
Cabinet

Minutes of
07 October 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 Paul Douglas
Councillor Kizzy Gardiner
Councillor Khevyn Limbajee
Councillor Louise Mitchell

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:

Linzi Roberts-Egan
Nicky Crouch
Marc Gadsby
Joe Garrod
Mark Hynes
Anthony Jackson
Rob Manning
Joe McDonell
Debbie Porter
Rianna Terry

Chief Executive
Strategic Director, Children Services
Strategic Director, Adult Services
Strategic Director, Place
Director of Governance and Law
Democratic Services Officer
Strategic Director, Resources
Director of Public Health
Strategic Director, Neighbourhoods and Environment
Assistant Director, Leadership and Democracy

26. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Grace Williams and Councillor Andrew Dixon.

27. Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made.

28. Minutes of Cabinet

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 9 September 2025, were approved and signed as correct record.

29. Early Intervention & Prevention - Building Stronger Communities

Councillor Loakes introduced the report and, in doing so, outlined the intention to build on existing foundations to become a prevention-focused council.

Decision

Cabinet:

- (1) noted the Prevention Programme Overview outlined in Appendix A to the report;
- (2) noted the plans for scaling up our approach as part of the next phase of change so that early intervention and prevention becomes the driver for change across the entire Council and informs the way we work with partners and communities to build resilience in the face of the challenges ahead;
- (3) noted the track record of investment and delivery in support of this ambition, including for example Family Hubs, our response to the Marmot review and the recent roll out of Waltham Forest Max; and
- (4) reaffirmed the commitment to putting early intervention and prevention at the heart of Mission Waltham Forest as the key driver for building stronger communities and making this a more equal and inclusive borough as well as to ensure financial sustainability into the future.

30. Housing Strategy Year One Update 2024-25

Councillor Khan introduced the report and, in doing so, said that that over the last year, there had been a commitment to improving engagement with residents in relation to the work of the housing service. He went on to refer to new strategies, procedures and policies in place that had improved the service and had set the Council on its way to meet its ambition of becoming one of the best housing service in London. Councillor Khan confirmed that alongside those improvements, the Council was continuing to build new housing. He added that there was still room for improvement, that the Council was not being complacent and were keen to achieve a C1 local authority rating from the Regulator for Social Housing. Councillor Khan gave thanks to Joe Garrod, Jane Martin – Director of Housing, for their hard work. He also gave thanks to relevant teams across the Council, under the leadership of the Chief Executive, for their efforts in making housing a real priority.

Councillor Limbajee thanked Councillor Khan for his leadership in that area and said that community safety was at the heart of place and regeneration. He then referred

to the work of the Housing Compact in bringing together housing associations as they were a key sector in the borough. Councillor Limbajee pointed to the fact that they provide a much needed service to residents and the Council had a duty to work closely with them. He went on to say that he was proud that the Council had renewed its property licensing scheme and work jointly with housing officers to administer the scheme. Councillor Limbajee gave thanks to all relevant officers for their work in this area.

Councillor Loakes echoed thanks to Councillor Khan for his leadership and to relevant teams for their hard work and said it showed the importance of social housing.

Decision

Cabinet noted the content of this report which provides an update on work to deliver the Housing Strategy objectives.

31. Fairer Contributions Policy: Proposal For Changes to Minimum Income Guarantee Uplift

Councillor Mitchell introduced the report and, in doing so, explained that previously the Council was in the position to offer a discretionary uplift of 25%, however, given the Council's increasing budgetary pressures, particularly within the Adult Social Care (ASC) team, the Council was now unable to sustain that offer. She said that the proposal before Cabinet would bring the Council inline with many other local authorities across the country who apply a lower discretionary uplift or have never provided their residents with an uplift. Councillor Mitchell confirmed that, of the 29 London boroughs who had data publicly available, only 3 authorities (including LBWF) offered a 25% discretionary uplift, 6 gave a varied uplift and 20 authorities provided no uplift at all. She went on to say that the decision before Cabinet was a difficult one, however, she said that Council needed to be pragmatic in its approach as there was much needed revenue to preserve the Council's services. Councillor Mitchell thanks all staff from the ASC team for their hard work.

