

## Minutes

### ENVIRONMENT, HOUSING AND REGENERATION SELECT COMMITTEE

20 January 2022

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre,  
High Street, Uxbridge



	<p><b>Committee Members Present:</b> Councillors Wayne Bridges (Chairman) Alan Chapman (Vice-Chairman) Nicola Brightman Allan Kauffman Alan Deville Scott Farley (Opposition Lead) Janet Gardner</p> <p><b>LBH Officers Present:</b> Neil Fraser, Democratic Services Officer Mark Billings, Head of Housing Options, Homelessness &amp; Standards Gemma McNamara, Head of Finance – Business Partnering &amp; Transformation Iain Watters, Head of Finance - Financial Planning, Capital, Treasury &amp; Systems David Haygarth, Climate Action Manager Dan Kennedy, Corporate Director - Planning, Environment, Education and Community Services</p>
50.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
51.	<p><b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
52.	<p><b>TO CONFIRM THAT ALL ITEMS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT ANY ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be considered in public.</p>
53.	<p><b>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.</p>
54.	<p><b>CABINET'S BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Iain Watters – Head of Finance - Financial Planning, Capital, Treasury &amp; Systems, and Gemma McNamara – Head of Finance – Business Partnering &amp; Transformation,</p>

introduced a report detailing Cabinet's budget proposals for the next financial year.

The report was summarised, with the General Fund Budget and Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budgets highlighted. Officers advised that, despite rising inflation and service demand, together with ongoing pressures as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, delivery of a balanced budget was expected for 2022/23, leaving a residual budget gap of £4,735k in later years of the 5-year MTFF period.

HRA budget strategy was confirmed to focus on the delivery of 100 new homes per annum, the regeneration of housing estates, and a five-year cycle of enhanced programme works.

Officers concluded by advising that the budget forecasts presented a sustainable balanced budget in the medium term that would allow for the continued provision of services to Hillingdon residents.

The Committee sought further information on whether the budget provided for improvements in housing stock fixtures and fittings. Officers advised that there was a rolling programme of housing stock renewals in place, to ensure homes were of the 'minimum lettable standard'. Where required, provision was available for families who needed support with upkeep and/or the purchasing of white goods.

In response to further queries, officers advised that the 100 new homes per annum were to be delivered through a combination of acquisition and construction, though with a greater focus on construction. Officers went on to advise that the capital programme also included renewal of playground and open spaces.

Members noted the contents of the report, and suggested the following comments to be submitted as the Committee's comments on the budget:

*'The Committee noted that it was gratifying to see that, despite the financial pressures faced by the Council as a result of rising inflation, increasing demand for services, and the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council was able to maintain adequate funds for projects and services for residents, including a programme of activity around homelessness prevention, investment in the Chrysalis programme, renewal of estates and playgrounds, and the delivery of more than 100 new homes per annum to support increasing demand for social housing within the Borough.'*

The comments were agreed, and it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That the Committee's agreed comments on the budget be included in the forthcoming report to the Corporate, Finance and Property Select Committee.**

**55. PROGRESS UPDATE - CLIMATE ACTION STRATEGIC PLAN (Agenda Item 6)**

David Haygarth – Climate Action Manager, provided the Committee with an update on the progress of Hillingdon's Climate Action Strategic Plan.

The Committee was informed that officers were briefing colleagues and identifying existing actions currently underway, in order to build a solid foundation for future

actions that incorporated existing knowledge. This included briefings for the Corporate Management, Senior Management, and Departmental Service Manager teams, with a view to steering future actions through their incorporation into service plans, such as the Housing Strategy. Cabinet's proposed budget had made provision for funding of £25m over 5 years to address climate change, though officers continued to review other potential sources of funding, such as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Future actions under consideration included decarbonising the Borough's top 25 buildings, incorporating solar arrays, and investment in the Council's fleet of vehicles, to move away from the use of traditional fossil fuels. Forthcoming capital works included construction of new school buildings and other large-scale projects, with energy efficiency and consideration of environmental impact (such as emissions/heat loss etc.) built into the development plans through adherence to the current building regulations. This included the use of government funds when constructing new Council housing stock, and officers would be working to embed such considerations within private housing stock.

The Committee was reminded that, following a motion at the Council meeting in November 2021, the Borough's young people would be included in the developing action plan, via partnership working with schools, Social Care, the Corporate Parenting Panel, and Looked After Children, among others, to embed climate change awareness and actions at an early age (including within school curriculums.)

Members asked whether officers could identify areas where air quality was poor due to vehicle congestion. The Committee was advised that such matters were being dealt with via the Council's Air Quality Action Plan, but details of hotspots, and the mitigation underway to address them, (e.g. green screens to shield playgrounds from pollution), could be forwarded following the meeting.

Regarding flood mitigation, the Committee was advised that actions to address flooding were currently underway, and these would be further incorporated into the Climate Action Strategic Plan as it developed.

