



HILLINGDON
LONDON



Council

To all Members of the Council

Date: THURSDAY, 18 JANUARY
2024

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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Published: Wednesday, 10 January
2024

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Putting our residents first

Lloyd White
Head of Democratic Services
London Borough of Hillingdon,
Phase II, Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

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Agenda

Prayers

To be said by Rabbi Aaron Goldstein of the Ark Synagogue.

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes 1 - 12
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023 (*attached*)
- 3 Declarations of Interest
To note any declarations of interest in any matter before the Council
- 4 Mayor's Announcements
- 5 Report of the Head of Democratic Services 13 - 14
- 6 Council Tax Base and Business Rates Forecast 2024/2025 15 - 20
To consider the report from the Corporate Director of Finance (*attached*)
- 7 Members' Questions 21 - 22
To take questions submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11
- 8 Motions 23 - 24
To consider Motions submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12

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Minutes

COUNCIL

30 November 2023

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



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

	MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillors: Naser Abby Kaushik Banerjee Labina Basit Adam Bennett Kishan Bhatt Jonathan Bianco Wayne Bridges Tony Burles Keith Burrows Farhad Choubedar Philip Corthorne Peter Curling Darran Davies Nick Denys Jas Dhot Ian Edwards Scott Farley Janet Gardner Elizabeth Garelick Narinder Garg Tony Gill Martin Goddard Ekta Gohil Becky Haggar OBE Mohammed Islam Kamal Preet Kaur Kuldeep Lakhmana Eddie Lavery Richard Lewis Heena Makwana Gursharan Mand Stuart Mathers Douglas Mills Richard Mills Peter Money June Nelson Barry Nelson-West Susan O'Brien Jane Palmer Sital Punja John Riley Raju Sansarpuri Jagjit Singh Peter Smallwood Jan Sweeting Steve Tuckwell MP
	OFFICERS PRESENT: Tony Zaman, Andy Evans, Dan Kennedy, Glen Egan, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon and Nikki O'Halloran
27.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>) Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Reeta Chamdal, Roy Chamdal, Alan Chapman, Henry Higgins and Rita Judge.
28.	MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>) RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 be agreed as a correct record.
29.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>) There were no declarations of interest in any matters coming before the Council.
30.	MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>) The Mayor advised that he had been invited to attend a variety of events which had included laying wreaths on Remembrance Sunday in Ruislip and Harefield. He thanked those Councillors who had laid wreaths in their Wards on his behalf. As well as opening new playgrounds and attending celebrations at the Navnat Centre, the Mayor had attended the Metropolitan Police West Area Basic Command Unit

	<p>commendation ceremony along with the Mayor of Hounslow.</p> <p>The Mayor's Christmas light switch on event had been held on the Civic Centre forecourt on Friday and had been well attended by residents, school choirs and the Hillingdon Music Service, amongst others. He wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.</p>
31.	<p>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>5.1 QUESTION FROM MARK MORGAN OF KESWICK GARDENS, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:</p> <p><i>"Ruislip Woods Trust would like to thank and congratulate the Woodland Officer for Ruislip Woods - an invaluable National Nature Reserve right here in Hillingdon - on their retirement after 20 years of service.</i></p> <p><i>"Can the Cabinet member advise of the succession plan in place for this role to ensure the high standard of management of Ruislip Woods is continued in the short and long term?"</i></p> <p>Councillor Lavery thanked Mr Morgan for his question and thanked the Woodland Officer for Ruislip Woods for his contribution during his employment. It was noted that the recruitment process was currently underway and that, in the interim, the management of Ruislip Woods would be picked up by the wider Green Spaces team. Work would also continue with volunteers to ensure that standards were maintained.</p>
32.	<p>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>6.1 URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS</p> <p>The recent urgent decision taken were noted.</p> <p>6.2 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION</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 the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to replace all references to 'Chairman' in the Council Constitution, with 'Chair' or 'Chairperson' as appropriate.</p>
33.	<p>MEMBERS' QUESTIONS (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>7.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BRIDGES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT - COUNCILLOR BIANCO:</p> <p><i>"Could the Cabinet member please provide an update on the recent press reports that Wealdstone FC and the London Borough of Hillingdon have reached an agreement in respect of land adjacent to the former Master Brewer site for their new stadium?"</i></p> <p>Councillor Bianco advised that, as Wealdstone Football Club (WFC) was currently based in Ruislip Manor on a short term lease, funding opportunities were limited. The Council had been in discussions with the Club about possible relocation options.</p>

WFC had undertaken significant community interactions and a relocation could provide a great social impact opportunity. The land at Freezeland Way had been identified as a possible suitable development site but plans had not been finalised and further work would be needed in relation to funding and identifying the benefits to the local community. The Council had agreed that it would not pursue alternative prospects over the next six months whilst WFC undertook a feasibility study (with the possibility of extending this for a further six months).

