

Minutes

COUNCIL

12 January 2023

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



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Councillor Becky Haggar (Mayor)
Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana (Deputy Mayor)

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| | <p>MEMBERS PRESENT:</p> <p>Councillors: Naser Abby Jas Dhot Gursharan Mand Kaushik Banerjee Ian Edwards Stuart Mathers Labina Basit Scott Farley Douglas Mills Adam Bennett Janet Gardner Richard Mills Kishan Bhatt Elizabeth Garelick Peter Money Jonathan Bianco Narinder Garg June Nelson Wayne Bridges Tony Gill Barry Nelson-West Tony Burles Martin Goddard Susan O'Brien Keith Burrows Ekta Gohil Jane Palmer Reeta Chamdal Henry Higgins Sital Punja Roy Chamdal Mohammed Islam John Riley Alan Chapman Rita Judge Raju Sansarpuri Farhad Choubedar Kamal Preet Kaur Jagjit Singh Philip Corthorne Kuldeep Lakhmana Peter Smallwood Peter Curling Eddie Lavery Colleen Sullivan Darran Davies Richard Lewis Steve Tuckwell Nick Denys Heena Makwana</p> |
| | <p>OFFICERS PRESENT: Tony Zaman, Andy Evans, Dan Kennedy, Perry Scott, Glen Egan, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon, Sue Albu and Nikki O'Halloran</p> |
| | <p>ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE</p> <p>Those present observed a one minute's silence in memory of former Councillor Peter Kemp.</p> |
| 37. | <p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Sweeting.</p> |
| 38. | <p>MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2022 be agreed as a correct record.</p> |
| 39. | <p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in matters coming before this meeting.</p> |
| 40. | <p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor hoped that everyone had had a restful Christmas and wished them a</p> |

healthy and prosperous 2023. The run up to Christmas had been very busy for the Mayor who had met with Ruislip Old Folks Association which had received one of the last Queen's Awards for voluntary service. As well as attending a number of events at schools including Oakwood, Swakeleys, Bishop Ramsey, Meadow High and Green Corridor, she had attended the staff awards ceremony at the Battle of Britain Bunker with the Leader where staff were thanked for their hard work.

The Mayor had received a personal thank you card from King Charles II and a picture from the former Deputy Lieutenant, Bruce Houlder, both of which were on display in the Mayor's Parlour. She also thanked Councillor Jagjit Singh who had raised £2,800 for the Mayor's charities by undertaking a 24 hour walk.

The Mayor thanked those who had attended the Civic Service. The event had been a credit to the Borough with an array of multifaith leaders present. Many of these events were seen as opportunities to make new contacts and to provide signposting and had resulted in SafeStart, a local organisation, sponsoring the Mayor's upcoming fundraising event, an Irish Night on 3 March 2023.

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

(i) URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

The recent urgent decisions taken were noted.

42. **COUNCIL TAX BASE AND BUSINESS RATES FORECAST 2023/2024** (*Agenda Item 6*)

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

RESOLVED: That:

- 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 2023/24 shall be 103,625.
- c) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance to submit the 2023/24 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.
- e) two amendments to the Council's local Council Tax Reduction Scheme with effect from April 2023 be approved:
 - i) Non-dependent charge to be increased to £8 per week
 - ii) Increase the minimum award from £1 to £2 per week
- f) the following recommendations be approved, upon referral from Cabinet:

