

Minutes

COUNCIL

13 January 2022

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



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Councillor Roy Chamdal (Mayor)
Councillor Becky Haggar (Deputy Mayor)

	<p>MEMBERS PRESENT:</p> <p>Councillors: Lynne Allen Scott Farley John Morgan Teji Barnes Duncan Flynn John Morse Jonathan Bianco Janet Gardner Susan O'Brien Lindsay Bliss Martin Goddard Jane Palmer Wayne Bridges John Hensley Kerri Prince Nicola Brightman Henry Higgins Devi Radia Alan Chapman Allan Kauffman John Riley Farhad Choubedar Kuldeep Lakhmana Paula Rodrigues Judith Cooper Eddie Lavery Raju Sansarpuri Philip Corthorne Richard Lewis Scott Seaman-Digby Peter Curling Heena Makwana David Simmonds CBE Darran Davies Stuart Mathers Colleen Sullivan Nick Denys Carol Melvin Jan Sweeting Jazz Dhillon Ali Milani Steve Tuckwell Janet Duncan Douglas Mills David Yarrow Ian Edwards Richard Mills Tony Eginton Peter Money</p>
	<p>OFFICERS PRESENT: Tony Zaman, Lloyd White, Glen Egan, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon, Sue Albu and Nikki O'Halloran</p>
44.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ahmad-Wallana, Arnold, Birah, Burrows, Deville, Dhot, Graham, Hurhangee, Markham, Nelson, Oswell, Sir Ray Puddifoot, Singh and Stead.</p>
45.	<p>MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2021 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
46.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Mathers declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10.3, subject to the agreement of his appointment to the Major Applications Planning Committee at Agenda Item 5, and stayed in the room and spoke on the item. Councillor Mathers advised that he would not be taking part in the determination of any planning application in relation to the site mentioned in Agenda Item 10.3.</p> <p>Councillor Allen declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 10.1, as she was a</p>

	<p>member of the MOPAC Independent Advisory Group, and remained in the room during the consideration thereof.</p>
47.	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor advised that he had attended the New Year's Day Parade which had been pared down this year due to the pandemic. He thanked those who had sent him Christmas cards and noted that his Christmas card, which had been designed by children in care, had been well received. The Mayor had attended a number of events to switch on Christmas lights and a number of Christmas teas.</p> <p>The Mayor noted that it had been just over 35 years since he first visited the Civic Centre which was when he had married the Mayoress.</p>
48.	<p>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>(i) CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS 2021/22</p> <p>Councillor Curling moved, and Councillor Dhillon seconded, the recommendation as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the following change to committee memberships for 2021/2022, as proposed by the Labour Group, be approved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Applications Planning Committee – Councillor Mathers to replace Councillor Dhot • Borough Planning Committee – Councillor Dhillon to replace Councillor Birah • Registration and Appeals Committee – Councillor Mathers to replace Councillor Dhot (Labour Lead)
49.	<p>COUNCIL TAX BASE AND BUSINESS RATES FORECAST 2022/2023 (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Goddard moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the recommendations as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the report of the Corporate Director of Finance for the calculation of the Council Taxbase and the Business Rates Forecast be approved. b) in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Taxbase) (England) Regulations 2012 the amount calculated by the London Borough of Hillingdon as its Council Taxbase for 2022/23 shall be 103,840. c) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance to submit the 2022/23 NNDR1 return to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) and the Greater London Authority (GLA). d) the continuation of the Council's policy of passporting Government discounts and reliefs applied to Business Rates to the ratepayer be approved.
50.	<p>PUBLIC SECTOR AUDIT APPOINTMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p>

Councillor Goddard moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the recommendation as set out on the Order of Business and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Council opt into the Public Sector Audit Appointments national scheme for the provision of external audit services.

51. **ADOPTION OF THE HOUSING STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2025/26** (*Agenda Item 8*)

Councillor Lavery moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the recommendation as set out on the Order of Business and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Borough's Housing Strategy 2021/22 to 2025/26, be adopted as part of the Council's policy framework.