There was no supplementary question.

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

"Hillingdon's Youth Justice Service have recently been awarded Quality Lead status with a Child First Commendation by the Association of Youth Offending Team Managers. Could the Cabinet member please explain what that means for the young people of Hillingdon especially for those that come into contact with the Youth Justice Service?"

Councillor O'Brien advised that it had been a complicated time for young people but that the Youth Justice Service should be very proud of its recent achievement as this award was only held by four other local authorities in the country. Work had been undertaken in relation to child centred development with regard to the early identification of young people to ensure that effective pathways were put in place.

The Hillingdon Youth Justice Service (HYJS) had achieved Quality Mark status in 2019. Since then, additional measures had been put in place to support young people with high level needs. The Quality Lead status demonstrated the effective partnership working that had been developed and showed how outcomes were improving for young people in the Borough, including those who had additional needs and vulnerabilities whereby wrap around support had been developed to prevent further contact with the HYJS.

The Cabinet Member thanked Kat Wyatt, Nuzhat Ilyas and their team for the investment that they had made in changing young people's lives.

There was no supplementary question.

7.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURROWS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"Can the Cabinet member please give more information on the plans to relocate Uxbridge Library?"

Councillor Lavery advised that Uxbridge Library was one of the three principal libraries in the Borough and the proposal was not in relation to closure. He understood that any changes to library services could be emotive and, to illustrate this, he had heard three petitions on the matter the previous week. He recognised the strength of feeling about this issue but was aware that there had been a number of misunderstandings.

Although the administration had committed to maintaining the Borough's libraries, they also needed to be cost efficient and the proposed relocation would reduce costs.

Uxbridge Library comprised six floors which made it difficult for disabled people, who were unable to self-transfer, to evacuate the building if they were on the upper floors. There were no evacuation lifts in the current building or secondary power supply which meant that, during a recent power cut, a disabled person had been unable to be evacuated and had had to wait for hours in the dark with a member of staff. The building also had the third highest carbon footprint of all Council buildings in Hillingdon.

As the Civic Centre was starting to become a hub for partners with the GP Confederation, Adult Learning and Family Hubs already located there, the relocation of the library would add to the offer whilst ensuring that Uxbridge retained the largest library in the Borough. Bookshelf space would reduce but this would be managed by getting rid of 'dead stock' (books that had not been borrowed in 2+ years). Although the availability of public access computers would continue, there would be an increase in the number of available laptop docking stations and study booths. As children's books made up the majority of books borrowed the current Uxbridge Library, the new children's library would be enclosed so that the children didn't have to worry about being noisy, and a buggy park would be incorporated into the design. The new library would have step free access and would be entirely on one floor. The Tovertafel table would be kept and there would be meeting rooms as well as exhibition and multi-purpose spaces.

Members were reminded that all of these proposals were subject to Cabinet approval and planning permission.

There was no supplementary question.

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

"Would the Leader of the Council please inform us what impact the Israel-Hamas war is having on community cohesion within Hillingdon?"

Councillor Edwards advised that there had been concerns across communities following the death of Israelis and residents in Gaza. Although there had been little impact on Hillingdon's residents to date, the Council's Stronger Communities Manager had been liaising closely with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) as there had been a 10+ fold increase in antisemitic incidents across London and both communities were feeling under-protected.

The Leader of the Council praised the Leader of the Labour Group for not publicly debating foreign affairs which could have undermined community cohesion. There had been a few antisemitic attacks in the Borough which had been dealt with swiftly by the MPS and the Council. Councillor Edwards thanked the Community Cohesion Manager and her team for the work that they had undertaken.

The TUC had organised rallies on the Civic Centre forecourt on Saturday and Thursday. Legal advice was now being sought in relation to the use of the forecourt for rallies.

It was important to build on the community cohesion and provide equal representation for all. The Mayor had recently attended an interfaith service and the Leader had attended a mosque with various faith leaders and a synagogue to hear their voices. The safety of all communities in Hillingdon was hugely important.

There was no supplementary question.

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

"Hillingdon Council has just been awarded Outstanding by Ofsted after their inspection of our Children's Services. Can the Cabinet member please advise Council what is taken into consideration during the inspection and the work that goes into having an outstanding service?"

Councillor O'Brien advised that the recent Ofsted inspection, where Children's Services had been rated as Outstanding, had focussed on the effectiveness of services and had been undertaken over a two-week period concluding on 6 October 2023. The Service had progressed from 'Requires Improvement', to 'Good' and now to 'Outstanding'.

The first week of the inspection had taken place off site and comprised a range of interviews with the Cabinet Member and others. Council officers had had to share the authority's practices, policies and strategies in the form of over 400 documents. The second week saw six inspectors on site, speaking to officers and young people, undertaking a rigorous test of service delivery.

