



HILLINGDON
LONDON



Council

To all Members of the Council

Date: THURSDAY, 28
SEPTEMBER 2023

Time: 7.30 PM

Venue: COUNCIL CHAMBER -
CIVIC CENTRE, HIGH
STREET, UXBRIDGE UB8
1UW

**Meeting
Details:** Members of the Public and
Press are welcome to attend
this meeting

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Putting our residents first

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Agenda

Prayers

To be said by Father Matthew Cashmore, Parish Priest, St Anselm, Hayes.

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes 1 - 20
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2023 (*attached*)
- 3 Declarations of Interest
To note any declarations of interest in any matter before the Council
- 4 Mayor's Announcements
- 5 Public Question Time 21 - 22
To take questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.
- 6 Report of the Head of Democratic Services 23 - 44
- 7 Members' Questions 45 - 46
To take questions submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11
- 8 Motions 47 - 48
To consider Motions submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12

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Agenda Item 2

Minutes

COUNCIL

13 July 2023

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



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana (Mayor)
Councillor Colleen Sullivan (Deputy Mayor)

	<p>MEMBERS PRESENT:</p> <p>Councillors: Naser Abby Ian Edwards Stuart Mathers Kaushik Banerjee Scott Farley Douglas Mills Labina Basit Janet Gardner Richard Mills Kishan Bhatt Elizabeth Garelick Peter Money Jonathan Bianco Martin Goddard June Nelson Wayne Bridges Ekta Gohil Barry Nelson-West Tony Burles Becky Haggar Susan O'Brien Reeta Chamdal Henry Higgins Jane Palmer Roy Chamdal Mohammed Islam Sital Punja Farhad Choubedar Kamal Preet Kaur John Riley Philip Corthorne Kuldeep Lakhmana Raju Sansarpuri Peter Curling Eddie Lavery Peter Smallwood Darran Davies Richard Lewis Jan Sweeting Nick Denys Gursharan Mand Steve Tuckwell</p>
	<p>OFFICERS PRESENT: Andy Evans, Dan Kennedy, Perry Scott, Glen Egan, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon and Nikki O'Halloran</p>
12.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bennett, Burrows, Chapman, Dhot, Garg, Gill, Judge, Makwana and Singh.</p>
13.	<p>MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 23 February 2023 and 11 May 2023 be agreed as correct records.</p>
14.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in any matters coming before the Council.</p>
15.	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor had been honoured to represent the Borough with his wife and daughter at a number of events since his election. He had visited newly refurbished tennis courts in Northwood and Hayes and attended events at Winston Churchill Hall and a residential care home. A BBQ at Brunel University had raised £750 and an event at Hayes Muslim Centre had raised £1,100 for the Mayor's charities.</p> <p>The Mayor had walked a lap of a track with a 99 year old resident, Anne, who, one lap at a time, was walking 26 miles to raise money for charity. So far, she had completed</p>

	<p>77 laps of her 105 target. He had also attended the Armed Forces Day flag raising on the Civic Centre forecourt as well as a ceremony at St Paul's Cathedral to celebrate the Polish Air Force.</p>
16.	<p>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>5.1 URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS</p> <p>The recent urgent decisions taken were noted.</p> <p>5.2 POSITION OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE</p> <p>Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That Mr Tony Zaman be appointed to the permanent position of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.</p>
17.	<p>MEMBERS' QUESTIONS (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>6.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:</p> <p><i>"Can the Leader provide an update on the Council's challenge to the ULEZ expansion into Hillingdon; action that Members of the Labour Group voted against supporting?"</i></p> <p>Councillor Edwards advised that Hillingdon Council had led a legal challenge on behalf of Bexley, Bromley and Surrey councils which, in April 2023, had received permission to proceed from the High Court. During the previous week, the case had been considered and judgement had been reserved. Although there were no timescales provided, it was thought that the decision would be announced by 27 July 2023.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council advised that ULEZ had previously been introduced in a small area of 8.1 square miles and that the proposed expansion would cover 600 square miles. Given this large area, adequate consideration needed to be given to the new charging scheme. Furthermore, it was suggested that the consultation had been unfair and unlawful as important information had been hard to obtain and residents had therefore not had a chance to respond.</p> <p>The decision to expand ULEZ had been based on limited information with regard to the number of non-compliant vehicles that would be affected. The lawfulness of the scrappage scheme had also been challenged as the £110m had seemingly not been based on any specific data and should have incorporated an area around the outside of London.</p> <p>The Leader stated that ULEZ was a tax on Hillingdon residents without putting reasonable public transport options in place. Although a much higher proportion in the current ULEZ zone, only 36% of current journeys in Hillingdon could be made without a car (this had been gleaned from an assessment undertaken by TfL).</p> <p>With the cost-of-living crisis, interest rate rises and challenges with regard to mortgages, it was suggested that now was not a good time to expand ULEZ to outer London. It felt as though the whole process had been rushed: the initial ULEZ</p>

implementation had taken four years; the implementation of the North Circular extension had taken three years; it was proposed that the outer London expansion be completed within nine months.

The London Borough of Hounslow had requested extra time to upgrade its fleet so that it was ULEZ compliant. In a survey of Hillingdon Hospital staff, 76% had said that it would impact on their lives, some of whom would struggle to travel on public transport as they worked shifts and some would need to get new jobs elsewhere as their cars were not ULEZ-compliant and they could not afford to replace them. Approximately 10% of Heathrow airport's 31k staff had non-compliant vehicles and 24% of Hillingdon Council staff who used their vehicles for work were non-compliant.

It was recognised that residents were concerned about air quality in the Borough and the authority had established a long-term improvement plan to achieve improvements over the next few years. The proposed ULEZ expansion attempted to achieve these improvements in a shorter time period which would also bring unintended negative consequences.

The Leader believed that the Mayor of London had been making alarmist statements about the impact of air quality on mortality. In a report published in February 2022, Hillingdon had been shown as having the fourth best air quality in London – the Borough had met all legal limits for CO² emissions. The expansion of ULEZ was not thought to be appropriate for outer London and was not thought to be an effective strategy as there would only be small benefits gained.

Some residents had been concerned about particulate matter in the air. Around 25% of nitrous oxide came from vehicles (most of which was caused by brake and tyre wear which the ULEZ expansion would not address). Other particulate came from sources outside of London including Saharan dust and a large proportion had been caused by non-transport sources such as heating. Where air quality was below the legal limits, there needed to be a balance with the harm caused to residents by ULEZ in relation to issues such as social harm, differential impact on health and financial / economic impact. The BAME community was most likely to feel a negative impact from the proposed ULEZ expansion.

Of those boroughs that were in the current ULEZ zone, all but two had had breaches of air quality. In Hillingdon, the number of pollution sensors had already been increased and there had been a £1.25m investment this year. The Hillingdon air quality action plan was also being renewed for another five years, fines had been introduced to tackle idling vehicles, the Council's fleet was being modernised (and diesel vehicles would be replaced by 2030) and pollution screens had been erected at schools around the Borough.

The Leader believed that the court would determine that the proposed ULEZ expansion was unlawful and that the TfL budget was reliant on income from the proposed expansion. Until Hillingdon had better TfL services like those in inner London, the current administration would oppose the plans.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Tuckwell asked if the Leader of the Council would agree that the best way send a message to the Mayor of London and oppose the proposed ULEZ expansion would be to vote Conservative in the upcoming parliamentary by-election.

The Leader of the Council stated that residents were only able to trust the

Conservatives to overturn Sadiq Khan's decision and introduce low traffic zones.

6.7 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ISLAM TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"Please can the Cabinet member explain why we, as the local authority, are placing residents in private rented properties that are not fit for purpose?"

Councillor Lavery advised that, if any Councillor had evidence of properties that were not fit for purpose, they should speak to him directly so that he could investigate the matter. The Private Sector Lettings Team were specialists who could work with tenants and landlords. When sourcing properties for homeless people, a survey was undertaken to make sure that the properties were in a reasonable state.

It was recognised that there were times when issues arose after the tenants had moved in. This might be as a result of wear and tear, mould appearing or kitchen units falling apart.

Agents were required to register on a portal which was run by Ealing Council on Hillingdon's behalf. It was noted that not all properties were able to be inspected in advance but, of the 140 most recently inspected, three had been found to be deficient.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Islam asked how it could transpire that local families had been housed in properties that had used needles in the garden and broken windows. Councillor Lavery advised that, if Councillor Islam provided him with details, he would investigate the matter.

6.11 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR R.MILLS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"I was concerned to read the sensationalist claims attributed to the Shadow Health Minister and the local Labour Party regarding an alleged delay to our new Hillingdon Hospital. Can the Cabinet member assure me and the residents of Hillingdon that this project is fully funded and progressing as promised?"

Councillor Lavery advised that he had been disappointed with the sensationalist claims made regarding an alleged delay to the Hillingdon Hospital redevelopment. The New Hospital Programme had been a Conservative Government project which had included Hillingdon Hospital. The Major Applications Planning Committee, chaired by Councillor Tuckwell, had granted planning permission for the Hillingdon Hospital redevelopment earlier this year and legal arrangements had been progressing.

The Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Strategy and Senior Responsible Officer for the Hospital Redevelopment Programme at The Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Mr Jason Seez, had provided Councillor Lavery with a statement confirming the Trust's continued commitment to delivering a new hospital in Hillingdon by 2030. He would be keeping a keen eye on the progress of this project.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor R Mills asked if there would be any reason for unnecessary delays to the delivery of the new hospital in Hillingdon. Councillor Lavery advised that officers had been working on the legal agreements and, although the Mayor of London would now need to agree to the project, there were no statutory timeframes for this agreement. As such, it would be important to

lobby City Hall to ensure that approval of the application was not delayed by The Mayor and get the project up and running as soon as possible.

