

# ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

## CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 24 JULY 2024 AT 2.00 PM

## MINUTES

### **Present:**

Councillor Anthony Okereke (Chair), Councillors Averil Lekau, Ann-Marie Cousins, Denise Hyland, Adel Khaireh, Mariam Lolavar, Jackie Smith and Rachel Taggart-Ryan

### **Officers:**

Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Interim Director of Legal Services, Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills, Director of Children's Services, Director Adult Social Care, Assistant Director Community Safety and Environmental Health and Assistant Director of Corporate and Central Services

### **Item**

### **No.**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Pat Slattery and Aidan Smith.

#### **2. Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business.

#### **3. Declarations of Interest**

##### **Resolved -**

That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies is noted.

#### **4. Minutes**

##### **Resolved -**

That the Minutes of the meetings of Cabinet held on 9 and 15 May be agreed and signed as true and accurate records.

#### **5. Draft Statement of Accounts 2023/24**

Councillor Denise Hyland stated that with regard to Note 28, related party transactions, she was not president of the Royal Heritage Trust but chair of the Greenwich World Heritage Site.

**Action: DoF to amend**

##### **Resolved -**

That the authority's draft Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 (including the Pension Fund Accounts) submitted to Forvis Mazars for audit on 12 July 2024 (Appendix A of the report) be considered.

#### **6. 2023/24 Revenue Outturn**

##### **Resolved -**

That the Council's outturn position be noted.

#### **7. Treasury Management and Capital Outturn 2023/24**

The Leader of the Council noted that their successful treasury management allowed the setting up of the new sustainable transport fund for example and the delivery of their capital projects.

##### **Resolved -**

1. That the Treasury Management Outturn Report for 2023/24 (Sections 4-10 of the report) be noted and that it be referred to Full Council.
2. That the Capital Outturn Report for 2023/24 (Sections 11-14 of the report), which shows a substantial increase in investment from £177m in the previous year to £318m in 2023/24, which included;

- £171m on the delivery of new homes via the Councils Greenwich Builds Programme:
    - £104m on the construction of new homes
    - £67m on the acquisition of new homes
  - £56m investment in existing Council homes.
  - £20m acquiring properties to meet Temporary Accommodation, Rough Sleeping and Refugee pressures.
- be noted and that it be referred to Full Council.

3. That an additional allocation of £1.3m of approved contingency within the Priority Investment Programme, as a match funding contribution towards the £17.2m Future High Streets Fund programme (11.5-11.6 of the report) be agreed.
4. That comments were sought from Audit and Risk Management Panel with respect to decisions 1.1 and 1.2 of the report prior to Full Council on 24 July 2024 be noted.

## **8. Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26+ update**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Social Value said that the Council was still structurally underfunded and she drew Members' attention to the forecasted gap in resourcing. She commented other local authorities faced a similar financial problem. The Council needed to protect its frontline services but they also needed to consider everything it did.

In response to a question from Cabinet, the Director of Finance replied the proposed public sector settlement was in respect of a certain cohort of workers, discussions were still ongoing but if agreed it was fully funded, however if the amount were to be above the proposed settlement that would put pressure on Council finances.

The Leader of the Council commented that they must all think strategically when in discussions with the Government about funding settlements, and they must all work together to balance the Council's budget so they could continue to deliver for their residents.

### **Resolved -**

1. That a forecasted £27.3m overall resourcing gap in 2025/26, increasing substantially each year thereafter (Section 7 of the report) be noted.

2. That the potentially significant financial risks to the MTFS going forward (Section 6 of the report) be noted.
3. That the MTFS is a continuous process and will be updated on a regular basis be noted.

## **9. Community Engagement Framework**

The Leader of the Council highlighted that there would now be a community engagement team, a community engagement hand book and pledge to residents on how the Council would engage with them. He stressed the importance of rethinking how they engaged with their communities. It was expected that everyone would hold to the new community framework. He acknowledged there was still more to do on how they collected and analysed data. The Leader of the Council thanked Officers for their work.

### **Resolved -**

- I. That the Council's first community engagement framework - now called the Our Greenwich: Community Engagement Pledge and the accompanying Our Greenwich: Community Engagement Handbook appended to the report as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 respectively (together, the "Framework") be adopted
2. That the Framework will inform the way in which the Council communicates with its residents and other stakeholders on proposals which involve engagement including consultation be agreed.
3. That it be noted that the Framework:
  - I. is intended to both drive forward and build on the Council's current examples of good community engagement work and ensure that best practice is rolled out across the entire authority.
  - II. ensures the Council places residents at the centre of its plans and how they are delivered, with communities enabled to contribute to decision making, and see actions and outcomes from consultation and engagement.
  - III. has the purpose of enabling the whole Council to:

- provide more opportunities for residents to have their say and broaden the range of activities undertaken to achieve this, including enabling deeper engagement and stronger relationships.
  - encourage more voices to be heard.
  - see more residents and more diverse communities contributing to and participating in community engagement and taking an active role in decision making.
4. That it be noted that following adoption by the Council the Framework is to be implemented and delivered by officers and elected members and can be used by the Council's partners to guide their community engagement efforts.