Evidence had been sought from officers and politicians who changed lives and inspired to sustain the highest quality services. Inspectors found that Hillingdon's Children's Services had mature professional relationships with its partners that were well developed. They had looked at the preparation for adulthood, training, strategic leadership and performance management, with a strong focus on the development of children and positive outcomes for children. Hillingdon's children continued to receive highly effective services with social workers that were committed to them and strong care plans had been put in place.

Councillor O'Brien thanked and congratulated the Corporate Director Children's Services, her Assistant Directors and team on achieving an Outstanding Ofsted rating.

There was no supplementary question.

34. MOTIONS (Agenda Item 8)

8.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR BIANCO

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

That this Council notes that the Director of TFL Buses met with council officers and Cabinet members in the summer to consider possible, much needed, improvements to the bus network and in particular our request for an express bus route linking Uxbridge with the Elizabeth Line.

This Council notes that TFL are currently undertaking a consultation on proposed changes to a number of routes in the Borough and that:

- 1. The total amount of bus miles throughout the Borough has already been significantly reduced.*
- 2. No new express link to the Elizabeth Line is being proposed.*

3. *The E7 route serving over 1,200 journeys to and from Ruislip Underground station will be removed.*
4. *The removal of the U1 route and a new U3 route running from Ruislip to Heathrow will be a further reduction in bus miles and make that service more prone to delays and cancellations.*

Therefore, this Council instructs the Cabinet member for Property, Highways and Transport to ensure that the Council's response to the consultation is robust and highlights the reduction in service rather than the enhancement to outer London being communicated by TFL & the Mayor.

Those speaking in support of the motion believed that the Mayor of London had been looking for ways to punish Hillingdon residents. ULEZ had been introduced to promote cleaner vehicles and encourage people onto public transport but bus services in Hillingdon had been reduced. The Council had requested that the bus service to the Elizabeth Line be extended but the Borough had instead received a cut to the existing services that linked Uxbridge to West Drayton and the new Superloop service provided no benefit to residents either.

Buses accessing Ruislip Station had experienced significant overcrowding and the Station needed additional accessibility work as it currently provided only partial step free access. The latest consultation undertaken had failed to understand the needs of Hillingdon's residents so the Council would continue to fight for them.

Although the Mayor of London and Transport for London (TfL) had advised that the changes were improvements, the devil was in the detail and there had actually been frequency reductions to facilitate a cost cutting exercise. The number of buses in Cowley had reduced by one third, routes had been axed and services rerouted, reducing the number of buses going to Hillingdon Hospital and Brunel University.

The Mayor of London was making a mockery of Hillingdon residents and not treating them with respect. Evidence in House of Commons reports indicated that there would be a greater reduction in the number of bus miles attributed to out of London boroughs in comparison to inner London. It was noted that the Leader of the Labour Group had previously said that he would speak to the Mayor of London to ensure that Hillingdon received improvements to its bus service but no evidence had been provided that this had happened.

Those speaking against the motion questioned why the Cabinet Member had submitted this motion when he was effectively asking for permission to do his job. It was suggested that the motion was being brought to provide a façade of productivity and to draw attention to the work of the Cabinet Member, providing supercilious obfuscation. It also sought disguise Members' campaigning for the upcoming GLA election.

Members speaking against the motion noted that the distance that a bus travelled did not equate to usage but recognised that usage was an important factor. TfL was undertaking a six-week consultation on the proposed changes to the timetable and the Hillingdon Labour Group would be providing its own response to this consultation. The consultation had started on 8 November so the Cabinet Member should have already been working on the Council's response rather than putting in a motion for discussion at Council. The Labour Group urged all residents to respond to the consultation.

The priorities of Hillingdon Council's leadership seemed to be posturing and self-preservation. However, the authority had, on 2 October 2023, generally welcomed the proposals and had looked at proposed mitigation measures which were then approved by the Conservative Group.

The motion was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED: That this Council notes that the Director of TFL Buses met with council officers and Cabinet members in the summer to consider possible, much needed, improvements to the bus network and in particular our request for an express bus route linking Uxbridge with the Elizabeth Line.

This Council notes that TFL are currently undertaking a consultation on proposed changes to a number of routes in the Borough and that:

- 1. The total amount of bus miles throughout the Borough has already been significantly reduced.**
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- 3. The E7 route serving over 1,200 journeys to and from Ruislip Underground station will be removed.**
- 4. The removal of the U1 route and a new U3 route running from Ruislip to Heathrow will be a further reduction in bus miles and make that service more prone to delays and cancellations.**

Therefore, this Council instructs the Cabinet member for Property, Highways and Transport to ensure that the Council's response to the consultation is robust and highlights the reduction in service rather than the enhancement to outer London being communicated by TFL & the Mayor.

8.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR BURLES

Council was advised that Members of the Planning Committee would be permitted to vote on this motion but should be cautious if speaking on the item so as not to potentially prejudice themselves when subsequently considering any related planning application.

