



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SPECIAL CABINET HELD REMOTELY

ON WEDNESDAY, 22ND APRIL, 2020 AT 3.00PM

Present: Mayor Philip Glanville in the Chair

Councillors

Deputy Mayor Anntoinette Bramble (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Jon Burke

Cllr Christopher Kennedy

Cllr Clayeon McKenzie

Cllr Guy Nicholson

Cllr Rebecca Rennison

Cllr Caroline Selman

Cllr Carole Williams

Cllr Caroline Woodley

Cllr Sem Moema

Cllr Yvonne Maxwell

Officers: Tim Shields, Chief Executive
Ian Williams, Group Director of Finance & Corporate Resources
David Padfield on behalf of the Interim Group Director of Neighbourhoods & Housing
Dawn Carter-McDonald – Interim Director of Legal & Governance
Clifford Hart, Senior Governance Services

1.	Apologies for Absence
	<p>The Mayor, in welcoming all attendees to the first remote meeting of Cabinet thanked the hardworking Officers who had made this meeting possible. The Mayor commented that it was vital that despite these challenging times, councils remained transparent with the decisions they were making, and since becoming Mayor his administration had driven a culture of cooperation with local residents; and wanted decisions to be made in partnership with Hackney's communities. During the greatest public health and now economic crisis in a generation, that culture becomes more important than ever, and being able to hold meetings like this despite the crisis was just one part of the pledge to open up the Council.</p> <p>The Mayor went on to say that the Cabinet meeting was just one of several different meetings that would continue, such as: planning, licensing, audit and scrutiny meetings and indeed #grillphil. The administration was making sure that the decisions it made</p>

	<p>would not only be made transparently, but with opportunity for scrutiny of those decisions too. It was impossible at a time like this to thank everyone that is ensuring that social care was delivered, benefits were processed, repairs delivered and rubbish collected, nor beyond the Council - transport workers, retail, and the NHS. Everywhere many people clapped their hands on Thursday evenings, but the meeting today was also another opportunity to say thank you. The Volunteers - from people born and bred in Hackney to those that had made it their home.</p> <p>The Mayor commented on those that were ill and had already lost their lives who the Council wanted to remember, whether they were known or currently unknown, every life lost would have an impact on a family, friends, neighbourhood, community, organisation - a borough.</p> <p>The Mayor in speaking of those that had lost their lives so far, whilst he did not have all those names, or would be able to read them all out, wanted to note some of those who had made an enormous contribution working or living in Hackney:</p> <p>Mr Ahmet Kamil, Rabbi Avrohom Pinter, Dr Abdul Mabud Chowdhury, Mr Nadir Nur, Mt Thomas Hardy (Windrush), Mr Haci Ali Dogus, the Father and Grandmother of Hackney Boxer Anthony Yarde, Mr Michael Allieu (Nurse), Ms Sophie Fagan (Homerton).</p> <p>The Mayor further commented that he would shortly ask that all those present observe a 1 minute's silence in memory of all those 94 residents of the Borough who had sadly lost their lives as a result of the virus.</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p> <p>NOTED</p>
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<p>2.</p>	<p>Urgent Business</p>
	<p>There were no items of urgent business other than consideration of Item 4 below.</p> <p>NOTED</p>

<p>3.</p>	<p>Declarations of interest - Members to declare as appropriate</p>
	<p>There were no declarations of interests.</p> <p>NOTED</p>

<p>4.</p>	<p>COVID-19 Financial impact and governance arrangements</p>
	<p>In his introduction to the report before Cabinet the Mayor firstly thanked officers for pulling together such a comprehensive report, with particular thanks to Ian Williams and his team, especially Russell Harvey, who in a short space of time had done a great job in explaining Hackney's financial challenge moving forward. The report's consideration also emphasised being open with the residents of Hackney about the decisions that the Council were making to support them so far. The coronavirus pandemic was the greatest public health crisis in a generation. Although much of the focus of the report before Cabinet was about Hackney's financial challenge, the Council should not lose</p>

sight of what was most important – the impact on loved ones and friends who had lost family, and those people whose lives had been turned upside-down by this crisis.

The Mayor expressed his and the Council's thoughts being with them, those who have contracted the virus and the families of the 94 Hackney residents who had lost their lives. At this point Mayor advised that there would be a one minute's silence observed by those attending the meeting in memory of the 94 residents in Hackney who had lost their lives to the virus.

A one minute's silence was observed.

The Mayor then went on to also pay tribute and thanks to those who were caring for loved ones, or caring for their communities and helping out wherever they could. They, along with Hackney's key workers in the local NHS, social care and council services were showing the #HackneySpirit that the Mayor had been so proud to see. From the outset of this crisis, Hackney Council's mission was to work cooperatively with its communities and harness that spirit.

The Mayor commented on the Council working with mutual aid groups and local charities, and 1200 residents had signed-up to Hackney's volunteering hub, through Volunteer Centre Hackney, to help out. This was a joint effort of the council, community and local organisations responding to this crisis together –the Tomlinson Centre which was now being used as a meal hub for homeless people, and was delivering 1500 meals a week which were being distributed by the Red Cross, and the Council's coordination of the Hackney Food Alliance of council services, local charities and social enterprises. This alliance was adding fresh fruit and vegetables to the Government's food parcels that were going to shielding households in Hackney. This partnership of humanitarian assistance was also delivering a further 350 food parcels a day to those that had approached the Council for help, as well as providing a hot food option to those that needed it.

