



HILLINGDON  
LONDON



# Council

To all Members of the Council

**Date:** THURSDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER  
2010

**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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2010

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# Agenda

## Prayers

To be said by the Reverend Adrian Guthrie

- 1 Apologies for Absence
- 2 Minutes 1 - 14  
To receive the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July 2010
- 3 Declarations of Interest  
To note any declarations of interest in any matter before the Council
- 4 Mayor's Announcements
- 5 Public Question Time 15 - 16  
To take questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10.
- 6 Report of the Head of Democratic Services 17 - 20
- 7 Audit Committee 2009 / 10 21 - 26  
To consider the contents of the annual report on the work of the committee
- 8 Members' Questions 27 - 28  
To take questions submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11
- 9 Motions 29 - 30  
To consider Motions submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12

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# Agenda Item 2

## Minutes

### COUNCIL

1 July 2010

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



HILLINGDON  
LONDON

Councillor David Yarrow (Mayor)  
Councillor Mary O'Connor (Deputy Mayor)

	<p><b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b></p> <p>Councillors: David Allam                      Beulah East                      John Major                     Lynne Allen                      Neil Fyfe                      Michael Markham                     Tim Barker                      Sid Garg                      Carol Melvin                     Richard Barnes                      Roshan Ghei                      Douglas Mills                     Josephine Barrett                      Dominic Gilham                      Richard Mills                     David Benson                      Raymond Graham                      John Morgan                     Jonathan Bianco                      Paul Harmsworth                      Susan O'Brien                     Sukhpa Brar                      Shirley Harper-O'Neill                      David Payne                     Wayne Bridges                      John Hensley                      Ray Puddifoot                     Mike Bull                      Patricia Jackson                      Andrew Retter                     Keith Burrows                      Phoday Jarjussey                      John Riley                     George Cooper                      Sandra Jenkins                      David Routledge                     Judith Cooper                      Alan Kauffman                      Robin Sansarpuri                     Philip Corthorne                      Peter Kemp                      Scott Seaman-Digby                     Brian Crowe                      Mo Khursheed                      David Simmonds                     Peter Curling                      Kuldeep Lakhmana                      Brian Stead                     Catherine Dann                      Richard Lewis                      Michael White                     Jazz Dhillon                      Anita MacDonald</p>
	<p><b>OFFICERS PRESENT:</b> Hugh Dunnachie, Fran Beasley, Christopher Neale, Chris Spencer, Jean Palmer, Brian Doughty, Raj Alagh, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon and Nikki Stubbs</p>
	<p><b>PRAYERS</b></p> <p>Prayers were said by Reverend Andrew Sheard.</p>
16.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Baker, Bliss, Buttivant, Duncan, Gardner, Higgins, Kelly, Lavery, Nelson and Sandhu.</p>
17.	<p><b>MINUTES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the meetings held on 25 February 2010 and 13 May 2010 be agreed as correct records.</p>
18.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>A briefing note regarding Declarations of Interest had been circulated to all Members.</p>

19.	<p><b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was with sadness that the Mayor informed Members of the recent death of Mr Norman Dann who had acted as Councillor Dann's escort when she was Mayor of Hillingdon in 2001/2002 and 2007/2008. All present stood for a minute's silence in his memory.</p> <p>The Council was advised that, in the six weeks that Councillor Yarrow had been Mayor, he had attended 82 events. 79 of these events were within the Borough with the remaining 9 being outside of Hillingdon.</p> <p>The Mayor announced that the launch of his charities (Hillingdon Autistic Care and Support and Hillingdon Food Bank) would take place in Committee Room 6 at 7.30pm on Monday 19 July 2010. All Councillors were welcome to attend.</p>
20.	<p><b>PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p><b>5.1 QUESTION FROM TONY ELLIS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR IMPROVEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY – COUNCILLOR D MILLS</b></p> <p>“In view of the London Borough of Harrow's successful implementation of a Local Panel under the provisions of the Sustainable Communities Act, when does Hillingdon intend to fulfil its obligations of implementing the Act and form a Local Panel?”</p> <p>Councillor D Mills responded that the Council was well aware of the provisions of the Sustainable Communities Act and had considered the matter in response to a public question at the Council meeting on 3 July 2009. In March 2009, Cabinet agreed that Council should be asked to resolve to use the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 when there were proposals for a revised pattern of public spending in Hillingdon with demonstrable benefits to local residents or businesses, or which would assist with implementation of the Council Plan or the Sustainable Community Strategy. Hillingdon remained ready to use the Sustainable Communities Act's provisions once proposals, which would benefit Hillingdon residents, had been identified.</p> <p>Councillor D Mills stressed that there was no process for 'signing up' to the Act, as such, and that 'opting in' to the Act meant submitting such a proposal. It did not offer a way of obtaining funding for specific projects. Nor did it provide a guarantee that any proposal would be taken forward.</p> <p>The previous Government had invited proposals for different ways of allocating existing central, local or other public expenditure in ways which would help deliver local priorities. The process of selecting proposals for consideration by the Government was co-ordinated by the Local Government Association. Shortly before the General Election, the former Communities Minister gave a partial response to 17 out of the 199 proposals submitted. However, the response stopped short of implementing any of the proposals that had been submitted using the Act's procedures. Councillor D Mills suggested that the recent announcement by the new Government to prevent 'garden-grabbing' was a cause taken up using the Sustainable Communities Act, which had long been Conservative policy.</p> <p>The Council did not propose to spend money setting up any new consultative panels. Instead the Council would continue its already successful engagement with local residents and communities, primarily through its incredibly successful Street</p>

Champions and Streets Ahead initiatives. These had the advantage of involving the views of a wider number of residents than just those active in any local group. Work was now underway with Council officers, residents and partners to strengthen the work of the Street Champions and Streets Ahead initiatives and to look at the linkage with the Chrysalis fund and the Safer Neighbourhoods Street Panels.