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

That this Council stands firmly with residents of Uxbridge who have voiced their opposition to the closure of the iconic and purpose-built library on Uxbridge High Street through three petitions of over 3000 signatures.

This Council acknowledges the deep public upset at the proposal to close Uxbridge Central Library.

Therefore, this Council requests that the Cabinet re-evaluate this proposal and demonstrate its commitment to library services through the retention of the purpose-built Uxbridge Central Library in its current location, looking at opportunities to move services into this space.

Those speaking in support of the motion believed that moving the library from Uxbridge town centre to the Middlesex Suite at the Civic Centre was ludicrous. The current site was close to the tube station and buses and the new site had a steep ramp which would impact accessibility. The current site had lifts to all six floors and was accessible for wheelchairs. The Middlesex Suite was situated on the fringe of the

town centre, away from transport options and the new library would have to fit on a single floor which meant that the services offered would need to be rationalised.

It was queried why, if the proposed move had been prompted by sustainability issues, the Council had wasted money on refitting the current library and no plans had been put in place for the future use of the current site. The proposals would damage an established social hub and reduce the facilities available such as PC access. Having lost major retailers such as Wilko and Debenhams in the town centre, loss of the library was thought to be a huge blow and a misguided decision.

Concern was expressed about the future of other libraries in the Borough and the impact of the proposal on travel distances for those with special needs. Now that sound financial management was no longer in place, it was questioned whether residents were being put first as assets were being sold off. Efficiency savings were being used as an excuse for the administration to do what it wanted and not what the residents wanted. It was suggested that the proposal be re-evaluated.

Those speaking against the motion advised that the Cabinet Member had provided a full explanation about the library proposal earlier in the meeting in response to a Member question. The motion was fundamentally flawed as it had requested that the proposal be re-evaluated when Cabinet had not yet made a decision on the matter.

A number of important services had already been co-located at the Civic Centre including the Family Hub and the Adult Education Hub which appeared to have been dismissed by the opposition. It was noted that Cabinet would be the proper place for consideration of this issue once it was known what was on offer.

The motion was put to a recorded vote.

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

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

Those abstaining: None.

The motion was lost.

8.3 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MATHERS

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

*That this Council recognises that, since 2010 successive Conservative led governments have cut '27% real-terms core spending power' to local authorities in England. In 2021/22 this meant it was 10.2% below 2009/10 levels.**

With higher inflation, high energy costs and rising demands on statutory services such as social and homelessness support, Hillingdon Council like all local authorities across England needs greater funding to face these

challenges.

Therefore, this Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet to actively and continuously lobby the Government for increased funding to prevent further cuts to local services and the significant loss of community assets.

**Source Local Government Association*

Those speaking in support of the motion advised that the Council needed additional funding to meet the increasing demand on services such as adult social care and housing. Successive Conservative Governments had cut council funding by 27% in real terms which had reduced their ability to meet residents' needs. The Government had wasted money on PPE contracts and parties at Downing Street during lockdown, which could have been used to resurface roads, and continued to apply cuts to local government funding, choking the life out of services.

The impact of the cuts had meant that an automated telephone service had been introduced in Hillingdon which was not very good. Furthermore, the bowls clubs in the Borough now needed to be maintained by the older people who used them. The services had been depleted and the Council was unable to deal with issues that arose. It was suggested that a strong local voice was needed to stand up for Hillingdon residents and ask the Government to fix local government funding.

Councillor Goddard moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the following amendment (deleted words crossed through and additional words in ***bold italics***):

~~That this Council recognises that, since 2010 successive Conservative led governments have cut '27% real terms core spending power' to local authorities in England. In 2021/22 this meant it was 10.2% below 2009/10 levels.*~~ ***the international financial crash in 2008, the Covid pandemic in 2020 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Government has provided significant financial assistance to individuals and businesses necessitating restraint in other areas of public spending.***

With higher inflation, high energy costs and rising demands on statutory services such as social and homelessness support, Hillingdon Council like all local authorities across England needs greater funding to face these challenges.

In recognition that Government resources are constrained, Council reaffirms its support for sound financial management strategies and its commitment to continue to review its services and methods of delivery to achieve further efficiencies.

Council notes that the Leader of the Council, through London Councils and Hillingdon's Conservative MPs, has called on Government not only for inflation adjusted grant funding but also for the devolution of funding streams direct to Boroughs.

~~Therefore, this~~ ***This*** Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet to actively and continuously lobby ***continue to press*** the Government for increased funding to prevent further cuts to ***help it protect and enhance*** local services and the significant loss of community assets.

Those speaking in support of the amendment noted that austerity measures had been in place since 2008 and that additional resources had been provided to the NHS, to deal with the pandemic, to support the war in Ukraine and to mitigate the energy cost cap. Councils were facing a range of financial pressures but had implemented a range of cost savings to balance the budget and had been able to keep a proportion of the business rates that they collected.