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

"In 2021 the Administration amended but supported a Hillingdon Labour motion to strengthen Hillingdon Council's climate change commitments which included reviewing the Council's investment strategy within the following 12 months to give consideration to climate change impacts in the Council's investment portfolio and publicly reporting on the level of investment in the fossil fuel industry. Please can the Cabinet member provide the Council's current level of investments in the fossil fuel industry and what considerations and changes have been made to the Council's investments to reduce climate change impacts?"

Councillor Goddard advised that the Council had made short term investments as well as longer term investments and aimed to be a responsible investor. Whilst the security and liquidity of its investments were a priority, the Council also looked at the sustainability of its investments. There had been a firm commitment from the Council, its advisors and fund managers to reduce the authority's reliance on fossil fuel investments. Of the £15m in long term investments, approximately £518k related to fossil fuel but this was just an estimate as it was difficult to identify investments' reliance on a particular activity. The effectiveness of divestment had been discussed but it had been resolved that engagement would be more effective.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mathers asked whether the Council's precarious financial position, particularly in relation to DSG, would mean that the authority would not have the opportunity to invest. Councillor Goddard advised that it was not the Council's business to invest in activities as described by Councillor Mathers. The Council needed liquid funds to meet its responsibilities.

6.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DENYS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:

"Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on the support available to children and families in Hillingdon, in response to cost-of-living pressures?"

Councillor O'Brien advised that Hillingdon continued to work in partnership to deliver and support families with children in relation to issues such as the cost-of-living pressures. Hillingdon Activities and Food programme (HAF) had been funded by the Department of Health and would continue over the summer holidays.

In 2022/23, there had been 10 weeks of programming providing 35k sessional places at 40 locations which included arts and crafts. In 2023/24 to date, 24k sessional places had been offered at over 30 locations. 600 at home activity resource packs had also been distributed.

Families had access to Family Development Workers and help was available with childcare costs. Between January and March 2023, Colham Manor Primary School had offered services. Citizens Advice Bureau and P3 had also provided support in relation to issues such as debt management and mental health support.

There was no supplementary question.

6.8 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURLES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE - COUNCILLOR GODDARD:

"Please can the Cabinet member provide details as to whether the Council is on track to make the savings and other targets within the original Safety Valve Agreement in which this Council was bailed out by the former Uxbridge and South Ruislip MP, Boris Johnson due to the £38 million deficit they had created?"

Councillor Goddard advised that the local authority and never received a bail out from Mr Boris Johnson and that this was a wildly inaccurate statement. The Council had received a funding allocation from the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). It was noted that central Government funding had not kept pace with the demand that the Council had been required to meet in relation to Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014. There were currently around £2.3bn of historic DSG deficits nationally that had not been addressed and 55 local authorities with the biggest deficits had entered into DSG Delivering Better Value agreements. It was suggested that Councillor Burles read the report that had been published online.

As the 45 minute time limit for Member questions had been reached, Councillor Burles was asked to send his supplementary question to the Head of Democratic Services for a response which would then be published in the minutes.

A written response would be provided for the remaining Member questions as listed below.

6.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BENNETT TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"Can the Cabinet Member update the Council on the positive progress being made in implementing the Council's Climate Change Strategy?"

WRITTEN RESPONSE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The Council's Strategic Climate Action Plan (2021) sets out the objectives to be taken to achieving the Council's aspirations to achieve carbon neutrality across its own operations by 2030. It identifies six corporate commitments and a suite of objectives across nine key themes:

Six Corporate Commitments	Nine Key themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• To lead and inspire our residents, businesses, and schools to reduce their own carbon emissions.• To become 'Carbon-Neutral' by 2030.• To achieve 100% clean electricity across the Council's services by 2030.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• C1 Community Leadership.• C2 The Councils Own Operations.• C3 Building Better Places.• C4 Using and Producing Clean and Green Energy.• C5 Waste Management.

Six Corporate Commitments

- To raise awareness and develop the potential of young people to respond to the challenge of the climate emergency.
- To enhance opportunities for biodiversity across the borough and particularly in urban areas.
- To remain open to the opportunity to go further, and to be innovative and creative to exceed the stated goals wherever possible.

Nine Key themes

- C6 Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation.
- C7 Carbon Offsetting.
- C8 Sustainable Transportation.
- C9 Transparency, Communication & Reporting.

The Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions used to track progress towards the carbon neutral 2030 target against three key areas Natural Gas, Electricity and Vehicular Travel. The percentage split of emissions in 2021/2022: Gas 49.6%, electricity 35.3%, vehicle travel 15%.

Progress against the Climate Action Plan objectives has been positive, and the Council has made strides towards its overarching carbon reduction aspirations, contributing to an overall 14.5% reduction in emissions from the baseline reported in 2018/19, equating to 1,909.53 tonnes CO₂e. An extensive street lighting replacement programme has been undertaken in recent years, delivering a 59.24% kWh reduction in usage since the programme started.

Since the commencement of the LED scheme in September 2022, 720 light fittings have been replaced as part of the LED scheme, with a further 728 in the current pipeline for 2023/24. One of the schemes, at Grainges Car Park, has seen consumption reduce by approximately 38% per month since installation was completed.

A boiler replacement programme is currently underway to replace communal gas boilers, with over 20 sites tendered to date. Boiler replacement in Heathfield Rise, a general needs housing scheme comprising of 36 dwellings spread across two blocks, took place in 2021 and is currently reporting a 16.09% kWh reduction in usage.

A recommendation to appoint an Electric Vehicle (EV) charging contractor and EV strategy is intended for July 2023 Cabinet; this will provide an accessible infrastructure for residents, visitors and LBH fleet. Our school screening programme has seen 39 school air pollution barriers installed, with a further 12 schools currently in the pipeline.

A Low Carbon Supplier Charter and Low Carbon Procurement Policy has been developed and incorporated into all new procurements, this will assist with identifying emissions associated with the supply chain and helping to secure carbon reduction. The Council has commissioned work to identify which of our assets contribute the most to our CO₂ emissions. The standout contribution is from the Civic Centre and hence our work to modernise this building. This work will ensure that we do work to assets we intend to retain.

Energy efficiency audits are being conducted at the Council's top energy consuming sites, the audits will review key sources of energy consumption such as: lighting

systems, building fabric, heating and cooling, buildings controls, renewables and low carbon technology. Upon completion of the audits, a centralised list of carbon reduction projects will be developed which would enable the Council to seek sources of funding to implement these carbon reduction projects and start decarbonising its operations and demonstrate progress towards Net Zero Carbon.

In order to stay informed on this evolving topic, Climate Officers actively participate in numerous programmes detailed to help ensure we are part of the national conversation and are well versed in all the latest developments, these include:

- The London Environment Directors' Network is a membership association across London boroughs, where Hillingdon officers participate. It provides a forum for councils to share learning and best practice and develop thinking on emerging policy.
- West London Climate Emergency Group - West London Local Energy Planning Report due in July 2023. Scoping discussions completed to explore how the overall outputs of Phase 1 will be presented at a sub regional level and to the boroughs.
- Local Engagement
 - Engagement with Hillingdon Friends of the Earth and focused sub groups
 - Hayes Town Partnership
 - Brunel University

Overall, the progress made in reducing emissions associated with electricity consumption and fleet usage has been encouraging, marking a significant step in the right direction. The efforts to minimise the consumption of natural gas have additionally contributed to this achievement; however, as we look to the future, the Council acknowledges that we will need to continue to address emissions from this particular energy source and we remained committed to doing so.

In conclusion, I am pleased with the overall progress that we have made in properly establishing our base line use and the projects already undertaken to reduce usage but there is much still to be done in this journey, both in terms of our own estate and our wider community leadership role.

6.9 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MONEY TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"Please could the Cabinet member explain why it appears that there is no systematic and fair approach in place by the Council for the housing department to work with all the Registered Social Landlords to ensure there is a fully managed transfer scheme within all Council and RSL housing stock in Hillingdon with a variety of different sized properties within the Council's control?"

WRITTEN RESPONSE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

The Housing Needs Service actively works with all registered social landlords (RSL's) in Hillingdon. It is possible for RSL tenants to join the Social Housing Register in Hillingdon and apply for a transfer and this facility is used by residents. It is also normal for both the council & the RSL's to run their own internal waiting lists for transfers within their own stock. This includes high priority moves, such as domestic abuse, as well lower priority moves, such as overcrowding. If high priority moves are necessary between providers these are arranged through reciprocal agreements and are approved on a case-by-case basis.

The use of a common hosing register across all providers is not that prevalent either in London or across the country. Housing Associations can and do work across boroughs and this adds to the complications. In Hillingdon we have 45 Housing associations working in the borough. Only 13 of whom have more than 100 properties. In line with best practice, we do reach to and work with Housing Associations.

The council does have a wide variety of properties under its own control and we are actively working to ensure that we make best use of the stock. We regularly review the mix of property we have and whether it still meets our current needs as well as downsizing incentives to free up stock where appropriate.

Hillingdon is also actively working on under-occupied property in both council and RSL properties in order to support downsizing moves and make the best use of internal stock.

6.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DAVIES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT - COUNCILLOR BIANCO:

"Can the Cabinet Member tell me if he has had any contact with Transport for London following his letter to the Mayor of London demanding better bus services for the people of this borough and has he also been able to raise the complete lack of help that the so-called 'Superloop' will bring to the residents of Hillingdon?"

