

Minutes

COUNCIL

10 September 2015

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



Councillor George Cooper (Mayor)
Councillor John Hensley (Deputy Mayor)

	<p>MEMBERS PRESENT:</p> <p>Councillors: Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana Jem Duducu Peter Money Lynne Allen Janet Duncan Carol Melvin Teji Barnes Tony Eginton Douglas Mills Jonathan Bianco Duncan Flynn Richard Mills Mohinder Birah Neil Fyfe John Morgan Wayne Bridges Janet Gardner John Morse Tony Burles Narinder Garg Susan O'Brien Keith Burrows Dominic Gilham John Oswell Roy Chamdal Raymond Graham Jane Palmer Alan Chapman Becky Haggart Ray Puddifoot MBE Judith Cooper Henry Higgins John Riley Philip Corthorne Patricia Jackson Robin Sansarpuri Brian Crowe Phoday Jarjussey Scott Seaman-Digby Peter Curling Allan Kauffman David Simmonds CBE Catherine Dann Judy Kelly Jagjit Singh Peter Davis Manjit Khatra Brian Stead Nick Denys Kuldeep Lakhmana Jan Sweeting Kanwal Dheer Eddie Lavery Michael White Jazz Dhillon Richard Lewis David Yarrow Jas Dhot Michael Markham</p>
	<p>OFFICERS PRESENT: Jean Palmer, Paul Whaymand, Tony Zaman, Chris Mansfield, Raj Alagh, Lloyd White, Mike Liddiard and Beth Rainey and Nikki O'Halloran</p>
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors East, Edwards, Khursheed and Nelson.</p>
2.	<p>MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2015 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
3.	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor advised that an illuminated address had been prepared and presented to the palace to commemorate Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II becoming the longest serving monarch in Britain.</p> <p>It was noted that the Mayor had attended a wide range of events since the last</p>

Council meeting including the Lord Mayor of London's Annual Service at St Paul's Cathedral, charcoal burning at Ruislip Woods and a visit to a care home that had installed a small pub for use by its residents and their visitors.

The Leader of the Council congratulated Councillor David Simmonds on being awarded a CBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List. He stated that Councillor Simmonds had been the best Deputy a Leader could have wished for, a knowledgeable Cabinet Member and an excellent Ward Councillor. Councillor Simmonds had also represented local government on a national level with regard to children's services issues. Councillor Simmonds was the second youngest recipient of the CBE and that he was a credit to the Council.

On behalf of the Labour Group, Councillor Oswell also congratulated Councillor Simmonds on being awarded the CBE.

Councillor Simmonds thanked the Leader of the Council and the Deputy Leader of the Labour Group for their kind comments. He believed that the CBE was a reflection of the excellent work undertaken by the whole team in Hillingdon and the support that they had provided him. He noted that the Borough had a great deal to be proud of.

4. **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES** (*Agenda Item 5*)

Councillor Puddifoot moved the recommendation as set out in the Order of Business. The motion as seconded by Councillor Simmonds and it was:

RESOLVED: That the urgency decisions detailed in the report be noted.

5. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS** (*Agenda Item 6*)

6.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GILHAM TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES - COUNCILLOR SIMMONDS

"What powers does the Council have for tackling breaches of planning permission by schools?"

Councillor Simmonds noted that, in recent years, there had been breaches of planning conditions in relation to school developments in Hillingdon, the most high profile of which had been at St John's school in Northwood. Enforcement action had been taken and the school had complied with the notice.

Over recent weeks, Councillor Simmonds had been made aware of the removal of two 75 year old lime trees and further work that had been undertaken at the front of the Whitehall Schools site in Uxbridge. The trees were protected by a planning condition and would be difficult to replace, Councillor Simmonds was currently talking to officers about action that could be taken by the Council.

There was no supplementary question.

6.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR EGINTON TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES - COUNCILLOR SIMMONDS

"On 5 August 2015, you and the Leader of the Council made a decision to change fees for Early Years Centres which reduced the discount for disadvantaged families

from 15% to 10%. Can you explain how this will encourage children from such families to participate in good quality childcare?"

