time period was very useful and provided some good feedback.

RESOLVED

1. That Cabinet authorises the necessary engagement process as set out in 6.2-6.3, which, for both strategies will be for a period of twelve weeks from the date of the Cabinet decision.
2. That Cabinet notes that the initial development of both Strategies has been informed by:

- Community Safety Strategic Needs Assessment 2022-23, (Appendix 3)
- Pre-engagement on the priorities of the strategy which took place between 5th-18th December 2022.
- Feedback from residents, businesses, and stakeholders during the Wood Green Voices engagement that took place in November 2022.

Reasons for decision

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council is required to put in place a Community Safety Strategy. As a partnership document listed in the Constitution as part of the Council's Policy Framework, the Crime and Disorder Reduction (community safety) Strategy ("Community Safety Strategy") is reserved for final approval by full Council subject to recommendation by Cabinet.

The co-production of a Hate Crime Strategy for Haringey runs in congruence with applying a zero-tolerance approach to any form of hate and discrimination. Alongside this, hate crime is included as a key theme in Haringey's Corporate Delivery Plan 2023.

The Community Safety Strategy will provide for the overarching Community Safety priorities aligned to key council strategies such as the Corporate Delivery Plan (2023-27) Young People at Risk strategy (2019-29) and the proposed Hate Crime Strategy (2023-27).

Both strategies are likely to be published in the summer of 2023 and in order to make most effective use of the engagement period with the public, both strategies although separate, will be developed at the same time.

Alternative options considered

Not developing a Community Safety Strategy is not an option, as it is a legal requirement as highlighted in 3.1.

With regard to the development of the Hate Crime Strategy, the alternative option would be not to have a strategy. This is not recommended as it is recognised the most effective way to coordinate this work is to deliver an agreed set of ambitions under a structured partnership strategy with an adjoining annual action plan.

Without any agreed responsibility or monitoring by officers including any formal Governance would increase the risk of the work dissipating and would not allow for the effective protection of victims.

13. DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS POLICY

The Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Engagement introduced the report which sought approval of the Discretionary Housing Payments Policy 2023 (DHP) as set out in appendix A of the report. The objective of the DHP policy was to sustain existing tenancies and prevent homelessness. DHP is used to help people with a shortfall in their benefits to cover their housing costs including those affected by the

benefit cap, bedroom tax (removal of the spare room subsidy), and shortfalls in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. It was noted that the Department of Work and Pensions had not confirmed the allocation to Haringey for 2023/24 at the time of the Cabinet meeting, and therefore this figure would be reported in the Quarter One budget monitoring report.

In response to questions from Councillor Cawley-Harrison, the following was noted:

- The review of services providing welfare advice and support was underway and was a really important piece of work. Councillors Chandwani and das Neves would be chairing the Progress Board for this review.
- Figures relating to the number of applicants would be provided following the meeting, but it was noted that there had been a reduction in the allocation provided to Haringey. Currently the number of applications was lower than before but the amount paid to them had increased due to rent increases.
- The system used to record information relating to applicants did not have the capability to record the tenure type of claimants for those on Universal Credit claims, however going forward a separate manual record would be kept.

RESOLVED to

1. Approve Haringey's Discretionary Housing Payments Policy 2023 (see Appendix A) as the methodology to determine the award of individual Discretionary Housing Payments having regard to the Equalities Impact Assessment (set out in Appendix B).

At the time of writing this report the DWP have not confirmed the DHP allocation to Haringey for 2023/24. If notification arrives after this Cabinet meeting, Cabinet will be notified of the figure in the Quarter One budget monitoring report.

Reasons for Decision

Funding for DHP is allocated annually by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP). The DWP awarded Haringey the sum of £1.6m each year in both 2018/19 and 2019/20. This increased to £2.1m in the pandemic year 2020/21, but reduced again to £1.68m in 2021/22, and then again to £1.17m in 2022/23. This represents a reduction in funding of 44% over two years.

It is recognised that with these depleting funds over the last two years from DWP we need to do more to work collaboratively across our services, such as Housing, to maximise the efficient use of DHP and other similar funding streams. For example, 11% of DHP awards so far in 2022-23 (data up to November 2022) are to help residents pay the 'Bedroom tax' caused by under-occupancy of properties. If the Council can work proactively to help residents identify alternative housing options, this will remove the need for DHP to be paid out for this purpose. Discussion with Housing

colleagues has already begun to ensure we make best use of the funds that will be provided to us by DWP.

The new Corporate Delivery Plan commits the Council to: “A review of all services providing welfare advice and support, including commissioned services, with a view to better coordinating these and maximising their impact”. Ensuring efficient use of DHP and coordination of Housing and Welfare funding streams will be addressed and improved as part of this review.

The Council has had wide-ranging discussions on the management and administration of DHP with partners representing residents’ interests through the Debt and Financial Hardship Board.

Alternative Options Considered

None

14. REVIEW OF THE ESSENTIAL SERVICE PERMIT SCHEME

Due to an error in the report, the Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Engagement requested that the decision be deferred to the March Cabinet meeting.

RESOLVED

To defer the decision to 14 March 2023 Cabinet meeting.

15. APPROVAL TO DELIVER 272 AFFORDABLE COUNCIL HOMES, LET CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AND APPROPRIATION OF LAND AT ASHLEY ROAD DEPOT, TOTTENHAM HALE, N17

16. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES

RESOLVED

To note the minutes of other bodies.

17. SIGNIFICANT AND DELEGATED ACTIONS

RESOLVED

To note the significant and delegated actions.

18. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

19. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of agenda items 20 and 21 as they contain exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972: Paragraph 3 – information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information); and Paragraph 5 – information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

20. EXEMPT - APPROVAL TO DELIVER 272 AFFORDABLE COUNCIL HOMES, LET CONSTRUCTION CONTRACT AND APPROPRIATION OF LAND AT ASHLEY ROAD DEPOT, TOTTENHAM HALE, N17

The information in the exempt appendix was noted.

RESOLVED to approve the recommendations as set out in the exempt appendix.

21. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of exempt urgent business.

CHAIR: Councillor Peray Ahmet

Signed by Chair

Date