

Minutes & Decisions

CABINET

Thursday, 18 April 2024

**Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW**



Published on: 19 April 2024

Decisions come into effect from: 5pm, 26 April 2024 or as otherwise stated

Cabinet Members Present:

Ian Edwards (Chair)

Jonathan Bianco (Vice-Chair)

Douglas Mills

Susan O'Brien

Jane Palmer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Goddard and Councillor Lavery

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS BEFORE THIS MEETING

No interests were declared by Cabinet Members present.

3. TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE LAST CABINET MEETING

The decisions and minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 21 March 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

4. TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 2 IN PRIVATE

It was confirmed that the reports, as marked public and private on the agenda, would be considered as such. An additional private urgent item was also tabled to Cabinet.

5. ANNUAL EDUCATION STANDARDS REPORT 2022/23

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet notes the Annual Education Standards Report 2022-23 and the key findings set out.

Reasons for decision

Cabinet received a report on the outcomes of standards and quality of education across Hillingdon schools in 2022/23.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families, and Education introduced the annual report. The report, intended for noting, reflected the previous academic year's data and was thus a year behind current outcomes. It focused on attainment, progress and achievement of outcomes, assessing the local education system's performance. The Cabinet Member also highlighted legacy issues that educational establishments continued to address post COVID-19, such as low attendance, persistent speech and communication delays in younger children, and ongoing mental health challenges across all educational settings, including early years. It was noted that Ofsted had cleared their inspection backlog and it was reported that 92% of Hillingdon schools were rated as good or outstanding.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families & Education
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Not for call-in
Officer(s) to action	Michael Hawkins / Abi Preston
Directorate	Children's Services
Classification	Public <i>The report and any background papers relating to this decision by the Cabinet are available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.</i>

6. COUNTER-FRAUD AND CORPORATE RELATED INVESTIGATIVE POLICIES

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

1. Agree to the implementation of the following policies attached in Appendix A:
 - Fraud Response Plan
 - Anti-Bribery Policy
 - Anti-Money Laundering Policy
 - Surveillance & RIPA Policy

2. Agree that the policies in Appendix A are reviewed on a 3-year cycle by Cabinet unless there are formal legislative changes necessitating a review at an earlier stage, where the Corporate Director of Finance, in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Finance, may authorise the changes required.

3. **Authorises the Cabinet Member for Finance to sign-off the yearly review of the Surveillance & RIPA Policy in line with the Investigatory Powers and Commissioner’s Office (IPCO) requirements.**
4. **Agree to retire the Corporate Prosecution & Sanctions Policy and the Internal Investigations Protocol for the reasons set out in the report.**

Reasons for decision

Cabinet considered and agreed updated counter fraud and related investigative policies, following a review.

The Leader of the Council, in Councillor Goddard’s absence, presented the report on counter fraud and corporate investigative policies. The Leader detailed the suite of policies that would guide the investigation of fraud, money laundering, and other criminal activities. These policies stood independently and offered transparency to the public on the Council’s investigative processes, providing a framework for both the Council and its officers. The Leader highlighted the Counter Fraud team’s recent successes in recovering substantial sums of money and assets, including addressing fraud in homelessness services where landlords had claimed for unoccupied temporary accommodations. Over 100 properties were recovered from council tenants who had been unlawfully subletting. The team’s efforts had been nationally recognised. The Leader of the Council gave particular emphasis on the policy on the use of CCTV and the necessary considerations for its deployment as an investigative tool.

Alternative options considered and rejected

An alternative would be for the Council not to update its policies; however, this would have had a negative impact as the Council would not be following best practice or legislative requirements.

Relevant Select Committee	Finance and Corporate Services
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet’s decisions can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Friday 26 April 2024
Officer(s) to action	Alex Brown
Directorate	Resources
Classification	Public <i>The report and any background papers relating to this decision by the Cabinet are available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.</i>

7. SCHOOL ORGANISATION PLAN

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- 1) Agree the School Organisation Plan and for publication.
- 2) Agree to the School Organisation Plan being updated and presented to the Cabinet Portfolio Member, relevant Select Committee and schools annually with the latest data and forecasts.

