

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2024**

COUNCILLORS

PRESENT Ergin Erbil (Deputy Leader of the Council), Abdul Abdullahi (Cabinet Member for Children's Services), Chinelo Anyanwu (Cabinet Member for Public Spaces, Culture and Local Economy), Susan Erbil (Cabinet Member for Licensing, Planning and Regulatory Services), Rick Jewell (Cabinet Member for Environment), Tim Leaver (Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement), George Savva MBE (Cabinet Member for Social Housing)

ABSENT Nesil Caliskan (Leader of the Council), Alev Cazimoglu (Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care) and Gina Needs (Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Cohesion)

OFFICERS: Ian Davis (Chief Executive), Tony Theodoulou (Executive Director – People), Kevin Bartle (Interim Director of Finance), Joanne Drew (Strategic Director of Housing and Regeneration), Perry Scott (Executive Director - Environment and Communities), Olga Bennet (Director of Finance: Capital & Commercial), Annette Trigg (Strategic Head of Corporate Finance), Terry Osborne (Director of Law and Governance), and Jane Creer (Secretary)

Also Attending: Associate Cabinet Members (Invitees): Councillor Mustafa Cetinkaya (Enfield South East), Councillor Ayten Guzel (Non-geographical), Councillor Ahmet Hasan (Enfield North) and Councillor Chris James (Enfield West)
Local press representative
Members and officers observing

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nesil Caliskan, Alev Cazimoglu, and Gina Needs. In the absence of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ergin Erbil chaired the meeting as Deputy Leader of the Council.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 DEPUTATIONS

NOTED that no requests for deputations had been received for presentation to this Cabinet meeting.

4 MINUTES

AGREED that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 November 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

5 QUARTERLY CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT (Q2)

Cllr Ergin Erbil (Deputy Leader of the Council) introduced the report of the Chief Executive, setting out the performance in delivering on the Council priorities and the progress being made against the key priority indicators for Enfield. Progress on Council Plan 2023-26 priorities was highlighted, including improved performance in recycling, and removal of fly tipping, and a decrease in percentage of adults who smoke. There had been substantial improvement in performance on planning applications, and Cllr Susan Erbil was thanked for her work on this. The rate of care leavers who were in education, employment or training was also noted as being the highest since data recording began in January 2019.

In response to members' queries, further details were provided on actions to address rates of obesity in school children.

DECISION: The Cabinet agreed to note the progress being made against the key priority indicators for Enfield.

The report sets out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendations and the decision.

(Non Key)

6 HOUSING SERVICES DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY 2023 - 2026

Cllr George Savva (Cabinet Member for Social Housing) introduced the report of the Strategic Director of Housing and Regeneration, seeking approval of the new Housing Services Domestic Abuse Policy for publication and implementation. The number of domestic abuse incidents in Enfield was sadly noted to be increasing, including incidents involving council housing tenants. The Council was committed to working with Police and other agencies to end domestic abuse, and was a White Ribbon Accredited local authority. Domestic abuse was noted as a contributory factor in homelessness, and often affected children too. The policy would meet the legal duties of the local authority, and set out clear standards and principles to prioritise safety, support victims and provide responsive and co-ordinated services.

In response to members' queries, the Council's zero tolerance to perpetrators of domestic abuse was reiterated, and that it would continue to meet requirements for White Ribbon accreditation. Further details were provided on support to children living in a property where abuse was taking place.

DECISION: The Cabinet agreed to approve the Housing Services Domestic Abuse Policy 2023-2026.

The report sets out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendations and the decision.

(Key decision – reference number 5674)

7 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) PERIOD 8 FORECAST OUTTURN REPORT 2023-24

Cllr George Savva (Cabinet Member for Social Housing) introduced the report of the Executive Director – Resources, providing an update of the HRA Period 8 forecast outturn position for 2023-24. Investment in building safety and decency, and the new homes programme was highlighted. There was a continued impact from cost pressures and inflation on construction in particular.

Steps to prevent further overspend on the HRA budget were advised, including in respect of responsive repairs management. Members also noted progress on decanting Walbrook, Shropshire and Cheshire Houses.

DECISION: The Cabinet agreed to note the Period 8 forecast outturn position for 2023/24 for both revenue and capital.

The report sets out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendations and the decision.

(Non Key)

8 2023/24 CAPITAL PROGRAMME FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023

Cllr Tim Leaver (Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement) introduced the report of the Executive Director – Resources, providing an update on the 2023/24 capital programme. The entire budget for capital was reviewed at November 2023 Council and this update was broadly in line with those intentions.

In response to members' queries in respect of the implications of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in school buildings, officers confirmed from the Department for Education that all Enfield schools had now been checked and RAAC was found in only one of them, and appropriate funding was being negotiated. In respect of the Mental Health Hub provision, this was a manifesto commitment and Cabinet approval was anticipated in the next few months.

DECISION: The Cabinet agreed to note:

I. Full year forecast capital expenditure for 2023/24 is £242.5m, including £115.5m for the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), £69.3m for Meridian Water and £17.6m for Companies.