WRITTEN RESPONSE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

I am pleased to say that after some delay, my colleague Cllr Douglas Mills and I, accompanied by the Chief Executive and a number of senior officers, finally got to sit down at the end of June with the Director of Buses at TfL, Louise Cheeseman and most of the senior team in Transport for London's bus division. It was the first time that Ms Cheeseman had been to Hillingdon; unexpectedly, bearing in mind her job title, she came on the tube!

I was slightly taken aback when, in their opening statement, TfL told us that they were not 'anti-car', and I said that I felt sure that if I had been told this at any other meeting, such as the present one, most of the audience would not believe me.

We made it abundantly clear that we feel that, as a whole, our residents are poorly served by public transport, circumstances which we largely share with most of our counterparts in Outer London. Furthermore, this is nothing new. However, and perhaps for the first time, TfL acknowledged this fact.

We explained that for many of our residents, a car remains the essential tool to enable their ability to get about, simply because there is no practical alternative for them. If there is no bus or train service that runs where they need it, then no amount of cajoling them to give up their car will help. Further, we explained that being an outer London borough where our longest boundary is against the Shires, bus transport fares particularly badly against this "Berlin Wall" separating us from Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire.

The much-vaunted 'Super Loop' is not going to help our residents one iota. For those who do not know what it comprises, it seems to be almost entirely nothing more than a re-branding exercise for a ring of mostly already existing bus routes that circulate around the inner part of Outer London, and in fact the loop itself barely scrapes the

eastern edge of Hillingdon.

However, no doubt partly as a gesture towards us, there is a hypothetical horizontal line drawn on TfL's map, via the Uxbridge Road, right through the Borough from east to west, as far as Uxbridge itself.

The existing express route along this road which many already know as the 607 is, we now understand, to be renamed the 'SL8' from the end of this month. I am sure that for many of our residents, the new name will suggest that it's a bus bound for or coming from Slough which has accidentally gone astray! More bizarrely, we only found out about that a few days after our meeting with the TfL bus people.

No actual changes to the service itself seem to be included at this stage, just a different number displayed on the front and back of the bus, which we feel will do little other than confuse people who have known and used the 607 in the precisely 33 years it has borne that number.

On a more positive note, Councillor Mills and I put across a number of our own suggestions, such as better connections to the Elizabeth Line, extending the 278 bus route and filling some of the obvious gaps in the network. Our officers have been tasked with working with TfL to see how and how soon some of these ideas can be brought into practice, and bring some meaningful benefits to our residents.

However, I am grateful that at long last TfL were willing to come to the table and at least open discussions with us; we must hope that this leads to a more fruitful partnership which actually benefits our residents!

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

"Please can the Cabinet member tell us what is the 'average' waiting time for a resident to be moved into permanent accommodation back in this borough, after them being placed 'out of borough' in temporary accommodation?"

WRITTEN RESPONSE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Once placed in temporary accommodation (TA), either in or out of Borough, residents generally remain in this property until either a settled private sector rental property is sourced or permanent property is found. Due to the current private rented sector (PRS) market, it is currently difficult to source PRS move on for all client groups and this includes TA residents. This is in special regard to family size properties – 2 bed or larger. This does mean it is currently more likely that a TA resident would end up in a Council property as other options would not be available.

In 2022/23, the Council was able to offer 432 new permanent tenancies in both Council and housing association stock. Of these, 138 new lettings went to former homeless households.

As of 31 May 2023, there were 3,449 applicants on the housing register. The average waiting times from 1 April 2022 to date are:

- 1 beds – average 1 year+ but up 3 years
- 2 beds – average 2 years+ but up to 5 years
- 3+ beds – average 3 years+ but up to 9 years

6.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR HAGGAR TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:

"Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on the progress for new SEND places and support provision within the borough for our resident children with special educational needs?"

WRITTEN RESPONSE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

As part of the Council's SEND sufficiency strategy, the council is working closely with all schools in Hillingdon to increase the provision of places across the Borough, in order for children to attend a school that is as close to their home as possible.

However, like many other local authorities, there is a rising number of children with special educational needs in the Borough and we have had to look at ways to strengthen the council's educational and schools' portfolio to accommodate the need.

Hillingdon's strategy is based on promoting an inclusive and supportive approach across all schools, that will increase the number of children with additional needs benefitting from the experience of a mainstream education. Inclusive schools and classrooms are filled with a mix of diverse learners; all with their own unique strengths and weaknesses. Inclusion gives all children an opportunity to build and maintain friendships, finding commonality and differences with their classmates and learning that everyone is different and that is normal. This coupled with the provision of special needs schools for children and young people with more complex support needs.

We are achieving this by creating a provision of support and special school places in the Borough by increasing the number of mainstream schools with a (S)pecial (R)esource (P)rovision on school sites across the Borough, to ensure children with higher levels of need are supported to excel in their school. In the next academic year 23/24 we expect to see three primary provisions Charville Academy, Wood End and Ruislip Gardens projects coming to fruition.

In addition, the provision of an Assessment Base in mainstream schools to complete assessments for children at an early stage to establish the most appropriate support and education pathway. The first one in the Borough will open at Ruislip Gardens Primary School in the next academic year and further opportunities to expand the number of places in our schools' portfolio is being explored.

Further, we continue to look at specialist Designated Units based at mainstream schools to ensure children with more complex needs can be supported to enjoy the mainstream school experience and ensure more complex needs are met, without the need to attend a special school.

The Council is keen to build enough capacity to meet demand whilst also supporting settings to ensure they are inclusive and maintain high standards of support for children and young people with SEND. We are closely monitoring demand for SEND places and projected growth of EHCPs to ensure we find a suitable balance of placements whilst also supporting settings to be inclusive wherever possible. We are carrying out an increasing number of SEND reviews for our mainstream schools, which has been positively received, and broadening our offer of placements to meet a range of needs. Our new offer of placement types means we have a spectrum of options for families to consider when deciding the best school placements for their

children.

Currently, we are looking at a new all through 180 place special free school in Hillingdon which has been approved by the Department of Education and options of location are now being considered. This will reduce the need for placements in Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools, which tend to be further from home for many children.

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

7.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL

Councillor Tuckwell moved, and Councillor Lavery seconded, the following motion:

That this Council notes that, on 2 November 2017, it resolved to request the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, to reconsider his plan to close Uxbridge Police station and sell off the site.

Council further notes that the minutes of that meeting show Labour Councillors chose not to support the motion. Despite this, discussions were held with MOPAC to try and avoid the closure, but Mayor Khan refused to change his decision to close the Uxbridge Police station.

The appointment of a new Metropolitan Police Commissioner has brought about renewed discussions, including with the Leader of the Council and an undertaking of a fresh review of the Police estate.

That, consequently, Council now instructs the Leader of the Council to intensify discussions with the Borough Superintendent and members of the Metropolitan Police senior leadership, with the intention of maintaining Uxbridge Police station as a permanent operational base for local policing and the wider geographical area.

In addition, this Council rebukes the Mayor of London who is responsible for the policing of London, for failing to listen to or engage with the residents of Hillingdon over the past 6 years since we have been campaigning on this. Noting his dramatic U-turn recently in desperation and panic; he is now looking to go against his own decision of closing this local facility in a political gimmick that will not land with local residents, who know who has been standing up for them since 2017.

Those in support of the motion stated that there had been no justification for closing Uxbridge police station and that its closure had posed a danger to residents. North Uxbridge Residents' Association had supported the Council's campaign to reopen the police station but, until the recent byelection campaign, the Labour Group had not supported residents on this matter as they had stated that it was a waste of money. The Leader of the Council had used his position to gain support from the Police Commissioner to reopen Uxbridge police station when the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, had expressed no interest in considering the matter.

The Labour Group had chosen not to support a motion moved by the administration in relation to Uxbridge Police Station in 2017, yet the Council had persisted with its objection to the closure.

Those speaking against the motion stated that the motion in 2017 had not been supported as it would have been better to get the three local MPs to lobby to keep the station open and taxpayers would effectively have been paying for the police station twice. There had been issues in relation to neighbourhood policing budgets being slashed and concerns from serving police officers that community policing had collapsed, yet Boris Johnson, whilst he had been Mayor of London, had closed West Drayton police station and wasted money on water cannons and the ill-fated Garden Bridge.

Councillor Curling moved, and Councillor Mathers seconded, an amendment to the motion to the effect that it would read as follows:

That this Council notes that, on 2 November 2017, it resolved to request the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, to reconsider his plan to close Uxbridge Police station and sell off the site.

Council further notes that the minutes of that meeting show Labour Councillors moved an amendment, recognising that the MOPAC (Mayors Office for Policing And Crime) proposals were a result of funding cuts by the previous Mayor of London (Boris Johnson) and further funding cuts from central government, totalling £1 Billion over a 7-year period.

Council also notes that the Labour amendment suggested that Council should “enlist the support of the three borough MPs to assist the Mayor of London in lobbying central government for the appropriate funding for a police service that has sufficient resources for the long-term protection of our residents”, and that all of the Conservative councillors voted against this amendment.

Despite this, discussions were held with MOPAC to try and use local council tax-payer’s money, to buy the Police station, which was already in public ownership but MOPAC rejected the offer.

The appointment of a new Metropolitan Police Commissioner has brought about renewed discussions and an undertaking of a fresh review of the Police estate.