It was suggested that the Labour Group interpreted every saving made by the Council as a service cut. Children's Services would not have been able to achieve an Outstanding Ofsted rating and the Corporate Fraud Team would not have won the Grand Prix at the Public Finance Awards if this had been true.

The disposal of assets could not be used to plug financial gaps. Instead, the Council had been investing to save and had implemented a digital strategy. All councils would always want more resources and this Council would continue to lobby in areas where pressures were rising. Hillingdon had delivered year in / year out with the continuation of 30 minutes free parking for residents and free weekly collection of waste and recycling.

The Council had received funding in relation to roads, as well as public health funding, levelling-up funding and sports funding. Conservative MPs had been embedded in communities in the Borough and were committed to working with the Government, providing a strong local voice and already undertaking what had been mandated by this motion.

The Council had already banked £159m in savings and needed to ensure that it moved with the times and remained affordable. The Government's autumn statement prioritised tax cuts for the public but real term funding for councils would continue to be a challenge.

Those speaking against the amendment noted that the Council had a responsibility to look after the welfare of its residents and recognise the cuts that it continued to make. Frontline services had been stretched, there had been a lack of investment to help communities and the Council needed more money from central Government. Other London local authorities had asked the Government for more funding as the demand for costly services had increased but the funding had been reduced. Social care was a key driver of these increases, yet no additional funding had been provided to support the demand.

In 2024/2025, London councils would need to make savings of around £500m. This level of savings was not sustainable as there was no longer any low hanging fruit. There had been a reduction in staff at children's centres, a reduction in libraries, reduced funds available to the voluntary sector, an increase in fees and staff reductions. Millions had also been spent on increasing the number of available primary school places which had not been needed.

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 that, since the international financial crash in 2008, the Covid pandemic in 2020 and Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Government has provided significant financial assistance to individuals

and businesses necessitating restraint in other areas of public spending.

With higher inflation, high energy costs and rising demands on statutory services such as social and homelessness support, Hillingdon Council like all local authorities across England needs greater funding to face these challenges.

In recognition that Government resources are constrained, Council reaffirms its support for sound financial management strategies and its commitment to continue to review its services and methods of delivery to achieve further efficiencies.

Council notes that the Leader of the Council, through London Councils and Hillingdon's Conservative MPs, has called on Government not only for inflation adjusted grant funding but also for the devolution of funding streams direct to Boroughs.

This Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet to continue to press the Government for increased funding to help it protect and enhance local services.

8.4 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR CURLING

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

That this Council recognises that fireworks are used by people throughout the year to mark / celebrate different events. While they can bring much enjoyment to some people, they can cause significant problems and fear for other people, especially those from war torn countries and those with PTSD, as well as our pets and other animals.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- *Require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.*
- *Actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.*
- *Write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays.*
- *Encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public displays.*

Those speaking in support of the motion hoped that it would receive cross party support. As well as pets being scared of the loud noises made by fireworks, there were Hillingdon residents that had escaped war-torn countries and veterans with PTSD that also suffered. The motion had been supported by the RSPCA and adopted by other councils.

It was suggested that a public awareness campaign be undertaken as proposed by James Cleverly MP. Members of the public could be encouraged to buy quieter fireworks next year to show residents that the Council cared.

Whilst fireworks were a way to celebrate a multitude of events such as Bonfire Night,

	<p>Diwali and New Year, they often caused late night disturbances when people were trying to wind down. Consideration needed to be given to neighbours who might struggle to sleep or children who were scared of the loud noises. There were also children who had autism and needed to wear ear defenders but, as they were so loud, they were unable to mitigate the impact of very noisy fireworks. The beauty of fireworks should not be at the expense of these residents.</p> <p>Those speaking against the motion had sympathy with the Labour Group. However, this motion had been similar to the one that had been voted out in 2021. As legislation had not changed since then, the Council still did not have any power to enforce the actions suggested in the motion. The things that could be enforced included the sale of fireworks to underage children, displays being undertaken by professionals and timings.</p> <p>It was recognised that some charities undertook public awareness campaigns around this matter and consideration would be given to how the Council's Communications Team could link up with this work.</p> <p>The motion was put to the vote and lost.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.37 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.

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REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

Reporting Officer: Head of Democratic Services

5.1 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2024/25

RECOMMENDATION: That the programme of meetings for 2024/25 as set out in the Appendix, be approved and the Head of Democratic Services in consultation with the Chief Whip of the Majority Party be authorised to make any amendments that may be required throughout the course of the year.

Members are asked to note that during the year some meeting dates / times may change, or additional meetings may be called for the effective conduct of the Council's business.

