

Minutes

COUNCIL

27 November 2025

Meeting held at Council Chamber - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



Councillor Philip Corthorne (Mayor)
Councillor Reeta Chamdal (Deputy Mayor)

	MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors: Naser Abby (in part) Scott Farley Kelly Martin Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana Janet Gardner Stuart Mathers Kaushik Banerjee Elizabeth Garelick Douglas Mills Labina Basit Narinder Garg Richard Mills Adam Bennett Tony Gill Peter Money Wayne Bridges Ekta Gohil Susan O'Brien Tony Burles Becky Haggart OBE Jane Palmer Keith Burrows Henry Higgins Sital Punja Roy Chamdal Mohammed Islam John Riley Farhad Choubedar Rita Judge Raju Sansarpuri Peter Curling Kamal Preet Kaur Jagjit Singh Darran Davies Eddie Lavery Peter Smallwood OBE Nick Denys Richard Lewis Colleen Sullivan Jas Dhot Heena Makwana Jan Sweeting Ian Edwards Gursharan Mand Steve Tuckwell		
	OFFICERS PRESENT: Tony Zaman, Steve Muldoon, Dan Kennedy, Sandra Taylor, Lloyd White, Daniel Toohey, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon and Nikki O'Halloran		
29.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE <i>(Agenda Item 1)</i> Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bhatt, Bianco, Lakhmana, Nelson and Nelson-West.		
30.	MINUTES <i>(Agenda Item 2)</i> RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025 be agreed as a correct record.		
31.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST <i>(Agenda Item 3)</i> Mr Dan Toohey declared a pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 6iii - Appointment of Statutory Officer as it was in relation to his appointment, and left the room during the consideration thereof.		
32.	MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS <i>(Agenda Item 4)</i> The Mayor advised that he had attended a number of events and had been presented, on behalf of the Borough, with the Pro Bono Poloniae award in the presence of the Duke of Kent. He had hosted Parlour visits where he had met a range of people including volunteers and health partners.		

	<p>The Halloween Quiz at Hayes Cricket Club had been a great success and Members were reminded that the next quiz would take place on 12 February 2026. The Christmas lights switch on would be taking place on 28 November 2025 and would include performances from the Hillingdon Music Service and a raffle to raise money for the Mayor's charities.</p>
33.	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>5.1 QUESTION FROM TONY ELLIS OF KEWFERRY ROAD, NORTHWOOD TO THE LEADER OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:</p> <p><i>"The council's Audit Committee papers confirm that leaders were formally warned of "key governance weaknesses" by CIPFA and auditors in February and March 2025. This was at the exact same time the administration was approving the 2025/26 budget.</i></p> <p><i>"Given the administration was formally warned of "key governance weaknesses" before the budget was set, I do not understand how it could have been legitimately claimed to have been robust. What accountability has there been for the leadership's failure to act on these warnings, which preceded the £36m financial collapse?"</i></p> <p>The Mayor asked the question on behalf of Tony Ellis. Councillor Edwards advised that the budget recommendation to Cabinet in December would be that consultation be undertaken thereon. The Council had been aware of the need to implement an improvement programme and had requested engagement with CIPFA to put a plan in place. Areas had been identified which needed to be strengthened and accountability had been built in. Progress had been reported to the Audit Committee in July and Council in September, with a further update expected next year.</p> <p>5.2 QUESTION FROM PATRICIA WARDLE OF WYE CLOSE ROAD, RUISLIP TO THE LEADER OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:</p> <p><i>"At the HARA meeting on 17 November, the Leader stated the EFS bailout application was for "the region of 40 million". This figure seems too low to be sufficient to cover both this year's overspend and to replenish the reserves, especially as each month in the last three the overspend has increased. Can the Leader provide a more accurate estimate of the kind of figure that the Council has been requesting from the government, given that the £40M figure doesn't seem anywhere near sufficient?"</i></p> <p>The Mayor asked the question on behalf of Patricia Wardle. Councillor Edwards advised that EFS funding of £40m would not be sufficient in the long term and would be in relation to 2024/25. It was likely that the actual figure needed would be available by late December and it would help if the fair funding settlement addressed Hillingdon's underfunding. The EFS figure would be estimated and included in the Council's budget which would be out for consultation in December / January.</p> <p>5.3 QUESTION FROM SUE MIDGLEY OF HOWLETT'S LANE, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:</p> <p><i>"The Council predicts it will have a £78M cumulative deficit in the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) by the end of the year. The statutory override government protection for</i></p>

this deficit expires in March 2028.

“What is the Council's plan to handle the £78.4M schools deficit when the government override ends, other than hoping for a second bailout?”

The Mayor asked the question on behalf of Sue Midgley. Councillor O'Brien advised that the DSG in-year deficit had been driven by high needs placement demand and that the cumulative deficit of around £78.4m reflected the crisis that local authorities across the country had been concerned about for years. The Council had been taking action which had resulted in the deficit reducing year-on-year, slowing the cumulative deficit.