Moreover, this approach was in line with the consultation procedure laid down in the Sustainable Communities Act, which allowed councils to build on existing engagement mechanisms rather than establishing new ones.

The Council continued to welcome any suggestions or proposals for consideration which might be implemented under the terms of the Act or in other ways for the benefit of local residents and communities.

## **5.2 QUESTION FROM STEVE PINK ON BEHALF OF NORTHWOOD HILLS RESIDENTS SUPPORT TEAM (RST) ON PARKING, TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS**

“I attended the Council meeting in July 2008 at which the petition from 465 residents of Northwood Hills was presented asking for parking controls to deter all-day commuter parking. At that meeting, I made the point that Tolcarne Drive should be a special case for consideration in view of particular safety considerations caused by the combination of the Harlyn junior school and the Driving Test Centre both situated here.

Following that meeting and consideration of the petition, Council agreed to consult and a consultation exercise was carried out eventually 7 months later, in February 2009. It covered the roads around Northwood Hills station with a consultation of residents and a separate but simultaneous consultation of the shopkeepers in Joel St in respect of a “Stop & Shop” parking control scheme.

The shopkeepers gave a majority in favour of parking management, for primarily commercial reasons obviously as they believe commuter parking deters potential customers who want to park to come in to their shops. So the ‘Stop & Shop’ parking management scheme has been approved by Council as a priority for Northwood Hills and is now to be implemented. In that same consultation exercise, however, Tolcarne Drive residents also gave a majority in favour of parking management AND have followed that up with a formal request for parking management, primarily for road safety (not commercial) considerations, yet this request (sent in August 2009 and followed up in February 2010) has not had any response from the Council or from any of our local Ward Councillors who we would hope would support any such remedial action.

We are aware that individual roads have been, and are being, given parking management schemes all across the Borough. Tolcarne Drive clearly has safety issues different from other roads in this area because of the combination of the junior school AND the driving test centre.

We would hope that the Council can take action for this road and will at least respond to the major concerns raised by residents?”

In the absence of the questioner, the Mayor put the question on his behalf and Councillor Burrows advised that a written response would be provided.

**5.3 QUESTION FROM JOHN STONE OF TOLCARNE DRIVE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS**

“As a very long-term resident of Northwood Hills, having lived here for 40 years, I have written many times to the Council over the years asking for some action to stop commuter parking along our road Tolcarne Drive. Nothing has been done yet but I hope there will be some action following our residents group’s campaign.

On many occasions, these regular commuters park in a way that goes over my dropped kerb and stops me getting my car easily out of my drive. Your traffic wardens do a good job when I phone them and they come and put tickets on the cars. But those cars are parked all day for the station, so it doesn’t help me getting in and out my drive during the day as the drivers don’t come back till early evening to go home. I know this affects other houses near me and that other people also have to contact your traffic wardens to get cars ticketed. Can you please take a look and let me know how many tickets are issued here each year compared with previous years?

In the past two years I have noticed a big increase in the cars parking here every day and it now goes all the way up and beyond the junction with Harlyn Drive. That makes things more dangerous for all of us but especially for the people going to and from Harlyn School. We see and hear many near-misses as cars and motorbikes swerve to get round each other when there is almost no room to pass, so we hope the Council appreciates the real safety concerns going on here.

I hope the Council is going to recognise what the residents are asking for and put something in here that will make a difference and improve safety. I was pleased that the Council did eventually do a consultation in 2009 and we know that in this road there was a majority vote wanting some parking management scheme.”

In the absence of the questioner, the Mayor put the question on his behalf and Councillor Burrows advised that a written response would be provided.

21. **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES** (*Agenda Item 6*)

**(i) ESTABLISHMENT OF A PENSIONS COMMITTEE, INVESTMENT STRATEGY SUB-COMMITTEE**

Councillor G Cooper moved the recommendation as set out on the Order of Business. This was seconded by Councillor Corthorne. Following debate (Councillor Harmsworth), the motion was put to the vote and agreed.

**RESOLVED: That a Pensions Committee, Investment Strategy Sub-Committee be established with the Membership, Terms of Reference and delegated authority as set out in Appendix A of the report.**

**(ii) MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2010/11**

Councillor G Cooper moved the recommendation as set out on the Order of Business. This was seconded by Councillor Markham. On being put to the vote, the motion was agreed.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- a. **subject to the approval of i) above, three Members be appointed to the Investment Strategy Sub-Committee (2 Conservative and one Labour –**



- Councillors Corthorne, Markham and Harmsworth) and that the sub-committee be asked to appoint the Chairman and Vice Chairman;**
- b. Councillor Gardner be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Hillingdon Domestic Violence Action Forum; and**
  - c. Councillor Curling be appointed as the Labour Group substitute for the Audit Committee, replacing Councillor Harmsworth.**

**(iii) APPOINTMENT OF CHAMPIONS 2010/11**

In accordance with Part 2, Article 4 of the Constitution the Council may, upon the recommendation of the Leader, appoint Champions for better representation of particular groups or issues both within the Council and community and agree their terms of reference.

