
Cabinet

Minutes of
09 September 2025 at 2.00 pm

Present:

Chair:

Councillor Grace Williams

Leader of the Council

Cabinet Members:

Councillor Ahsan Khan
Councillor Clyde Loakes
Councillor Naheed Asghar
Councillor Rosalind Doré

Deputy Leader (Housing and Regeneration)
Deputy Leader (Climate and Air Quality)
Portfolio Lead Member - Inclusive Economy
Portfolio Lead Member - Libraries, Culture and Sports & Leisure

Councillor Andrew Dixon
Councillor Paul Douglas
Councillor Kizzy Gardiner
Councillor Khevyn Limbajee
Councillor Louise Mitchell

Portfolio Lead Member - Stronger Communities
Portfolio Lead Member - Finance and Resources
Portfolio Lead Member - Children and Young People
Portfolio Lead Member - Community Safety
Portfolio Lead Member - Adults and Health

Officers in Attendance:

Laura Butterworth
Nicky Crouch
Marc Gadsby
Ursula Gamble
Joe Garrod
Jarlath Griffin
Anthony Jackson
Rianna Terry
Jeremy Walling
Emily Wood

Director of Early Help and Prevention
Strategic Director, Children Services
Strategic Director, Adult Services
Director of Financial Services
Strategic Director, Place
Director of Neighbourhoods
Democratic Services Officer
Assistant Director, Leadership and Democracy
Assistant Director, Commercial Law
Head of Democratic Services

17. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence were received.

18. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

19. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 15 July, were approved and signed as a correct record.

20. Budget Monitoring - Month 3

Councillor Douglas introduced the report and, in doing so, explained that the Council's core spending power had reduced by 11% since 2010/11 on services that costed a substantially more. He also said that the Council was still experiencing the impact of high inflation and high borrowing costs, noting that the long-term borrowing rates were at a 27 year high. In addition, Councillor Douglas highlighted the following points:

- Expenditure had been reduced in Neighbourhoods, Children's Services, Resources and Chief Executive service areas.
- A 20% reduction in the number of children in care over the last 2 years.
- The Council had achieved cumulative savings of £140 million since 2010/11, including £10 million for the last financial year and the Council was on track to deliver a further £15 million savings next financial year.
- The use of agency staff had reduced by 30% over the last 2 years and work continued on the Council's Transformation Programme to reduce expenditure.

Councillor Douglas went on to say that the Council would continue to try and identify savings wherever possible. He then explained that despite the aforementioned good work, there were external factors which were beyond the Council's control and there were unprecedented increases in demand-led services, including temporary accommodation, children services (including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)) and adult services. In addition, homelessness demand had increased by 80% over the last 2 years, which is in line with other London boroughs and was the single biggest financial challenge faced by the Council. Councillor Douglas went on to say that the number of SEND packages had increased by 39% in the last 2 years which were again in line with other London boroughs and had an impact on other areas within children services, including placements, homes and school transport. The cost of adult social care packages had increased per package by 13% over the last 2 years and, as a result, managing services was becoming more difficult with suppliers regularly failing and going out of business which has required the Council to step in and find alternative and often more expensive solutions in order to keep vulnerable residents safe. Councillor Douglas added that the Council was doing everything it could to mitigate as much of the pressure as possible. He then went on to thank relevant officers, particularly Rob Manning – Strategic Director of Resources, and Ursula Gamble for their hard work.

The Leader stated that it was important to be clear that the financial situation of the Council was not improving and thanked Councillor Douglas for drawing attention to the efforts officers were making to address financial issues, which was underpinned by focus and resilience. She said that the Council needed to consider future actions carefully. The Leader then gave thanks to Councillor Douglas for his approach and leadership.