A national restructure of SEND was needed and it was anticipated that Government action would be announced to deal with the deficit.

5.4 QUESTION FROM SALLY WEBB OF LAKESIDE CLOSE, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR BRIDGES (ANSWERED BY FORMER PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR LAVERY):

“In April 2025, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ian Edwards, personally assured the Ruislip Residents' Association that a new, robust risk assessment for Ruislip Lido was a priority and would be 'picked up very quickly' to address the 'obvious risks' of overcrowding.

“On June 29th, those risks were realised when emergency services struggled to access the site. Yet, as of November, this vital risk assessment has still not been commissioned, and Council officers have confirmed they are still awaiting responses from external specialists.

“Given the Council's failure to deliver this urgent safety review, how does it justify prioritising new, non-essential spending at the Lido, such as the £19,200 approved in October to refurbish the pirate ship and the £76,949 approved in September for 'infrastructure improvements', which includes 'new picnic tables' - all of which will only attract more visitors to a site the Council has not yet made safe?”

The Mayor asked the question on behalf of Sally Webb. Councillor Lavery advised that the Council had been clear that safety was a priority. The risk assessment was underway and mitigation measures were being taken including health and safety training for Lido staff.

The investment mentioned in the question would ensure that the site complied with British safety standards and maintenance was being undertaken on the railway to ensure it was safe and enjoyable for all residents.

5.5 QUESTION FROM DANIEL O'NEILL OF ASHBURTON ROAD, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION – COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

“The Month 6 Budget Monitoring Report identifies a £4 million "adverse impact" on the budget caused by a review of the asset sales programme. Can the Cabinet Member confirm if this £4 million deficit exists because the Administration had already spent or committed the money before the assets were actually sold and why was such a large sum spent "at risk" before the funds were actually secured in the Council's bank

account?”

The Mayor asked the question on behalf of Daniel O'Neill. Councillor Lavery advised that the £4m adjustment existed as a result of a technical change of eligibility of one receipt which had been a necessary investment. He believed that this issue appeared to have been raised to dramatise the situation for political effect.

5.6 QUESTION FROM DAVID EDINGTON OF HOYLAKE CRESCENT, ICKENHAM TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR BRIDGES (ANSWERED BY FORMER PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR LAVERY):

“The Chrysalis Fund criteria, presented to the Residents’ Services Select Committee in March 2025, explicitly state the fund cannot fund events, activities or furniture and equipment.

“Can the Cabinet Member explain why he subsequently approved £19,200 for 'Playground equipment refurbishment' and £76,949 for a project that includes 'new picnic tables' - in direct contradiction of the programme's published rules - and further explain when and by whom the decision was taken to increase his portfolio's Chrysalis budget from the £1 million stated in his June Capital Release report to the £3 million stated in his September report, given the Council's current severe financial constraints?”

The Mayor asked the question on behalf of David Edington. Councillor Lavery advised that the Chrysalis Fund had been operational for more than twenty years and included playground improvements. Insofar as the budget figures were concerned, the £3m stated in the capital release report in June had been an administrative error and should have stated £1m.

34. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES (Agenda Item 6)

i) Urgent Implementation of Decisions

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Tuckwell seconded, the motion and it was:

RESOLVED: That the urgent decisions taken since the last Council; meeting in September 2025, as detailed in the report, be noted.

ii) Political Groups on the Council, the Calculation of Political Balance and Committee Memberships

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Tuckwell seconded, the motion and it was:

RESOLVED: That the alteration of the overall political balance of the Council, following the changes in Group membership detailed in the report, be noted and the following changes to membership of Council Committees, etc. be approved:

- **Councillor Gohil to replace Councillor Singh on the Hillingdon Planning Committee.**
- **Councillor Basit to replace Councillor Nelson on the Health & Social Care Select Committee.**
- **Councillor Farley to replace Councillor Garg on the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee.**