That this Council regrets:

- that after 13 years of a Conservative led government, criminals in Uxbridge and South Ruislip are being let off whilst victims are being let down,*
- that successive Conservative led Governments have cut a total of 20,000 police officers from our streets,*
- that the Police Replacement Programme still leaves 6000 fewer police out on the beat and 9000 fewer officers in real terms compared to the last Labour government as the population has grown,*
- the former MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip, Boris Johnson, closing West Drayton police station whilst Mayor, leaving Hillingdon with only three police stations.*
- proposing to purchase Uxbridge Police Station, using Council Tax money, which tax-payers have already paid for and residents continue to contribute towards through the Council Tax precept.*
- withdrawing funding of the Police Tasking team in February 2023 which provided Hillingdon residents with 9 dedicated officers to keep our streets safer.*
- the failure of Hillingdon Conservative Councillors to stand up for local*

residents and speak out against any of these Conservative led failures in law and order.

This Council thanks the thousands of local residents who supported the Labour led campaign to save Uxbridge Police Station.

Council now instructs the Leader of the Council to work with the Mayor of London, the new MP for Uxbridge & South Ruislip, once elected, the Borough Superintendent and members of the Metropolitan Police senior leadership, with the intention of maintaining Uxbridge Police station as a permanent operational base for local policing and the wider geographical area.

Those speaking in support of the amendment had been happy that the police station would be staying open. The Council motion in 2017 had not been supported as it had proposed that £5m of taxpayers' money be used to buy the station and further money be provided towards the annual running costs. However, the Council had withdrawn funding support for nine dedicated officers on the police tasking team in February 2023 at a time when the number of police officers on the streets needed to be increased. After 13 years, criminals were being let off and residents were being let down.

Those speaking against the amendment stated that it tried to change the history of events and confuse the issue. In 2017, Mr Khan had rarely ever visited Hillingdon and had sent someone else to speak to residents about the closure. The residents had said that the closure was a bad idea, crime figures had subsequently gone up and Labour Members had failed to represent local people. The Council motion in 2017 had proposed to use capital funds to buy Uxbridge police station and the authority would have received a rental income from this investment.

The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

Those speaking in support of the original motion noted that the administration had put forward a motion in 2017 to save Uxbridge police station which had been opposed by the Labour Group. In 2018 and 2021, the Labour Group proposed amendments to remove funding to buy the police station from the budget but, in 2021, they voted for the budget even though their amendment had been lost.

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

RESOLVED: That this Council notes that, on 2 November 2017, it resolved to request the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, to reconsider his plan to close Uxbridge Police station and sell off the site.

Council further notes that the minutes of that meeting show Labour Councillors chose not to support the motion. Despite this, discussions were held with MOPAC to try and avoid the closure, but Mayor Khan refused to change his decision to close the Uxbridge Police station.

The appointment of a new Metropolitan Police Commissioner has brought about renewed discussions, including with the Leader of the Council and an undertaking of a fresh review of the Police estate.

That, consequently, Council now instructs the Leader of the Council to intensify discussions with the Borough Superintendent and members of the Metropolitan

Police senior leadership, with the intention of maintaining Uxbridge Police station as a permanent operational base for local policing and the wider geographical area.

In addition, this Council rebukes the Mayor of London who is responsible for the policing of London, for failing to listen to or engage with the residents of Hillingdon over the past 6 years since we have been campaigning on this. Noting his dramatic U-turn recently in desperation and panic; he is now looking to go against his own decision of closing this local facility in a political gimmick that will not land with local residents, who know who has been standing up for them since 2017.

7.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR SWEETING

Councillor Sweeting moved, and Councillor Mand seconded, the following motion:

That this Council recognises the vital role and responsibility local authorities have in supporting the attainment and improvement of their schools.

This Council is, therefore, concerned at the fall in some standards as detailed in the Annual Standards Report 2021/22.

Therefore, this Council calls on the administration to review urgently its approach in supporting our schools.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that everyone wanted what was best for the Borough's children and that schools had been doing what they could since the pandemic. This motion was not about criticising the work that teachers had been doing but was about identifying what else could be done to improve the situation. Although the Borough had borne well against national outcomes for primary key stages, there had been a drop in achievement when comparing to statistical neighbours. These had been worrying results that had been glossed over and blamed on the pandemic despite the pandemic affecting everyone and Hillingdon having been consistently at the bottom even before Covid. The pandemic should not be used as an excuse for poor performance and the Council needed to do better in helping schools to improve their results.

Consideration needed to be given to the action that other London boroughs had taken that had helped them to improve, identify what Hillingdon had been doing to support schools in the Borough and produce a levelling up action plan to improve performance.

Those speaking against the motion noted that the School Improvement Team had been continuously working with schools. However, there had been some performance issues in relation to Key Stage 5 in 2021/22, with Covid disproportionately affecting children in Hillingdon. As such, it was important that comparisons were not made with previous years. Priorities for the next academic year had been set and training and support had been offered to schools. Work had also been undertaken with the SEND and social care teams along with the provision of advice, guidance and signposting.

Councillor O'Brien moved, and Councillor Haggart seconded, an amendment to the motion to the effect that it would read as follows:

That this Council recognises the vital role and responsibility local authorities have in supporting the attainment and improvement of all schools within their geographical area.

This Council is aware that there has been a dip in a small number of outcomes as detailed within the Annual Standards Report 2021/22 following the impact of the COVID pandemic, a trend that has been recorded across the country. Council also notes that it has been recognised nationally that 2021/22 data cannot be used to give an accurate indication of performance compared to other years, because of the disruption brought about by the pandemic.

This Council will continue to review and work closely with all educational settings in targeting support appropriately.

Those speaking against the amendment noted that there were schools in the Borough had been deemed inadequate in all areas. Despite the hard work that had been undertaken, schools in Hillingdon still fell behind statistical neighbours that had struggled with the same issues. As such, Covid should not be blamed for this poor performance and action should be taken so that the Council stopped letting these children down.

Those speaking in support of the amendment advised that HM Majesty's Inspectors had stated that 2021/22 data should be seen as incomplete. It had been recognised that there had been an increase in the number of children with SEN and action was being taken to meet these needs. This had been the subject of a Council Select Committee review and was an issue that could be reviewed again.

The amendment was put to the vote and agreed. The substantive motion was then put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED: That this Council recognises the vital role and responsibility local authorities have in supporting the attainment and improvement of all schools within their geographical area.

This Council is aware that there has been a dip in a small number of outcomes as detailed within the Annual Standards Report 2021/22 following the impact of the COVID pandemic, a trend that has been recorded across the country. Council also notes that it has been recognised nationally that 2021/22 data cannot be used to give an accurate indication of performance compared to other years, because of the disruption brought about by the pandemic.

This Council will continue to review and work closely with all educational settings in targeting support appropriately.

7.3 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MATHERS

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

That this Council affirms our commitment to free weekly bin collections and thanks our Council staff for their dedication to their work. However, this Council recognises that, since the refuse collection routes have been changed, there has been a noticeable difference across the borough in the amount of litter and burst bin bags around the time of collection day.

Therefore, this Council calls on the administration to take action for a more synchronised approach to services that keeps our streets clean and restores a sense of pride in our communities.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that, on collection days, rubbish was regularly strewn across the streets and was a blight on the Borough. The refuse team worked hard and Members were grateful for the job that they did but consideration needed to be given to making rubbish collection even easier for residents to prevent rubbish from being blown into their neighbours gardens. It was suggested that there needed to be better synchronisation between refuse collection and street cleaning and litter picks and grass cutting. Action also needed to be taken to address the confusion caused by changes to collection days around bank holidays.

Concern was expressed about the Council's lacklustre approach to enforcement, particularly in HMOs, and about how some residents had received fines for trying to help by collecting their rubbish in single big piles.

Those speaking against the motion did not recognise the picture that had been painted by the opposition as the majority of litter had been picked up before it had been reported. New properties had been added to routes and a communications campaign had been undertaken to deal with missed collections. The street cleaning team visited roads the day after their bin collection day and the food waste collection service had been offered to more households (767 properties had been approached which had increased participation in the food waste collection scheme).

Councillor Lavery moved, and Councillor D Mills seconded, an amendment to the motion to the effect that it would read as follows:

That this Council affirms our commitment to free weekly bin collections, including recycling and green waste collections and thanks our Council staff for their dedication to their work.

Council reaffirms that it rejects the idea of charging residents for the collection of garden waste and is concerned that Labour's Camden candidate in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip parliamentary by-election, who is currently a Cabinet Member at the London Borough of Camden has already supported policies that have introduced an annual £75 charge for this service in that borough.

Council further recognises that it needs to continue to monitor litter and burst bin bags around the time of collection and notes action that our street cleaning team have already taken to ensure a more synchronised approach to services, ensuring our streets remain clean, continuing to promote a sense of pride in our communities all across the borough.

Those speaking in support of the amendment noted that the original motion had had made reference to refuse collection but had made no reference to the other types of waste collected. Hillingdon provided a complete service with weekly collections that included green waste. Concern was expressed that inappropriate inner London solutions, such as those used in Camden, were being proposed for an outer London borough. A coordinated approach had been put in place to deal with the challenges of clearing litter after the refuse collection day and, as a result, there had not been a large number of MEs on the issue.

Those speaking against the amendment stated that the Council Chamber was being used for electioneering and that MPs did not set policy for refuse collection. The intent of the original motion had been that it referred to all types of waste collected by the Council. Insofar as MEs were concerned, it was suggested that the new GOSS system for reporting had been challenging and therefore prevented many Members from reporting many instances in their wards. A future Labour administration would commit to the continuation of weekly waste collections.