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) To increase the current Empty Homes Council Tax Premium, applicable to non-exempt properties empty for more than two years, from the current 50% to 100% from the 2023/24 financial year; ii) To phase in increases to the current Empty Homes Council Tax Premium, applicable to non-exempt properties empty for more than five / ten years, to the maximum premium allowable of 200% / 300% respectively and from financial years 2024/25 and 2025/26 respectively; <p>g) the 2 specific circumstances where the application of the Premium cannot be applied be noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) a member of the Armed Services, who is away from the property as a result of their service; ii) where a property forms part of a single property, for example, an annexe. |
| 43. | <p>STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY 2023-2025 (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Lavery moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the revised Statement of Gambling Policy be adopted as a policy framework document; and b) the change to the Ward Councillor Call-in procedure for gambling applications, be approved and included within the Constitution. |
| 44. | <p>MEMBERS' QUESTIONS (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>8.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DENYS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE - COUNCILLOR PALMER</p> <p><i>“Can the Cabinet Member please advise how Hillingdon Hospital is currently managing its discharge of patients back into our community?”</i></p> <p>Councillor Palmer advised that the Council had developed good partnerships with health and voluntary sector colleagues in Hillingdon which had helped the Borough to achieve the best Covid vaccination rates in North West London (NWL) and the second highest flu vaccination rates and NWL having one of the best hospital discharge performances in London.</p> <p>Insofar as hospital discharge was concerned, a team was available seven days per week, aided by electronic document transfer and well-established processes. A number of discharge pathways were available to the team through a widely used model: no formal input from social care or health (50%); support to recover at home (45%); rehabilitation or short term care (4%); and 24-hour nursing / long term care (1%).</p> <p>However, there were challenges being faced across the country with regard to care home staffing shortages. Discharge had also been impacted by the recent nurse and ambulance service strikes. Although the nurses at Hillingdon Hospital had not been</p> |

on strike, there had been an overflow of patients from other areas that had been directly affected coming into the Borough.

Action had been taken before Christmas to address the number of parents presenting at A&E with children that had Strep A as it had been anticipated that this would further exacerbate the winter pressures which were likely to continue until March 2023.

Hillingdon was above the average NHS performance metrics, for example, Hillingdon had dealt with 39 admissions and 25 discharges on Christmas Day. Councillor Palmer thanked the social care team, NHS staff and voluntary sector who had worked tirelessly to achieve this performance.

There was no supplementary question.

8.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GARDNER TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY

“In view of the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak through living in a home riddled with damp and mould, and the justifiable national criticism of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, could the Cabinet Member please tell the Council what steps have been taken to review the adequacy of Hillingdon’s arrangements to deal urgently and efficiently with the constant stream of complaints received by us as councillors, on behalf of tenants living in:

- a. its own properties*
- b. those owned by housing associations*
- c. those used by the Council for the temporary housing of people for which it has a legal responsibility, including those placed by the Council 'out of Borough'*
- d. private rented homes in general?”*

Councillor Lavery advised that investigations had been undertaken by the Council in relation to damp, mould and ventilation in October 2021 to ensure that homes were compliant with the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2019. A spotlight review had been undertaken and a number of actions were identified including the responsibility for anyone working at a property to report issues relating to damp, mould and ventilation. A cross service group had been set up, which included social and private sector housing representatives, to take the actions forward and the fire safety work had been extended to include damp and mould.

It was anticipated that, of the 9,961 tenanted properties in Hillingdon, there would be a prevalence rate of 4.8% for damp and mould (which equated to 478 households). As well as overcrowding and fuel poverty having an impact on the number of properties with damp or mould, Hillingdon specific issues had been identified: solid wall construction; metal framed windows and non-traditional build.

When inspections were being undertaken on properties, issues including damp and mould were immediately being reported as soon as they came to light. Investment in the Council’s housing stock continued with the roof, window and boiler replacement programmes which would also help in addressing the issue of damp, mould and ventilation.

Processes were being reviewed and Councillor Lavery advised that all information gathered about the Council’s housing stock was being collated in one place to enable officers to keep track of any actions required.

Although the majority of residents in the Borough were owner-occupiers, the private rented sector accounted for approximately 28k properties, including properties owned by housing associations. It was assumed that around 8% of these properties (2,200) could be affected by damp.

When the Council received complaints from tenants in the private sector, officers were often able to take action and a private sector housing enforcement policy had recently been drafted. Advisory information for tenants was currently being reviewed, including appropriate questions to ask landlords in relation to damp and mould cases. A procurement framework had also been introduced in relation to temporary accommodation and a new Members Enquiries system had been introduced which included a category for damp and mould.

Between April and November 2022, there had been 399 reports to the repairs team in relation to the Council's housing stock, most of which had been resolved. So far this year, there had been 38 new legal disrepair cases, 30 of which related to damp or mould.