Councillor Simmonds responded that, many years ago, the Schools Forum had agreed to maintain the fees to enable disadvantaged families to continue to access Early Years Centres. As a number of Centres were facing closure, the Council had undertaken a consultation which had resulted in an agreement with several schools to make a financial contribution that had held for some time.

However, the Schools Forum, of which Councillor Eginton was a member, had recently withdrawn funding from the Early Years Centres at short notice. As a result, the Council had looked at possible ways forward to help reduce the impact on disadvantaged families in accessing childcare. By making use of Government funding, the Council had been able to ensure that the Centres remained open and that disadvantaged families were able to access funding for childcare.

Councillor Eginton, by way of a supplementary question, asked why the discount for residents had been removed so that they now paid the same as non-residents.

Councillor Simmonds advised that the Schools Forum decision to increase fees had not been helpful. He noted that the Council's policy was to ensure that the three Early Years Centres (Uxbridge, Nestles and South Ruislip) were charging at least 10% less than providers outside of the Borough. Even after the increase in fees, charges at the Hillingdon Centres were still less than 90% of those in neighbouring boroughs.

6.7 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CHAMDAL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY, COMMERCE AND REGENERATION – COUNCILLOR D.MILLS

"How many Hillingdon First Cards are currently live?"

Councillor D Mills advised that there were currently 180,263 active Hillingdon First cards in the scheme which acted as a constant reminder that residents could access services for less than non-residents.

Councillor Chamdal, by way of a supplementary question, asked how many households with two or more cards were also in receipt of the 25% single person's Council Tax discount.

Councillor D Mills advised that the Corporate Fraud Team had, as part of its work on Single Person Discount (SPD) fraud, been reviewing all Hillingdon First cards issued since April 2014. To date, the Team had checked cards issued between April 2014 and February 2015 and identified 86 cases where SPD had been incorrectly claimed.

The next phase of the work had highlighted 7,847 households which had more than one Hillingdon First card but where SPD was being claimed at the same address. Councillor D Mills acknowledged that there may be genuine reasons for this but that these cases would now be investigated further by the Corporate Fraud Team and, where appropriate, the SPD would be taken away. This could result in additional revenue for the Council of up to £1.6m. Councillor D Mills urged Councillors to encourage residents in this situation to come forward.

6.9 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GARDNER TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING - COUNCILLOR

CORTHORNE

"With the introduction of Universal Credit on the Horizon, are you confident that the support measures that are to be put in place will ensure that all the new claimants who are regarded as vulnerable and in the hard to reach groups, will be given every necessary help prior to the introduction, to ensure that if they want, or in some cases, need, their Housing Benefit will be paid direct to their landlord."

Councillor Corthorne advised that responsibility for the introduction of Universal Credit rested primarily with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and that the first tranche of Universal Credit would be introduced in Hillingdon from 2 November 2015.

The rollout of Universal Credit was being handled very cautiously and was not expected to be completed before 2019/20. The total number of Universal Credit claims in Hillingdon in the period from November 2015 to April 2016 was expected by the DWP to be no more than 1,200. The DWP had informed the Council that the first benefit/tax credit claimants who would transfer onto Universal Credit would be unemployed single people without children and that no individuals with disabilities or pensioners would be in this initial group.

The Government had made a commitment that local support would be made available to help claimants where appropriate, recognising that there would be some people who would require additional support to move to an online system with monthly payments and the responsibility to pay rent to landlords.

The Council was proposing to enter into an agreement with the DWP to provide support to residents claiming Universal Credit between November 2015 and April 2016. As part of this agreement, the Council would receive funding to enable claimants to access support from the Citizens Advice Bureaux to make a claim for Universal Credit. It would also enable claimants who needed it to receive money advice and support and would provide information to DWP on claimants' housing costs to enable the DWP to calculate Universal Credit payments. The DWP estimated that only around 5% of the anticipated 1,200 claimants in the first five months of the rollout would require access to support with online claims or budgeting.