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Councillor Singh to replace Councillor Farley on the Residents' Services Select Committee. • Councillor Smallwood to replace Councillor Sullivan on the Pensions Committee. • Councillor Punja to replace Councillor Farley as a Labour Group named substitute on the Audit Committee. <p>iii) Appointment Of Statutory Officer</p> <p>It was noted that, since the issue of the agenda, the recruitment process for the Director of Legal and Governance had concluded and Mr Daniel Toohey had been appointed to the role.</p> <p>Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Tuckwell seconded, the motion and it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the new Director of Legal and Governance, Mr Daniel Toohey, when confirmed in post, be appointed to the statutory role of Monitoring Officer of the Council.</p> <p>iv) Appointment of Independent Person</p> <p>Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Tuckwell seconded, the motion and it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Mr Roger Cook be appointed as the Council's second Independent Person until July 2030; and b) Mr Graeme Armour's appointment as Independent Person be extended to July 2030. <p>v) Cabinet (<i>additional item for information only</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Edwards advised Council of the changes that he had made to Cabinet and thanked Councillor Goddard for his considerable service to the Council and residents during a very difficult time. Accordingly, Members noted that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. w.e.f. 19 November 2025, Councillor Lavery be responsible for the Finance and Transformation Cabinet portfolio; and 2. w.e.f. 21 November 2025, Councillor Bridges became the Cabinet Member for Community and Environment.
35.	<p>POLLING DISTRICT AND POLLING PLACES REVIEW (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Tuckwell seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the changes to polling places, as set out in the report, be approved.</p>
36.	<p>ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2024/25 (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Tuckwell seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business.</p> <p>Those speaking in support of the motion noted that the report provided performance comparisons to other local authorities but did not provide enough value for money</p>

	<p>comparisons. However, the report would give residents confidence as well as identify areas for improvement. The report included information in relation to housing in the Borough, the condition of Hillingdon's roads and local procurement and identified anti-social behaviour, NEET and dry recycling as areas for improvement.</p> <p>The Council provided exceptionally good value for money in delivering services and reflected the hard work that had been undertaken whilst continuing to meet rising challenges. Demand for temporary accommodation had been relentless but the Temporary Accommodation Strategy would see nightly accommodation costs being capped and new leases secured. Around 3,000 housing repairs had been undertaken, planning and development services remained strong and jobs were being created.</p> <p>The report provided a clear account, with evidence of progress and detailing how the administration continued to put residents first.</p> <p>On being put to the vote, it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Annual Performance Report 2024/25 be noted.</p>
37.	<p>PROPOSED ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Tuckwell moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business.</p> <p>Immediate action was needed in relation to the development of small dwellings into houses of multiple occupation (HMOs). Time had been taken to ensure that the Article 4 direction had been developed carefully and responsibly which would result in the tightest controls in London.</p> <p>HMOs made up approximately 9% of the private rented sector and, although there was a need for this type of home, they had higher levels of anti-social behaviour and lower standards than in other privately rented properties. The proposal would not ban HMOs in Hillingdon, and was not about punishing landlords or restricting housing supply, but would enable planning oversight and enforcement and focus on management standards to protect local communities.</p> <p>For far too long, residents had watched unlicensed HMOs appearing in their neighbourhoods with landlords profiting from cramped and chaotic accommodation. A boroughwide approach would be crucial as HMOs were present in every area of Hillingdon and the safety of all residents needed to be prioritised with swift and decisive action. To ensure that the Council maintained a solid legal position, unlike other local authorities that had rushed into taking action, Hillingdon had taken its time to collect evidence to support the Article 4 direction.</p> <p>It was noted that the Government intended to remove some planning powers from local authorities which worked within a legislative regime that needed improvement. Concern was expressed that this removal of powers might impact on the implementation of the Article 4 directive.</p> <p>The opposition noted that the Labour Group had raised a motion about 18 months previously to ask that action be taken to control the rise in the number of HMOs in the Borough. This motion had been lost. As a result of this inaction, it was queried how the administration would now deal with the oversaturation of HMOs in places like the</p>

Heathrow Villages which had been decimated over the last few years.

On being put to the vote, it was:

RESOLVED: That:

1. the making of an immediate direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) to remove the permitted development right for the change of use of building and any land within its curtilage from a use falling within Class C3 (Dwellinghouse) of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (Amended) Order to a use falling within Class C4 (House in Multiple Occupation) of that Order being development comprised within class L(b) of Part 3 of Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) ("GPDO") within the area identified in Appendix 1, be approved.
2. the cancellation of the existing Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation, Brunel and Uxbridge South wards once the new Article 4 direction is confirmed, be approved.
3. it be noted notice given for the Article 4 Direction will be made as soon as practical following approval, and that Full Council will receive a further report at the end of the representation period to consider whether, in light of any representations received, the new direction should be confirmed.
4. authority be delegated to the Chief Planning Officer and the Head of Legal Services to authorise the relevant notices to enact the proposed Immediate Article 4 Direction.

38. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS** (*Agenda Item 10*)

10.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR HIGGINS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:

"Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the Chagossians' arrival into Hillingdon and outline how the Council is managing the support required?"

Councillor Tuckwell advised that, as a result of Heathrow being based in the Borough, 166 Chagossian households had sought the Council's help and that there were 100 in temporary accommodation. With this support costing around £20k per household per year, this amounted to approximately £2m. Although the Council was providing support to these households for up to twelve months, the Government would only fund the first 10 days which put long term financial pressures on port authorities. Whilst Hillingdon remained committed to supporting the Chagossians, the financial burden should not fall to Hillingdon residents.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Higgins asked if there had been an update on expected arrivals and how they would be supported. Councillor Lavery advised that a further 32 families were expected the following week which would increase the financial pressure on the Council by around £600k. These pressures were significant and Hillingdon should not shoulder the cost of national policy decisions which put an unfair burden on local residents.