The issue of damp and mould had been scheduled as an item on the Residents' Services Select Committee agenda on 12 April 2023.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Gardner asked that the Council ensure that residents placed in private housing had a legally binding tenancy agreement which required the property to be maintained to decent tenancy standards prior to letting and that any maintenance issues be dealt with by experienced and qualified professionals in a timely manner.

Councillor Lavery advised that he would provide Councillor Gardner with a written response.

[NOTE: Councillor Lavery provided the following written response after the meeting:

As you are aware, in meeting its duties under homelessness legislation, the council makes use of a variety of property across housing tenures.

Private rented sector housing forms a significant part of the accommodation used and access to sufficient accommodation is a significant and ongoing challenge. The affordability of homes is an issue in all areas but especially so in and around London and this brings with it additional pressures around housing quality as the council constantly seeks to control expenditure as far as possible, whilst providing homes of an adequate standard.

Registered Providers (RPs) are required to meet the standards of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). The RSH Tenancy Standard includes a requirement to meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation. The RSH Home Standard requires that RPs ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in the Government's Decent Homes Guidance and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard.

Housing Associations form part of the private sector and as such the Council can use enforcement powers with respect to housing standards. We would however expect that tenants would seek redress via the Housing Association's own complaints process before approaching the Council.

While temporary accommodation can be let under licence arrangements, longer-term move-on accommodation will in most instances be through a tenancy agreement which, in the private rented sector is likely to be an assured shorthold tenancy. The government has guidance on landlord and tenant rights and responsibilities in the private rented sector to help make sure tenancies get off to a good start and that the landlord-tenant relationship can be a professional and positive one. When using Temporary Accommodation the Council uses a framework, which any landlord providing such accommodation, must sign up to. The Framework includes a full repairing schedule and landlords are contracted to ensure that properties are of a required standard and are properly maintained to remain at that standard.

Landlords are required to provide tenants with a copy of the governments' guide 'How to rent: the checklist for renting in England' when a new tenancy starts. This sets out what must be provided, including a written tenancy agreement and it provides links to a model agreement and how to seek advice if there are concerns.

By entering an assured shorthold tenancy, the landlord and tenant are entering into a contractual arrangement. It is the landlord's responsibility to ensure that the property is safe and fit for human habitation.

The landlord has responsibilities throughout the tenancy to maintain the property, perform checks and complete repairs. The council is not able to prescribe who carries out repairs to a landlord's property but does have enforcement powers to act if the property contains serious hazards.

The Council encourages landlords to maintain good standards through engagement work including a landlords' forum and by promoting landlord accreditation schemes. At present there is not a requirement for properties in the private rented sector to meet the Decent Homes Standard, but the government has indicated an intention to make this a requirement.

In conclusion, whilst the Council cannot stipulate who in the private sector could undertake maintenance work or that properties should be maintained to the decent homes standard, there are enforcement actions available to us where we are aware of a situation that is not safe or satisfactory, we engage in several Landlord liaison schemes to ensure Landlords are aware of what is expected of them. Registered providers are already required by law to ensure properties are maintained to at least the Decent Homes Standard.]

8.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CURLING TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

"Does the Leader agree with me that, whilst on-line self-service can be quick and efficient, there are times, especially in emergencies, that the only way of getting the service residents need, is by talking to a person on the 'phone and can he therefore inform Council of the telephone waiting times that residents should expect when calling the Council or its service partners, especially out of hours?"

Councillor Edwards advised that he did agree with Councillor Curling but that the question related to Councillor D Mills' portfolio.

Councillor D Mills advised that there had been a considerable increase in volumes with around 51k enquiries received by the Council over the last few months. In

November / December 2022, the Council had introduced automatic voice responses for the 28 most frequently raised issues, primarily in relation to waste and housing services. This shift to self-help had reduced the waiting time for other callers to an average of six minutes and had reduced costs whilst also improving the service provided.

