

## Minutes

### COUNCIL

19 November 2020

Meeting held at VIRTUAL - Live on the Council's  
YouTube channel: Hillingdon London



Councillor Teji Barnes (Mayor)  
Councillor Roy Chamdal (Deputy Mayor)

	<p><b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b></p> <p>Councillors: Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana Scott Farley John Morse Lynne Allen Duncan Flynn June Nelson Simon Arnold Janet Gardner Susan O'Brien Jonathan Bianco Martin Goddard John Oswell Mohinder Birah Raymond Graham Jane Palmer Lindsay Bliss Becky Haggar Kerri Prince Wayne Bridges John Hensley Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE Nicola Brightman Henry Higgins Devi Radia Keith Burrows Allan Kauffman John Riley Alan Chapman Kuldeep Lakhmana Paula Rodrigues Farhad Choubedar Eddie Lavery Raju Sansarpuri Judith Cooper Richard Lewis Scott Seaman-Digby Philip Corthorne Heena Makwana David Simmonds CBE Peter Curling Michael Markham Jagjit Singh Nick Denys Stuart Mathers Brian Stead Alan Deville Carol Melvin Colleen Sullivan Jazz Dhillon Ali Milani Jan Sweeting Jas Dhot Douglas Mills Steve Tuckwell Janet Duncan Richard Mills David Yarrow Ian Edwards Peter Money Tony Eginton John Morgan</p>
	<p><b>OFFICERS PRESENT:</b> Fran Beasley, Paul Whaymand, Tony Zaman, Dan Kennedy, Perry Scott, Mike Talbot, Raj Alagh, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon, Beth Rainey and Nikki O'Halloran</p>
29.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Vanessa Hurhangee.</p>
30.	<p><b>MINUTES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2020 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
31.	<p><b>ROLL CALL AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>The Head of Democratic Services asked each Member in alphabetical order to declare that they were present and whether they had any declarations of interest in any matter before Council.</p>

32.	<p><b>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p><b>i) Temporary Suspension of Council Procedure Rules for the Virtual Council Meeting Only</b></p> <p>Councillor Sir Ray Puddifoot moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the recommendation as set out in the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That, under Standing Order 26.1, the specific Standing Orders set out in the report be temporarily suspended for the purposes of holding this virtual Full Council meeting only, with immediate effect.</b></p> <p><b>ii) Urgent Implementation of Decisions</b></p> <p>The recent urgent decisions taken were noted.</p>
33.	<p><b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor advised that Councillor Neil Fyfe, a Ward Councillor in Charville, had passed away at the weekend and that her thoughts were with his family. A minute's silence was held.</p> <p>In the six months since the start of her mayoralty, the Mayor had attended 111 events in person and 26 via Zoom and other electronic platforms. She had also posted 29 videos including 10 weekly vlogs on her YouTube channel since September 2020. Her channel had 92 subscribers, had been watched for 157 hours and had had 15,700 impressions. The Mayor would continue to engage with residents via the various means available.</p> <p><u>Statement from the Leader of the Council</u></p> <p>The Mayor invited the Leader of the Council to update all Members of the Council's ongoing local response to the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>Hillingdon was nearing the end of a year that had seen the Coronavirus pandemic have a major effect on many people's lives across the country. Whilst the Council had needed to adapt and provide some services differently, Hillingdon had continued to deliver services to its residents since the start of the pandemic. Residents continued to send their thanks for the performance of Council staff in many areas of service delivery.</p> <p>As stated at the last Council meeting, Hillingdon's ability to manage finance and business processes had provided a firm base to enable the authority to deal with the ongoing pandemic. This financial year, the Council had budgeted to have just under £28m in balances at year end. By the end of September, the Council had been showing a surplus of £2.5m on the current year's budget, increasing the predicted year end balances to £30.5m.</p> <p>Hillingdon's estimated COVID financial pressure at the end of September had been £3.8m which was the difference between additional costs and income loss and the funding receivable from Government. Apart from balances, the Council had a good level of other reserves which had been earmarked for particular purposes. £9.1m had been earmarked to cover COVID costs.</p>

Whilst there would be additional costs attributable to the current lockdown period, there had also been further Government funding available. Accordingly, there would be no financial problems in the current year due to the Council's balances and earmarked reserves.