10.10 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MAND TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"At September's Full Council, the Cabinet Member dismissed Exceptional Financial

Support as merely an “accounting adjustment” and claimed residents would not shoulder the burden. Yet the last so-called accounting adjustments — totalling £14.1 million since 2014 — led directly to cuts in services, the sale of community assets, and still this administration cannot balance its books.

“Does the Cabinet Member agree that this latest “accounting adjustment”, in the form of Exceptional Financial Support, will also be paid by the residents of Hillingdon — especially as every past adjustment has resulted in higher costs, fewer services, and deeper financial crisis for this borough? Yes or No.”

Councillor Lavery advised that EFS had been sought as a result of spending pressures. National pressures such as inflation and increased demand for adult social care and children’s services had increased the Council’s costs. The comment made at the September meeting had been in relation to a capitalisation mechanism which had been used to lawfully manage costs.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mand noted that the Chief Finance Officer had advised in a Select Committee meeting in November that shortfalls would be made up of EFS in future years. If this were true, he asked whether the Council would be able to rebuild its reserves. Councillor Lavery advised that the budget was currently being developed.

10.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GARDNER TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR BRIDGES (ANSWERED BY FORMER PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR LAVERY):

“Over the past few months young people have been seen and heard in the streets and parks igniting large fireworks that are clearly meant for organised display events only. Can the Cabinet member please outline the process for licensing the sale of fireworks and, in particular, if there is a requirement for recording who purchases them?”

Councillor Lavery advised that fireworks could only be sold to those aged 18+ from 33 licensed vendors in Hillingdon. These sales of small fireworks did not have to be recorded and the Metropolitan Police Service was responsible for addressing the illegal use of fireworks.

There was no supplementary question.

10.7 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR AHMAD-WALLANA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH & SOCIAL CARE - COUNCILLOR PALMER:

“Could the Cabinet member explain the benefits to the Council and residents of the recent purchase of The Burroughs Care Home?”

Councillor Palmer advised that this purchase had been strategic. The number of people in the Borough aged 65+ continued to increase so the Council had been looking ahead. Over 97% of local care home beds were occupied at all times so around 250 residents had been placed outside of the Borough. Hillingdon had established its own care company and would be upgrading to full nursing care via CQC registration in due course, providing savings for the Council and benefitting residents.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Ahmad-Wallana asked if there were

any plans for similar purchases in the future. Councillor Palmer advised that Cabinet had resolved to repurpose the Council's 'lobster pot' car park as a 162 bed care home. This would increase the adult social care provision and reduce reliance on expensive care placements.

10.9 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PUNJA TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

"The 2025/26 budget relies on delivering £38.8m of in-year savings to remain balanced, yet by Month 6 up to £20.2m is either at risk, undeliverable, or still at an early stage. The Strategic Risk Register presented to the November Audit Committee states plainly that "a key driver in this forecast overspend is that the savings programme is not on track... and mitigations will not be sufficient to offset this."

"Does the Leader of the Council still maintain that Hillingdon has a balanced and lawful budget when the savings essential to its in-year legality are already failing under this administration?"

Councillor Edwards confirmed that the 2025/26 Council budget had been balanced when it had been set and that it had met the legal tests in February 2025. Pressures had emerged during the year including the support that had needed to be provided to the Chagossians. The Section 151 Officer was not currently minded to issue a Section 114 notice and discussions were underway with the Government in relation to EFS funding.

It seemed that the questioner had misunderstood the law and local government finance as the Council continued to take a legal and professional approach to its finances.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Punja asked why Grant Thornton had been appointed to a new contract without going through an open tender process and whether the Council would stop extending the contract now that it had run out of money. Councillor Edwards advised that Grant Thornton was a very respectable business with experience and expertise. The company had been familiar with the Council's systems, issues and people so had been ideally suited to be appointed to the contract and had been effective in delivering the improvement programme.

10.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BENNETT TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:

"Can the Cabinet member please provide an update on the condition of Ministry of Defence estates in Hillingdon, and the opportunities available for bringing empty military homes back into productive use?"

Councillor Tuckwell advised that the Council had taken the lead on tackling the 100 empty MoD homes in Hillingdon, some of which had been empty for more than two years. About half of the homes would soon be occupied by serving personnel and work was underway with the MoD on the other half which would need to be brought up to standard.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Bennett asked who the remaining 50 homes would be allocated to once they were back in use. Councillor Tuckwell advised that these properties would be allocated to established Hillingdon families in line with the Council's policy.

