



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Cabinet

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Monday 15th July, 2024**, Room 18.01/18/02/18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Adam Hug (Chair), Aicha Less, Geoff Barraclough, Liza Begum, David Boothroyd, Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Paul Dimoldenberg, Ryan Jude, Matt Noble and Cara Sanquest

Apologies for Absence: None

1 WELCOME

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, noting that it would be livestreamed with a recording to be made available online.

No apologies were received and the Leader welcomed back Councillor Sanquest from her maternity leave.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

3 MINUTES

The Chair, with the consent of the Members present, agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 29 February 2024 were a true and accurate record of proceedings.

4 OXFORD STREET PROGRAMME – OXFORD STREET SCHEME STAGE 3

The Chair introduced the item and invited Councillor Barraclough and Manisha Patel to introduce the report, followed by Paul Williams and Dee Corsi from the New West End Company.

Councillor Barraclough set out the stage the Oxford Street project is at and set the project in the wider context of the Council's commitment to investing in High Streets.

Councillor Barraclough confirmed that the proposition to invest further in Oxford Street was for the benefit of Westminster and for the country as a whole.

Manisha Patel set out the overall progress of the project, noting that Stage 2 design was completed in March 2024, enabling the proposals in the report to progress to Stage 3 design. Stage 3 design is the final design stage before the programme will move to pre-construction.

Manisha Patel detailed that there are three options in the paper, with the recommendation being to progress to Stage 3 design and approve draw down of the funding to proceed. It was also noted that future Cabinet approval will be required and sought to approve a Section 278 agreement to receive private sector funding for the delivery of the project.

Dee Corsi and Paul Williams set out the New West End Company's commitment to the project as well as that of businesses, including property owners. This included acknowledgement of the financial commitment required from the private sector to deliver this vital project.

Cllr Hug asked for further detail on the financial agreements and position of the private sector contributions. Paul Williams set out that extensive engagement had been ongoing with contributors and final documentation is being put together.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the following recommendations:

Approve the option to proceed to Stage 3 design on the basis set out in the report in the knowledge that the remaining funding is yet to be formally confirmed.

Approved spend of £3.845m to progress the Stage 3 design.

5 NORTH PADDINGTON PROGRAMME – YEARS 2-4 PROGRAMMES OF WORK

The Chair introduced the item and invited Councillor Barraclough and Debbie Jackson to introduce the report.

Councillor Barraclough set out that the North Paddington programme and the proposals set out in the report respond to a long-standing need for coordinated action to revitalise the North Paddington area.

Debbie Jackson noted how the programme is grounded in community engagement across seven themed groups to identify where investment would make the biggest impact. Debbie Jackson added to the record her thanks to the officers and members of the community who participated in this process.

Debbie Jackson set out that authority was being sought to progress investment using the budget identified for the programme as well as an element of delegated authority to make reasonable adjustments to those investments.

Councillor Sanquest noted her own experience of participating in the community engagement and the significant value this has added to the programme.

Councillor Hug noted that after this meeting, responsibility for the delivery of the North Paddington programme would transfer from Councillor Barraclough to Councillor Sanquest.

Councillor Jude set out his support for the programme on the basis of the coordination across different areas of Council priority, most notably the Council's environmental commitments.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the following recommendations

Approve spend of the remaining North Paddington budget, subject to further feasibility and project scoping (where required), to fund the Years' 2-4 indicative programme of works, as detailed in Appendix 1 ("Years' 2-4 Programme of Works").

Approve the Years' 2-4 indicative programme of Works (set out at appendix 1) and notes that some of the indicative Years' 2-4 programme of works' projects will, enter a feasibility and pilot stage, if required, before moving to full delivery (subject to due diligence), by drawing on the full North Paddington years' 2-4 budget.

Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Regeneration, Economy and Planning, to initiate and deliver projects in the Years' 2-4 indicative programme of works; conduct any necessary procurement exercises; agree commercial terms and enter into all associated legal agreements and documentation subject to the agreement of the Director of Law.

Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Regeneration, Economy, and Planning to amend, reprofile and reallocate any underspend from the year 1 Programme to Years 2-4 Programme of Works and amend, reprofile reallocate and spend funds earmarked for the North Paddington Programme on Years' 2-4 programme of works, where such changes should not exceed the overall budget envelope, as detailed in Section 7 of the report.

6 RESHAPING OF HOUSING SOLUTIONS SERVICE

The Chair introduced the report, noting that a submission had been made by Westminster Unison on this item earlier in the day and that submission had been circulated to the Cabinet for consideration as part of the decision. The Chair invited Councillor Begum and Sarah Warman to set out further detail on the report.

Councillor Begum set out the Council's ambition to have an empathetic, person-centred housing solutions service and that this function has been outsourced for around 20 years. In the context of the housing challenges facing the council, the proposal to bring the functions set out in the paper in house, presents a real

opportunity to improve service outcomes for our residents. Councillor Begum also noted her thanks to all of the officers involved for bringing this work forward.