Over the coming months, the Council's medium financial forecast would be reviewed to plan appropriately for the coming years. For the avoidance of doubt, the Leader of the Council reiterated that he did not anticipate any reduction in service delivery. Whilst other regions of the country were now exceeding London with regard to new COVID-19 cases, the case level in Hillingdon had risen to place the Borough as the seventh highest of the London boroughs. Between 24 March 2020 and 18 November 2020, there had been 315 death registrations in Hillingdon that had contained suspected COVID as the cause of death. Accordingly, the Council and the community could not become complacent and the Leader urged residents and businesses to continue to follow Government guidelines.

The previous week, the Council had become part of the NHS tracing service. NHS Test and Trace would pass details to the Council of residents that had tested positive but who the NHS had not been able to contact. Once in receipt of this information, the Council would try to make contact by text, phone, email or a visit to capture information about the residents' activities in the days prior to their positive result.

It was anticipated that the temporary mortuary that had been situated at Breakspear Crematorium would be re-established in the coming weeks. The Council had also been asked to provide two vaccination hubs which would be located at Ruislip Young People's Centre in Bury Street, Ruislip and William Byrd Pool in Victoria Lane, Harlington.

The Council would continue to put the health and wellbeing of its residents at the forefront of everything it did. Staff, in all aspects of service from social care to finance and administration, continued to deliver for Hillingdon's residents. Whilst having the best parks and open spaces and the best refuse and recycling service in the country was good news in normal times, it was now more important than ever.

On behalf of the authority and the residents that it represented, the Leader offered his thanks to Council staff for their continued dedication to delivering services to residents. It was important to continue to recognise the severity of the current situation and refrain from the traditional political knock about activities and campaign and concentrate all efforts on COVID-19 and its consequences for all residents. The Leader of the Council was grateful to the Leader of the Opposition for his understanding and support on this.

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

**6.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR RODRIGUES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND THE ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR CORTHORNE:**

*"Would the Cabinet Member please provide details of the national award recently received by Hillingdon's Waste and Recycling Service?"*

Councillor Corthorne advised that the Local Authority Recycling Advisory Committee (LARAC) Celebration Awards had been founded in 1985 to represent the interests of local authorities on recycling, waste and resource management issues. The LARAC

annual Celebration Awards recognised the hard work and showcased best practice across the UK.

Hillingdon had entered the 2020 Team of the Year category highlighting the Council's excellent work during the first months of lockdown to protect its frontline staff whilst continuing to provide waste services without disruption. Unlike most other local authorities, Hillingdon had maintained all of its free weekly services to residents, despite increased waste and recycling being placed out. This had been achieved with the support of the Council's passenger transport team.

Hillingdon residents had been delighted with the Council continuing all services and had showed their appreciation by attaching letters and cards to their waste bags, sending in emails of thanks and clapping the teams as they worked across the Borough.

The awards took place remotely on 14 October 2020 and Hillingdon won its category against strong competition. The Cabinet Member congratulated the team on winning such a prestigious award.

There was no supplementary question.

#### **6.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SWEETING TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:**

*"Why is the Council proposing to build the new secondary school in Ruislip when there is:*

- A greater need for more secondary places in the south of the borough, which is the area which has far fewer and very limited unfilled YR 7 places in its schools compared to schools in the north of the borough.*
- Where there is a greater child and overall population density, (as is evidenced by the attached map (contained in agenda) showing YR7 offers to secondary schools in September 2020).*
- Where there is currently an extremely limited choice for parents living in the south of the borough, which has necessitated the need for many parents applying for and gaining up to 7 Forms of Entry of places in out borough schools*
- Where the thousands of planned additional housing units are likely to increase the child population in the south of the borough even further, especially in the light of the increased housing density requirements of the recently adopted Hillingdon Local Plan Part 2 which is expected to bring forth more housing capacity to this area?"*

Councillor O'Brien advised that a paper had been considered by Cabinet during the previous week regarding the site of a new secondary free school. The report had made it clear that the proposal for a new free school in the north of the Borough had been directed by the Department for Education (DfE) and not the Council. Any newly built school was now legally required to be a free school which was directly funded by the Government and was not run by the local authority. A free school would typically be an academy-type school which had its own direction and autonomy.