52. **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS** (*Agenda Item 9*)

9.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SULLIVAN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE - COUNCILLOR PALMER:

"Could the Cabinet Member please give an update on the Stronger Families Hub and the benefit of this approach for our families?"

Councillor Palmer advised that she had great pride in, and respect for, all staff in health and social care. The Stronger Families Hub had been launched in the previous year and had provided a 24/7 service which had been well received by residents. Using a partnership approach, families had been provided with a reassuring voice, advice and support to help with a range of issues.

Moving to a Stronger Families Hub put families first by providing them with a single point of contact that had a single telephone number, email address and online referral form. The Hub had responded to an increase in demand by strengthening processes and had become a gateway for residents by making sure that early help and safeguarding priorities were aligned.

Locality teams had been strategically located across the Borough based on demand. It was anticipated that the timely support being offered would help to prevent escalation and, therefore, demands on other services. Work would be continued to develop and strengthen this support further.

Councillor Palmer thanked the Interim Chief Executive and the social care team for their work in remodelling service delivery, which would have been particularly challenging during the pandemic.

There was no supplementary question.

9.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PRINCE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE - COUNCILLOR GODDARD:

"Can the Cabinet Member please inform us how the Council has promoted the draft budget consultation to residents?"

Councillor Goddard advised that the process had been transparent. The draft budget had been considered by Cabinet and further information had been included on the relevant agenda as well as publicised through a range of media, including Hillingdon People and press releases. In addition, the Council's Select Committees were currently reviewing the budget and would submit their comments to Cabinet in February. Residents had been invited to participate in the consultation and submit comments by 30 January 2022.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Prince asked whether the poor response to the consultation (there had only been 22 public responses to the consultation when this question had been submitted) had been as a result of poor promotion or a political decision to avoid publicising the Council's true financial position.

Councillor Goddard advised that, despite having a huge public relations machine and huge budget, the Mayor of London had only given around four weeks over the Christmas period for consultation on his budget and had been misleading regarding the precept.

Since the Council agenda had been published, additional public comments had been submitted bringing the current total to 48. It was noted that 75% of respondents had been satisfied with the proposals and it was suggested that the silent majority that had not participated in the consultation had been happy with the financial controls and budget process.

9.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BRIDGES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FAMILIES, EDUCATION AND WELLBEING - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:

"Could the Cabinet Member please update Council on the unprecedented admissions for in-year school places to children in the Borough for this academic year?"

Councillor O'Brien advised that, for September 2021, Hillingdon had processed 7,271 reception and Year 1 school place applications. On top of this, there had also been more than 500 in-year applications processed. By December 2021, there had already been 1,754 in-year applications. It was noted that, although there had been an excessive number of in-year applications, there had also been a large number of children leaving the area which had caused churn.

Meetings had been undertaken in relation to placing vulnerable children and there had been a 36% increase in the number of children been placed through the Fair Access Panel (91). 66 children were currently awaiting confirmation of a school place.

Officers had had to work quickly to help schools and children to identify places to meet the demand. Despite this pressure, applications had been processed quickly and all children had continued to be offered places within a reasonable timeframe.

Councillor O'Brien thanked the officers for their dedication and also thanked the schools for their work.

There was no supplementary question.

9.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR EGINTON TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FAMILIES, EDUCATION AND WELLBEING - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:

"The London Borough of Hillingdon is negotiating with the Department for Education to enter into a Safety Valve agreement. It is hoped that this agreement will provide Central Government assistance to reduce the cumulative deficit on Hillingdon's Dedicated Schools Grant which is expected to reach at least £46 million in 2024. That is equivalent to £150 for each and every resident in Hillingdon. Can the Cabinet Member please explain the reasons and responsibility for causing the deficit?"