The Council had been hosting forums for landlords. The most recent forum, held in June 2015, included a presentation from the Universal Credit team at the DWP which outlined the Alternative Payment Arrangements which would operate for a minority of claimants who would need to have their rent paid direct to a landlord.

The DWP would be determining the arrangements that could be made and that there would be certain circumstances where direct payments could be made, e.g., in relation to mental health, learning disability, drug/alcohol dependency, homelessness, student halls, domestic violence victims, complex needs, 16/17 year old care leavers. Landlords would be able to apply to the DWP for direct payments if the tenant fell into rent arrears.

Councillor Gardner, by way of a supplementary question, asked how quickly the rent arrears of vulnerable residents would be picked up.

Councillor Corthorne acknowledged that rent arrears were in no one's interest and that the Council would continue to work with the Landlords Forum, the DWP and other agencies to look at the support that would be needed by these vulnerable residents. The Council would be proactive in identifying individuals that might be at risk of falling into rent arrears.

6.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR FLYNN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND BUSINESS SERVICES – COUNCILLOR BIANCO

"Can the Cabinet Member please give an update on the number of Green Flag Awards received this year from the Royal Horticultural Society?"

Councillor Bianco advised that the Council had recently learnt that it had been awarded 34 Green Flags in 2015 for its quality parks and open spaces – an increase of 6 since 2014 (Elephant Park, Hitherbroom Park, Knights Gardens, Shenley Avenue Recreation Ground, The Closes Recreation Ground and Warren Park).

The majority of Hillingdon's Green Flags had been awarded in the south of the Borough and Hillingdon now had the most Green Flag Awards of any local authority in the country.

There was no supplementary question.

6.11 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR LAKHMANA TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR PUDDIFOOT

"Would the Leader of the Council consider going the extra mile with "Putting our Residents First" by negotiating with the NHS Foundation Trust for the use of Hillingdon First cards at our hospital car parks in the Borough?"

Councillor Lakhmana clarified that the question was in relation to The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (THH). Councillor Puddifoot agreed that use of the Hillingdon First card to provide preferential rates for parking had been a great success and demonstrated the administration's commitment to putting its residents first. He and the MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip had met with the THH Chief Executive to discuss parking but stated that they had not raised the issue of preferential parking rates for residents. Using the Hillingdon First card in this way would result in the need for the installation of expensive equipment and was likely, therefore, to not be agreed by the THH Board.

However, the parking issues were not solely about cost but also about capacity. As such, discussions were currently underway to address the problem of temporary and longer term parking.

Councillor Lakhmana asked whether Councillor Puddifoot would consider making the suggestion of preferential parking rates for residents to THH.

Councillor Puddifoot advised that he would mention the suggestion to the THH Chief Executive next time they met but noted that the Trust also served non-residents. The current lack of parking at Hillingdon Hospital would be exacerbated by an increase in the number of births there following the closure of Ealing Hospital maternity services.

6.6 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DUDUCU TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY, COMMERCE AND REGENERATION – COUNCILLOR D.MILLS

"Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that the excellent news that the ARLA development in South Ruislip can now proceed, adds to the overall economic improvement throughout Hillingdon?"

Councillor D Mills agreed that the Arla development in South Ruislip was excellent

news for local residents and a real boost to the local economy. He recognised that the Ward Councillors had been working with the Residents Association and congratulated the Planning Department on the outcome. This would result in a development creating over 500 local jobs, representing an investment of £100m in South Ruislip. This was just one sign of economic improvement in the Borough along with developments in Hayes and other economic improvements at St Andrew's Park in Uxbridge, an exciting development at the Pavilions and the Charter Place refurbishment. As well as the location of an OCADO distribution centre in the Borough, Members were advised that the development of a new business park by Pro Logis at Stockley Park would create an estimated 650 new jobs at no cost to the Council. He congratulated officers and the Planning Committee on this achievement.