10.11 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR KAUR TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR BRIDGES (ANSWERED BY FORMER PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR LAVERY):

“Could the Cabinet Member explain why the out-of-hours nuisance service has been effectively closed? Given that:

- No resident consultation was carried out prior to this decision;*
- the data used to justify the withdrawal is acknowledged in the report as incomplete - specifically stating that “it is not possible to obtain complete and accurate reports of the data held on the GOSS system relating to the team’s activities”; and*
- the report also confirms that “noise complaints cannot be investigated remotely using noise recording equipment, noise apps or diary sheets alone.”*

Councillor Lavery advised that the out of hours service was not being scrapped but was being refocussed as it had not been providing value for money. It would be targeting persistent disruptive nuisance and officers would be employed when needed.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Kaur noted that a downgrade was as good as a closure and asked whether this would put vulnerable residents at risk. Councillor Lavery referred Councillor Kaur to his previous answer.

10.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR D.MILLS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:

“As all Councillors have now received the letter from the Department for Education’s Deputy Director regarding the Safety Valve Agreement, is it fair to conclude that the pressures facing this administration are the result of national funding arrangements and wider systemic issues within the SEND framework — challenges that ultimately require national, rather than solely local, solutions?”

Councillor O’Brien advised that the situation had been caused by the funding arrangements. The DfE had confirmed that Hillingdon’s approach had demonstrated strong governance and provided a high quality, financially efficient SEND service. By 2026/27, it was likely that the high needs deficit would exceed all of the Council’s useable reserves.

The pressure had been driven by the high demand for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) with no funds from central Government. The safety valve deficit had not arisen as a result of the misuse of funds but related to fundamental system wide issues and the Government had not set out how SEND would be addressed. Hillingdon continued to deliver what was required.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor D Mills asked why it had been suggested by the opposition that this was the fault of the administration when expert advisors had commended the Council’s approach. Councillor O’Brien advised that analysis had been distorted for a wider audience and that the opposition had thanked officers for their work during meetings and then criticised the Council. The number of EHCPs had never been so high (3,667) and officers continued to deal with this every day.

10.12 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MATHERS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

“Can the Leader explain how a £13.9M adverse movement in just two months can

possibly be presented as evidence that he and his Cabinet Member for Finance have any control over the Council's financial position?"

Councillor Edwards advised that he was unable to answer this as neither he nor officers had been able to identify this movement in any two month period (although there had been a movement between M2 and M5).

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mathers asked if the Leader would accept that this was about budgetary failure and submit his resignation. Councillor Edwards noted that successive governments had underfunded local government. Hillingdon did not overspend and had been underfunded yet still provided services in a cost effective way. It was hoped that the new funding settlement would help.

10.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURROWS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES AND PROPERTY – COUNCILLOR BIANCO (ANSWERED BY COUNCILLOR LAVERY IN COUNCILLOR BIANCO'S ABSENCE):

"Can the Cabinet member please give an update on the progress of the development of the new Jubilee Platinum Leisure Centre and confirm when it is expected to be completed?"

Councillor Lavery advised that the development had been progressing well and that it was on track for completion in January 2026 and would be open to the public in February. The Centre would provide a modern inclusive facility which included a 25m eight lane pool, gym, sports hall, 5G pitch, party rooms and a Family Hub.

There was no supplementary question.

10.8 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SWEETING TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

"The November budget report confirms the Council cannot remain a going concern without Exceptional Financial Support. When did the Leader first know that the Council was effectively insolvent and why was this not immediately disclosed to Members or residents?"

Councillor Edwards advised that the financial challenge had been caused by Government underfunding. The funding needed to cover all of the Council's costs including the costs incurred from being a port authority. Accounting adjustments had shown that the depletion in funds had been quicker than expected so the Council would not be able to cope without EFS.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Sweeting asked if the Leader would publish the spending controls that had been put in place since the S114 risk had emerged. Councillor Edwards advised that spending controls were the responsibility of the Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer.

10.6 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURLES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR BRIDGES (ANSWERED BY FORMER PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR LAVERY):

"Does the Cabinet member believe that the new policy of not locking the gates of parks at night has been of any benefit to residents living in the local area if so what

are they?"

Councillor Lavery advised that the removal of the locking gates in parks had given residents more flexibility and there had been no resultant increases in the number of complaints or Members' Enquiries submitted on the issue. This increase in park access had been working well.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Burles asked if the Cabinet Member had been aware of the resident who lived by Fassnidge Park who had experienced an increase in anti social behaviour. Councillor Lavery advised that he had been contacted by one resident and that Councillor Bridges would address the matter if it proved to be an issue.

39. **MOTIONS** (*Agenda Item 11*)

11.4 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR EDWARDS

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Higgins seconded, the following motion:

That this Council expresses its deep disappointment at the closure of the Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit, a service relied upon by thousands of residents. More than 27,000 people signed a petition opposing the decision, yet their views were dismissed, and many believe no meaningful public consultation was undertaken. A recent survey again showed strong public support to retain the Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit.