Councillor O'Brien advised that the situation had been compounded by funding pressures as well as an increase in the identification of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) and changes to the funding methods. In 2014/15, the high needs population had been 1,503. By April 2021, the number of individuals with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) had risen to 2,855 (an increase of 1,352 in five years).

The increase in EHCPs had started in 2015/16 following an extension to the SEN provision in 2014 and had resulted in a deficit of £3.2m. In 2017/18, the Council had implemented funding transfers of £11.5m from the schools block to the high needs block and changes to the national funding formula had been implemented. Subsequent disapplication requests by the Council had not been approved by the Education and Skills Funds Agency.

In 2020, Hillingdon's high needs funding had been identified as the fourth lowest in London (28th out of 32 boroughs). To mitigate the pressures on schools-based budgets, SEN pre-statutory pathways had been developed.

There had been an increase in the number of children with SEN and therefore an increase in the demand for places in SEN schools. There had also been a number of children being moved from mainstream schools to special schools increasing pressure on existing provision.

As it was more productive to work collaboratively to find solutions, officers had been working with the Department for Education. Work was currently underway to develop additional local specialist places, improve support and inclusion within the mainstream sector, reduce reliance on the independent special school sector, improve the support for parents of children aged 0-5 and increase pre-statutory pathways to meet needs prior to starting an EHCP. Everyone wanted what was best for the children in the Borough.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Eginton asked whether the Department of Education had been informed of the failure of the Council to open the special resource provision for children with special needs at Ruislip High School. This had meant that other schools had been considering closing their special resource provision.

Councillor O'Brien advised that the Council was currently in negotiations with Ruislip High School in relation to this matter as well as with other schools. It was intended that there would be a specialist provision and the Council would continue to work with Ruislip High School as well as other schools in the Borough to ensure that all of Hillingdon's young people had a place in a school.

53. **MOTIONS** (*Agenda Item 10*)

10.4 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR LAVERY

Councillor Lavery moved, and Councillor D Mills seconded, the following motion:

That this Council commits to maintaining a weekly, free at point of use waste collection service for general, mixed recycling, food and green waste. We reject the imposition of multiple wheelie bins as they are unsightly, not cost effective and their use puts at risk the valued weekly collection service that enjoys strong support from residents who value our straightforward collection method.

This Council notes the success of the food rollout programme and the ambitious plans to increase the take up of this service.

Councillor Prince proposed the following amendment:

“This Council recognises that residents in flats are not receiving the standard of waste collection that this Council advertises, and urges the Cabinet member to request a report on the specific issues of waste and collection faced by residents who reside in flats.

“This Council also thanks the waste and recycling staff team for their hard work, especially during the pandemic and the challenges that it brought.”

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Curling.

During the debate, those in support of the motion noted that Hillingdon would continue to provide a free weekly collection of waste and recycling to its residents. Although some residents had purchased their own wheelie bins, there were no plans for the Council to introduce wheelie bins across the Borough.

The food waste collection service continued to be expanded across the Borough and work had been undertaken to look at the inclusion of flatted developments in this scheme. Residents had continued to benefit from a textile and small electrical appliance collection service.

Members speaking in favour of the amendment noted that, although the value to residents of the service was not underestimated, there was always room for improvement, particularly in relation to the service received by those living in flats. In addition, it was noted that there were times when weekly street cleaning was undertaken before the bin collection which meant that any resultant waste strewn across the road/pavement would not be cleared up until the following week.

The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

Members noted the need to maintain the simplicity of the scheme and weekly collections and to recognise the risk of changing the service too much.

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

RESOLVED: That this Council commits to maintaining a weekly, free at point of use waste collection service for general, mixed recycling, food and green waste. We reject the imposition of multiple wheelie bins as they are unsightly, not cost effective and their use puts at risk the valued weekly collection service that enjoys strong support from residents who value our straightforward collection method. This Council notes the success of the food rollout programme and the ambitious plans to increase the take up of this service.

10.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PRINCE

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

That this Council notes that street lighting is one the many tools that can be used to reduce crime and promote safety on our streets.