Councillor Puddifoot moved the recommendation as set out on the Order of Business. This was seconded by Councillor Simmonds. Following debate (Councillor Major), the motion was put to the vote and agreed.

**RESOLVED: That:**

- a. Councillor Major be re-appointed as Champion for Carers;**
- b. Councillor Kemp be re-appointed as Champion for Disabled People & Equalities; and**
- c. Councillor Routledge be re-appointed as Champion for Heritage and Built Environment.**

**22. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS** (*Agenda Item 7*)

**7.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS**

“Following the recent announcements made by our new Government regarding garden grabbing can the Cabinet Member advise what does this mean in practice for us as a planning authority?”

Councillor Burrows responded that, on 9 June 2010, the Government published a revised planning policy statement (Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) which introduced two key changes:

1. It amended the definition of previously developed land to exclude private residential gardens. This meant that garden land no longer had an automatic presumption for development or redevelopment and councils could therefore refuse inappropriate development on private residential gardens; and
2. It deleted the reference to the national indicative minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare. This meant that, whilst there remained a commitment to "efficient" use of land, there was more flexibility on what density was considered appropriate within the local area. Greater priority could therefore be given to matters such as maintaining and improving the character of the local area.

Together, these changes meant that Hillingdon should be able to receive support from the Planning Inspectorate at appeal following any decision to refuse planning permission for applications which it considered unacceptable because it would result in overdevelopment and/or harm the character of the local area. This new policy had been implemented immediately because the Planning Inspectorate issued new practice guidance on 9 June 2010 to Planning Inspectors who were administering

planning appeals that were currently underway.

This new policy guidance could also be taken into account by the Council in preparing its development plans. The Council's draft Core Strategy, which was now out for public consultation until the end of July, included a policy (Policy BE1) which had a presumption against development of gardens where this would erode the character and biodiversity of suburban areas. The Council was looking to expand on this policy within the draft Development Management DPD, which was in preparation.

There was no supplementary question.

## **7.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CURLING TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR PUDDIFOOT**

“Now that the election is over and we have a Liberal Democrat, Conservative Coalition Government, can the Leader of the Council please update us with the current position of Hillingdon's Building Schools for the 21st century programme?”

Councillor Puddifoot advised that Councillor Simmonds had met with the Civil Servant in charge of the overall national Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme on 19 April 2010 and was advised that the then Labour Government had planned a cut of £18bn in the overall funding, from £40bn to £22bn. This would have affected both primary and secondary schools, whose capital allocations were being concentrated with Partnerships for Schools (PfS). Hillingdon's share of funding was, according to PfS, based on assumptions about the next Comprehensive Spending Review which had not yet been undertaken and was contained within a notional base budget line in the Treasury - none of which was in any way guaranteed until the CSR was completed. The bureaucratic process demanded by the former Labour government imposed huge costs for consultants long before a single brick was laid. This information reinforced the Council's view that it would be wise to await confirmation that the money existed before committing much more money to the process and therefore the £¾m proposed for consultants' fees over a six month period was not deemed cost effective when the scheme might not have survived the general election. However, in March 2010, the Council had carried forward £746k to be used in the event that the scheme did survive.

On 15 June 2010, Nick Gibb MP had stated that BSF was a flagship of the Labour Government and that many schools needed to be rebuilt or improved to meet the needs of an increasing population. However, Mr Gibb believed that the BSF process had been wasteful. In the seven years since the programme had been announced, fewer than 75 schools had been built. It was anticipated that more information would be forthcoming over the next few months but it was believed that the BSF scheme was now defunct and would therefore save the Council a significant amount of money.

Councillor Curling, by way of a supplementary question, asked whether the Leader regretted that the BSF deal had not been signed before the election given the urgent need to expand primary schools (and secondary schools later). Councillor Puddifoot stated that it was not something he regretted as there had been no guarantee of any funding being available. He advised that the need to expand and improve schools needed to be addressed but that the Council would address the matter in a more efficient manner.

**7.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR EAST TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, SPORT AND LEISURE – TO BE ANSWERED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONDS ON BEHALF OF COUNCILLOR HIGGINS**

“Could the Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure please inform us as to how residents without cars and/or with buggies and wheelchairs, are going to make the journey to Hayes or Uxbridge Leisure Centres, now that Yiewsley pool is to be closed?”

Councillor Simmonds noted that the two brand new modern facilities at Uxbridge and Botwell would benefit and improve accessibility of sport and leisure facilities for the vast majority of Hillingdon's residents, particularly as they were both well located in terms of access to public transport. He appreciated the concerns of those residents who lived within walking distance of the Yiewsley Pool as they would have to travel by car or public transport to Hayes or Uxbridge once the Pool closed. For those who did not have access to a car, there were low floor bus services available (i.e., the U1 to Uxbridge Leisure Centre and the U5 and 350 to Hayes). Officers were liaising with Transport for London to see whether any improvements to these bus services could be justified to make access easier for Yiewsley residents.