The closure has taken place before adequate alternative provision has been secured placing a further burden on the Accident & Emergency Unit at Hillingdon Hospital. The rebuilding of the Hospital has been delayed by the Government and the promised health hubs remain years away with no funding having yet been allocated for their construction in Hillingdon.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Health seeking urgent clarity on when funding will be made available to Hillingdon to develop the promised health hubs to provide urgent and diagnostic health services to Hillingdon residents and, if necessary, to reopen the Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit until long-term solutions are in place.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that Wes Streeting MP had said that the condition of Hillingdon Hospital had been the worst that he had ever seen but Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit (MVUCU) had subsequently been closed. Planning permission for the new hospital had been based on the provision of hospital services in the community. Health partners were expecting (and the new hospital would rely on) investment into the neighbourhood centres and, to this end, Hillingdon had been identified as one of the first 43 areas to pilot the neighbourhood health service programme. However, this programme would focus on how services were delivered rather than how they were funded.

There had been concern raised about the NHS changes and the commitment to the programme without having funding in place to support it. A cross party approach would show the unity of the Council in securing services for Hillingdon residents.

Councillor Punja moved, and Councillor Sansarpuri seconded, the following amendment (additional words in ***bold italics*** and deleted words ~~crossed through~~):

That this Council ***notes residents' concerns about*** expresses its deep disappointment at the closure of the Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit, a service relied upon by thousands of residents. More than 27,000 people signed a petition opposing the decision, yet their views were dismissed, and many believe no meaningful public consultation was undertaken. A recent survey again showed strong public support to retain the Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit. ***but also recognises the significant investment now being made in local NHS services. This includes the Labour Government's £1.39 billion funding for the rebuilding of Hillingdon Hospital, already in its first phase, and the inclusion of Hillingdon in the first wave of 43 areas to receive three new health hubs.***

The closure has taken place before adequate alternative provision has been secured placing a further burden on the Accident & Emergency Unit at Hillingdon Hospital. The rebuilding of the Hospital has been delayed by the Government and the promised health hubs remain years away with no funding having yet been allocated for their construction in Hillingdon.

This Council thanks the Government for prioritising the healthcare of Hillingdon residents - investment that the previous Conservative Government, including under former Prime Minister Boris Johnson, promised but failed to deliver.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Health seeking urgent clarity on when funding will be made available to Hillingdon to develop the promised health hubs to provide urgent and diagnostic health services to Hillingdon residents and, if necessary, to reopen the Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit until long-term solutions are in place.

This Council calls on the NHS Northwest London Integrated Care Board to ensure residents continue to have accessible and appropriate urgent and diagnostic care during this period of transition.

Those speaking in favour of the amendment believed that the amendment told the truth and corrected history whereas the original motion only offered outrage. The Chief Executive of The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust had advised that the Mount Vernon (MV) model had not been clinically sustainable and that it had been treating a lot of patients from outside of the Borough. It was noted that the Pembroke Centre was already providing great services and Hillingdon had been chosen to take part in the first wave of the new health hubs. The closure of the MVUCU had caused some disruption but the Borough was finally getting investment in its NHS services.

The amendment acknowledged residents' concerns but recognised that the MV site was dilapidated. The Conservatives had promised Hillingdon a new hospital but nothing had happened even when Boris Johnson had been the MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip and the Prime Minister. The current Labour MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip had positioned the Hillingdon Hospital rebuild at the front of the queue and the investment had been welcomed.

Those speaking against the amendment noted that MV staff did an incredible job. The amendment looked to silence residents, made no mention of the 27k signature petition that had been drawn up (no Labour Councillors had signed this petition), did not reflect residents' voice and missed the point of the original motion. Residents

were not happy that services were being taken away and it was a shame that the amendment had not sought a middle ground. The Borough wanted reassurance from the Government about when it would receive investment and plans to properly develop the hubs.

The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

Those speaking in support of the original motion noted that when patients attended the MVUCU, they were being seen quickly and were not adding to the congestion at Hillingdon Hospital's Emergency Department or Urgent Treatment Centre. MV had been rated as Excellent in its CQC inspection whereas Hillingdon Hospital had been rated as Requires Improvement. MV provided a local service for local people (including those on the borders of the Borough) and it was unclear why the Unit would be closed when this would put more pressure on Hillingdon Hospital.

Residents had been advised that this was a reconfiguration but this was not the case and consultation on the changes had not been undertaken. Legislation had made provision for the Secretary of State to be able to call this decision in but no action had been taken. The Government had had every opportunity to deliver health hubs but had instead now left Hillingdon residents without services instead of giving local health partners the funds and freedoms to get on with delivering these services. MVUCU should have remained open until the hubs were up and running.