Decision

Cabinet:

- (1) considered the responses to the public consultation and alternative proposals put forward by residents, as outlined in Appendix 1 and Section 4.1 & 6 of the report;
- (2) noted mitigating measures to support residents through any transition set out in Section 3.5 of the report;
- (3) noted the recommendation from Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee set out in paragraph 6.10 of the report;

- (4) agreed to proceed with the proposed phased reduction and removal of the discretionary uplift applied to the Minimum Income Guarantee as follows:
- 2025/26: An initial reduction from 25% to 10%, in November 2025
 - 2026/27: A further reduction from 10% to 0% in November 2026
- (5) delegated authority to the Strategic Director Adult Services to make the necessary changes to the Fairer Contributions policy reflecting these changes.

32. 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.

33. London Secure Children's Home Proposals - Update

Ms Celia Coram, a member of the public, addressed Cabinet pointed out that the designated site was not suitable for housing vulnerable young people as the land was on a flood plain and had a network of pipes that frequently leaked. She added that the site was situated on Lea Bridge Road which was not ideal for families in terms of public transport to access the area. She requested that Members seriously consider the capital delivery element of the project for the following reasons:

- LBWF had no experience in managing the development of such a project.
- Whether the project was right for extremely vulnerable young people as there were examples of similar projects not working such as Oasis Restore in Kent where children felt unsafe.
- Secure Children's Homes had largely escaped public scrutiny and were not without problems.
- Children in such facilities had suffered mental health issues due to isolation as a result of Deprivation of Liberty (DoL) Orders - the number of DoLs granted had risen significantly over the last 6 years.
- A recent 2020 report entitled 'What Works for Children's Social Care' concluded that such facilities failed those who were sent there and suggested an urgent need to reform secure residential care.
- Mixing vulnerable children with those that were a danger to others and whilst the proposed project aimed to have separate provision within the site, such planned solutions were not always fit for purpose.
- Concerns in relation to poor engagement process with local residents as the outcome of was not reported.

In response to Ms Coram's points, Councillor Khan made the following points:

- LBWF was well placed to be the lead authority in relation to the project given recent complex projects that had been delivered over the last 5 years, such as schools, leisure centres and Health Hubs.
- The operation of the facility and the service model would be discussed by each local authority as business cases progressed through each of the individual governance processes.

- Consultation in the area, ahead of the previous pre-application design, had already taken place and any future proposals would be subject to consultation also, including a planning application consultation.

Councillor Loakes said that he believed that LBWF had the capacity to take on the project and there was a definite need for such a facility in London to support some of the most vulnerable children.

Decision

Cabinet:

- (1) agreed to the council taking on the development manager role to design and build the LSCH, details of which are set out in paragraphs 3.10 - 3.11 of the report, working alongside the London Councils project team to deliver the project on behalf of London Local Authorities (LAs);
- (2) noted that, as per paragraphs 7.1 - 7.6 of the report, although design and build costs will be met through grant funding provided by the Department for Education (DfE), taking on the development manager role does have an element of capital cost risk. The council's continuing role as development manager is subject to the London LAs entering into legally binding agreements with the council to share the residual capital costs and these agreements would need to be entered into before the main works contract is signed;
- (3) agreed an initial project delivery budget of £3.7m to cover design, technical and other consultant fees, surveys and staff costs. These costs will be fully covered by the DfE;
- (4) delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Capital Strategy & Delivery:
 - to proceed with the procurement of design and technical consultants required to complete the project; and
 - to award contracts.
- (5) delegated authority to the Strategic Director of Place in consultation with the Strategic Director of Resources and the Corporate Director of Governance and Law to enter into any legal agreements with the DfE and other LAs in relation to the design and build arrangements for this scheme, including for cost risk sharing.

The meeting closed at 2.22 pm

Chair's Signature _____

Date _____