Background Papers: None

Programme of Meetings - 2024/25

2024

2025

MEETING (and start time)	Start Time	May	Jun	Jul	Aug'	Sept'	Oct'	Nov'	Dec'	Jan'	Feb	Mar'	April	May
Council	7:30PM	9 (AGM)		11		26		28		16	20			8 (AGM)
Whips Meeting	5PM	7		9		24		26		14	18			6
Cabinet	7PM	23	27	25		12	10	7	12	9	13	13	10	22
Petition Hearings with the Cabinet Member for Property, Highways and Transport	7PM			17		11	16	13			5	5	16	
Petition Hearings with the Cabinet Member for Residents' Services	6PM		5			4				22		19		
Hillingdon Planning Committee	7PM	8	11	16		5	2	5	5	15	13	12	9	15
Pensions Committee	5PM		5			25			10			26		
Audit Committee	5:10PM				8			21			12		30	
Health & Wellbeing Board	2:30PM		11			10		26				4		
Licensing Committee	10AM			4 (training)			9						2	
Licensing Sub-Committee - Dates TBC	TBC													
Property, Highways and Transport Select Committee	7PM		6	9		19		20		8	6	6	8	
Children, Families and Education Select Committee	7PM		18	17		18		13		7	4	11	15	
Residents' Services Select Committee	7PM		13	18		24		27		14	19	13	22	
Finance and Corporate Services Select Committee	7PM		12	23		17		19		9	11	4	10	
Health and Social Care Select Committee	6:30PM		19	24		11		12		23	25	19	23	
Corporate Parenting Panel	5:30PM	22		30				5		28				21
Standards Committee	7PM		27		29				11		27			
Hillingdon SACRE	6PM		26					14				27		
Member Development Day	1PM - 9PM						3							

COUNCIL TAX BASE AND BUSINESS RATES FORECAST 2024/25

Reporting Officer: Corporate Director of Finance

SUMMARY

This report sets out the proposed Council Taxbase and Business Rates Forecast for 2024/25 in accordance with the legislation for approval by the Council. The Council is required to calculate both its Council Taxbase as at 30 November 2023 by 31 January 2024 and the Business Rates forecast for the forthcoming year by 31 January 2024.

RECOMMENDATIONS: That:

- a) The report of the Corporate Director of Finance for the calculation of the Council Taxbase and the Business Rates Forecast be approved.
- b) In accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Taxbase) (England) Regulations 2012 the amount calculated by the London Borough of Hillingdon as its Council Taxbase for 2024/25 shall be 104,668.
- c) Authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance to submit the 2024/25 NNDR1 return to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) and the Greater London Authority (GLA).
- d) The continuation of the Council's policy of passporting Government discounts and reliefs applied to Business Rates to the ratepayer be approved.

COUNCIL TAXBASE

The calculation of the Council Taxbase is prescribed under the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Taxbase) (England) Regulations 2012 and represents the equivalent number of Band D Properties within the Borough. The calculation of the Council Taxbase is based upon the following formula:

$$((H-Q+E+J)-Z) \times (F \text{ divided by } G)$$

Where:

H is the number of chargeable dwellings for the band on the relevant day less the number of exempt dwellings on that day;

Q is a factor to take account of the discounts to which the amount of council tax payable was subject on the relevant day;

E is a factor to take account of premiums, if any, to which the council tax payable, was subject on the relevant day;

J is the amount of any adjustment in respect of changes in the number of chargeable dwelling or premiums calculated by the authority;

Z is the total amount that the authority estimates will be applied as a result of the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme expressed as an equivalent number of chargeable dwellings in that band;

F is the number appropriate to that band which is used in determining the Band D equivalent (i.e., Band A = 6, Band B = 7, Band C = 8, Band D = 9, Band E = 11, Band F = 13, Band G = 15 and Band H = 18;

G is the number applicable to Band D i.e., 9.

Table 1 sets out a summary of the Council Taxbase for 2024/25 including the estimated collection rate and allowance made for contributions in lieu of Council Tax in respect of Forces Barracks and Married Quarters. The detailed calculation is set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

Table 1: Total Number of Band D equivalent properties

Band	Number of properties
A	897
B	3,331
C	18,854
D	40,179
E	20,215
F	13,034
G	7,637
H	888
Total Equivalent	105,035
Equivalent number adjusted for the estimated collection rate (99%)	(1,050)
Plus, the contribution in Lieu of Council Tax in respect of Forces Barracks and Married Quarters	683
Council Taxbase for 2024/25	104,668

Changes in the Council Taxbase since 2023/24

In calculating the Council Taxbase for 2024/25, the authority has to estimate the various changes that will occur during the financial year, which are expected to result in a net increase of 1,043 Band D equivalent properties from the 2023/24 Taxbase. The Council is forecasting a 276 Band D equivalent decrease in the taxbase due to slower growth in 2023/24 meaning the Council needs to realign the 2024/25 taxbase due to the in-year pressure, with this decrease being offset by two key factors, turning this position around into an overall net increase:

- Firstly, a 798 increase is projected in respect of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme as demand is forecast to continue to reduce to pre-pandemic levels.
- Secondly, the collection rate allowance has been adjusted upwards by 0.5% to 99% due to experience in 2023/24 and inflation rates decreasing from 6.7% in September to 4.6% in October, with the impact on collection rates increasing the taxbase by the equivalent of 521 properties to net down the Council Taxbase by a total of 1,057 to 104,668.