Decision

Cabinet:

- (1) noted the forecast outturn position for Revenue, HRA and DSG as at month 3;
- (2) approved £0.015 million funding from the budget strategy reserve (BSR) to fund the 2025 Pride Awards and £0.145 million towards the together campaign from the BSR;
- (3) approved £0.500m additional capital funding for Soho Theatre due to extended timelines to complete works (September 2024 to March 2025);
- (4) approved an amount not exceeding £0.300m, to be funded from capital contingency, for fit out works on Unit C Soho Theatre. This is to enable the unit to be let on a commercial basis (i.e. ducting and electrical upgrade); and
- (5) approved £0.984 million to fund the Oracle stabilisation programme, of which £0.894 million is to capital related to be funded from the capital contingency and £0.089 million is revenue expenditure to be funded from the corporate revenue contingency budget.

21. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 - 2028/29

Councillor Douglas introduced the report and, in doing so, confirmed that the financial situation was being taken very seriously by the Council and that he had met with the Leader, other Portfolio Lead Members and senior officers to seek innovative solutions to the financial challenges that the Council faced. Councillor Douglas then gave thanks to the Chair of Budget Scrutiny Committee and other committee members for their thoughtful questions and feedback and to senior officers for their hard work.

The Leader highlighted the importance of looking at how the Council worked with the new ministerial team and the importance to keep applying pressure in relation to making savings.

Decision

Cabinet:

- (1) noted the potential funding gap of £15.331 million for the 3-year period 2026/27 to 2028/29 with £12.504 million in 2026/27, assuming all service-related pressures are resolved. The final position will not be known until the provisional local government finance settlement and final settlement are released. The provision settlement is expected in late November.

- (2) noted the MTFS refresh assumes a council tax increase of 4.99% for all 3 years which is subject to Council approval. If the council tax increase is at 1.99%, the gap for the 3 years would be £29.807 million;
- (3) noted the requirement to achieve savings from management actions, efficiencies and a transformation programme, to mitigate the in-year baseline pressure reported in the month 3 monitor of £31.412 million, the potential funding gap of £15.331million for the 3-year period to 2028/29;
- (4) noted the continuing uncertainty resulting from the implementation of the Fair Funding Review and the proposed reset of Business Rates; and
- (5) noted the outline timetable for the budget process as set out in paragraph 3.46 of the report; and
- (6) delegated, to the Strategic Director of Resources, the authority to distribute any contingency budgets and/or reserves as per the Council's financial ground rules.

22. Social Value Report 2024/2025

Councillor Douglas introduced the report and, in doing so gave thanks to all officers involved for their hard work.

The Leader said that the report outlined a position that the Council would like to sustain over the long term. She added that considering social value had made a significant difference within the community. The Leader thanked Councillor Douglas for his hard work and leadership.

Councillor Gardiner referred to the Lloyd's Park Children's Charity as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report and highlighted the journey the charity had been on the amazing work they were doing for the community.

Decision

Cabinet approved the Social Value Report 2024-2025 attached as Appendix 1 to the report for publication.

23. Social Value Policy 2025-2027

Councillor Douglas introduced the report.

Decision

Cabinet approved the Social Value Policy 2025-2027 (Appendix 1 to the report) for publication.

24. Exclusion of Press and Public

Cabinet agreed not to discuss the content of the exempt appendices and, therefore, not to exclude the press and public.

25. Environmental Services Contract Extension

Councillor Loakes introduced the report and, in doing so, explained that the contract extension offered a good financial deal and that the Council maintained a good relationship with FCC who had overseen a large change to waste collection, which included a change to fortnightly rubbish collection and the introduction of food waste collection. Councillor Loakes gave thanks to Jarlath Griffin, Kirsty Waugh – Assistant Director – Climate and Compliance and the team for their hard work.

The Leader said refuse collection was one of the most important services ran by the Council and pointed out that FCC had led the service change very well, which was highlighted by the resident insight survey. She gave thanks to Councillor Loakes for his leadership and to his team for their hard work.

Decision

Cabinet:

- (1) agreed to the extension of the existing Environmental Services Contract for a further eight years from 30th September 2027 to 29 September 2035; as permitted under the terms of the original contract;
- (2) delegated the final negotiations of the contract extension to the Strategic Director of Neighbourhoods and Environment and the Strategic Director of Resources; and
- (3) agreed an increase in the annual budget of £1.6 million from 30th September 2027 to fund the contract extension.

The meeting closed at 2.17 pm

Chair's Signature _____

Date _____