Reasons for decision

Cabinet agreed a School Organisation Plan to support strategic school place planning and for schools to be kept informed and to plan effectively for the future.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education presented the report. The report provided an overview of Hillingdon's educational landscape, summarising current and projected pupil demand across primary, secondary, and special school settings. It outlined the Council's plans for future school places within the Borough, emphasising the need to manage school places effectively and maintain a balance of sufficiency.

The Cabinet Member explained that the document projected place requirements for the next seven years, noting a decline in demand that had led to a planned reduction by 18 forms of entry in the primary sector by 2026. The report also addressed the growth in demand for special educational needs placements since 2014, highlighting the creation of specialist resource provisions and designated units benefiting 71 children.

The Cabinet Member underscored that the report set out the need for schools to adapt and become flexible within the educational landscape, mentioning the conversion of schools to Academy status and the formation of multi-Academy trusts or collaborations within the Borough.

The Leader of the Council commended the Director of Education & SEND for the strong, informative, and useful report, requesting the Chief Executive to convey Cabinet's gratitude.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Relevant Select Committee	Children, Families & Education
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Friday 26 April 2024
Officer(s) to action	Nav Minas / Abi Preston

8. MONTHLY COUNCIL BUDGET MONITORING REPORT: MONTH 11

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- 1) Note the budget monitoring position and treasury management update as at February 2024 (Month 11), noting the actions proposed by officers as outlined in Part A of this report.
- 2) Approve the financial recommendations set out in Part B of this report.
 - a) Accepts of £140k grant funding from the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (Defra) for costs associated with the delivery of new post-Brexit port health authority functions at the Heathrow Imported Food Office.
 - b) Accepts a grant of £1,079k from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to fund further Public Health investment into substance misuse treatment & recovery.
 - c) Agree to the release of the specific General Contingency created to fund the SEND Projects, with the following releases being requested totalling £10,000k:
 - a. Meadow High School Expansion - £9,263k
 - b. Pinkwell Primary School Expansion - £413k
 - c. Establishing 24 ASD places at Wood End Park Academy - £324k.
 - d) Note the acceptance of £90k grant funding from the Department for Transport for costs associated with progressing the Council's local Electric Vehicle infrastructure strategy.
 - e) Approve acceptance of the GLA Good Growth Fund grant of £450k to fund improvements at Hayes Town Centre.

Reasons for decision

In Councillor Goddard's absence, the Leader of the Council gave a statement on the latest budget monitoring report from the Cabinet Member. The General Fund revenue account showed a small underspend, consistent with the month 10 report. The Leader noted the additional cost pressures of £3.6 million due to increased demand for homelessness services, care for looked-after children, and adult social care. These costs were to be covered by earmarked reserves, projected to total £10.1 million by 31 March 2024.

A surplus of £4.1 million in the collection fund had been identified, with the majority of benefits expected in the fiscal year 2024-2025, marking an improvement from the month 10 projection. Reported unallocated general balances were at £26.8 million, leading to a projected total reserve of £37 million by year-end. The Leader advised that the existing savings programme was on track to meet the £22.8 million target.

The Capital Fund forecast indicated an underspend of £38.4 million, with most of this amount proposed to be deferred to the following year. Despite inflation and increased demand for housing and social care against stagnant central Government funding, the Leader indicated that the Council's financial position remained strong.

Discussions with the Department of Education regarding the Dedicated Schools Grant deficit were ongoing, following the suspension of the safety valve agreement and a delay in receiving £2.5 million funding from the Department. Consequently, the dedicated schools grant was projected to have a £29 million deficit by year-end.

The Leader noted that the Housing Revenue Account was expected to match the budget for the full year, with capital expenditure projected at £84 million, underspending by £0.5 million, which would mostly be deferred.