Demand for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) has continued to track above pre-pandemic levels in 2023/24, which has been declining steadily at a rate of 3% despite the cost-of-living crisis. While current data indicates that this decline will continue, with the current economic climate and businesses struggling with the relatively high inflationary environment, the Council will continue to closely monitor demand for this service going forward. For planning purposes, it has been assumed that the current elevated demand for CTRS will continue to reduce for the remainder of the year, as has been the case throughout 2023/24.

Impact on 2024/25 General Fund Budget

The actual impact of the new Council Taxbase on Hillingdon's General Fund budget for 2024/25 is an increase of 1,043 Band D equivalents properties, increasing Council Tax revenue by £1,383k. This position will be compounded by the proposed increases in Council Tax and the Adult Social Care Precept. This position reflects the outlook presented within the draft budget considered by Cabinet on 14 December 2023.

Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992

It is noted that this report falls within the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. Any member who is two or more months in arrears with his/her Council Tax must declare the fact and not vote on the recommendations in this report.

BUSINESS RATES INCOME FORECAST

The Local Government Finance Act 2012 introduced a mechanism whereby local authorities retain a proportion of business rates as a revenue funding stream and as a result, the business rates income forecast for 2024/25 has a direct impact upon the Council's finances and is therefore submitted to Council for approval alongside the Council Taxbase.

For 2024/25 The standard Business Rates multiplier is being frozen with the higher multiplier set to increase by September's CPI rate of 6.7%, the freeze on the lower multiplier will be fully funded by the Government via an under-indexation grant paid to local authorities.

The Business Rates Income forecast for 2024/25 has been derived from the local rating list. Following allowance for the current levels of both mandatory and discretionary reliefs, the Council anticipates a gross yield of £382,844k made up of a combination of rate payers' liabilities and Section 31 Grant income paid by Government to fund national reliefs.

The Local Government Act 2012 permitted the retention of 30% of revenues generated by London Boroughs, with the remainder being split between Central Government (33%) and the Greater London Authority (37%). This retained sum is reduced through tariff and levy mechanisms, with Hillingdon's share of projected 2024/25 income amounting to £68,276k, which is made up of the baseline rates income of £52,270k plus retained growth of £16,006k.

The Council is required to submit a certified NNDR1 return, containing a more detailed analysis of this business rates forecast, to both DLUHC and GLA by 31 January 2024. A recommendation to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance to submit this return is included in this report, with the return to be based on the latest available intelligence.

Impact on 2024/25 General Fund Budget

The £68,276k income retained by the Council will be reflected in the budget presented to Cabinet for approval in February 2024, an increase of £7,606k from 2023/24 due to the Council releasing much of the benefit of the 2023/24 revaluation that was previously held back to fund appeals against the new list, with this position now more firmed up, but remaining any area that will be reviewed throughout 2024/25. This

position reflects the outlook presented within the draft budget considered by Cabinet on 14 December 2023.

Proposed Retail Rate Relief

In his Autumn Statement 2023 the Chancellor announced that retail relief of 75% would be awarded to businesses within the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors on rates bills up to £110k against their 2024/25 liability per business will continue for a further year in 2024/25. An estimate for the local cost of this scheme along with all other Government reliefs will be included in the NNDR1 returned to DLUHC on this basis. In line with other Government-directed discounts, the Council will be reimbursed for lost income through a Section 31 Grant.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The forecasts outlined in this report for both Council Tax and NNDR revenues in 2024/25 were included within the draft budget published for public consultation in December 2023, with the recommendation in this report to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Finance to submit an NNDR1 being on the basis of the position presented in this report, which mirrors the position presented to December Cabinet. Income collected during 2024/25 will be closely monitored and any variation from the projections outlined above captured through future refreshes of the Medium Term Financial Forecast process.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The legal implications are contained in the body of the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: The Council's Budget: MTFF 2024/25 - 2028/29 - 14 December 2023.