Hillingdon was sending out a clear message about cooperation and the plans and policies that it had in place with regard to its expectations for its area. Although it would not happen overnight, Hillingdon did have the workforce, the partners and the geography to continue this path of economic improvement.

Councillor Duducu, by way of a supplementary question, asked whether the Council's partnership with Job Centre Plus had been of benefit to the Borough's residents.

In response, Councillor D Mills stated that moving the Job Centre Plus into the Civic Centre had been one of the Council's greatest successes and had resulted in open days being held jointly to recruit staff for the new ASDA store in Hayes. This culminated in 80% of the 300 jobs at the store being taken by local people. The Hayes ASDA Store Manager had stated that the London Borough of Hillingdon had been the most positive council he had ever encountered with regard to its efforts to support and encourage local people. Councillor D Mills hoped that this move to help residents out of unemployment and into servicing the community could be replicated at the new ASDA store on the Arla site.

6.10 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MORSE TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR PUDDIFOOT

"The Right Honourable George Osborne in his budget statement described the former 11 Group control bunker at Uxbridge as dilapidated and has invested £1M of Government money. Please would the Leader of the Council explain how this prestigious national monument has become dilapidated?"

Councillor Puddifoot advised that construction on the building had started in 1938 and it had become operational in 1939. It became a technical training command in 1958 and then, in 1974, the plotting room was renovated. Since 1975, the building had been used as a forces development asset and a public attraction and had, since it became known as the Battle of Britain Bunker, been managed by The Friends of Number 11(F) Group.

The Bunker had been flooded in 2001 and 2004 and then twice in 2014 when the flood water had reached levels of up to 4ft. Much of the Bunker was not open to the public and was in need of renovation.

Councillor Morse, by way of a supplementary question, asked, as Hillingdon residents were funding nearly 80% of the capital funding of the £4.8m for the site of national importance and he was not aware of any efforts to obtain Lottery or Heritage funding, how the business model would sustain the long term financial viability of this site.

Councillor Puddifoot noted that the auxiliary building had been acquired at no cost to

the Council. Following discussions between the MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Government had agreed to contribute £1m towards renovation work.

Hillingdon had an enviable track record for looking after its heritage and the Council would be applying for Heritage Lottery Funding but, although the match funding was already in place, this process could take quite a long time. It was anticipated that the planned renovation works would produce a state of the art facility with commercial applications to ensure its long term sustainability and funding criteria.

6.8 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR AHMAD-WALLANA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, HEALTH AND HOUSING - COUNCILLOR CORTHORNE

"I understand that Church Road, a new Supported Living Unit, has opened in the borough. Would the Cabinet Member provide an update on how this scheme is progressing and how the parents and carers of residents who use these services can be assured that it is the right approach to providing support?"

Councillor Corthorne outlined the purposes of Supported Living which allowed people to remain in their own homes and able to make their own decisions about how they wanted to live and received help with managing their home. The benefits of supported living were clear and included giving people the security of their own tenancy. It also offered more choice, gave people more responsibility to live independently, could be matched more closely to what people needed and it used local housing and services so people could live close to their family and friends.

Hillingdon had been transforming its offer to residents and, to date, had 193 units of supported living and extra care housing, with another 184 planned over the next 3 years.

Church Road was the latest development; providing accommodation for 6 people with challenging needs. As the new residents moved in, it marked a return back to the Borough for people whose home it had been but who had had to live further away. It provided more independence for those who had been in institutional care for a long time. One of the first new residents to move to Church Road had found it very difficult to live in shared residential care, out of borough and away from his family, which had exacerbated his challenging behaviours. He had returned to Hillingdon's positive behaviour support unit last year and was now delighted to have his own flat, with personalised support that enabled him to deal with his behaviour appropriately. This resident would now be able to access employment and further education in the future and have his family visit frequently now that he was local to them.

Councillor Corthorne advised that there was a traditional overreliance on out of borough placements and that Supported Living would provide a more cost effective and appropriate approach.

There was no supplementary question.