The amendment was put to the vote and agreed.

Councillor Curling moved, and Councillor Punja seconded, a further amendment to the substantive motion to the effect that it would read as follows:

That this Council affirms our commitment to free weekly bin collections, including recycling and green waste collections and thanks our Council staff for their dedication to their work.

Council reaffirms that it rejects the idea of charging residents for the collection of garden waste.

Council further recognises that it needs to continue to monitor litter and burst bin bags around the time of collection and notes action that our street cleaning team have already taken to ensure a more synchronised approach to services, ensuring our streets remain clean, continuing to promote a sense of pride in our communities all across the borough.

Those in favour of the amendment noted that residents did not want to pay more for their weekly bin collection and rejected the idea of paying for garden waste collections. As it was not appropriate to vote on what Camden had or had not done, the amendment sought to delete reference to that borough and the upcoming election.

The amendment was put to a recorded vote:

Those voting for: Councillors Abby, Basit, Burles, Curling, Farley, Gardner, Garelick, Islam, Kaur, Lakhmana, Mand, Mathers, Money, Nelson, Nelson-West, Punja, Sansarpuri and Sweeting.

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

Those abstaining: None.

The amendment was lost and the substantive motion was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED: That this Council affirms our commitment to free weekly bin collections including recycling and green waste collections and thanks our Council staff for their dedication to their work.

Council reaffirms that it rejects the idea of charging residents for the collection of garden waste and is concerned that Labour's Camden candidate in the Uxbridge and South Ruislip parliamentary by-election, who is currently a

Cabinet Member at the London Borough of Camden has already supported policies that have introduced an annual £75 charge for this service in that borough.

Council further recognises that it needs to continue to monitor litter and burst bin bags around the time of collection and notes action that our street cleaning team have already taken to ensure a more synchronised approach to services, ensuring our streets remain clean, continuing to promote a sense of pride in our communities all across the borough.

7.4 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PUNJA

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

That this Council recognises the detrimental impact that poor housing standards can have on residents' well-being and calls on the Cabinet to carry out an immediate review of its current strategies relating to housing to assess the impact on residents' well-being and to develop a plan to improve the detrimental impact of poor housing on residents' well-being.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that it was no secret that Hillingdon housing was in crisis and that there was not sufficient housing for residents in need. The cost of building new properties had increased and took time. Consideration needed to be given to housing standards to make existing properties fit for purpose as inadequate housing contributed to poor health conditions, which was exacerbated by poor quality repairs and long waiting times. Residents had been let down by the Council and by Locata and had been unable to speak to a person when calling.

Some families were living in cramped and overcrowded conditions which compounded their health conditions but which were still not serious enough to improve their standing on Locata. Concern was expressed that officers had regularly not been responding to enquiries about housing cases which were increasing in seriousness and which could impact on residents' mental health. This was exacerbated by the fact that many residents did not speak English as their first language which caused additional confusion. It was suggested that staff received additional training on how to deliver messages sensitively as each situation and case needed to be handled differently.

Housing issues were regularly raised in ward surgeries and residents were sometimes being blamed for the poor conditions that they were living in despite them not doing anything that they shouldn't be doing. Pressure needed to be put on landlords to fix issues that their tenants raised to make them habitable and it was suggested that the Housing Strategy be reviewed.

Those speaking against the motion recognised the detrimental impact that poor housing could have on residents' mental wellbeing. Staff tried their best but were required to apply standard criteria across the board. The Housing Strategy had recognised the importance of health and the Council had been making improvements to its housing stock with new roofs, kitchen and bathrooms, etc. Concerns about damp and mould were also being tracked and dealt with but it was recognised that poor ventilation could be exacerbated by efficient new windows.

It was noted that the Council was the landlord of approximately 10k properties. £70m of investment had been made in the housing stock in relation to boiler replacement,

	<p>windows, roofs, sprinkler systems, etc. Approximately 3k repairs were undertaken in the Council's housing stock each month and, although it was thought that the authority was doing well, it was recognised that it could still do better.</p> <p>The motion was put to the vote and lost.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.27 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.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

5.1 QUESTION FROM CHRIS WATERS OF FERRERS AVENUE, WEST DRAYTON TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

The Council has recently been part of a legal battle against the expansion of the ULEZ zone, with the highlighted factor being the £12.50 charge during the 'cost of living crisis' – all pointing at this being more of a money-making than pollution reduction scheme by the Mayor of London.

On the other hand, the Hillingdon Council deems it suitable to increase various vehicle related costs for its residents. General parking increasing 166% for residents to 80p per hour whilst the increase to non-residents is 20p or 11%. Blue badge renewals for the disabled residents to go up 376% or £7.90 and residents who live in permit zones, the 1st permit which was previously free will now cost £75.

Without comparison to other or neighbouring Boroughs, can the Council provide justification as to why their increases should be acceptable however the cost associated with the ULEZ expansion, which will also provide a health benefit, is not acceptable considering that the Council, TfL and City Hall all have cost pressures to consider?

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REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Reporting Officer: Head of Democratic Services

6.1 MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2023/24

1. Background

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Council held on 23 February 2023 the Scheme of Members' Allowances was approved for 2023/24 and the Head of Democratic Services was given delegated authority to increase the level of the Basic Allowance paid to Members in line with any subsequent annual pay award to staff for 2023/24.
- 1.2 Although the pay award for the current year has yet to be finally determined, the National Employers have offered a 'full and final' pay deal which equates to between 3.88% and 9.42%, depending on an individual member of staff's pay grade. Staff above spinal point 43 have been offered a flat 3.88% increase.

RECOMMENDATION: That the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to increase the level of the Basic Allowance paid to elected Members by 3.88% to £12,480 pa, backdated to 1 April 2023 (subject to the final agreement of the annual pay award to staff).

1. Proposal

- 1.1 Although the Employers' offer equates to different percentage level rises for staff, dependent on their current salaries, it is recommended that, for ease of implementation and administration, the increase of 3.88% be applied to the Member Basic Allowance.
- 1.2 No change is proposed to the level of Special Responsibility Allowances which will have remained at their current level for three years in a row,.

3. Financial Implications

The proposed increase in the Basic Allowance will be met from existing budgets.

4. Legal Implications

Under the terms of the Constitution, the determination and / or amendment of the Scheme of Allowances is a matter for Full Council.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Nil

6.2 WAIVER OF 6 MONTH COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE RULE.

Introduction

1. Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 requires a Member of a Local Authority to attend at least one meeting of that Authority within a six-month consecutive period, to avoid being disqualified as a Councillor. This requirement can be waived, and the time limit extended if any failure to attend was due to a reason approved by the Authority, in advance of the six-month period expiring.
2. Unfortunately, Councillor Rita Judge has not been able to attend any Council or Committee meetings since the Annual Council meeting on 11 May 2023 and, due to illness, will be unable to attend any meetings before the end of the six-month period.
3. A formal request has therefore been made for an extension to the six-month rule to be approved in his respect.

RECOMMENDATION: That, pursuant to Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972, Councillor Judge's non-attendance at meetings of the authority due to ill health, be approved for a period ending on 31 December 2023.

Background

4. The Head of Democratic Services has received a request for the Council to consider approving an extension to the usual six-month attendance rule enabling Councillor Judge to remain in office until she is able to resume normal duties.
5. Council can only consider approval of any reasons for non-attendance before the end of the relevant six-month period, which will be 11 November 2023. This is the final Council meeting at which approval could be sought for an extension of the time limit. If approval to any extension is not therefore agreed at this meeting, Councillor Judge would, under Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 be disqualified from office as a councillor.
6. Once a Member loses office, through failure to attend for the six-month period, the disqualification cannot be overcome by the Member subsequently resuming attendance nor can retrospective approval of the Council be sought for an extension in time.
7. Councillor Judge was elected to the Council in May 2022 and represents Yeading Ward.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Section 85 (1) of the Local Government Act 1972 states that, *“if a Member of a Local Authority fails, throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of their last attendance, to attend any meeting of the Authority they will, unless the failure was due to some good reason approved by the Authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a Member of the Authority.”*

BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

6.3 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 2022/23

1. Background

- 1.1 The annual report of the Audit Committee 2022/23 contains information to be presented to Council, so that it can be assured that the Audit Committee is acting appropriately on its behalf.
- 1.2 The annual report also provides an opportunity for Council to review the work of the Audit Committee and comment on its contribution and performance. The terms of reference of the Committee are detailed in the report.

RECOMMENDATION: That the annual report of the Audit Committee 2022/23, attached at Appendix B, be noted.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 This report summarises, for the Council, the work of the Audit Committee during 2022/23 and how it has undertaken its responsibilities for reviewing the key areas within its remit. Specifically, these include:
 - Internal Audit (including internal controls);
 - Risk Management;
 - Corporate Governance;
 - External Audit;
 - Counter Fraud; and
 - Financial reporting process of the Statement of Accounts.
- 2.2 The Committee membership during the 2022/23 Municipal Year is shown below. They have a wide range of skills and bring both technical and professional experience to the role.
 - Mr John Chesshire - Independent Chairman – Appointed 02.11.17
 - Councillor Richard Lewis
 - Councillor Naser Abby
 - Councillor Tony Burles
 - Councillor Reeta Chamdal
 - Councillor Nick Denys

The current Independent Chairman has approximately 20 years' experience in the public and private sector working in the internal audit, risk management, business improvement and governance fields.