Those speaking against the original motion noted that the closure would be difficult for some residents as something was being taken away from them. However, there were some residents in some areas of the Borough that didn't have any health services at all. The MVUCU had been financially unstable, costing around £1m each year which had had an impact on the whole Trust. In addition, the buildings were tired and cramped and could not provide onsite acute care.

The original motion was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED: That this Council expresses its deep disappointment at the closure of the Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit, a service relied upon by thousands of residents. More than 27,000 people signed a petition opposing the decision, yet their views were dismissed, and many believe no meaningful public consultation was undertaken. A recent survey again showed strong public support to retain the Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit.

The closure has taken place before adequate alternative provision has been secured placing a further burden on the Accident & Emergency Unit at Hillingdon Hospital. The rebuilding of the Hospital has been delayed by the Government and the promised health hubs remain years away with no funding having yet been allocated for their construction in Hillingdon.

This Council therefore calls on the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Health seeking urgent clarity on when funding will be made available to Hillingdon to develop the promised health hubs to provide urgent and diagnostic health services to Hillingdon residents and, if necessary, to reopen the Mount Vernon Urgent Care Unit until long-term solutions are in place.

11.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR GARELICK (*held over from Council meeting on 11 September 2025*)

Councillor Garelick moved, and Councillor Mathers seconded, the following motion:

That this Council recognises that the presentation and cleanliness of our residential streets across the whole borough have been in sharp decline this year, clearly indicating that the Council's financial troubles are having a significant impact on our frontline services such as refuse collection, street cleansing, and weed removal.

Therefore, this Council calls on the administration to take action to improve these frontline services, in order to keep our streets clean and restore a sense of pride in our communities.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that residents were frustrated, angry and embarrassed about the condition and state of Hillingdon's streets which needed to be cleaned up. This was not thought to be the street cleaning teams' fault but had been a short-sighted move, driven by budget cuts to deliver efficiencies which had had a big impact on residents. The Council had started to charge residents for bulky waste and green waste collections (which had proved to be a false economy) and had stopped closing some parks at night to save money. Some residents in the south of the Borough did not see street sweepers and residents had seen a sharp decline in basic services alongside an increase in their Council Tax.

Residents had been submitting complaints about the litter around bus stops and shops and deserved a commitment to help restore pride in their community. Action needed to be undertaken to work with local businesses to reduce packaging and with HMO landlords. Neglected streets sent a message that no one cared about the area which then attracted fly tipping and resulted in further neglect. There were no campaigns to address the condition of the Borough's roads and the prohibition notices on lampposts were small and no fines were issued which meant that nothing changed. The number of fly tipping hotspots had been multiplying every week and, as there were only six enforcement officers for the whole Borough, it was suggested that mobile CCTV be utilised to help deal with this increase.

Those speaking against the motion noted that it did not reflect the reality of services. Complaints had reduced by 17%, £1.5m had been raised through the green waste collection charges and seven new street sweepers had been put into operation. A new Love Clean Streets app would soon be rolled out and weed spraying had been completed across the Borough. Hillingdon had been rated as the seventh best performing local authority in London for recycling and additional action was being investigated to further improve efficiency.

Everyone agreed that residents deserved clean streets. Members on the Council's Residents' Services Select Committee had been briefed on the scale of pressures and the lack of funds and, despite this, Hillingdon had delivered exceptionally well and had continued its weekly waste collections. It was noted that fly tipping had not increased following the introduction of the green waste charge.

The motion was put to the vote and lost.

11.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR CURLING

Councillor Curling moved, and Councillor Gardner seconded, the following motion:

That this Council expresses its concern and disappointment that the Labour Government have u-turned on the issue of mandating developers to install

'Swift bricks' in all new developments. This Council also notes the campaigns by organisations such as the RSPB and other rare bird organisations for the inclusion of swift bricks in all new developments.

As a responsible council and one that believes that we should do all that we can to protect wildlife, rare birds, and generally enhance our biodiversity, this Council calls on the Cabinet to consider ways in which we could either introduce our own local policy on swift bricks or at least encourage developers to include them on future new builds.

Those speaking in support of the motion believed that it should not be a contentious matter. Some places that birds used to nest were no longer accessible and Steve Reed MP (the former Environment Secretary) had now withdrawn his support for 'Swift bricks' since becoming the Housing Secretary, despite each only costing around £30. It was hoped that a local arrangement could be agreed. A new flatted development would only need 4-10 Swift bricks and a house would need about two so this would not result in huge costs.

Those speaking against the motion advised that they supported wildlife and, whilst the spirit of the motion was welcomed, any action taken needed to be practical and not add complexity. The Government decision had recognised that one size would not fit all and that it would be important not to hinder home building. The requirement for Swift bricks would increase the cost of affordable homes at a time when the number of affordable homes needed to increase. Biodiversity could be delivered through a range of initiatives that could really make a difference.

The motion was put to the vote and lost.