Calculation of the Council Taxbase 2024/25

Appendix 1

CALCULATION OF 'H' (The number of chargeable dwellings on valuation list)	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total
Number of properties in the valuation list as at 13.12.23	1,817	6,501	27,938	47,286	18,752	10,033	5,291	485	118,103
Exempt Properties	(96)	(291)	(672)	(1,014)	(499)	(332)	(480)	(9)	(3,393)
Properties re Disabled Persons relief - Drop a Band		(8)	(56)	(206)	(130)	(90)	(44)	(20)	(554)
Properties re Disabled Persons relief - Drop a Band	8	56	206	130	90	44	20		554
Value of 'H'	1,729	6,258	27,416	46,196	18,213	9,655	4,787	456	114,710
CALCULATION OF 'Q' (the value of discounts allowed)									
Equivalent number of properties entitled to single occupancy discount/ Disregard (i.e. actual number x 25%)	(200)	(875)	(2,834)	(2,441)	(939)	(472)	(176)	(8)	(7,943)
Equivalent number of properties entitled to 50% discount as all residents disregarded (i.e. actual number x 50%)	(1)	(11)	(15)	(12)	(8)	(8)	(11)	(3)	(68)
Empty Property Discount	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Value of 'Q'	(201)	(885)	(2,849)	(2,453)	(947)	(480)	(187)	(11)	(8,011)
CALCULATION of 'E' (Any premiums payable on empty properties)									
Calculation of Premiums applicable	4	14	58	99	39	21	11	1	246
Value of 'E'	4	14	58	99	39	21	11	1	246
CALCULATION OF 'J' (Expected adjustments to number of properties on valuation list)									
New properties added to valuation list since 13.12.22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Properties completed but not yet shown on valuation list	130	42	148	42	12	6	9	2	391
Properties known to be on valuation list but to be taken out of list as demolished	(5)	(1)	(5)	(23)	(7)	(3)	(1)	0	(45)
Assumed increase in no of properties over year									0
Estimated in year changes to discounts	1	3	9	8	3	2	1	0	25
Estimate change in Empty Property Premium	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Estimated in year changes to exemptions	1	2	5	6	3	2	3	0	22
Value of J	126	46	156	33	11	7	12	2	393
Value of (H+Q+E+J)	1,658	5,432	24,782	43,875	17,316	9,202	4,623	449	107,338
CALCULATION of 'Z' (Band adjustment due to Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme)									
Equivalent Band reduction based upon estimated monetary values of Council Tax Support Grant	(361)	(1,325)	(4,118)	(4,523)	(896)	(206)	(47)	(5)	(11,481)
Estimated in year changes	48	176	547	827	119	27	6	1	1,750

Value of 'Z'	(313)	(1,149)	(3,571)	(3,696)	(777)	(179)	(41)	(4)	(9,731)
Value of H+Q+E+J-Z	1,345	4,283	21,211	40,179	16,539	9,024	4,582	444	97,607
Convert to band D equivalent properties (F/G) where G = 9 and F = number shown in column.	6	7	8	9	11	13	15	18	
Band D Equivalent properties by Band Value of ((H+Q+E+J)-Z)*(F/G)	897	3,331	18,854	40,179	20,215	13,034	7,637	888	105,035
Collection rate allowance 2022/23	99.0%							1.0%	(1,050)
Estimated Collectable Band D Properties									103,985
Ministry of Defence properties	683								683
COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23									104,668

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

7.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR REETA CHAMDAL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE – COUNCILLOR PALMER:

How has Hillingdon Adult Social Care reacted to hospital discharge during the doctors' strike?

7.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURLES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

Does the Cabinet member regret not holding a full and proper consultation with residents over the proposed relocation of Uxbridge Library to the civic centre?

7.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CORTHORNE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE – COUNCILLOR GODDARD:

Would the Cabinet member please advise Council of the veracity of recent media reporting - specifically that of GB News - regarding the state of the London Borough of Hillingdon's finances?

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

Can the Leader explain the delays in payment to a special needs school which has been outstanding for a considerable amount of time, especially when this administration claims to have sound financial management?

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

Is the Leader of the Council as amazed as me to discover that the cost of the 2022 Freedom of the Borough celebratory meal at the Battle of Britain Bunker, Visitor Centre, cost a staggering £15,277.58 of which the catering costs alone was £13,640. This is compared to £7,000 for the catering of a similar event in 2018.

From Members enquiries and a resident's Freedom of Information request, it appears that there were no estimates sought for the 2022 event and an assumption was made that the catering cost would be in the region of £7,000 as it was in 2018. Why was this allowed to happen and why was there effectively a blank cheque of public money allocated to this event?

7.6 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SMALLWOOD TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

Can the Cabinet member update Council on the progress of the proposed Yiewsley housing scheme and its contribution to affordable housing targets?

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

Can the Cabinet member please provide an update in respect of the on-going disruption to buses and rail passengers at West Drayton Station caused by the actions or inactions of Network Rail?

MOTIONS

8.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR KAUR:

That this Council understands that its assets mentioned on the Local as well as Heritage List are of local architectural and historic importance, and that they significantly contribute to the unique character of the Borough. This Council, therefore, commits that these listed assets, such as Granaries at Knightscode Farm, Harefield, or Gatehouse at Hillingdon, Uxbridge Cemetery or Barra Hall, would not, at any time, be disposed of to finance the Council's DSG Safety Valve or broader transformation programme.

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