The Leader highlighted Part B of the report, which included financial recommendations and the use of capital contingency funding for additional special education needs within the Borough. Other recommendations, all agreed by Cabinet, pertained to the acceptance of grants.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Relevant Select Committee	Finance and Corporate Services
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions 2 (a-c & e) can be called in by a majority of the select committee by 5pm, Friday 26 April 2024
Officer(s) to action	Andy Evans
Directorate	Resources
Classification	Public <i>The report and any background papers relating to this decision by the Cabinet are available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.</i>

9. PUBLIC PREVIEW OF MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet note the reports to be considered later in private and Part 2 of the Cabinet agenda and comment on them as appropriate for public information purposes.

Reasons for decision

The Leader introduced the report which provided a public summary of the matters to be discussed in the private part of the Cabinet meeting later, increasing the Council's transparency.

Alternative options considered and rejected

These were set out in the public Cabinet report.

Relevant Select Committee	
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	This matter is not for call-in, as noting only.
Officer(s) to action	Mark Braddock
Directorate	Central Services
Classification	Public - <i>The report and any background papers relating to this decision by the Cabinet are available to view on the Council's website or by visiting the Civic Centre, Uxbridge.</i>

10. FIRE DOOR REPLACEMENT PROGRAMME & ASSOCIATED WORKS

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet:

- 1) Accept the Direct Award to Gerda Security Products Limited for the provision of the supply and installation of Fire Door Sets to the London Borough of Hillingdon for a 3-year period at the value of £4.5m.
- 2) Furthermore, agrees that this contract includes the provision to extend the contract for a further 1-year period at the value of £500,000, delegating approval of any extension to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways & Transport, in consultation with Officers.

Reasons for decision

Cabinet agreed to award a long-term contract to continue the Council's established programme of installing high standard fire door sets and associated products in across the housing stock. The Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport noted the considerable investment the Council had made on fire doors since the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

Alternative options considered and rejected

None.

Relevant Select Committee	
Property, Highways and Transport	
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions can be called in by a majority of the Select Committee by 5pm, Friday 26 April 2024
Officer(s) to action	Mike Emmett / Alana Martin
Directorate	Place

Classification

Private - *Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).*

11. VOID [EMPTY] PROPERTY REPAIR SERVICE

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Revoke the decisions made by the Cabinet on 11th January 2024 in relation to the award of contracts for all Lots for the Void Property Repairs Service.
- 2) Accept the tender from R Bensons Property Maintenance Limited for the provision of the LOT 1 – NORTH – Voids Repair Service Contract to the London Borough of Hillingdon for a period of 4 years at an estimated value of £764k per annum.
- 3) Accept the tender from Pilon Limited for the provision of the LOT 2 – CENTRAL – Voids Repair Service Contract to the London Borough of Hillingdon for a period of 4 years at an estimated value of £1.6m per annum.
- 4) Accept the tender from PFL Electrical Limited for the provision of the LOT 3 – SOUTH – Voids Repair Service Contract to the London Borough of Hillingdon for a period of 4 years at an estimated value of £1.8m per annum.
- 5) Accept the tender from Gilmartin Limited for the provision of the LOT 4 – RESERVE – Voids Repair Service Contract to the London Borough of Hillingdon for a period of 4 years at an estimated value of £50k per annum.
- 6) Agree that these contracts include the provision to extend the contract for a further 2+1 years (giving a potential contract duration of 7 years in total), delegating approval for any extension to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Property, Highways & Transport, in consultation with Officers.

Reasons for decision

Cabinet agreed to appoint contractors for the Void (or Empty Homes) Repair Service for Council housing properties. The Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and

Transport explained that this would ensure the quick turnaround of such properties back into use after people leave and maximise the utilisation of the housing stock.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Alternative options were set out in the confidential report.