The main out of hours provider had exceeded its target, with 92% of calls being handled within one minute. On the run up to Christmas, one of the housing contractors had experienced difficulties and lessons had been learnt. If Councillors became aware of an issue, they were encouraged to report this through the new Members Enquiries system.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Curling asked if the Cabinet Member agreed that a wait of one hour and forty minutes for a service provider to answer out of hours calls was not acceptable and queried what action would be taken to monitor and enforce the service standard.

The Leader noted that this response time was unacceptable and that Councillor D Mills had set out the action that had been taken to put this right.

8.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MATHERS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE - COUNCILLOR GODDARD:

“Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the impact of inflation and other budgetary pressures on capital projects such as leisure facilities and house building?”

Councillor Goddard advised that inflation had had an impact on capital projects and that the Council had had to manage the increase in the cost of things such as labour and building materials using cost reappraisals. An £8.8m cost contingency had been included in the General Fund Capital Programme to protect the Council from cost inflation.

The West Drayton and Yiewsley leisure centre project was on track. Projected costs by the end of 2023/24 were expected to be 95% of the total budget and on target to be completed by May 2024. The Hillingdon Outdoor Activities Centre relaunch project had made good progress and the project for new homes was on track (103 housing units against a target of 100). The Hayes Town Centre and Avondale regeneration project was also progressing well on the construction and the completion of the compulsory purchases.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mathers asked that residents be assured that delays and increased costs would not reduce project sizes or the benefits to residents, including the provision of housing.

Councillor Goddard advised that the rephrasing of capital expenditure should not be seen as an attempt to delay or abandon projects. Although rephrasing had been undertaken, the Council fully intended to finish the projects as soon as possible and the capital budget was in a good position.

45. **MOTIONS** (*Agenda Item 9*)

9.3 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR D.MILLS

Councillor D Mills moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on

the Order of Business.

Speaking in support of the motion, Members advised that it had been proposed to reaffirm the Council's opposition to the ULEZ expansion. Cabinet would be asked to agree to the use of Council resources to fight the proposal. It was suggested that taking action to mitigate the impact of the ULEZ expansion would be pointless as, at £12.50 per day, it would still cost more than £3k per year for those individuals using their cars for five days each week if the ULEZ expansion went ahead.

The Mayor of London needed to be told that air quality in Hillingdon had been negatively affected by Heathrow airport but the Mayor had made it clear that he did not want to engage in further talks. A legal response would need to be developed and the Council would need to work collaboratively with local businesses and neighbouring councils that would also be affected. Harrow had already written to the Mayor challenging the lawfulness of the decision.

Councillor Curling moved, and Councillor Kaur seconded, the following amendment:

~~That this Council opposes the Mayor of London's decision to expand the ULEZ restrictions to outer London as it is wrong on several fronts, not least that it fails to put our residents first and will most adversely impact those on low incomes, at a time when they can least cope with additional expenditure, by being unfairly taxed in the use of their own vehicles and in going about their normal daily business~~ **notes their unanimous resolution on the expansion of the London ULEZ at its meeting on 14 July 2022, which sought to bring Council's opposition and concerns to the attention of the Mayor of London. Since then, a decision has been made to expand the ULEZ zone, but with various mitigations including a scrappage scheme, exemptions for some drivers and the provision of extra bus routes.**

Council also notes that the London ULEZ is part of the national government's Framework of "Clean Air Zones", which was introduced by Rt. Hon Michael Gove MP. Council further notes that the government has since removed the option of having "non-Charging" Clean Air Zones.

This Council, therefore, **opposes the Mayor of London's decision to extend the ULEZ zone to outer London, as it will most adversely impact those on low incomes, at a time when they can least cope with additional expenditure, and the Government's decision to remove the option of having Non-charging Clean Air Zones and** requests Cabinet to formalise a plan of action to implement this policy of opposition to the ULEZ decision and to establish an appropriate budget to do so. The authority to spend against this budget to be granted to the Leader in consultation with appropriate Cabinet members. **that will ensure that our residents are put above party politics and works with the Mayor of London to ensure that those most severely impacted by ULEZ have all the mitigations available to them, and that Cabinet also works with the government to ensure that significant mitigations are funded through the government's Clean Air Zone Framework.**

The amended motion would then read:

That this Council notes their unanimous resolution on the expansion of the London ULEZ at its meeting on 14 July 2022, which sought to bring Council's

opposition and concerns to the attention of the Mayor of London. Since then, a decision has been made to expand the ULEZ zone, but with various mitigations including a scrappage scheme, exemptions for some drivers and the provision of extra bus routes.

