

Cabinet

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 14 September 2021 at 11.00 am at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Kieron Williams (Chair)
Councillor Jasmine Ali
Councillor Stephanie Cryan
Councillor Rebecca Lury
Councillor Alice Macdonald
Councillor Darren Merrill
Councillor Jason Ochere
Councillor Catherine Rose

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Evelyn Akoto and Helen Dennis.

2. NOTICE OF INTENTION TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IN A CLOSED MEETING, AND ANY REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED

No closed items were considered at this meeting.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

The chair gave notice of the following late item:

Item 7: Deputation requests

Reasons for urgency and lateness will specified in the relevant minute.

The chair also confirmed that the following items were deferred:

Item 15: Gateway 1 – Procurement Strategy for the Borough's Tree Works Programme

Item 18: Response to the Education and Local Economy Scrutiny

ANNOUNCEMENT

The cabinet made a statement in respect of the distressing situation in Afghanistan and the council's continuing commitment to welcome refugees to Southwark.

The cabinet expressed their thanks to those supporting and helping those wishing to leave Afghanistan including the public, community and voluntary sector and Southwark's Members of Parliament.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

5. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (15 MINUTES)

SE16 residents Barry Duckett, Ilona Marsh, Kathy Heather and Sharon Noonan-Gunning

Given COVID-19 crisis and the constant squeeze on peoples income with the withdrawal £20 per week UC uplift; along with increases in food and fuel costs, i) how has LBS investigated additional needs across the borough and ii) put in place means to alleviate increased hardship this winter.

Response by Councillor Kieron Williams, Leader of the Council

I am appalled by the Government's plans to cut incomes for the poorest in our community. Their plans to cut Universal Credit by £20 a week will be the biggest overnight cut in benefits since the formation of the welfare state and come at a time when thousands are struggling to put food on the table. No government can claim to be levelling up when they are slashing the incomes of the poorest.

In contrast in Southwark we are determined to do all we can to protect our residents during the COVID-19 crisis. Over the last two years we have increased funding for our Southwark Emergency Support Scheme by £1.6m, or 160% increase for what was already among the most generous schemes in London. We have invested over £1.5 million in funding for our Southwark Community Support Alliance to provide support and food for people who are struggling to get by. We continue to provide free health school meals for all primary school children, and over the last two years allocated £2.3m to ensure children do not go hungry in the holidays too. As well as maintaining a council tax reduction scheme, that supports those on the lowest incomes.

However, all of our efforts to tackle poverty locally are being undermined by the Government's successive cuts to the incomes of the poorest in our borough. As one of the richest countries in the world, we should have a national social security system that ensure no one has to live in poverty or turn to a foodbank. Cutting Universal Credit will have the opposite effect.

As a council, we will continue to work with our partners across civil society to make the case for fair benefits that lift people out of poverty and for the Government to abandon this £20 cut to Universal Credit that will be so harmful to people in Southwark and across our country. As part of those efforts, the Council is supporting an inquiry by a Resident Working Party into how residents have been affected by the economic impacts of COVID-19 and the kinds of support they might need in the future. A survey of residents is taking place now and will close on 22 September 2021.

Supplemental question

SE16 residents asked what contingency plans were in place to meet current estimated needs.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the open section of the meeting held on 13 July 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

7. DEPUTATION REQUESTS

The report had not been circulated five clear days in advance of the meeting. The chair agreed to accept this item as urgent (the requests had been received in line with the council's constitutional deadline for the receipt of deputation requests).

RESOLVED:

1. That the deputation request from Marie Curie Residents Project Group (RPG) be heard. The deputation addressed cabinet for five minutes (also circulating a written statement of their deputation submission) and questions were asked of the deputation for a period of five minutes.
2. It was noted that the deputation requests from UNISON and Friends of Nunhead Cemetery had been deferred.

8. POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY: REVENUE MONITORING REPORT, INCLUDING TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2020-21 (MONTH 4)

RESOLVED:

1. That the general fund forecast outturn position for 2021-22 (Table 1 of the report) be noted.
2. That the COVID-19 emergency funding support received to date (paragraphs 18 – 22 of the report) be noted.
3. That the government's COVID-19 sales, fees and charges compensation scheme (paragraph 19 of the report), and that the scheme only part funds the actual losses incurred be noted.
4. That the other key adverse variations and budget pressures underlying the forecast outturn position be noted, notably:
 - Temporary accommodation pressure of £6.9m after use of reserves.
5. That the housing revenue account (HRA) forecast outturn position for 2021-22 (Table 2, paragraphs 58 – 65 of the report) be noted.
6. That it be noted that there is currently no compensation for the HRA for additional costs or lost income arising from the pandemic.
7. That the treasury management activity to date in 2021-22 (paragraphs 71 – 78 of the report) be noted.
8. That the interdepartmental general fund budget movements as shown in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

9. POLICY AND RESOURCES STRATEGY: CAPITAL MONITORING REPORT, INCLUDING CAPITAL PROGRAMME UPDATE 2021-22 (MONTH 4)

RESOLVED:

1. That the forecast outturn and resources for 2021-22 and future years for both the general fund and housing investment programmes as detailed in Appendices A, B and D of the report be noted.
2. That the virements and variations to the general fund and housing investment capital programme as detailed in Appendix C of the report be approved.
3. That the significant funding requirement of £311m which needs to be identified for the general fund programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix A of the report be

noted.

4. That the borrowing requirement of at least £876m for future years for the housing investment programme to be fully delivered over the remaining term of the programme, as detailed in Appendix B of the report be noted.

10. MARIE CURIE - SAFETY WORKS AND RESIDENT REHOUSING OFFERS

RESOLVED:

Decisions of the Cabinet

1. That the detailed ongoing resident engagement to date be noted and the Marie Curie Resident Project Group (comprising resident volunteers that meets monthly) be thanked for their continued work to date.
2. That the offer made to tenants and leaseholders set out in the 'information to tenants' and 'information to leaseholders' documents appended to the report be endorsed.
3. That the start of individual negotiations to acquire leasehold interests (lease buy-backs) for those leaseholders who have opted to move permanently from Marie Curie be approved.
4. That the commissioning of an independent review of fire safety at Marie Curie be endorsed with a requirement that the outcome of that review to be reported to a meeting of the cabinet in due course.
5. That a further report setting out progress on the works and the rehousing of the tenants within Southwark be received.

Decision of the Leader of the Council

6. That approval of compensation packages for the acquisition of individual leasehold interests be delegated to the director of planning and growth in consultation with the strategic director of housing and modernisation.

11. PUTTING RESIDENTS FIRST STANDARDS REVIEW

RESOLVED:

That the reviewed operational process: Putting Residents First Standards as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.

12. A HOME TO BE PROUD OF: THE COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO ENSURING RESIDENTS ARE SAFE, SECURE AND COMFORTABLE IN THEIR COUNCIL HOME

RESOLVED:

1. That the broad framework for a future asset management strategy ('The Plan') that is driven by the council's commitment to tackling inequality and to keeping people safe in homes that are well maintained and cared for be agreed.
2. That a full strategy be developed adhering to the principles and priorities set out in the report to be presented to the council's cabinet in summer 2022.
3. That the proposal and approach set out in the report to undertake further work to achieve a balanced approach to Climate Emergency commitments be approved.
4. That a more detailed analysis of inequality in Southwark is required to be undertaken in relation to investment and asset management of our homes.
5. That the commitment in the report to deliver services that provide safer and secure homes following the legislative changes introduced and upcoming since the last asset management strategy in 2016 be noted.

13. HEAT NETWORKS STRATEGY

RESOLVED:

1. That the work done in preparing a strategy for decarbonising the council's heat networks be noted, but that challenges remain both in terms of residual carbon and financial impact (paragraphs 73-82 of the report).
2. That appropriate opportunities to lobby government to bring forward grants for low carbon heating that will help to overcome the challenges described in the Climate Change Implications section be used.
3. That the principles and activities laid out within the strategic direction, service improvement and investment plan sections (paragraphs 17 - 38 and Appendix 3 of the report) be agreed.
4. That the 'district heating disconnection policy for leaseholders and freeholders' included in Appendix 1 and summarised in paragraphs 43 - 54 of the report be adopted.
5. That the update provided relating to the heat metering regulations and the council's related legal obligations be noted and that an update be received within 12 months on progress in delivery against its heat metering obligations and on any changes to the status of the upcoming heat networks market

regulation.