- 2.3 During the course of meetings Members are briefed on relevant issues in relation to local government accounts, External Audit, Internal Audit, Use of Resources, Anti-Fraud arrangements, and Risk Management.
- 2.4 The role delegated by the Council to the Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance over the governance, risk management and the system of internal control in operation at the Council. The Audit Committee has fulfilled this role by undertaking the key activities including:
- Oversight of Internal Audit
 - Oversight of External Audit
 - Prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption
 - Oversight of Risk Management
 - Approval of Financial Accounts
 - Corporate Governance

Further information about these key activities are detailed in the report.

- 2.5 The Audit Committee considers that it has continued to make a significant contribution to ensuring that the key elements of the governance framework are given proper consideration and are appropriately challenged. It will continue to develop this role and contribute to strengthen internal control, risk management and governance throughout the authority.
- 2.6 Accordingly, in compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) Regulations 2021, the Audit Committee has reviewed the effectiveness of the systems of internal control by receiving regular reports from these areas above that contribute to the control framework.

3. Financial and Legal Implications

None arising from this report.

Background papers: Nil

6.4 HILLINGDON PLANNING COMMITTEE

1. Proposal

- 1.1 Following a recent review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application process, it is proposed to rationalise the work of the current two planning committees (Borough and Majors) and merge them into a single, borough-wide, Hillingdon Planning Committee.
- 1.2 The new Planning Committee will meet once a month with the same size membership (7 – four Conservative and three Labour) and will consider applications from across the Borough. The Committee will utilise the existing dates for the current Borough Planning Committee with the first meeting being on 1 November with subsequent meetings on:
 - 6 December
 - 17 January
 - 14 February
 - 14 March
 - 11 April and
 - 15 May.
- 1.3 To support the merger of the planning committees, changes to the Planning Scheme of Delegations are proposed which will ensure that the most controversial and significant planning applications are always put before the Planning Committee, whilst enabling all other applications to be determined by officers.
- 1.4 In summary the changes proposed to the Scheme of Delegations are as follows:
 - to remove the requirement for minor applications with a valid petition or 20 or more written representations to be submitted to the committee where the desired outcome of the petition or written representations accords with the officer's recommendation, and in such circumstances public speaking rights would not apply. However, applications may still be referred to Committee via a different criterion if applicable, e.g., Ward Councillor Call-in.
 - to remove the requirement for inappropriate developments in the Green Belt of more than 200m² to be submitted to the Committee. Applications over 1,000m² are required to be submitted to the Committee for consideration as major applications, and it is anticipated that controversial applications will trigger one or more of the other criteria,
 - to allow Tree Preservation orders with objections to be considered and determined by officers and
 - to reduce the types of HS2 applications presented at the Committee due to the limited scope for changes and to reflect that most operational development has now been approved.
- 1.5 Other minor updates to the Petition Scheme have been made, to clarify existing practices and procedures.

1.6 The proposed changes will come into effect from 12 October 2023 and all applications and petitions submitted after that date will be dealt with in accordance with these changes.

1.7 Accordingly, Council is asked:

- i) to delete the two existing planning committees and appoint a single committee with the following membership:
 - Conservative: Councillors Higgins (proposed Chairman), Bennett (proposed Vice-Chairman), Roy Chamdal and Davies.
 - Labour: Councillors Garelick, Mand and Singh.
- ii) amend Chapter 7 of the Constitution as shown in the appendix to this report along with other references to the existing two planning committees as they occur elsewhere in the Constitution.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That:

- a) **w.e.f 12 October 2023, the Borough Planning Committee and the Major Applications Planning Committee cease to exist, and a single Hillingdon Planning Committee be appointed with membership as shown above and Terms of Reference as detailed in Appendix A, and**
- b) **that the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to make the consequential necessary changes to Chapter 7 of the Constitution, including the Petition Scheme, as detailed in Appendix A and any other amendments required as they occur elsewhere in the Constitution.**

2. Financial Implications

The reduction in the number of meetings and the deletion of one committee will result in a consequential saving to the cost of democracy in the region of £24k.

3. Legal Implications

- 3.1 Under the terms of the Constitution, the appointment of appropriate Committees and their membership to undertake Council business is a matter for Full Council.
- 3.2 The proposals do not affect the overall political balance of the Council and comply with sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 which relate to the discharge of functions by the Council.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Nil

Chapter 7 - Planning Decisions

The London Borough of Hillingdon is a Local Planning Authority and determines planning matters permitted in law. All matters relating to town and country planning functions as set out in the Town and Country Planning Act and related acts, including The High Speed 2 (HS2) Act, are delegated to the Chief Planning Officer **for determination**, with the exception of the matters listed below which are for determination by the **Hillingdon Planning** relevant Committee.

Definition of Planning Applications

References to 'Planning Applications' in this document include the following application types:

- Applications for full planning permission **including householder applications**,
- Applications for outline planning permission and reserved matters,
- Applications under S73 of the Town and Country Planning Act (1990) (as amended),
- Applications for permission in principle and technical details consent.

For the avoidance of doubt, the following application types are excluded from the definition of 'Planning Applications' in this document:

- Applications for prior notification/approval,
- Applications for tree works,
- Applications for non-material amendments to a planning permission,
- Applications to discharge a condition(s) pursuant to a planning permission,
- Applications for listed building consent,
- Applications for advertisement consent,
- Applications for certificates of lawfulness.
- **Applications for permission under the HS2 Act.**

Hillingdon Planning Committees

Matters to be Determined by the Major Applications Committee	
<i>Planning Applications meeting the following criteria:</i>	
1.	Planning applications relating to 'Major' development as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) where the recommendation is for approval. Except that Planning Applications to vary an existing planning permission or associated legal agreement are delegated to the Chief Planning Officer (unless the variation results in a reduction of affordable housing provision).
2.	Any ' Major ' planning application as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) where a Ward Councillor requests, in writing to the Chief Planning Officer, Head of Development Management and Building Control or Area Planning Service Managers within 21 days of the publication of the relevant weekly list of applications received by the Council, that it be determined by a Committee. The Ward Councillor must include a valid planning reason for the request.

	<p>Determination of what constitutes a valid planning reason will be made by the Chief Planning Officer or their sub-delegates, in consultation with the Planning Committee Chair. In exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Chief Planning Officer, Head of Development Management and Building Control or Area Planning Service Managers, the 21-day rule may be waived.</p> <p>Should the desired outcome subsequently be in accordance with the 'Officer's Recommendation' or the call-in request be withdrawn, then the application will not be referred to Committee.</p>
<i>Applications under the High Speed 2 Act meeting the following criteria:</i>	
3.	Schedule 17(2) – Condition relating to building works where the footprint is above 500m².
4.	Proposals under Schedule 17(3) Table: (2): Earthworks - where the works involve land of more than 1 hectare.
5.	Schedule 17(6) – Condition relating to road transport proposals for the movement of large goods vehicles (over 7.5 tonnes) of more than 24 movements a day (12 in, 12 out).
6.	Schedule 17(7 and 8) - Conditions relating to waste and soil disposal and excavation where the works affect an area of more than 1 hectare.
7.	Schedule 17(9) – Conditions on bringing scheduled works and depots into use where the scheduled work is more than 500m².
8.	Schedule 17(12) – Condition relating to site restoration where the proposals affect an area of more than 1 hectare.
9.	Schedule 16(5) – Condition relating to site restoration where the proposals affect an area of more than 1 hectare.
<i>Other matters meeting the following criteria:</i>	
10	Applications for listed building consent for which there is a corresponding Major Planning Application which meets the criteria set out in 1 or 2 above.

Matters to be Determined by the Borough Planning Committee	
The Borough Planning Committee will determine all other (non-major) planning applications which involve:	
11 3.	Planning applications for which a petitions of 20 or more valid signatures has been received , or 20 or more separate written responses have been received and the 'officer's recommendation' does not accord with the desired outcome of the petition. Where a petition has been received on a householder application and the desired outcome of the petition accords with the 'Officer's recommendation' then the application will not be reported to Committee.
4.	Planning applications for which 20 or more separate written objections have been received, and the 'officer's recommendation' is for approval.
5.	Planning applications for which 20 or more separate written representations of support have been received, and the 'officer's recommendation' is for refusal.
12 6.	Non-major- All planning applications where the Council is the applicant or has a financial liability.
3 7.	Planning applications submitted by or on behalf of a Councillor, Chief Officer or by or on behalf of any officer directly involved in the processing of planning applications.
4	Planning applications for inappropriate development in the Greenbelt (excluding

	householder or other development proposing less than 200sqm additional floorspace) where the recommendation is to grant planning permission.
8.	Applications for listed building consent for which there is a corresponding planning application which meets the criteria for referral to committee.
5	To confirm and modify Tree Preservation Orders where objections have been received and not withdrawn.
6	Any non-major planning application where a Ward Councillor requests, in writing to the Chief Planning Officer, Head of Development Management or Planning Service Manager within 21 days of the publication of the relevant weekly list of applications received by the Council, that it be determined by a committee. The Ward Councillor must include in their request the valid planning reasons why they wish the application to be determined by Committee and their desired outcome for the application. Determination of what constitutes a valid planning reason, and thus a valid referral, will be made by the Chief Planning Officer, Head of Development Management or Planning Service Manager in consultation with the relevant Planning Committee Chairman. In exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Chief Planning Officer, Head of Development Management or Planning Service Manager the 21-day rule may be waived. Should the desired outcome subsequently be in accordance with the 'Officer's Recommendation' then the application will not be referred to Committee.
	<i>Applications under the High Speed 2 Act meeting the following criteria:</i>
9.	Schedule 17(12) – Condition relating to site restoration where the proposals affect an area of more than 1 hectare.
10.	Schedule 16(5) – Condition relating to site restoration where the proposals affect an area of more than 1 hectare.