The DfE had identified the need for new schools within its forward plan. Bids were then invited and decided by the DfE which then managed and funded the free school programme. Like many other authorities in London, Hillingdon had experienced a

significant rise in demand for school places over the last decade. The Council had a statutory obligation to offer a school place to all children that needed one that were resident in the Borough. To meet the needs of residents, the Council had been successful in its Building Schools for the Future programme delivering a multi-million pound school expansion programme to increase forms of entry in primary schools across the Borough including three new primary schools.

The number of children needing a primary school place now appeared to have stabilised but remained consistently high. The increased demand for new school places had moved into secondary schools and the Council had already successfully expanded a number of existing schools. This included rebuilding and/or expanding Northwood School, Vyners School and Ruislip High School in the north of the Borough. Oakwood School and Swakeleys School had been rebuilt and expanded in the centre of the Borough. The Council was also currently working with the DfE to expand Harlington School in the south of the Borough.

Given the rising demand for school places, the DfE invited bids in 2016 for secondary free schools in Hillingdon and had agreed two bids, both in the north of the Borough. No bids for secondary free schools had been received or approved by the DfE for the south of the Borough. The DfE had recently reviewed school expansion in the Borough and adjacent areas and had decided to progress with just one bid: Bishop Arden from the Veritas Academy Trust which oversaw Bishop Ramsay School. A new school from an outstanding provider would increase the total number of school places and the choice available across the Borough.

Education case law was clear that parents were able to freely choose to apply for any school. There were more secondary schools in the south of the Borough which provided local choice for local families. Once a child reached secondary school, distances became less of a priority and most Hillingdon secondary pupils travelled within a reasonable distance from home to school. This reflected each family's own reasons, including preferences for selective and faith schools, which could mean a longer travel distance from home to school for these pupils based on their choice of school which some families were prepared to do.

The Council had a statutory duty to have a school place available for every child that lived in the Borough. Therefore, Council officers scrutinised, reviewed and updated its school places forecast using population data forecasts from the GLA and new housing development data to ensure that the Council could meet its obligations. The need for additional primary and secondary school places remained constantly under review, looking at the final educational census figures that were reported back every October, taking into account changing birth rates, migration and changes in the economy which might affect the choices made by families in relation to where they lived as well as the impact of new residential development.

Families wanted good quality educational provision and Hillingdon aimed to provide that.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Sweeting stated that the response had not taken into account the very latest statistical information regarding demand in the north of the Borough compared with demand in the south. She asked whether the Council had heeded the Government recommendation to leave 5% of places unfilled and if Hillingdon would work constructively with Government, DfE and others to seek to provide a second new secondary school in the south of the Borough so that parents living in the South of the Borough would no longer need to seek places at schools in

the North of the Borough or at out Borough schools due to lack of places and choice as was currently the situation.

Councillor O'Brien stated that the Council was constantly reviewing the situation and forensically looking at forecasts to ensure that school places were available for every child that lived in the Borough. She advised that the query would be investigated further to see how the matter could be moved forward.

**6.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MORGAN TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE, PROPERTY AND BUSINESS SERVICES – COUNCILLOR BIANCO:**

*“Could the Cabinet Member please give us his annual update on the success or otherwise of the Borough in this year’s awards of Green Flags?”*

Councillor Bianco advised that his annual update on this year’s Green Flag awards had again been a good news story with the total number of Green Flags in Hillingdon increasing from 55 to 60. The new flags had been achieved in Fairway Recreation Ground, Stonefield Park, Field End Recreation Ground, Highgrove Woods and Hale Field Park.