The Mayor also expressed Hackney's mission to keep its vital frontline services running to support our residents, and keep our staff safe. In the report before Members it pledged to maintaining high performing public services supporting the most vulnerable residents, with over £12 million additional investment earmarked for the Council's frontline in 2020. This funding into adult social care, children's social care, education and homelessness work would go directly into making sure residents were kept safe.

The Mayor also stated that the administration had also stepped-in and stood-up for the borough – its residents, businesses and charities – with direct interventions in its local economy. A package of measures had been launched to support Hackney's local economy and residents worth £100 million including.

- a three-month rent free period for our voluntary and charity organisations renting Council buildings;
- a three-month no-quibbles rent deferral for all 300 other commercial tenants;
- the suspension of all commercial waste payments for businesses that have been forced to close; and,
- the suspension of any fees and charges due from street market traders unable to trade.

The Mayor reported that as of 20th April, £30.2 million worth of business rate grant payments had been made to almost 2,000 businesses. The Mayor commended the Council's business rates team for getting money to businesses that needed it quickly and efficiently, and he urged all local businesses who were eligible to contact the Hackney

Business Network. The Council had also invested in schemes to support the most vulnerable – those on low-pay or who may have lost their job because of this crisis. There had been £500,000 invested in the Council's Discretionary Crisis Support Scheme which residents were able to apply to for urgent financial support with emergency needs. A further £120,000 had been invested to support Discretionary Housing Payments for those needing support to pay rent, which was on top of the hardship funding which had seen Council Tax relief provided to all working age Council Tax benefit claimants with a reduction of up to £150 in their Council Tax. The Mayor stated a total of over £5.2m of Council and Government investment in supporting the most vulnerable and the financially hardest hit households in Hackney.

The Mayor commented that the report before Cabinet set out how Hackney would go further – with a £100k hardship fund created to support migrants and refugees in the borough. All of the measures had been done and working cooperatively with Hackney's communities, keeping vital frontline public services running, and direct intervention in the economy – because it was the right thing to do.

In respect of the outlined measures the Mayor stated that these had had to be taken because Hackney had to fill the gaps created by the Government and that whilst some were shying away from political action during this crisis, the Mayor stressed that he wanted to be clear that the Government's response had not been good enough. The Mayor stated that the administration would keep its promise to be a campaigning council at this crucial time – calling out the Government's failures, and calling on the Government to do the right thing by Hackney's private-renters and ban evictions, when the coronavirus crisis could have led to a sudden homelessness crisis. The Council had lobbied for a lift in Local Housing Allowance and the removal of restrictions on Discretionary Housing Payments – both vital steps that were needed to support Hackney's residents on lower or no incomes. The Council had stood-up for its local voluntary and charitable sector, arguing for greater government intervention to protect the sector that was supporting the local communities during this crisis.

The Mayor also commented on the Council working with local businesses who were slipping through the net of government support – collating and submitting case studies to a Parliamentary enquiry. The Council had recently stood-up for businesses who had been badly ripped off and let down by their insurance companies.

The Mayor in concluding his comments further advised that the report also highlighted how Councils and their staff were also being let down by the Government. In responding to this crisis would leave Hackney with a £19 million funding gap in the first three months alone. The additional spending required this year – all from frontline services that the most vulnerable relied on – could reach £72 million. Yet so far the Government has only supported the Council with an additional £17 million, and they had not clarified if the Spending Review or Fair Funding Review would be delayed. The Council's frontline services – care workers, waste and recycling teams, cleaners, social workers, to name just a few – and the vulnerable residents they supported needed stability, not shake-ups. The report was part of the Council's call to the Government to honour the pledge they made to Councils at the beginning of the crisis – telling Councils to 'spend what we need' and that they would support them – with money and not just platitudes. The Mayor stressed that the Council would keep standing up for its key workers to see this happen, so its key workers would be able to keep looking after the people of Hackney.

Following on from the Mayor's comments and recommendations to the report and his outline of the actions taken thus far in the pandemic crisis all Members of Cabinet commented on their support for the proposals and reiterated the sentiments expressed by the Mayor.

(N.B Governance Officer's note – the remote meeting of Cabinet was recorded and the

recorded contributions of Cabinet Members in respect of the item under consideration can be found on the Council's webpage for the meeting and will therefore not be recorded in the minutes).

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UeKSyquoqBkXbTZ0_vCMj2zLnHrozZA-/view

The Mayor then **MOVED** the recommendations as detailed in the report, and following indications by all Cabinet Members that they were unanimously in support of the recommendations it was:

RESOLVED

- i. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and the Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources to allocate COVID-19 Grant Funding to the Council service areas as required in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor (Finance).
- ii. that the extension of the Council's current Discretionary Council Tax Hardship scheme in response to the COVID epidemic as detailed in section 7 of the report be noted;
- ii. that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive and Group Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, in consultation with the Mayor, Deputy Mayor (Finance) and Cabinet Member for Community Safety, policy, and the voluntary sector, to repurpose unallocated Community Grant funding and to make awards to support local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations in their response to COVID-19 and to support the work of Mutual Aid groups through partnerships with local VCS, as detailed in section 8 of the report;
- iv. that the potential financial implications of Covid-19 as set out in Section 11 of the report be noted ; and
- v. that it be agreed that any further urgent decisions required during this specific period will be reported in summary at the next ordinary meeting of Cabinet in accordance with the governance and legislative framework of the Local Authority.

Duration of the meeting: 15.00 – 16.24hrs

Mayor Philip Glanville
Chair at the meeting on
Wednesday, 22 April 2020