Relevant Select Committee	Property, Highways and Transport
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	Cabinet's decisions can be called in by a majority of the Select Committee by 5pm, Friday 26 April 2024
Officer(s) to action	Liam Bentley
Directorate	Place
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</i>

13. ACQUISITION OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet:

- 1) Agrees to progress negotiations to acquire the residential accommodation in Hayes, as set out in the report, in line with the Council's agreed policy and budget strategy to acquire 500 new affordable homes over the next three years. The purchase to be subject to a satisfactory survey outcome, robust due diligence which supports the subsequent recommendation to purchase and a successful grant allocation from the GLA.
- 2) Delegates authority to the Corporate Director, Central Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Portfolio Holders, to negotiate the terms of the purchase, including the purchase price with the vendor of the accommodation and to make all necessary decisions in respect of the due diligence work required in support of this, prior to any final decision on the purchase of the accommodation.
- 3) Release funds of up to £100k to undertake the necessary due diligence activities from the Housing Revenue Account budget.
- 4) Instruct officers to actively progress external grant funding applications as a contribution towards the purchase price of the accommodation.
- 5) Instruct officers to prepare a Lettings Plan for the accommodation, should the purchase proceed, to ensure effective letting and

management arrangements are in place, and for subsequent approval by the Leader of the Council and relevant Cabinet Members.

- 6) Subject to the satisfactory outcome of the due diligence, applications for grant funding and purchase price negotiations, delegate authority to the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport, Cabinet Member for Residents' Services and Cabinet Member for Finance to make the final decision on any acquisition and any further decisions that may be required for completing the purchase and future use of the site for housing purposes.
- 7) Request that the Chair of the Residents' Services Select Committee considers waiving the scrutiny call-in period on these recommendations due to the urgency reasons set out in the report.

Reasons for decision

Introduced by the Leader of the Council, Cabinet considered an urgent report in respect of the potential acquisition of a property in Hayes to support the Council's housing objectives. Cabinet provided the necessary delegated authority to progress and consider the matter further.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Alternative options were set out in the confidential report.

Relevant Select Committee	Residents' Services
Expiry date for any scrutiny call-in / date decision can be implemented (if no call-in)	These decisions cannot be called in and take immediate effect following the approval, following the Cabinet meeting, to waive the scrutiny call-in period by the Chair of the Residents' Services Select Committee.
Officer(s) to action	Dan Kennedy
Directorate	Central Services
Classification	Private - <i>Whilst the Cabinet's decisions above are always made public, the officer report relating to this matter is not because it was considered in the private part of the meeting and contained information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information) and the public interest in withholding the information outweighed the public interest in disclosing it in accordance with Section 100(A) and paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).</i>
	Urgency provisions – <i>The Leader of the Council agreed the report relating to this decision as an urgent item. This decision was taken under special urgency provisions in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.</i>

12. ANY OTHER ITEMS THE CHAIRMAN AGREES ARE RELEVANT OR URGENT

Other than the preceding urgent matter in these minutes, no further additional items were considered by the Cabinet.

The meeting closed at 19:18pm

Internal Use only*

Implementation of decisions & scrutiny call-in

When can these decisions be implemented by officers?

Officers can implement Cabinet's decisions in these minutes only from the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period, unless otherwise stated in the minutes above, which is:

5pm, Friday 26 April 2024

However, this is subject to the decision not being called in by Councillors on the relevant Select Committee. Upon receipt of a valid call-in request, Democratic Services will immediately advise the relevant officer(s) and the Cabinet decision must then be put on hold.

Councillor scrutiny call-in of these decisions

Councillors on the relevant Select Committee shown in these minutes for the relevant decision made may request to call-in that decision. The call-in request must be before the expiry of the scrutiny call-in period above.

Councillors should use the Scrutiny Call-in App (link below) on their devices to initiate any call-in request. Further advice can be sought from Democratic Services if required:

[Scrutiny Call-In - Power Apps](#) (secure)

Notice

These decisions have been taken under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

This Cabinet meeting was also broadcast live on the Council's YouTube channel [here](#) for wider resident engagement.

Please note that these minutes and decisions are the definitive record of proceedings by the Council of this meeting. If you would like further information about the decisions of the Cabinet, please contact the Council below:

democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk

Democratic Services: 01895 250636

Media enquiries: 01895 250403