The Council had made a number of ecological and recreational improvements in Field End Recreation Ground, with recent additions including a new skate park and 5,000 new trees to benefit the environment and counter the damaging effects of climate change. In addition, Hale Field Park had opened to the public in the summer of 2019. As part of a planning agreement for a Stockley Park development, the previously derelict land had been regenerated by Prologis and handed back to the Council as public amenity space.

Gaining Green Flags for 60 open spaces had highlighted the Council’s commitment to maintaining its green spaces for residents so that they were able to use good quality facilities. These green spaces had been particularly useful for those residents who did not have access to their own garden.

Of the 60 Green Flags that had been awarded, 22 had been in the north of the Borough and 38 had been in the south. Each of these green spaces had to be re-evaluated every year during the Green Flag process.

The Cabinet Member thanked the Green Spaces team for their hard work and also thanked the residents for the part that they had played in achieving these Green Flags. He looked forward to raising the flags with the Mayor at some point in the New Year.

There was no supplementary question.

**6.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR COOPER TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, CHILDREN AND YOUTH SERVICES - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:**

*“Can the Cabinet Member tell us how the Council has supported Schools to return in the next academic year?”*

Councillor O'Brien advised that, following the closure of schools earlier in the year, in line with Government guidance and subsequent partial reopening, the Council had

supported all schools in the Borough to successfully open fully and safely for all pupils from the start of the new school year in September. A wide range of Council services had supported this effort which included:

- providing advice and support and keeping lines of communication and engagement open for schools;
- issuing timely advice and guidance to all head teachers in the Borough to ensure compliance with changing Government guidelines;
- supporting schools to complete risk assessments before the start of the new school year and to make changes to the way schools operated to minimise the risk of infection, including staggering start and finish times, enhancing cleaning regimes and providing pavement distancing markers outside school premises;
- making PPE available to all schools irrespective of their designation;
- providing regular communications and briefings with head teachers and school governors;
- promoting walking and cycling to school to reduce the need to use public transport where possible;
- delivering a communications campaign to residents, in line with Government messages on children returning to school following the summer break, to ensure that as many pupils as possible returned to the classroom;
- providing advice and guidance to schools to access national and local resources and technology offers to ensure schools were fully equipped to provide home learning arrangements to pupils who could not be in school. For those occasions when children needed to self-isolate, the Council had worked with schools in July 2020 to ensure vulnerable children and those from low income families had access to IT equipment to continue learning from home; and
- closely monitoring pupil attendance and working with schools and social care services to ensure that children were in school, wherever possible.

The Council continued to work closely with all schools in the Borough to keep schools open and safe, in line with Government guidelines. The Council continued to be committed to putting residents first and had worked tirelessly during the pandemic to keep essential Council services running for residents and businesses during this difficult time, adhering strictly to Government COVID-19 guidance whilst helping to keep residents safe.

There was no supplementary question.

35. **MOTIONS** (*Agenda Item 7*)

**7.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MATHERS**

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

“That this Council believes it is important to engage residents in local decision making and acknowledges that the pandemic has made it understandably more difficult for residents to engage in local democratic processes.

“This Council recognises the importance of residents’ petitions in playing a valuable part in enabling residents to resolve issues and concerns they face within our borough.

“Therefore, this Council resolves to reduce the qualifying criteria of the number of required signatures for online petitions from 100 signatories to the current

level for paper petitions of 20 signatories.

“This Council further instructs Cabinet to undertake an urgent review to enable the online petition process to be made as accessible as possible by, for example,

- allowing petitioners to start a petition and those signing the petition to do so without having to create a separate login but by simply using their personal details.
- ensuring that online petition pages are part of the new formatted website rather than the older version.”

Following debate (Councillors Duncan, Eginton and Lewis), the motion was put to the vote. The motion was lost.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.29 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.