## **10. Children and Young People's Plan - 2024-2029**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People noted that the Royal Borough of Greenwich had chosen to continue with creating Children and Young People's Plans though they were no longer statutory. He highlighted that this new Children and Young People's Plan was created with young people and partners; it was important to continue to deliver for children and young people because they were the future. The Cabinet Member gave thanks to his predecessor, Councillor Matthew Morrow, and to Officers for their work.

Cabinet congratulated Children's Service on achieving Ofsted 'Outstanding' status.

### **Resolved -**

That the new Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2024-2029 (Appendix I of the report) be approved and that the high-level objectives (in paragraph 4.5 of the report) and the priorities suggested by the Greenwich Young People's Council outlined (in paragraph 4.6 of the report) be agree

## **11. Royal Borough of Greenwich Air Quality Action Plan**

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability and Transport noted the air quality monitoring was part of London wide monitoring. The Cabinet Member thanked the former portfolio holder, Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, and Officers for their work on the Plan.

Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, as the former portfolio holder, emphasised the importance of the Plan for the health and wellbeing of the residents. She highlighted what the Plan covered and recommended it to Cabinet.

The Leader of the Council commented that their treasury management strategy allowed them to deliver the Plan.

**Resolved -**

That it be agreed to proceed with the formal adoption, and publication of the borough's Air Quality Action Plan 2023-2028

**12. SEND and Inclusion Strategy 2024 - 2029**

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People said the Strategy would help take the Borough forward. Young people had been involved in helping to shape it, but more would be done to engage. He confirmed that they would be lobbying government for the money to deliver what was needed for young people. The Cabinet Member thanked his predecessor, Councillor Matthew Morrow, and Officers for their work.

The Leader of the Council noted that the matter of SEND was a national topic, and that the government needed to set out their new strategy on how they were going to support schools and parents.

**Resolved -**

1. That the objectives set out in the Local Area's revised SEND & Inclusion Strategy (2024-2029) be approved
2. That the proposed publication and communication arrangements be approved

**13. Community Resource Strategy**

The Cabinet Member for Equalities, Culture and Communities highlighted that the Community Resources Strategy linked with the Community Engagement Framework. It was an umbrella Strategy looking to increase proportionality of resources to the voluntary and community sector.

Councillor Adel Khaireh, as the former portfolio holder, added the Strategy was a golden thread going through all departments. They had looked across the borough to see where the needs were and where they could improve. The Strategy was a live document on which they would continue building.

**Resolved -**

1. That the proposed Community Resource Strategy and associated Needs Analysis at Appendix A of the report be agreed.

#### **14. Culture Strategy**

The Cabinet Member for Equalities, Culture and Communities emphasised that the Royal Borough of Greenwich was a borough of culture. The purpose of the Culture Strategy was to set a focus and a direction. Councillor Adel Khaireh, as the former portfolio holder, said the Strategy brought organisations and residents together, and it related to the Our Greenwich missions. It would connect with the work they were doing around mental health for example.

In response to a question from Cabinet, the Cabinet Member for Equalities, Culture and Communities replied that Appendix D referred to areas of deprivation rather than specific places to retain flexibility, as the nature of specific places could change from year to year.

Appendix D to be updated to state current Wards

**Action: DCEC**

**Resolved -**

1. That the Culture Strategy that covers the period from 2024 to 2030, and which compliments the vision and missions of Our Greenwich be adopted.
2. That this is believed to be the first cultural strategy for the borough be noted. It has been developed through collaboration between the Council and our communities and the creative and cultural sectors, to create a strategic vision with eight strategic principles to be the catalyst for cultural development.

3. That the Council has had a long and proud history of supporting culture, and in a 2019 GLA report, Greenwich is named as one of the London Councils who spend the most on Culture in London (the other boroughs are City of London, Waltham Forest (in 2019 then the London Borough of Culture), Westminster and Tower Hamlets be noted.
4. That the Council will explore the creation of an arm's length high-level strategic Culture Board to advocate for the strategy and the Implementation plan, and work in collaboration and partnership with our communities, cultural and creative sectors and stakeholders in synergy with the aims of our Equality and Equity Charter be agreed.
5. That a review of the culture project funding schemes which include: Royal Greenwich Festivals, Black History 365 (BH 365) and the Community Arts Fund to ensure that they deliver against the eight principles of the culture strategy be agreed.
6. That Council officers should scope the creation of a culture development fund to support the aims of the strategy be agreed.

## **15. GS Plus Ltd and GSS Ltd – Review of Direction of Travel**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Social Value noted the proposals before them had the support of the two outgoing chairs of GSS and GS Plus and of the incoming chair, and the support of the chair of the transformation group. The Cabinet Member explained that they had reviewed operations since the decision taken by Cabinet in February 2019 and the companies were now more stable. The Cabinet Member drew Members' attention to the proposed decision.

### **Resolved -**

1. That the continuation of the Council's trading companies GS Plus Ltd and GSS Ltd beyond 31 March 2025, based on the existing delivery model and governed by a new 10-year Strategic Partnering Agreement to be developed and implemented by this date, be agreed.
2. That it be agreed to retain the responsibility for the net assets / liabilities from GSP's membership of the RBG Pension Fund (the pool is currently fully funded).



The meeting closed at 2.39 pm

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Chair