II. Actual capital expenditure from the beginning of the year to 31 October is £77.4m, which is 32% of full year forecast. The largest General Fund variances to forecast are within Meridian Water and Companies.

III. Budget reductions of £5.5m and grant / s106 funded growth of £1.4m in Period 8.

IV. The forecast of £139.0m borrowing in 2023/24 to deliver the capital programme (£16.5m core services, £50.m Meridian Water, £15.5m Companies loan drawdowns and £57.0m HRA).

V. HRA and Companies forecasts are reported in separate papers on the meeting agenda.

The report sets out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendations and the decision.

(Non Key)

9 2023/24 TREASURY MONITORING REPORT AS AT 23 NOVEMBER 2023

Cllr Tim Leaver (Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement) introduced the report of the Executive Director – Resources, providing information on the activities of the Council's Treasury Management function over the eight months to 30th November 2023. The economic context in respect of inflation and rise in interest rates was highlighted. Attention was drawn to the maturity structure of the Council's debt portfolio and that it had borrowed prudently and long term.

In response to members' queries, it was confirmed that the Council was meeting its capital financing targets.

Officers confirmed that it was not required for this paper to be submitted to Council.

DECISION: The Cabinet agreed to note the Treasury Management monitoring report.

The report sets out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendations and the decision.

(Non Key)

10 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN (2024/25 TO 2028/29)

Cllr Tim Leaver (Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement) introduced the report of the Executive Director – Resources, setting out information in relation to the Council’s budget, how the estimated budget gap is expected to be met through a variety of measures, and seeking approval of a suite of savings. The economic context and government funding decisions were highlighted. It was confirmed that the budget has been balanced for 2024/25, dependent on proposed savings, Council Tax increase, review of the Council Tax Support Scheme, and grant to Adult Social Care.

In response to members’ queries, further details were confirmed regarding the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, and that Enfield was not fairly funded. On behalf of the Cabinet, Cllr Leaver and all the officers involved were thanked for their hard work towards bridging the budget gap.

DECISION: The Cabinet agreed to:

I. Note that the budget has been balanced for 2024/25 subject to:
(a) The recommended level of Council tax increase;
(b) The implementation of the recommended Council Tax Support scheme changes;
(c) Approval and achievement of the further recommended set of savings and income proposals.

II. Note the intention to increase Council Tax by 4.99% (2.99% core and 2.00% Adult Social Care Precept) for 2024/25, the maximum allowable without breaching referendum limits.

III. Note the forecast budget gap of £85.763m across the entire period covered by the medium term financial plan, of which £25.375m is in 2025/26.

IV. Note that whilst the 2024/25 budget is balanced subject to the points set out in paragraph (I) above, there is now an increased forecast overspend of circa £29m for 2023/24 (note this is indicative at the time of writing this report).

V. Note the details announced in the Chancellor’s Autumn Statement, which was delivered on 22nd November 2023 and the Local Government Policy statement on 5th December 2023.

VI. Note the outcome of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement as described in paragraph 7 of the report.

VII. Note that the smaller Business Rate Pool of eight London boroughs including Enfield will extend for a further year in 2024/25.

VIII. Note the update on funding in paragraphs 32 to 49 and spending pressures set out in paragraphs 50 to 64 of the report.

IX. Approve the proposed further income and savings proposals brought forward in January of £7.026m for 2024/25 set out in Appendix D(iii) of the report comprising:

- (a) £4.210m from efficiencies and,
- (b) £2.816m from receipts and income generation.

X. Note that the income and savings proposals set out in the report are being recommended for approval subject to consultation and assessment of the equality implications where relevant.

XI. Note the intended use of £1.021m Council Tax surplus within the 2024/25 General Fund revenue budget.

XII. Note the use of reserves in 2024/25 to meet welfare costs set out in paragraphs 75 to 79 of the report.

XIII. Note the overall forecast level of reserves over the medium term, ensuring the Council's financial sustainability set out in paragraphs 80 to 87 of the report.

XIV. Note the proposed fees and charges (subject to Council approval) set out in Appendices G to K of the report and the continuation of the flexibility introduced in 2021/22 for these to be varied in year where appropriate.

The report sets out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendations and the decision.

(Key decision – reference number 5682)

11 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

NOTED the next meeting of the Cabinet was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 21 February 2024 at 7:00pm.

12 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

A resolution was passed under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the press and public from the meeting for the items of business listed on Part 2 of the agenda on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in those paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006).

13 2023/24 COMPANIES FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT AS AT 31 OCTOBER 2023

Cllr Tim Leaver (Cabinet Member for Finance and Procurement) introduced the report of the Executive Director – Resources, setting out confidential financial performance information in respect of Council companies.

DECISION: The Cabinet agreed to note the confidential financial performance information provided by the individual Council companies.

The report sets out the options considered, if any, and the reasons for the recommendations and the decision.

(Non Key)

The meeting ended at 7.59 pm.