Other Cases

~~Additionally, the Chief Planning Officer in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member, may refer applications which by virtue of the level of public interest or by virtue of the economic / regeneration impacts of the proposals are felt to warrant consideration at the Borough or Major Applications Planning Committee.~~

Planning Committee Membership, Training & Conduct

The Planning Committees will be politically balanced, and membership determined by the Full Council. Mandatory training in planning is required for new committee members and all members of the planning committees should observe the Planning Code of Conduct set out in Part 3 of the Constitution.

Planning Committee Quorum

No business shall be transacted at a meeting of **the a** Planning Committee unless there is present at least one third of the whole number of Members of the body concerned or 3 Members of the Committee, whichever is the greater.

Decisions made by Planning Officers

Delegated Decisions

The Council has delegated the determination of all other planning decisions to the Chief Planning Officer in accordance with S101 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The Chief Planning Officer is authorised to delegate any of the above functions delegated to her/him in this Constitution to other officers, subject to maintaining a written record.

Referral to Committee

Additionally, the Chief Planning Officer, in consultation with the appropriate Cabinet Member may refer applications which by virtue of the level of public interest, importance and/ or the economic or regeneration impacts of the proposals, are felt to warrant consideration at Planning Committee.

Decisions on High Speed 2 (HS2)

HS2 is a major national infrastructure rail project impacting the Borough and requires additional, albeit temporary, decision-making delegations to ensure the Council can respond to the development effectively.

More significant decisions are taken by the ~~Major Applications~~ Planning Committee as set out above in this Chapter.

All other High Speed 2 Act Schedule 17 applications and Schedule 16[5] [land restoration schemes] applications from HS2 Ltd to the London Borough of Hillingdon requiring approval are delegated to the Chief Planning Officer in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Member.

Chapter 3 - Resident participation

Planning Petitions & Speaking Rights

a. Where public speaking rights apply

Public speaking rights to the Planning Committee will only apply where:

1. a valid petition is received on a planning application as defined in Chapter 7 – Planning Decisions - of the Council's Constitution, and
2. a valid petition's desired outcome is not in accordance with the planning officers' recommendation. ~~will entitle the lead petitioner to speak directly to the relevant Planning Committee considering the application.~~

Note: in cases where a valid petition's desired outcome accords with the planning officer's recommendation on the planning application, the planning officer may determine the application without referral to the Planning Committee. In all such cases, the lead petitioner will be notified by the planning officer of the outcome when the decision is made.

b. Speaking rights in relation to petitions by the lead petitioner, applicant/agent.

Where a lead petitioner is invited to ~~the~~ a Planning Committee to speak, they will be contacted a week before ~~the~~ date of the relevant Planning Committee meeting about participating in the democratic process.

The petitioner/organiser (or their nominated representative) will be invited to attend and speak for up to 5 minutes in relation to that matter at the meeting at which the application will be considered.

The applicant (or their agent) will also get the opportunity to speak for 5 minutes where a valid petition has been accepted by the Council in relation to their application.

Notification of the intention to speak and the name of the speaker must be supplied to the Head of Democratic Services at least 24 hours before the meeting.

Members of the Committee will also be able to ask questions of the petitioners. ~~Statements made by members of the public speaking will be broadcast and in the public domain.~~

c. Ward Councillors and other speaking rights

Ward Councillors will be permitted to speak for up to 3 minutes in relation to an application if they have notified their intention to do so in advance to the Committee Chairman. Additionally, under general committee speaking rules in this Constitution, any Councillor may also speak at a committee meeting, but only with the permission of the Chairman.

When a proposed development falling within a Conservation Area is considered by ~~the~~ a Planning Committee, a representative of the relevant Area Panel will be entitled to

attend and address the committee for a maximum of five minutes. Notification of the intention to speak and the name of the speaker must be supplied to the Head of Democratic Services **48 hours** prior to the meeting.

d. Chairman's discretion on speaking times

The Committee Chairman reserves the right to vary all speaking time limits if there is more than one petition in relation to one issue.

e. Where speaking rights do not apply

~~Speaking rights do not apply where a petition or Councillor request has been received requesting refusal of a householder application and where the officer recommendation is to refuse consent and the reasons for refusal align with those requested by the petition or Councillor. For 42-day and 56-day prior approval applications, petitions may not necessarily be referred to a planning committee enabling speaking rights and instead may be considered by the relevant planning officer instead. However, speaking rights will be permitted if time constraints allow for a referral to the committee and the petitioner's request is contrary to the officer recommendation on the application. More detailed rules on this are set out in Part 2, Chapter 7 – Planning Decisions, of this Constitution.~~

e. Receipt of petitions

Petitions should be received during the consultation period on the planning application if possible and must be received before a decision is made on the application.

Where a planning application is scheduled to be considered at the Planning Committee and already on the published agenda, any valid, or further valid petitions in relation to it, Planning Committees should be received by the Head of Democratic Services no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting. Discretion to allow petitions after this deadline can only be approved by the Chairman of the relevant Planning Committee, in exceptional circumstances.

f. Supplementary information submitted.

Any supplementary information to be presented by **anyone entitled to speak** ~~the petitioner, applicant or agent~~ at the meeting should be provided to Democratic Services no later than 48 hours prior to the meeting, unless the Chairman of the Committee agrees otherwise in exceptional circumstances.

g. Second opportunity to speak

If the organiser of a petition, having exercised their right to speak at a planning committee, would like to address a second or subsequent meeting which is to consider the issue which gave rise to their petition (e.g. if the matter is deferred), they will need to organise a new valid petition.

h. Written representations in lieu of speaking

~~A Planning Committee may resolve for~~ Any person entitled to speak ~~at a Planning Committee may opt to~~ instead ~~to~~ submit a written representation to be read out. This would be in lieu of speaking directly to the committee. ~~The~~ Planning Committees may ~~jointly~~ agree a local protocol for this and, similarly, any ~~such~~ written representation ~~and~~ ~~or~~ supplementary supporting information should be received ~~no later than~~ 48 hours prior to the meeting. ~~Statements read out will be broadcast and on the public record.~~

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ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE

2022/23

Report Distribution

- Audit Committee: 8th August 2023
- Council: TBC 2023



HILLINGDON
LONDON

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In line with best practice guidance, the Audit Committee is required to submit an annual report to Council outlining the Committee's activities over the previous year. This report summarises the work of the Audit Committee during 2022/23 and how it has undertaken its responsibilities for reviewing the key areas within its remit. Specifically, these include:
- Internal Audit
 - External Audit
 - Counter Fraud
 - Risk Management
 - Financial reporting process of the Statement of Accounts.
- 1.2 In compliance with the Accounts and Audit (Amended) (England) Regulations 2021 the Audit Committee has reviewed the effectiveness of the systems of internal control by receiving regular reports from these areas above that contribute to the control framework. This report provides an opportunity for Council Members to review the work of the Audit Committee and comment on its contribution and performance.

2. Key Activities of the Audit Committee

- 2.1 The Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Committee are attached at [Appendix A](#). These were last amended at the Council meeting held on 11 May 2017, following an Internal Audit review of the Effectiveness of the Audit Committee.
- 2.2 During the 2022/23 municipal year the Audit Committee met on five occasions: 27 July, 29 September & 15 November 2022 and 31 January & 27 April 2023.
- 2.3 Membership and attendance of the Audit Committee comprised as follows:

Member Name	Member Appointment	2022/23 Meeting Attendance
Mr John Chesshire (Independent Chairman)	Initially appointed on 2 November 2017 to present	All five meetings
Cllr Naser Abby	Appointed May 2022 to present	27 July 2022 29 September 2022 (apologies) 15 November 2022 31 January 2023 27 April (apologies)
Cllr Reeta Chamdal	Appointed May 2022 to present	All five meetings
Cllr Richard Lewis	Appointed May 2021 to present	27 July 2022 29 September 2022 15 November 2022 31 January 2023 27 April (apologies)
Cllr Tony Burles	Appointed May 2022 to present	All five meetings
Cllr Nick Denys	Appointed May 2022 to present	All five meetings

- 2.4 The current Independent Chairman has over 20 years' experience in the public and private sectors working in the internal audit, risk management, business improvement and governance fields.
- 2.5 The role delegated by the Council to the Audit Committee is to provide independent assurance over the governance, risk management and the system of internal control

in operation at the Council. The Audit Committee has fulfilled this role by undertaking the following key activities:

a) Oversight of Internal Audit

- The Audit Committee oversaw the activity of the Council's Internal Audit service to assist it in its role of monitoring the internal control, risk management and governance arrangements of the Council's operations. During 2022/23, the Audit Committee reviewed the 2021/22 Annual Internal Audit Report and Head of Internal Audit Opinion Statement, the 2022/23 Annual Internal Audit Plan, and quarterly progress reports and operational plans;
- The Audit Committee also reviewed the key findings from Internal Audit reviews and sought explanations from the Head of Internal Audit about the recommendations emanating from 'Limited' or 'No' assurance audits.
- The Committee continued to monitor the performance of the Internal Audit Service. Due to significant vacancies within the Internal Audit team during the year, including reliance on Interim Heads of Internal Audit, support was received from an external audit provider, Mazars, to complete the 2022/23 Internal Audit plan.
- An assessment of the Internal Audit Service is required by the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS) to be completed every five years. Hillingdon's Internal Audit Service was reviewed at the end of the 2022/23 year and any actions arising from the report will be agreed and monitored as part of the 2023/24 workplan.