The Hillingdon Sport and Leisure Centre was a brand new facility which did not replace any existing Pool. It therefore provided a range of sport and leisure uses to residents in the Uxbridge/Hillingdon area who previously would have had to travel to Hayes or Highgrove Pool to enjoy access to swimming facilities. In addition, this new facility had far more accessible parking for the over 65's and disabled customers.

The new facility at Botwell included a range of other community facilities apart from the Pool and would be more attractive to most residents, including families. These facilities included a library, sports hall, health and fitness areas, specialist gymnastic facility and an artificial pitch.

In comparison with the Yiewsley pool, both the new facilities were DDA compliant and included many features that would make access easier to the buildings, such as electric doors, low level access, ramps, hoists, push plates and modern changing rooms, lockers and reception areas.

Councillor East, by way of a supplementary question, asked why the Local Development Framework consultation CL1 document had stated that the Council would locate new leisure facilities in town centres. Councillor Simmonds believed that this was what the Council had achieved.

**7.6 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR HARMSWORTH TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, SPORT AND LEISURE – TO BE ANSWERED BY COUNCILLOR SIMMONDS ON BEHALF OF COUNCILLOR HIGGINS**

“Could the Cabinet Member for Culture, Sport and Leisure let me know whether the existing level of access will be given to the local schools at either Uxbridge and/or Botwell Green Leisure Centres as was available at Yiewsley Pool and will the Council subsidise the schools transport costs?”

Councillor Simmonds responded that the Council had already worked with three Primary schools – two of whom had now moved from Yiewsley Pool and were enjoying using the new swimming pool at Hillingdon Sport and Leisure Complex. The third school would commence its new term's programme in September.

The Council was currently in contact with the two remaining Primary schools using Yiewsley Pool to provide time at either Botwell Green Sports and Leisure Centre or Hillingdon Sports and Leisure Complex depending on which they preferred.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Harmsworth asked for more details of whether the Council would subsidise the school transport costs. Councillor Simmonds advised that individual schools would need to make their case to the Schools Forum which would then make a decision as to whether to provide funding for this purpose. It was noted that this was not an issue that fell within the remit of the Council.

#### **7.8 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DHILLON TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES – COUNCILLOR SIMMONDS**

“Can the Cabinet Member for Education and Children’s services inform us as to when the Head Teachers, Chairs of Governors and other stakeholders were informed about the planned massive increase in school places, planned for 2012/13?”

Councillor Dhillon, when asked for clarification, advised that the “other stakeholders” he referred to in his question related to parents. Councillor Simmonds responded that the principal reason for the forecast increase in demand for places in 2012/13 was the very high number of births in 2008 (11.5% above forecast). Initial information became available in June 2009 but the geographical distribution of births was only received in October 2009.

A briefing on future primary place needs was given to the Primary Forum Executive by the Council’s Director of Education and Children’s Services in December 2009. This set out the total forecast need (19 forms of entry) and the need for school expansions and new provision. In the same month, information on the forecast need for additional primary school places was included in the annual Schools Funding Consultation document. The target audience for this consultation included a wide range of stakeholders, including head teachers, governing bodies, teachers’ professional associations, early years providers and the Schools Forum.

In February 2010, a letter was sent to all head teachers and chairmen of governing bodies outlining the number of forms of entry that would be required and the proposed approach to meeting this need. Discussions with the local diocesan boards had also taken place. In addition, school place needs had been discussed by the Admissions Forum (which included stakeholder representatives). Most recently (21 June 2010), primary school place needs were discussed with head teachers at the Director’s termly briefing.

In relation to specific proposals, over the spring term 2010, officers met with the governing bodies of individual schools proposed for inclusion in the first phase of expansions.

Councillor Dhillon, by way of a supplementary question, asked whether the Council had published information before or after an article had been published in the Gazette. Councillor Simmonds advised that he was unaware of the date of the Gazette article referred to but had set out the timescales within his response.

#### **7.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR JARJUSSEY TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS**

“The report on the Planning application for Phase 3 of the Stockley Park development was pulled from the agenda for the Central and South Planning Committee on 30 March 2010 following receipt of a letter from the Member of Parliament for Hayes and Harlington and the Friends of Lake Farm asking about the whereabouts of £1M that was supposed to have been used for local environmental improvements under agreements for earlier phases of the scheme. Can the Cabinet Member say when the report will be re-submitted to the Committee?”

Councillor Burrows responded that he was surprised to receive this question as the determination of planning applications was not a Cabinet function, but dealt with through the Area Planning Committee's. The question concerned a live planning application and, as such, Councillor Burrows could not fetter officers or the Committee's determination by commenting on the detail in the question. However, Councillor Burrows had spoken to the Chairman of the Central and South Planning Committee who had informed him that the report would be considered by the Committee on 13 July 2010.

Councillor Jarjussey started to ask a supplementary question which concerned details of the planning application and the Mayor ruled that, for the reasons outlined by Councillor Burrows, this was not a valid question as the planning application was still live.

