



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Cabinet

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cabinet** held on **Monday 17th October, 2022**, Rooms 18.01-03 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

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

Also Present: Stuart Love, Chief Executive, Parveen Akhtar, Director of Law, Gerald Almeroth, Executive Director for Finance and Resources, Debbie Jackson Executive Director for Growth, Planning and Housing, Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director for Innovation and Change

1 WELCOME

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: Councillor Adam Hug, with the consent of the Members present, agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2022 were a true and correct record of the proceedings.

4 TRULY AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

Report of the Executive Director for Growth, Planning and Housing, Debbie Jackson and the Executive Director for Finance and Resource, Gerald Almeroth

Councillor Hug invited Steve Hilditch, a member of the Future of Westminster Commission and Chair of the Housing Review to speak on the Commission's note on the Truly Affordable Housing Strategy ("the Strategy") that was published on the website and appended to the Cabinet Report for information.

Steve welcomed the strategy as a first step in helping to deliver truly affordable housing in the city. Cabinet heard from Steve that while there is no one clear solution to the problem, the Housing Review group were also

looking at other ways to support delivery including looking at the role of housing associations and their ability to provide affordable housing.

Steve told Cabinet that while the current backdrop of increased inflation and the wider cost of living crisis will challenge delivery of affordable housing there is still the opportunity to increase supply.

Councillor Hug invited Neale Coleman, Chair of the Commission to speak. Neale noted the hard work of officers that had gone into producing the strategy and the positive outcome it was already having on the supply of affordable housing in the city.

Neale told Cabinet that although the Commission was a time limited endeavour there were still things, they could do to support critical issues like the supply of affordable housing whether that's reviewing the delivery structures within Westminster or the process around procuring development in Westminster.

Councillor Hug then invited Councillor Noble to introduce the Truly Affordable Housing Strategy.

Councillor Matt Noble thanked the Future of Westminster Commission for their work and told Cabinet that the adoption of the Strategy was a positive step to providing more homes, in particular, more homes for social rent.

Councillor Hug asked Debbie Jackson, Executive Director for Growth Planning and Housing for any comments she had on the Strategy.

Cabinet heard that the Strategy establishes principles for the development of houses in Westminster. The Strategy marks a shift in delivery towards houses for social rent moving away from the previous focus on intermediate housing.

Debbie went on to explain to Cabinet that the recommendations are based on evidence of housing need drawn from Westminster's waiting list. This is why there is a particular focus on the provision of properties of 2 bed and larger. Intermediate Housing will focus on one bed properties.

The recommendations set out in the Cabinet report relate to changing the tenure of schemes such as Luton Street, Ashbridge to provide larger council homes for social rent. Overall, there will be an additional 160 council homes provided by changing the tenure as set out in the report.

Cabinet heard that the GLA is an important partner in realising this shift with additional funding coming from them.

Debbie concluded by saying that each investment represents an opportunity to further other priorities and wider outcomes, from greening to support for SMEs, which will benefit Westminster's communities.

Councillor Hug invited comment from Cabinet colleagues.

Councillor David Boothroyd told colleagues that this was a firm declaration of our intention as a Council, not only does it give hundreds of families a long-term stable home in Westminster but it makes economic sense in terms of reducing costs associated with Housing Benefit and Temporary Accommodation.

Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis said she was delighted that Maida Vale, the ward which she represents will benefit from an additional 43 homes for social rent, which are sorely needed in the area.

Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg said this was a practical, common-sense way of supporting Westminster's vulnerable residents and told Cabinet that he supported the adoption of the Strategy fully.

Councillor Hug emphasised that the Strategy does not stand in isolation, there is other complimentary work underway to further support the delivery of truly affordable housing in Westminster, including the partial review of the City Plan which is currently being consulted on.

Councillor Geoff Barraclough added that the City Plan consultation will look, in particular, at affordable housing and how small development sites can be made to provide more social housing.

Councillor Hug concluded by saying that by reviewing the existing the Capital Programme the delivery of social housing has been maximised. Councillor Hug went on to say that there was more to be done to support Westminster's key workers who are critical to the workings of the city.

RESOLVED – CABINET APPROVED THE RECCOMENDATIONS SET OUT IN SECTION 2, PAGE 9.

5 PRIORITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) AND UPDATE TO THE CIL SPENDING POLICY STATEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

Report of the Executive Director for Innovation and Change, Pedro Wrobel

Councillor Hug invited Councillor Barraclough to introduce the report.

Councillor Barraclough told Cabinet colleagues that CIL is an important contribution to funding infrastructure in the city and is designed to compensate the locality for the harm and disruption that new development can often cause.

CIL can fund a range of infrastructure improvements from enabling housing e.g., through the provision of broadband, to supporting green transition projects, active travel and accessible spaces

Councillor Barraclough explained that the recommendations in the report centred around expanding the definition of "infrastructure" to include the management of infrastructure. This is to avoid the scenario where CIL could

be used to fund, for example, a Community Centre but not support the operation of it.

Councillor Barraclough also made clear that it was not the intention to create an on-going liability to fund management costs so CIL applicants would have to demonstrate a clear path to revenue generation longer term.

The report also set out recommendations to streamline decision-making to make it faster and more flexible.

Neighbourhood CIL projects will be decided by the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Planning, currently Councillor Barraclough. Strategic CIL projects will be decided by Cabinet as part of the wider capital programme.

Councillor Barraclough cautioned Cabinet that CIL was not an endless funding source. CIL contributions are dependent on building in the city. The Council do not receive these contributions until spades are in the ground at a given development site. Given the current pressures on the construction industry it is prudent to assume that CIL contributions may fall and there is also the possibility that Government may bring in a different levy mechanism.

Councillor Hug invited Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change to speak to the item. Pedro told Cabinet that in addition to the above the report also provided an updated spending policy statement and refreshed governance arrangements.

Councillor Hug opened the item to Cabinet for any other comments.

Councillor Noble said he agreed with the new approach with large, strategic applications being considered in the round by Cabinet and smaller decisions being taken by the responsible Cabinet Member. Councillor Noble also agreed with the caution expressed by Councillor Barraclough around the potential lack, or decrease, of new developments coming through.

Councillor Hug concluded by saying that the new approach would better support communities in engaging with the Neighbourhood CIL process and is a good first step in becoming more flexible and responsive to the needs of our communities.

RESOLVED – CABINET APPROVED THE RECOMMENDATIONS SET OUT IN SECTION 2, PAGE 28

6 REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 21/22

Report of the Executive Director for Finance and Resources, Gerald Almeroth

Councillor Hug invited Councillor David Boothroyd to introduce the report.

Councillor Boothroyd assured Cabinet that he had interrogated officers as to statement and is confident that it is an accurate statement of accounts

Councillor Hug invited Gerald Almeroth, Executive Director of Finance and Resources to provide any further comment.

Gerald drew Cabinet's attention to income related shortfalls in Environment and City Management and demand pressures in Children's Services. Gerald also explained that the report included statements on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Programme.

RESOLVED – CABINET APPROVED THE RECOMMENDATIONS SET OUT IN SECTION 2, PAGE 60

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____