This Council also notes the tragic abductions, rapes, murders and assaults that have taken place recently, and recognises the need to take necessary action to

reduce crime and increase public safety.

This Council agrees with the Government that there is evidence on how street lighting can be effective at improving feeling of safety in public places, as well as preventing crimes.

This Council welcomes the initiatives created by the Mayor of London's Office to challenge violent offences and street safety.

This Council calls on Cabinet to:

- Proactively work with MOPAC, ward Councillors, residents, and other relevant partners to identify the areas in the borough that require increased street lighting.
- To develop a strategy for publication for improving safety through street lighting.

Councillors speaking in support of the motion expressed concern regarding the increase in violent crime and, although it was recognised that improved street lighting would not prevent all violence, it was thought that it might prevent some and would therefore help residents to feel safer. In addition, it was mooted that improved street lighting would reduce crime and reduce the number vehicle collisions.

Those speaking against the motion suggested that support of the motion would take resources away from dealing with issues such as anti-social behaviour. Council officers and the relevant Cabinet Members worked closely with the policing team on a range of initiatives to improve public safety. CCTV had been expanded across the Borough with an excellent monitoring centre. Any increase in street lighting would need to be balanced against resultant light pollution.

The motion was put to the vote and lost.

10.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MATHERS

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

That this Council notes the increase in food banks use around the country and in Hillingdon over recent years, as households feel the squeeze of rising inflation and a decade of suppressed wages.

This Council also notes the increasingly worrying concern of fuel poverty with a growing number of Hillingdon residents being fuel poor with the situation only due to get worse with energy price hikes later this year.

This Council notes that the levels of child poverty in the borough means a number of children struggle to thrive in education and health outcomes.

This Council notes that the highest single reason for poverty is 'low income', made harder by the Conservative Government's recent cut of £20 per week to Universal Credit.

This Council believes it is time for change and that recognising socio-economic deprivation is an equality issue.

Therefore, this Council declares a Poverty Emergency, noting the progress made of the Climate Emergency declaration, and believes that a commitment

to a people and planet approach will aid recovery and renewal in these difficult times of the pandemic and beyond.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- ensure that the Poverty Action Plan workstream sits alongside the Climate Change action plan workstream.
- develop a poverty action strategy which takes a people and planet approach, including engaging and working with residents through an 'ending poverty' forum made up of residents and relevant partner organisations.
- take a collaborative and evidence-based approach, working more closely with health partners, trade unions, employers, education settings, the voluntary sector and community groups.
- adopt the good practice of other local government bodies and councils that have made significant progress in this area.

Members in support of the motion noted that, with fuel bills going up and the financial pressure on households increasing, some families had been struggling to put food on the table. It was noted that Hammersmith had introduced an initiative to provide free school meals for children over the school holidays to address this situation and it was suggested that Hillingdon introduce something similar.

Those speaking against the motion recognised that some residents were facing increasing difficulties and noted that help for these families was being targeted through schools. As poverty was not a single issue, a wide range of support was available to help these families in Hillingdon, including housing grants and the Council Tax discretionary fund.

Concern was expressed that some families needed the practical help provided by food banks and that Members should not be playing politics with this service. Hillingdon had lower unemployment than other areas and residents recognised that finding work would be one route out of poverty.

The motion was put to a recorded vote:

Those voting for: Councillors Allen, Bliss, Curling, Dhillon, Duncan, Eginton, Farley, Gardner, Lakhmana, Mathers, Milani, Money, Morse, Prince, Sansarpuri and Sweeting.

Those voting against: The Mayor (Councillor Chamdal), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Haggard), Councillors Barnes, Bianco, Bridges, Brightman, Chapman, Choubedar, Cooper, Corthorne, Davies, Denys, Edwards, Flynn, Goddard, Hensley, Higgins, Kauffman, Lavery, Lewis, Makwana, Melvin, D Mills, R Mills, Morgan, O'Brien, Palmer, Radia, Riley, Rodrigues, Seaman-Digby, Simmonds, Sullivan, Tuckwell and Yarrow.