#### **7.10 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR LAKHMANA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDRENS' SERVICES – TO BE ANSWERED BY COUNCILLOR BURROWS ON BEHALF OF COUNCILLOR SIMMONDS**

“Could the Cabinet Member for the LDF or the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services inform us if the public consultation (Education Facilities: Chapter 4 of the adopted planning obligations SPD) will now be extended, given the fact that this Section was missing from the website for around a week, with the exception of a cover page?”

Councillor Burrows responded that, when the public consultation commenced on Wednesday 16 June 2010, an on-line document had been available and was the principle means for people to read and lodge their comments against specific proposals.

Due to a technical hitch, the PDF version of the revised Chapter 4 of the adopted planning obligations SPD was not available on the website until Friday 18 June 2010. Once identified, this issue was resolved as soon as possible. However, as the PDF version was not immediately available, officers would accept representations during the week after the close of the consultation.

There was no supplementary question.

#### **7.9 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GARG TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR PUDDIFOOT**

“Now that the Mayor of London has given planning permission for the development of the Southall Gas Works site and the Central and South Planning Committee has decided to accept that they are not going to get any more out of the developers under

planning power, what is the Leader's position with regard to the sale of the land that will be needed to provide access to the site - will he maintain his principled opposition to the scheme because of the adverse impact on Hayes or will he roll over and sell?"

Councillor Puddifoot responded that the Mayor had not yet technically granted planning permission and would not do that until the S106 legal agreement was completed. In answer to the question, a key issue was whether Compulsory Purchase Order powers would be used against the Council. To say that the implications of a compulsory purchase order were complicated would be an understatement.

The Council would get the best possible professional advice on the property and legal issues. This would include the options available to the Council to continue to resist the Southall Gas Works development proposals. Once such advice had been received, a decision would be made which best served the interests of the residents of Hillingdon.

There was no supplementary question.

### **7.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MACDONALD TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS**

"Could the Cabinet Member for Planning and Transportation please inform us of exactly how many times they have attempted to contact Network Rail to tackle the huge problem of pigeon guano under the railway bridge in West Drayton?"

Councillor Burrows advised that, in response to complaints in 2004/2005, Network Rail had instigated substantial and effective anti-roosting measures in 2006 that remained in place today.

Following further reports concerning pigeon droppings received in 2008, officers conducted a monitoring exercise between November 2008 and March 2009. They were unable to prove that a nuisance (i.e., significant slip hazard) existed as few birds were observed roosting on the bridge and any droppings found were on the edge of the footway beneath the bridge. Network Rail was pressed for a second independent assessment, which it agreed to fund. This report, dated October 2009, confirmed there was still no nuisance. Copies of both reports were available on request.

Street Scene Enforcement Officers continued to respond to all reports received concerning pigeon droppings under the bridge and regularly assessed any alleged nuisance. Street Cleansing operatives also paid particular attention to this location on a weekly basis.

The Council, with support from Transport for London, was looking at long term solutions to improve the environment under the bridge and this was one of a number of issues which would be tackled as part of the on going Town Centre Enhancement Programme.

Councillor MacDonald, by way of a supplementary question, advised that she was in no way criticising the Council, but asked whether the Council could put any pressure on Network Rail to share the cost of the work. Councillor Burrows advised that the pigeon guano was not considered to be a major problem and that, if it was, the Council would press for a better solution.

**7.7 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ALLEN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS**

“Could the Cabinet member for Planning and Transportation please inform us as to any problems with the new pay machines for parking around the borough, particularly for those people visiting from other boroughs?”

Councillor Burrows responded that the machines were generally working well and there were no significant problems. A review of the maintenance records for the machines showed that, since 1 January 2010, there had been an average of 38 faults per week, which equated to 6 per day. As the Council had 194 pay and display machines in operation across the Borough, this equated to a daily fault rate of 3.2%, which was considered to be a reasonable level within the parking industry, especially as these faults included problems caused by defective coins, etc.

However, the Council would not be complacent about this matter and the parking team was working with the manufacturer to deal with any recurring issues to try and minimise the fault rate in the future.

Councillor Burrows was not aware of any problems relating specifically to people visiting from other boroughs. When the Hillingdon First scheme was introduced in June 2009, some people found the dual charging rate instructions a little confusing. However, officers were working with the public to ensure that they were aware of the operating arrangements and the queries over the instructions quickly reduced as people became used to the new machines.

Councillor Allen, by way of a supplementary question, asked for confirmation that no residents from other boroughs had benefited from the reduced parking fees (without the use of a Hillingdon First Card). Councillor Burrows advised that questions specifically relating to the Hillingdon First Card should be directed to Councillor D Mills as the Cabinet Member for Improvement, Partnerships and Community Safety.

23. **MOTIONS** (*Agenda Item 8*)

**8.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MACDONALD**

Councillor MacDonald moved the following motion:

“This Council has now had several years experience of the new improved structure of local government as applied in this Borough. Most emphasis has been given to the Cabinet, which is now well understood. The Policy overview process is not so well understood. This Council calls for a better balance between the Cabinet and the expertise available within the Policy overview process to include more in-depth scrutiny in order to further improve the performance of the Council.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Garg. Following debate (Councillor Puddifoot), Councillor Lewis moved an amendment as follows:

Delete the last two sentences and replace with:

“Whilst Cabinet will always seek to consider appropriate proposals to improve performance in all areas, this Council notes the valuable contribution made by Policy Overview Committees through in depth scrutiny of policy, which have helped to

deliver the record resident satisfaction and sound financial management that are becoming hallmarks of Hillingdon.”