Council also notes that the London ULEZ is part of the national Government's Framework of "Clean Air Zones", which was introduced by Rt. Hon Michael Gove MP. Council further notes that the Government has since removed the option of having "non-charging" Clean Air Zones.

This Council, therefore, opposes the Mayor of London's decision to extend the ULEZ zone to outer London, as it will most adversely impact those on low incomes, at a time when they can least cope with additional expenditure, and the Government's decision to remove the option of having non-charging Clean Air Zones and requests Cabinet to formalise a plan of action that will ensure that our residents are put above party politics and works with the Mayor of London to ensure that those most severely impacted by ULEZ have all the mitigations available to them, and that Cabinet also works with the Government to ensure that significant mitigations are funded through the Government's Clean Air Zone Framework.

Those speaking in support of the amendment noted that Michael Gove's Clear Air Strategy could direct areas with poor air quality to introduce measures to reduce air pollution. Had the Mayor of London not agreed the expansion of ULEZ, it was thought likely that London would have been directed to develop a Clean Air Zone. Concerns continued regarding the impact that ULEZ expansion would have on those residents on low incomes and on small businesses but it was suggested that any potential legal challenge would need to also challenge Government policy.

Those in favour of the amendment advised that they were unable to agree the original motion as it had been uncostered. Improving air quality was everyone's responsibility so as not to let future generations down and, as such, the Council needed to try to secure Government funding to introduce measures to mitigate the impact of the ULEZ expansion.

Those speaking against the amendment suggested that the current public transport infrastructure was not sufficient to provide a viable alternative for those that currently used vehicles that would not be ULEZ compliant. Members noted that, contrary to what had been stated in the amendment, the option of having "non-charging" Clean Air Zones was still available and should be investigated. The scrappage scheme offered by the Mayor of London had not provided sufficient funding to enable benefactors to buy ULEZ compliant vehicles.

The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

Those speaking in support of the original motion noted that, up until 2015, the Mayor of London had supported Heathrow expansion which would have increased air pollutants in Hillingdon. They believed that the ULEZ expansion was being seen by the Mayor of London as a cash cow and an opportunity to plug the black hole in his budget. Locally, the value of non-compliant vehicles had been negatively impacted by the decision to expand ULEZ, with approximately 500,000 vehicles in Greater London affected. It was unlikely that the number of cars on the road would reduce (and therefore pollution levels would not reduce either).

Business owners would be significantly impacted by the ULEZ expansion, paying approximately £4,400 per year if they operated seven days each week and residents would not be able to spend as much with these small businesses as a result of the cost of living crisis. The current ULEZ zone had raised £182m less than expected in the previous year and the cost of installation for the cameras and signs for the expansion was expected to be in the region of £400m. As the Mayor of London was happy to increase the 2023/24 precept by approximately 10%, it was questioned how long it would be before the ULEZ charge was also increased.

Those speaking against the motion advised that this was the third ULEZ motion considered at a Council meeting since the Borough elections in May 2022. The Government funding formula needed to be amended to ensure that money was available in London to improve public transport services. Concern was expressed that the motion called for action to be taken by the authority with no limits set on the associated budget, yet the Council was unable to provide funding to support services such as the continuation of early years centres.

It was suggested that the Council needed to lobby the Secretary of State for Transport over the TfL settlement as well as the Mayor of London over the expansion of ULEZ.

The motion was put to a recorded vote:

Those voting for: The Mayor (Councillor Haggar), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Ahmad-Wallana), Councillors Banerjee, Bennett, Bhatt, Bianco, Bridges, Burrows, Reeta Chamdal, Roy Chamdal, Chapman, Choubedar, Corthorne, Davies, Denys, Edwards, Goddard, Gohil, Higgins, Lavery, Lewis, Makwana, D Mills, R Mills, O'Brien, Palmer, Riley, Smallwood, Sullivan and Tuckwell.