The Audit Committee is satisfied that Internal Audit is effective and adds value to the Council.

b) Oversight of External Audit

- The Committee has reviewed the activity of the Council's External Auditors (Ernst & Young) to assist it in its role of monitoring the internal control, risk management and governance arrangements of the Council's operations. The Committee has received and considered the external audit plan, progress updates and reviewed EY performance.
- The Committee monitored the progress to complete the audit of the 2021/22 annual accounts and acknowledge the ongoing delays are consistent with other local authorities. The audit was ongoing at the end of 2022/23 and will be taken forward during 2023/24.

The Audit Committee is satisfied with the Council's External Audit arrangements during 2022/23

c) Prevention and Detection of Fraud and Corruption

- The Council operates a zero-tolerance policy towards all fraud and corruption. The Counter Fraud Team (CFT) is embedded into all major fraud risks across the three largest areas of expenditure Revenues, Social Care and Housing. The team conducts proactive and reactive counter fraud activity to highlight fraud, loss and error. This minimises the Council's exposure to fraud and maximises its preventative savings.
- The National Fraud Initiative (NFI), is embedded in practice in the CFT through detecting potential fraud by matching electronic data sets within and between public and private sector bodies. Relevant service areas across the Council review the initial data matches and then refer them to the CFT for investigation (where appropriate to do so).
- The Audit Committee has received consolidated quarterly progress reports from the CFT, a detailed 2022/23 Annual Plan and Annual Report for 2021/22. The team

has responsibility for the oversight of the effectiveness of the Council's policies and procedures to prevent and detect fraud and corruption.

- In 2022/23 the CFT had achieved a number of successful outcomes including a total of c£12.3m in loss prevention savings across Council services. These savings included the recovery of 84 council properties due to tenancy fraud,.

The Audit Committee is satisfied with the effectiveness of the Council's counter fraud arrangements during 2022/23 and is looking forward to seeing more loss prevention work being completed in 2023/24.

d) Risk Management & Corporate Governance

- The Audit Committee reviewed the Annual Risk Management Report in September 2022 as part of the Committee's role to independently assure the Council's corporate risk management arrangements. The Council's Risk Management Policy and Guidance was last updated in August 2020.
- The Committee has monitored and reviewed the Council's risk management arrangements during the year through a quarterly risk management report, including the updated Corporate Risk Register. It also sought assurances that action was being taken on risk related issues.
- The Audit Committee also oversee the production of the Council's Annual Governance Statement (AGS). The AGS for 2021/22 was drafted and submitted to External Audit during the year, however as the 2021/22 audit of the annual accounts has been delayed the final accounts were not presented to the Committee during the year.

The Audit Committee is satisfied that the Risk Management arrangements enable it to provide sufficient challenge to officers around the identification and management of the key risks to the Council.

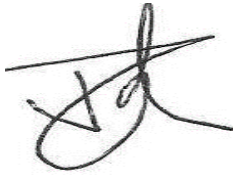
e) Approval of Financial Accounts

- Throughout 2022/23 the Audit Committee was provided with audit progress reports on the Council's annual statement of accounts for 2021/22. This included considering whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from the external audit of the financial statements that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- Due to delays finalising the audit of the 2021/22 annual accounts the Audit Committee had not received the final accounts by the end of 2022/23. This will be taken forward during 2023/24.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 In January 2023 the Committee received an update on the CIPFA's recent position statement: Audit Committees in Local Authorities and Police 2022. Following an assessment against the position statement it was acknowledged the committee was generally in compliance with the best practice and no significant actions were identified.
- 3.2 The Audit Committee considers that it has continued to make a significant contribution to ensuring that the key elements of the governance framework are given proper consideration and are appropriately challenged. It will continue to develop this role and contribute to strengthen internal control, risk management and governance throughout the authority.

- 3.3 I would like to thank all Members and officers who have been involved in the work of the Audit Committee throughout the past year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Chesshire', written over a horizontal line.

Mr. John Chesshire
Independent Chairman of the Audit Committee, London Borough of Hillingdon
August 2023

APPENDIX A: AUDIT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Constitution defines the Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee as:

The Audit Committee's role is to:

- Review and monitor the Council's audit, governance, risk management framework and the associated control environment, as an independent assurance mechanism;
- Review and monitor the Council's financial and non-financial performance to the extent that it affects the Council's exposure to risk and/or weakens the control environment;
- Oversee the financial reporting process of the Statement of Accounts.

Decisions in respect of strategy, policy and service delivery or improvement are reserved to the Cabinet or delegated to Officers.

Internal Audit

- 1) Review and approve (but not direct) the Internal Audit Strategy to ensure that it meets the Council's overall strategic direction.
- 2) Review, approve and monitor (but not direct) Internal Audit's planned programmes of work, paying particular attention to whether there is sufficient and appropriate coverage.
- 3) Through quarterly Internal Audit summary reports of work done, monitor progress against the Internal Audit Plan and assess whether adequate skills and resources are available to provide an effective Internal Audit function. Monitor the main Internal Audit recommendations and consider whether management responses to the recommendations raised are appropriate with due regard to risk, materiality and coverage.
- 4) Make recommendations to the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance on any changes to the Council's Internal Audit Strategy and plans.
- 5) Review the Annual Report and Opinion Statement and the level of assurance this provides over the Council's corporate governance arrangements, risk management framework and system of internal controls.
- 6) Consider reports dealing with the activity, management and performance of internal audit services.
- 7) Following a request to the Corporate Director of Finance and, subject to the approval of the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Member for Finance, to request work from Internal Audit.

External Audit

- 8) Receive and consider the External Auditor's annual letter, relevant reports and the report to those charged with governance.
- 9) Monitor management action in response to issues raised by External Audit.
- 10) Receive and consider specific reports as agreed with the External Auditor.
- 11) Comment on the scope and depth of External Audit work and ensure that it gives value for money, making any recommendations to the Corporate Director of Finance.
- 12) Be consulted by the Corporate Director of Finance over the appointment of the Council's External Auditor.
- 13) Following a request to the Corporate Director of Finance and, subject to the approval of the Leader of the Council or Cabinet Member for Finance, to commission work from External Audit.
- 14) Monitor arrangements for ensuring effective liaison between Internal Audit and External Audit, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Finance.

Governance Framework

- 15) Maintain an overview of the Council's Constitution in respect of contract procedure rules and financial regulations and, where necessary, bring proposals to the Leader of the Council or the Cabinet for their development.
- 16) Review any issue referred to it by the Chief Executive, Corporate or Executive Director, any Council body or external assurance providers including inspection agencies.
- 17) Monitor and review (but not direct) the authority's risk management arrangements, including regularly reviewing the corporate risk register and seeking assurances that appropriate action is being taken on managing risk.
- 18) Review and monitor Council strategy and policies on anti-fraud and anti-corruption including the 'Raising Concerns at Work' policy making any recommendations on changes to the Leader of the Council and relevant Corporate / Executive Director.
- 19) Oversee the production of the authority's Annual Governance Statement and recommend its adoption.
- 20) Review the Council's arrangements for corporate governance and make recommendations to the Corporate Director of Finance on suggested actions to improve alignment with best practice.
- 21) Where requested by the Leader of the Council, Cabinet Member for Finance or Corporate Director of Finance, provide recommendations on the Council's compliance with its own and other published standards and controls.

Accounts

- 22) Review and approve the annual statement of accounts. Specifically, to consider whether appropriate accounting policies have been followed and whether there are concerns arising from financial statements or from the external auditor that need to be brought to the attention of the Council.
- 23) Consider the external auditor's report to those charged with governance on issues arising from the external audit of the accounts.

Review and reporting

- 24) Undertake an annual independent review of the Audit Committee's effectiveness and submit an annual report to Council on the activity of the Audit Committee.

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

7.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR REETA CHAMDAL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on the rollout of 'PayByPhone' parking across the borough?

7.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BRIDGES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT - COUNCILLOR BIANCO:

Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the current situation regarding the new Platinum Jubilee Leisure Centre in West Drayton, following the collapse of Buckinghams, our appointed contractor?

7.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DENYS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:

Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on RACC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) in Hillingdon's community and Foundation schools?

7.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SWEETING TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

Does the Leader recall that a Motion to Council on 10th September 2020 asked that all from this borough who died in the Great War and who are listed on the memorials and church plaques across the borough and were not included in the only book published by the Council to remember it's war dead from the Great War, entitled, "We Will Remember Them," be included in an addendum to this book?

This Motion was passed and in response the Cabinet at its meeting of 10th December 2020 committed the Council to completing this book by producing an addendum which would include all of the additional memorials which had been identified, including the plaque in St Martin's Church West Drayton.

This addendum has still not appeared in copies of this booklet in the borough's libraries and elsewhere, so when will this commitment by both Council and Cabinet almost three years ago be accomplished?

7.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MATHERS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

Can the Leader of the Council shed some light on how the determination is made on whether to use in-house officers or external consultants when conducting transformation and service reviews or consultations?

7.6 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PUNJA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT - COUNCILLOR BIANCO:

Can the Cabinet Member please explain why, when there are multiple potholes in an area of road, only the one photographed and submitted as a Service Request is filled in despite being informed of the others in the further information box?

7.7 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MAKWANA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:

Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on the 2023 Summer Holiday Activities Programme that was available to the school age children and young people of Hillingdon?

MOTIONS

8.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR KAUR

That this Council regrets a consistently low response rate to its public consultations and will review its consultation process to ensure geographical parity, and that the voices of our diverse communities are heard equally.

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