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Markham.

Following debate (Councillors Corthorne, Major, Harmsworth, Simmonds, D Mills, Puddifoot and MacDonald), the amendment was put to the vote and agreed. The substantive motion was then put to the vote and agreed.

**RESOLVED: That this Council has now had several years experience of the new improved structure of local government as applied in this Borough. Most emphasis has been given to the Cabinet, which is now well understood. Whilst Cabinet will always seek to consider appropriate proposals to improve performance in all areas, this Council notes the valuable contribution made by Policy Overview Committees through in depth scrutiny of policy, which have helped to deliver the record resident satisfaction and sound financial management that are becoming hallmarks of Hillingdon.**

## **8.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR SIMMONDS**

Councillor Simmonds moved the following motion:

“This Council applauds the Government decision to rule out a third runway at Heathrow Airport, whilst noting that other major transport proposals with possible serious environmental impacts on the borough are under consideration. Council calls upon the Government to consult fully with all stakeholders on any proposal which will have an impact on the Boroughs' residents.”

The motion was seconded by Councillor Burrows. Following debate (Councillors Brar, Gilham, Benson, Harmsworth, MacDonald and Puddifoot), and on being put to the vote, the motion was agreed.

**RESOLVED: That this Council applauds the Government decision to rule out a third runway at Heathrow Airport, whilst noting that other major transport proposals with possible serious environmental impacts on the borough are under consideration. Council calls upon the Government to consult fully with all stakeholders on any proposal which will have an impact on the Boroughs' residents.**

## **PUBLIC QUESTIONS - WRITTEN RESPONSES**

The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.05 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Lloyd White, Head of Democratic Services on 01895 556743. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.



## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC - WRITTEN RESPONSES

### **5.2 QUESTION FROM STEVE PINK ON BEHALF OF NORTHWOOD HILLS RESIDENTS SUPPORT TEAM (RST) ON PARKING, TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS**

I attended the Council meeting in July 2008 at which the petition from 465 residents of Northwood Hills was presented asking for parking controls to deter all-day commuter parking. At that meeting, I made the point that Tolcarne Drive should be a special case for consideration in view of particular safety considerations caused by the combination of the Harlyn junior school and the Driving Test Centre both situated here.

Following that meeting and consideration of the petition, Council agreed to consult and a consultation exercise was carried out eventually 7 months later, in February 2009. It covered the roads around Northwood Hills station with a consultation of residents and a separate but simultaneous consultation of the shopkeepers in Joel St in respect of a "Stop & Shop" parking control scheme.

The shopkeepers gave a majority in favour of parking management, for primarily commercial reasons obviously as they believe commuter parking deters potential customers who want to park to come in to their shops. So the 'Stop & Shop' parking management scheme has been approved by Council as a priority for Northwood Hills and is now to be implemented. In that same consultation exercise, however, Tolcarne Drive residents also gave a majority in favour of parking management AND have followed that up with a formal request for parking management, primarily for road safety (not commercial) considerations, yet this request (sent in August 2009 and followed up in February 2010) has not had any response from the Council or from any of our local Ward Councillors who we would hope would support any such remedial action.

We are aware that individual roads have been, and are being, given parking management schemes all across the Borough. Tolcarne Drive clearly has safety issues different from other roads in this area because of the combination of the junior school AND the driving test centre.

We would hope that the Council can take action for this road and will at least respond to the major concerns raised by residents?

### **5.3 QUESTION FROM JOHN STONE OF TOLCARNE DRIVE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS**

As a very long-term resident of Northwood Hills, having lived here for 40 years, I have written many times to the Council over the years asking for some action to stop commuter parking along our road Tolcarne Drive. Nothing has been done yet but I hope there will be some action following our residents group's campaign.

On many occasions, these regular commuters park in a way that goes over my dropped kerb and stops me getting my car easily out of my drive. Your traffic wardens do a good job when I phone them and they come and put tickets on the cars. But those cars are parked all day for the station, so it doesn't help me getting in and out my drive during the day as the drivers don't come back till early evening to go home. I know this affects other houses near me and that other people also have to contact your traffic wardens to get cars ticketed. Can you please take a look and let me know how many tickets are issued here each year compared with previous years?

In the past two years I have noticed a big increase in the cars parking here every day and it now goes all the way up and beyond the junction with Harlyn Drive. That makes things more

dangerous for all of us but especially for the people going to and from Harlyn School. We see and hear many near-misses as cars and motorbikes swerve to get round each other when there is almost no room to pass, so we hope the Council appreciates the real safety concerns going on here.

I hope the Council is going to recognise what the residents are asking for and put something in here that will make a difference and improve safety. I was pleased that the Council did eventually do a consultation in 2009 and we know that in this road there was a majority vote wanting some parking management scheme.

### **Response to both:**

Councillor Burrows thanked both residents for their questions. As public questions 5.2 and 5.3 raise broadly the same issues, Councillor Burrows answered them together.

Councillor Burrows knew that parking in Northwood Hills had long been a concern to many residents, and indeed the Council always aimed to work closely with the community to try to tackle the problems with a solution that gained the majority support.