Those voting against: Councillors Abby, Basit, Burles, Curling, Dhot, Farley, Gardner, Garelick, Garg, Gill, Islam, Judge, Kaur, Lakhmana, Mand, Mathers, Money, Nelson, Nelson-West, Punja, Sansarpuri and Singh.

Those abstaining: None.

RESOLVED: That this Council opposes the Mayor of London's decision to expand the ULEZ restrictions to outer London as it is wrong on several fronts, not least that it fails to put our residents first and will most adversely impact those on low incomes, at a time when they can least cope with additional expenditure, by being unfairly taxed in the use of their own vehicles and in going about their normal daily business.

This Council therefore requests Cabinet to formalise a plan of action to implement this policy of opposition to the ULEZ decision and to establish an appropriate budget to do so. The authority to spend against this budget to be granted to the Leader in consultation with appropriate Cabinet Members.

9.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR CURLING

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

That this Council notes the adverse impact that tax avoidance has on the public purse, and thereby the damaging effect that it has on the services that we can provide for the residents of Hillingdon. This Council also notes that a significant element of such tax avoidance is that of "Corporate tax avoidance".

This Council believes that, as recipients of significant public funding, local authorities, such as Hillingdon, should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct. However, we also recognise that UK procurement law restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct, or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.

This Council therefore requests the Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee to consider conducting a review into how we can ensure that Hillingdon is a Fair Tax borough.

Those speaking in support of the motion believed that, since 2013, tax avoidance had been a public concern and it was suggested that a company's ethics should be considered by the Council when awarding contracts. Significant losses had been created through multinational tax sharing arrangements which was one form of tax avoidance so it was important to promote a fair tax ethos. Although UK procurement laws prevented organisations from rewarding or penalising tax conduct, it was important that taxpayers' money was used wisely.

The motion had fairness at its heart and sought to address the unfairness and greed around some company practices. It was suggested that being complicit with these companies avoiding tax could put Council services at risk and an in depth Select Committee review would be an ideal way to explore all of the issues.

Those speaking against the motion stated that the idea of a fair share of taxation was subjective and questioned how good tax conduct could be identified. Tax avoidance was legal, whereas tax evasion was not, so Members queried why they should challenge a company if HMRC was satisfied. Only contracting with those organisations that had signed up to the Fair Tax Foundation would prove restrictive and tax diligence was not useable in contracts. This issue had not been raised at the recent Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee meetings during Member discussions about procurement.

The motion was put to the vote and lost.

9.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR FARLEY

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

That this Council, as part of Hillingdon Council's strategy of creating a green and sustainable borough, requests the Cabinet to conduct feasibility studies into the use of further innovative technological solutions as additional ways to reduce London Borough of Hillingdon's carbon footprint and improve air quality, such as city trees, aquamation and water reclamation, to complement existing schemes.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that Heathrow airport had had an impact on air quality in the Borough and that City trees could be used to mitigate pollution as they absorbed more than regular trees and took up less space. Hillingdon had the second worst air quality in London.

Pollution, and the impact of pollution, had been increasing. In November 2022, the London Ambulance Service and Hillingdon Hospital had reported an increase in the number of respiratory related attendances at A&E. With more residents working from

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| | <p>home, and therefore using local town centres more, it would be important to consider opportunities to improve air quality in town centre regeneration initiatives. The Council needed to explore options.</p> <p>Those speaking against the motion understood the intent of the motion but it did not take account of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan, Carbon Offset Strategy, Air Quality Action Plan, etc. Air quality screening had already been put in place around many of the schools across the Borough and sustainable urban drainage initiatives had been undertaken. Surveys would be undertaken in February on the Council's top 20 energy use buildings and an update on climate change had been scheduled for consideration at the Residents' Services Select Committee on 8 February 2023.</p> <p>The motion was put to the vote and lost.</p> |
| | <p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.26 pm.</p> |

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.