11.3 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PUNJA

Councillor Punja moved, and Councillor Mathers seconded, the following motion:

That this Council notes the findings of the October/November 2025 Budget Monitoring Report, which confirm the comprehensive financial failure of this Conservative administration, specifically:

- Hillingdon is now dependent on Exceptional Financial Support from the Labour Government simply to remain a going concern.
- The Administration has failed to deliver its £34m in-year savings, resulting in a £36m overspend at Month 6 and rising.
- Reserves have collapsed from +£70m to -£34.5m, a total deterioration of £104.5m under this administration.
- The Council's financial position is now unsafe and unsustainable, with no general fund unearmarked reserves left, depleted general
- reserves, mismanaged operational overspend, future asset sales with the only option being anticipated Labour government support.
- Repeated failures - from the FMP and GRIP programme to green waste subscription - have further destabilised the Council's finances, placing the burden of Conservative mismanagement squarely on Hillingdon residents.

That this Council also acknowledges that any lawful budget must be:

1. that the budget should be balanced or sustainable in-year
2. that the budget should be supported by adequate reserves to manage financial risk

This Administration's budget meets neither test nor can any longer credibly be defended as lawful.

Therefore, this Council believes the situation is critical and requests the relevant Statutory Officers to urgently consider:

1. Issuing a Section 114 Report, under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, recognising that the Council has an unlawful, unbalanced budget that fails the 2 binary tests and cannot meet its expenditure commitments
2. At the same time, issuing a Section 5 Report under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, confirming the full legal implications and consequences and advising on direct, indirect and consequential implications for the Council and Councillors on the failures of governance that have led to this position.
3. Requesting a Report in the Public Interest (RIPI), commissioned under the Local Audit and Accountability Act. To be undertaken by the Council's external auditor (EY) with independent oversight from CIPFA, ensuring full objectivity and compliance with the statutory Best Value duty (Section 3, Local Government Act 1999). The RIPI – to be reported publicly to Full Council in January 2026 - must provide an unqualified, independent account of:
 - The collapse of reserves from +£70m to –£34.5m, a deterioration of £104.5m under this administration.
 - The Month 6 overspend, failure to deliver savings, and decisions leading to the Council's effective insolvency.
 - An examination of the past 15 years of “delivered” savings against budgeted savings, including whether the administration's repeated claims of balanced budgets were in fact undelivered savings and overspends covered up by the year-on-year depletion of reserves.
 - The governance, oversight and leadership failures that enabled this financial collapse.
4. Establishing an Emergency Financial Recovery Team, working directly under the control of central government, external inspectors and statutory officers to halt further financial deterioration and stabilise the authority.
5. Producing a Wednesbury Compliance Report. The Monitoring Officer to provide written legal advice to Full Council setting out the personal legal risks to the Administration and all Members who voted for the February 2025 Budget, should their decisions be found to violate the Wednesbury principles of reasonableness, given the escalating negative reserves - including the additional £13.9m deterioration in the last two months alone under this Administration.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that the Administration had inherited £70m of useable reserves which had now gone. Various Cabinet Members had repeatedly stated that the Council had been in a stable financial position, that Section 114 (S114) was not happening, that every London Borough had been in the same financial position, that the budget had been robust and the reserves were adequate and that EFS was prudential stewardship. The evidence of this assurance that everything was fine had been recorded despite everything not being fine and the Administration's response to institutional failure had been to set unreasonable budgets.

Over £14m of accounting adjustments had been wiped out straight away and zero savings had been delivered. The SEND deficit, high cost acquisitions and scrapping

Goss had contributed to the reduction in Hillingdon's reserves but there were questions over where the money had gone and when the non-essential spend would end. An independent audit would identify what had happened and why as it appeared that the Council's finances had failed by choice, not chance.

It was reiterated that the motion sought a S114 report, not a request to issue a S114 notice and it was queried why the motion would be rejected if the Administration had nothing to hide. The Government had cut local government to the bone for a decade yet the Administration had been blaming everyone but themselves for the Council's current financial situation.

Those speaking against the motion noted that it would force officers to spend time doing things that they did not have time for and would not meet the Wednesbury principle of reasonableness. Members had received a large amount of paperwork in relation to the last budget, the Audit Committee had been scrutinising the action being taken and progress made and all Select Committees had been looking at the budgets within their remits. The Labour motion would enable the Government to raise more money off of Hillingdon residents. It was suggested that the motion smacked of political opportunism as a S114 would be disastrous for residents and staff and should be avoided at all costs.

At 10.30pm, Councillor R Mills moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, that the meeting continue so that Agenda Item 11.3 (the final item on the agenda) could be concluded.

The motion was carried.

Councillor R Mills moved Standing Order 13j, that the question be now put. The motion was seconded by Councillor Edwards and carried.

The motion was put to the vote and lost.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.38 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Lloyd White, Head of Democratic Services on democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.