Councillor Burrows was pleased that residents had a positive experience of their ability to register their dropped kerbs for enforcement against inconsiderate parking. However, Councillor Burrows realised that this might only be a partial solution for these residents and their neighbours. With regard to the number parking tickets issued in Tolcarne Drive in 2008/09, it was noted that 53 tickets had been issued. In 2009/10, 67 tickets had been issued.

One of the dilemmas faced by the Council was that any parking management scheme which set out to tackle only part of a problem would almost inevitably end up causing problems for neighbouring roads - parking problems would simply move from one place to another. For obvious reasons, while the Council wanted to achieve the best overall position for all residents, it would be self-defeating if, by curing the problem for one group of people, the Council made life worse for their neighbours – furthermore, commuters were adept at finding new places to park. It was therefore very rare that the Council would introduce a parking management scheme in just one road. On many occasions, Councillor Burrows had considered petitions from residents living at the edge of a scheme that did not want to be part of a parking management scheme. Frequently, the very same group of petitioners came back to another Petition Hearing because they had felt the impact and had changed their minds. Clearly it was best to try to get a consensus from the outset, but this is not always possible.

The Council had consulted in the roads around Northwood Hills station before and, each time this had been done, there was no clear supported mandate to proceed to an agreed scheme. In fact, the petition presented by ex-Councillor Mr David Bishop would have had a parking management scheme covering everywhere from Northwood Hills and beyond.

Councillor Burrows realised that there were particular pressures in Tolcarne Drive – the obvious ones were commuter parking, the school run traffic and the driving test centre. To that end, Councillor Burrows, the Northwood Hills Ward Members and Council officers in the parking design team were continuing to work closely to find a solution that would tackle the problems faced by residents without the spectre of creating fresh problems in other roads where, to date, there had not been such strong support for a parking management scheme.

Councillor Burrows advised that he and the Council took these concerns very seriously, and he urged the questioner to speak to his Ward Councillors and work with them to try to find a solution that satisfies the majority.

## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

### 5.1 QUESTION FROM PENNY RUTHERFORD TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR IMPROVEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY – COUNCILLOR DOUGLAS MILLS

The agenda of the Cabinet meeting in March 2009 which discussed implementation of the Sustainable Communities Act listed the following local organisations which would be consulted (in lieu of forming a newly constituted Local Panel) for the purposes of the Act:-

- Streets Ahead
- Street Champions
- Other representative Forums such as Connecting Communities BME forum, Older People's Assembly, Assembly for People with Physical or Sensory Disabilities, the Inter-Faith Network, the Youth Council and others
- Neighbourhood Watch
- Police SNT Panels
- Developing links from the Hillingdon Residents' Survey
- The Chrysalis Programme and Councillor Ward Budgets.

Given that local Residents' Associations

- Probably represent a greater number of residents than any other local organisation
- Have demonstrated the ability to make constructive suggestions in many areas relating to Civic life,
- Comprise a wide range of people with varying knowledge and skills in different areas
- Consistently demonstrate an interest in and commitment to improving and maintaining sustainable life in the local area
- Function in a more consultative way than Street Champions which the Council include on their list,

Will the Council make a commitment to including local residents' Associations in their consultations for the Sustainable Communities Act, if not, why not and what criteria are used in making this decision?

### 5.2 QUESTION FROM TONY ELLIS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR IMPROVEMENT, PARTNERSHIPS AND COMMUNITY SAFETY – COUNCILLOR DOUGLAS MILLS

At a recent meeting of chairmen/officers of Residents' Associations from the north of the Borough, there was a general consensus that there is no consistency in the way that officers of the Council consult with Residents' Associations. Some are consulted on a regular basis and others rarely, if at all.

Recent examples are:-

- None of us was involved in the formulation of the draft Core Strategy document
- Not all of us were invited to the officers' presentation on the Core Strategy
- Hard copies of the Core Strategy were not made available until we protested at a higher level
- By the time hard copies were available, we had less than 4 weeks to consult with our residents. Requests to extend the consultation period were refused by officers.
- The Rights of Way Improvement Plan consultation was not sent to Residents' Associations
- Changes to parking regulations consultations are not sent to the affected Residents' Associations

Residents' Associations represent many thousands of the Borough's residents and are mandated to protect their interests. This irregular or lack of consultation makes our work very difficult and we feel the many Council officers do not value our opinions.

Assuming that the Leader of the Council agrees that Residents' Associations should be involved in all public consultations, will he instruct the Chief Executive to ensure that his officers consult all of us in future?

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

*Reporting Officer: Head of Democratic Services*

### (i) CONSTITUTION – DELEGATIONS RELATING TO HILLINGDON HOMES

Members will recall that, after taking into account the outcome of the tenant and leaseholder 'test of opinion' and other considerations, Cabinet at its meeting on 18 February 2010 agreed to bring housing services back under Council control at the earliest possible opportunity. Following negotiations with Hillingdon Homes, control will be handed over to the Council on 1 October 2010.