14. GATEWAY 1 - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY APPROVAL - INSOURCING THE LEISURE SERVICE

RESOLVED:

1. That the plan to bring the leisure service back in house following the recommendation of the GW0 report in March 2021 be approved.
2. That the immediate resource required to bring the service in house from June 2023 and the detailed delivery plan set out at Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
3. That the one off mobilisation costs covering the whole mobilisation period necessary to insource the leisure service, estimated to be £2.4m be approved and that the strategic director for finance and governance be asked to make the financial provision from earmarked reserves.
4. That the work that has been completed so far on the preferred option to insource the leisure service when the current contract with Sport and Leisure Management Limited (operating as Everyone Active) ends in June 2023 be noted.
5. That the associated benefits and risks of insourcing the leisure service as detailed in paragraphs 68-77 of the report and the mitigation measures be noted.
6. That it be noted that a progress report will be brought back to cabinet in spring 2022 updating on progress with the delivery of the project plan and management of the risks identified in the report.
7. That authority be delegated to the strategic director of environment and leisure, in consultation with the strategic director of finance and governance, the cabinet member for equalities, neighbourhood and leisure, the cabinet member for finance, performance and democracy and cabinet member for transport, parks and sport to approve operational and resourcing decisions in the lead up to insourcing the leisure service provided that they are consistent with the principles set out in the report.

15. GATEWAY 1 - PROCUREMENT STRATEGY FOR THE BOROUGH'S TREE WORKS PROGRAMME

This report was deferred.

16. REFRESH OF THE REGULATORY SERVICES ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

RESOLVED:

1. That the regulatory services enforcement policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be approved.
2. That the private sector housing enforcement policy as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be approved.

17. RESPONSE TO THE EDUCATION AND LOCAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMISSION: REVIEW OF APPROACH TO EQUALITY AND ADOPTION OF THE EQUALITY FRAMEWORK

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations made by the education and local economy scrutiny commission be noted and the response set out in the report be agreed.
2. That officers act upon the response agreed by cabinet as part of the implementation of the Southwark Equality Framework.

18. RESPONSE TO THE EDUCATION AND LOCAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMISSION: EDUCATION: CHILDREN'S EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

This report was deferred.

19. RESPONSE TO THE EDUCATION AND LOCAL ECONOMY SCRUTINY COMMISSION: LOCAL ECONOMY, REVITALISING SOUTHWARK'S HIGH STREETS AND TOWN CENTRES

RESOLVED:

That the responses to recommendations set out in the report of the education and local economy scrutiny commission (June 2021) be noted.

20. REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION - AIR QUALITY (PART 2)

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations (Appendix A of the report), as set out on page 4 of the report be noted and that the relevant cabinet member reports back within eight weeks.

21. REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMISSION - ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations (Appendix A of report), as set out on page 3 of the report be noted and that the relevant cabinet member reports back within eight weeks.

22. REPORT OF THE HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION - MENTAL HEALTH INEQUALITIES OF BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

RESOLVED:

That the recommendations (Appendix A of the report), as set out on page 6 of the report be noted and that the relevant cabinet member reports back within eight weeks.

23. REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION: REVIEW OF COMMUNAL AREAS AND RESIDENT EXPERIENCE ON SOUTHWARK ESTATES

RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations from the housing and community engagement scrutiny commission arising from the scrutiny review of communal areas and resident experience on Southwark Estates in respect of estate cleaning and anti-social behaviour, paragraphs 6 to 11 of the report be noted.
2. That the relevant cabinet member reports back to cabinet on the recommendations within eight weeks.

24. REPORT OF THE HOUSING AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SCRUTINY COMMISSION: REVIEW OF COMMUNITY HUBS

1. That the recommendations from the housing and community engagement scrutiny commission arising from the scrutiny review of community hubs (paragraphs 6 and 7) be noted.
2. That the relevant cabinet member reports back to cabinet on the recommendations within eight weeks.

25. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODY - LONDON BRIDGE BID

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Jason Ochere be agreed as the cabinet member appointment to the outside body London Bridge Business Improvement District (BID) for 2021-22.

MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in category 3 of paragraph 10.4 of the access to information procedure rules of the Southwark Constitution.

The following is a summary of the decisions taken in the closed part of the meeting.

26. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the closed section of the meeting of cabinet held on 13 July 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

The meeting ended at 12.55pm.

CHAIR:

DATED:

DEADLINE FOR NOTIFICATION OF CALL-IN UNDER SECTION 17 OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULES IS MIDNIGHT, WEDNESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2021.

THE ABOVE DECISIONS WILL NOT BE IMPLEMENTABLE UNTIL AFTER THAT DATE. SHOULD A DECISION OF THE CABINET BE CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY, THEN THE RELEVANT DECISION WILL BE HELD IN ABEYANCE PENDING THE OUTCOME OF SCRUTINY CONSIDERATION.