Sarah Warman added her thanks to the role played by officers as well as communities and service users. Sarah Warman further noted that the proposal presented to Cabinet has been developed using extensive testing of different service models and that the option recommended provides a phased and measured approach to managing the transition, focusing on service continuity for these vital frontline services.

Sarah Warman set out a continuing commitment to engagement with trade unions, including Unison with respect to the submission made.

Councillor Noble noted the pressure housing services has been under, the impact that has on councillor casework and his support for the proposals as a further step to improve services.

Councillor Hug added his support for this proposal, noting that it also sends a signal about the council's measured commitment to insourcing services where this makes sense.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the following recommendations

Approve the implementation of a hybrid delivery model for Housing Solutions Services.

Approve bringing in-house Lot 1: Frontline housing advice and homelessness prevention and Lot 3: Families Pathway, Housing Assessment, Allocations and Nominations Services, to be directly delivered by the Council by April 2025.

Approve insourcing back-office functions currently commissioned to support Housing Solutions including, a contact centre, complaint management, and finance functions, to sit within existing services across the Council.

Approve delegation the new operating model and associated budget for insourced services jointly to the Strategic Director of Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing Services and the Executive Director of Finance and Resources in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Council Reform.

7 NEIGHBOURHOOD CIL HIGH VALUE ALLOCATIONS: SEYMOUR CENTRE AND ABBEY CENTRE

The Chair introduced the item and invited Councillor Barraclough and Debbie Jackson to speak to the report.

Councillor Barraclough set out how the Seymour Centre proposal has been brought forward by the Council's own Corporate Property Team, based on extensive community engagement as per the requirements for any applicant, internal or

external. The proposal was subject to a vote of the Neighbourhood Forum which resulted in support for a £1m allocation being made. Marylebone Ward Councillors have also made representations to the Leader and Cabinet Member regarding the process and proposed allocation, including a request for the minutes of the meeting of the Marylebone Neighbourhood Forum where this was discussed to be circulated to the Cabinet. Councillor Barraclough confirmed that he had circulated these minutes. Councillor Barraclough also set out the proposal to allocate funding to the Abbey Community Centre.

Councillor Boothroyd supported the proposal on the basis that the Seymour Leisure Centre is in need of this investment and it is supported by the Neighbourhood Forum.

Councillor Hug noted that this item had been postponed from a previous meeting of the Cabinet to enable additional time for community and Ward Councillor feedback.

RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the following recommendations

Approval of the allocation of £1 million of Neighbourhood CIL funding from the Marylebone Neighbourhood Area pot to the Council to support the transformation of Seymour Leisure Centre.

Approval of the allocation of £424,435 of Neighbourhood CIL to support the restoration of the Abbey Centre.

8 2023/24 FAIRER WESTMINSTER ANNUAL PROGRESS REVIEW

The Chair noted that this is the first time in a number of years that the Cabinet has received such an update on the progress being made against the Council's corporate strategy, noting a number of significant achievements.

Gerald Almeroth set out further detail on the report, noting that 85% of commitments made are either completed or on track.

The report was for noting.

9 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLANNING 2025/26 - 2027/28

The Chair introduced the time and invited Councillor Boothroyd and Gerald Almeroth to speak to the report.

Councillor Boothroyd set out that the report contains an up-to-date picture of the Council's financial position and budget gap for 2025/26, while also noting that the report was drafted before the General Election and changes that may arise as a result of policy from the new Government will be subject to future updates.

Gerald Almeroth added that this is the first step in the annual budget setting process in the context of a three year overarching plan, adding that we expect the new Government to undertake a comprehensive spending review at some stage which will need to be taken account of.

Councillor Jude asked about the Government’s commitment to multi-year spending settlements and whether further updates will be given to Cabinet as further detail emerges. Gerald Almeroth confirmed that this is the first in a series of budget papers, culminating in a paper to Cabinet in February, and onwards to Full Council in March 2025, setting the budget for 2025/26, adding that Budget Scrutiny will take place in the intervening period.

Councillor Dimoldenberg asked about the situation with temporary accommodation costs. Gerald Almeroth noted that we are making prudent assumptions about temporary accommodation including around increased demand, but that needs to be kept under review based on what is experienced in the service.

**RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the following recommendations
Noted the Medium Term Financial Planning 2025/26 – 2027/28 report and approved the budget process for the year ahead.**

10 2023/24 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Chair introduced the item and invited Councillor Boothroyd and Gerlad Almeroth to speak to the report.

Councillor Boothroyd noted the major variances set out in the paper, most notably in Temporary Accommodation and in Children’s Services driven by increases in costs associated with Children with No Recourse to Public Funds due to NHS ceasing certain contributions. Overachievement were made on income generation and investment income but these are not necessary sustainable and should not be relied on in future budget setting processes.

Gerald Almeroth added that the Statement of Accounts have been produced within the statutory deadline at the end of May 2024.

**RESOLVED: Cabinet approved the following recommendations
Noted the revenue outturn position for 2023/24 and approved the reprofiling from the 2023/24 capital programme into future years as set out in Appendix 1 (GF) and Appendix 2 (HRA).**

The Meeting ended at 19.27

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____