Those abstaining: None.

The motion was lost.

10.3 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR CURLING

Members were provided with legal guidance before the start of the debate. The final decision on the restricted covenant had been delegated to the Leader and Deputy Leader but decisions in relation to any planning application would be made by the Major Applications Planning Committee. Any Members of the Major Applications

Planning Committee (or substitutes) considering the application at the Major Applications Planning Committee meeting in February 2022 would need to be mindful to avoid making any comments during the debate that could be deemed to prejudge that decision and avoid any debate that touched on planning issues.

The Council did have the power to override restrictive covenants where it was considered appropriate to do so in the public interest. A resolution to never use this power would not be consistent with the land management in the public interest. Whether or not it was appropriate to override public interest was a decision for Members. When voting on this motion, Members would need to consider whether they had said anything during the debate that would prejudice their participation in determining the planning application.

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

That this Council believes that restrictive covenants on public & communal land plays an important role in ensuring that the value and enjoyment of the land is, and continues to be, preserved. Restrictive covenants enhance and protect our borough for our residents' benefit and that of future generations.

This Council, therefore, believes that it should set the example and do all within its power to uphold restrictive covenants especially on council land.

This Council, therefore, calls on the Cabinet to abolish their current plans to remove the restrictive covenant in Yiewsley in order to develop on the recreation ground and library site.

This Council calls on the Cabinet to enter into dialogue with local residents to devise alternative options for the use of the land in Yiewsley that complies with the restrictive covenants put in place to preserve the enjoyment and benefit for Hillingdon residents.

Furthermore, this Council commits to uphold restrictive covenants across the borough for the benefit of residents.

It was stated by those in support of the motion that this was the public's land which had been put into the Council's custodianship and that the Council needed to honour this promise. Concern was expressed that no proactive consultation had been undertaken other than the statutory street signage about the planning application.

Preserving green spaces helped to support good mental health. Concern was expressed that suburban areas were increasingly becoming urban.

Those speaking against the motion noted that care needed to be taken so as not to fetter or predetermine planning or land appropriation matters during the debate. It was recognised that some residents might have concerns but the motion was misleading as the Council did not intend to build on the open space recreation ground. In January 2020, Council had agreed the Local Plan Part 2 which clearly showed the land in Yiewsley designated as metropolitan open space and did not include the Yiewsley pool site or library site. In 2014, the Planning Committee had approved an application to build on the old Yiewsley swimming pool site which had included residential units with no abstention or dissent from the Labour Members on the Committee.

The new duty to uphold restrictive covenants mentioned in the motion was uncoded

and unfunded and would be impractical to discharge. It would fetter future Council discretion and decision making in relation to its own use of land and the Borough Solicitor had advised against this. Each case needed to be determined on its own merits which a blanket policy would prevent and would open the Council to challenge and hinder proper land management. If agreed, the motion would place the Council in a legal quagmire.

The motion was put to a recorded vote:

Those voting for: Councillors Allen, Bliss, Curling, Dhillon, Duncan, Eginton, Farley, Gardner, Lakhmana, Mathers, Milani, Money, Prince, Sansarpuri and Sweeting.

Those voting against: The Mayor (Councillor Chamdal), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Haggard), Councillors Barnes, Bianco, Bridges, Brightman, Choubedar, Cooper, Davies, Denys, Edwards, Flynn, Goddard, Hensley, Kauffman, Lavery, Lewis, Makwana, D Mills, R Mills, Morgan, O'Brien, Palmer, Radia, Riley, Rodrigues, Seaman-Digby, Simmonds and Sullivan.

Those abstaining: Councillors Chapman, Corthorne, Higgins, Melvin, Morse, Tuckwell and Yarrow.

The motion was lost.

The meeting, which commenced at 8.00 pm, closed at 9.42 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.