6.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DHOT TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY, COMMERCE AND REGENERATION – COUNCILLOR D.MILLS

"How effective have the Council's policies been in encouraging young people to participate in sports thus helping to combat possible obesity and other health risks?"

Councillor D Mills advised that he was conscious of the data available in relation to obesity amongst young people and where the Borough stood nationally and regionally. The recent investment provided by the Council to encourage sport participation, together with the grant from Sports England, had enabled 18,837 young people to participate in sporting activities over the last twelve months. A range of events and programmes had been undertaken including the Fiesta Programme, summer sport, street games and taster sessions. Councillor D Mills congratulated those who had taken part in the Youth Games which had resulted in the best ever result for Hillingdon.

As girls got older, their interest and participation in sport tended to reduce. 'This Girl Can' was a programme that had been developed to encourage mothers and daughters to jointly return to sporting activity on a regular basis. The challenge was around using the funding available to its best effect and to cover all age groups in the Borough to encourage all residents to be active and healthy.

There was no supplementary question.

6.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CURLING TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR PUDDIFOOT

"Registered disabled people and Blue Badge holders are eligible for exemptions on general hosepipe bans by the water companies, but Hillingdon's allotment policy is to remove taps and to not allow hosepipes to be used by anyone at the council's allotment sites. The Council also provides over 65's with the opportunity to have an allotment plot free of charge, but if they are disabled, the current policy of not allowing hosepipes could prevent them from making best use of their allotment plot. Would the Leader of the Council & Champion for Older people therefore review this policy?"

Councillor Puddifoot advised that the Council was keen to maintain a consistent approach to all of its 35 allotment sites and with all of its plot holders, many of whom were over 65 so received their allotments free of charge.

Taps on the sites had been replaced with automatic filling dip tanks in 2006. Having taps encouraged people to use hosepipes and an excessive amount of water. As such, the Green Spaces Team was keen to lead on conserving water and managed the water usage at each site.

During his 15 years as Leader of the Council, the issue raised by Councillor Curling in his question had never been raised with Councillor Puddifoot by the allotment holders as an issue of concern. Efforts could be made by the Green Spaces Team to move disabled allotment holders closer to the dip tank where this was identified as an issue.

Councillor Curling, by way of a supplementary question, asked why dip tanks had been removed from some allotment sites and requested that Councillor Puddifoot's response be made in writing.

Councillor Puddifoot asked Councillor Curling to provide him with written evidence regarding the alleged removal of the dip tanks so he could ask officers to investigate the matter.

6. MOTIONS (*Agenda Item 7*)

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

"That this Council recognises that the changes made at the Council meeting on 15 January 2015 to the number and location of polling stations in the Borough, made it difficult and confusing for some residents to visit a conveniently located and easily accessible polling station in order to cast their vote at the last General Election.

"Council therefore instructs officers to revisit the recent review of polling stations with the aim of putting residents first and making sure it is as convenient as possible, with ease of access, for them to cast their votes, rather than try to restrict every ward to an arbitrary maximum of three polling stations per ward."

Following debate (Councillors Eginton, Jarjussey, D Mills and Morse), the motion was put to a recorded vote:

Those voting for: Councillors Allen, Birah, Burles, Curling, Dheer, Dhillon, Dhot, Duncan, Eginton, Gardner, Garg, Jarjussey, Khatra, Lakhmana, Money, Morse, Oswell, Sansarpuri, Singh and Sweeting.

Those voting against: The Mayor (Councillor Cooper), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Hensley), Councillors Ahmad-Wallana, Barnes, Bianco, Bridges, Burrows, Chamdal, Chapman, J Cooper, Corthorne, Crowe, Dann, Davis, Denys, Duducu, Flynn, Fyfe, Gilham, Graham, Haggard, Higgins, Jackson, Kauffman, Kelly, Lavery, Lewis, Markham, Melvin, D Mills, R Mills, Morgan, O'Brien, Palmer, Puddifoot, Riley, Seaman-Digby, Simmonds, Stead, White and Yarrow.

The motion was lost.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.50 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 01895 556743. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.