It was confirmed that further information on the Plan would follow within the report to be received by the Committee in April 2022.

The Committee suggested that actions to address climate change could be embedded within staff personal objectives. Officers advised that this would be considered.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That officers forward details of congestion/pollution hotspots, and the actions being taken to address them, following the meeting.**

56. **HOMELESSNESS IN HILLINGDON** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Mark Billings - Head of Housing Options, Homelessness & Standards, introduced a report detailing homelessness within Hillingdon.

The report was summarised, with the number of approaches to Hillingdon (including through online applications and referrals) highlighted. Domestic abuse was confirmed as the highest reason for homelessness recorded. Performance figures for Hillingdon versus other London boroughs showed Hillingdon to be performing well, and it was

expected that other boroughs would contact Hillingdon requesting the sharing of best practice.

Rough sleepers in Hillingdon had seen a reduction, with the lowest ever number recorded in November 2021. Hillingdon had approximately 5 regular rough sleepers, with more transient sleepers often seen due to the proximity to Heathrow Airport. A monthly count was conducted, which provided a snapshot of rough sleeper numbers on a given night. Numbers were recorded through officer walks across the Borough, including through parks and other non-hotspot spaces, together with the use of CCTV and partnership working.

Officers were working with Heathrow Airport/Travel Care, Transport for London, the Police, the Home Office and other partners in order to help encourage rough sleepers or the homeless to enter accommodation. Work was also ongoing with landlords to extend tenancies and avoid making residents homeless in the first instance. A number of separate options were available to former members of the armed services who had since become homeless.

It was confirmed that an emergency service was available 24/7 for residents to contact the Council out of hours. When contacted, officers would ensure that the individuals or groups in need were picked up and rehomed that same night. Non-Hillingdon homeless would be reconnected to their original location, where it was safe to do so. If the risk was deemed to be too high, then individuals would be rehomed locally.

The Committee requested that officers provide additional information regarding homelessness data for Jan-April 2021, along with any additional information available regarding potential reasons for the rise in domestic abuse (e.g. tensions caused by enforced proximity as a result of pandemic lockdowns, etc). Additionally, it was requested that officers provide details of the number of cases reported through the out of hours service, together with details of any cases within the LGBTQ+ community.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. That officers provide additional information regarding homelessness data for Jan-April 2021;**
- 3. That officers provide additional information regarding potential reasons for the rise in domestic abuse;**
- 4. That officers provide details of the number of cases reported through the out of hours service;**
- 5. That officers provide details of any cases identified within the LGBTQ+ community.**

**57. HOUSES OF MULTIPLE OCCUPANCY (Agenda Item 8)**

Mark Billings - Head of Housing Options, Homelessness & Standards, introduced a report detailing Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) within Hillingdon.

The report was summarised, with the definition of an HMO and the requirements for a licensed HMO highlighted. It was confirmed that, as of December 2021, there were approximately 650 licensed HMOs within Hillingdon, with 172 new applications processed since April 2021.

The officer advised the Committee on the processes for inspection of HMOs and

enforcement action within Hillingdon. Best practice was being highlighted to landlords, with enforcement action available to address untidy gardens, antisocial behaviour, fly-tipping etc. The service maintained a rolling programme of inspections, alongside responding to specifically reported issues.

The various licensing schemes across West London were set out, with options for Discretionary and Selective licensing confirmed as being under consideration for future adoption within Hillingdon. The Tenancy Deposit Scheme was referred to and confirmed to be under review, incorporating regular engagement with landlords, including through the Landlord Forum.

In response to a query from the Committee, it was confirmed that Hillingdon would be looking to offer training and accreditation to landlords within the next year.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

58. **REVIEW - DRAFT FINAL REPORT** (*Agenda Item 9*)

Members were asked to formally endorse the final report on the Committee's review into engagement with tenants and leaseholders within Hillingdon for submission to Cabinet.

The Committee suggested some minor amendments, before it was:

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the report be endorsed for submission to Cabinet; and**
- 2. That the clerk be delegated authority to make any further amendments as required.**

59. **CABINET FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 10*)

Consideration was given to Cabinet's Forward Plan, and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Cabinet forward Plan be noted.**

60. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 11*)

Consideration was given to the Committee's Work Programme.

Members requested that the forthcoming 'CIL Annual Report' include specific information relating to where and how CIL monies were being used.

It was also requested that the future item on 'Regeneration of High Streets' include detail of how the Council was improving safety within High Streets. Members were advised that this was likely to fall under the remit of the Public Safety and Transport Select Committee, though the clerk would discuss the matter with the report authors.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted;**
- 2. That the clerk request that the forthcoming CIL Annual Report include specific information relating to where and how CIL monies are being used.**
- 3. That the clerk review the potential inclusion of safety within High Streets**

	<b>as part of the forthcoming 'Regeneration of High Streets' information item.</b>
	The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.24 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Neil Fraser on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.