Once the handover is complete there will need to be certain amendments to the Constitution and the scheme of delegations and these are shown in Appendix A

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the constitutional amendments as set out in Appendix A be approved and the Head of Democratic Services, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to make any further minor amendments that may be required in relation to the transfer of Hillingdon Homes

### (ii) MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Council is asked to approve the following:

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** That

a) on the recommendation of the Leader of the Conservative Group:

- **RELATE – Councillor Routledge to replace Councillor Seaman-Digby**
- **Hillingdon Asian Women's Group Committee – appoint Councillor Harper-O'Neill.**

b) on the recommendation of the Leader of the Labour Group:

- **Local Authorities' Aircraft Noise Council – Councillor Nelson to replace Councillor Duncan;**
- **North Planning Committee – Councillor Dhillon to replace Councillor MacDonald**
- **Corporate Services and Partnerships Policy Overview Committee - Councillor MacDonald to replace Councillor Dhillon**

### (iii) SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES 2010/11

Members will recall that the Scheme of Allowances includes the payment of a co-optees allowance to the non-councillor, independent members of the Standards and Audit Committees as follows:

- **Chairmen of Audit Committee and Standards Committee - £2854.07pa**
- **Vice Chairman of Standards Committee - £1037.78pa**

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Independent member of Standards Committee - £1037.78pa

The London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel recommends that the independent members' payment should be based not only on the role being carried out (ordinary member, vice-chairman, chairman etc), but also on the amount of meetings / additional duties that they are required to attend or carry out.

Accordingly the Leader of the Council is recommending that, to reflect the additional work that the Vice Chairman of the Standards Committee is required to carry out in also chairing the first stage sub-committee for considering complaints against Members, the payment for this co-optee be increased to £1560 pa. The other payments to remain the same.

**RECOMMENDATION: That the allowance paid to the vice-chairman of the Standards Committee be increased to £1560 pa.**

### **(iii) REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

#### **INFORMATION**

Councillor Garg has submitted a request via the Head of Democratic Services for special dispensation to be granted by full Council to be excused from meetings until end of February 2011 (over and above the six month period) on medical grounds.

Councillor Garg's last attendance was the full Council meeting on 1 July 2010.

Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that if a member of a local authority fails throughout a period of six consecutive months from the date of his last attendance to attend any meeting of the authority, he shall, unless the failure was due to some reason approved by the authority before the expiry of that period, cease to be a member of the authority.

**RECOMMENDATION: To consider whether to grant a request for leave of absence for Councillor Garg under Section 85(1) of the Local Government Act 1972.**

**CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**  
**ARTICLE 7 – THE CABINET (EXECUTIVE)**

(Changes shown are either underlined (indicating same or similar wording contained in the Constitution pre-Hillingdon Homes) or ~~crossed-through~~)

**Cabinet Member for Social Services, Health and Housing**

1. To oversee and report to the Cabinet on the Council's responsibilities and initiatives in respect of:-
  - care services for adults and older people,
  - transport and travel for social services clients,
  - services for clients with disabilities,
  - mental health services,
  - local authority health services, other than public health,
  - alcohol, drugs and substance abuse services – in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services,
  - HIV/AIDs services,
  - Health Promotion,
  - working with the NHS,
  - housing need for the Borough,
  - housing maintenance,
  - stock refurbishment,
  - housing development programme,
  - council shops,
  - homelessness duties,
  - management of the housing stock,
  - conditions of tenancies,
  - rent setting,
  - housing revenue account budget,
  - housing benefit scheme,
  - home ownership,
  - social housing grant,
  - private sector housing grants,
  - new homes initiatives,
  - maximising the use of empty homes.
2. To consider monthly reports on sensitive services and those with significant budget implications, e.g. placements in residential homes.
3. To provide link contact between the Council and the Joint Health and Social Care Executive.
4. To provide link contact between the Council and the Primary Care Trust.
5. To approve proposals for naming and re-naming of housing schemes and developments.
6. Jointly with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Business Services authorise the grant of extension of leasehold interests in properties where the Council is freeholder and to consider requests from leaseholders of Council properties for loft conversions.
7. To approve systems for consultation with tenants and lessees.
8. ~~To act as the Council's representative for purposes of the Management Agreement with Hillingdon Homes~~ and to approve housing management arrangements and methods of procurement.
9. ~~To recommend to the Cabinet the approval of the annual delivery plan of the Hillingdon Homes.~~
10. To approve programmes for stock investment and confirmation of adjustments to the programme.

## **PART THREE – SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS TO OFFICERS**

### **Delegations to the Head of Housing Services Deputy Director of Adult Social Care Health and Housing**

1. To exercise the Council's regulatory and enforcement functions in relation to housing in the area under any enactment including:-
  - (i) taking all steps in connection with the issue or withdrawal of notices, orders or other documents which the Council is authorised or required to serve.
  - (ii) selecting the most effective means of enforcement whether by agreement, works in default, prosecution or otherwise.
  - (iii) authorising officers to act in matters arising under any such enactments.
2. To authorise payments of improvement grants, home insulation grants and creditors' accounts in accordance with regulations.
3. To assess housing rents in accordance with Council policy.
4. To operate the building society support lending scheme on behalf of the Council.
5. To exercise the Council's statutory discretion in connection with improvement grants.
6. To exercise the Council's functions in deciding whether or not applicants for housing assistance are intentionally homeless and therefore ineligible for such assistance.
7. To act on behalf of the Council in agreeing the terms for the sale of any interest in land where the Council is obliged by the Right to Buy legislation to sell or has discretion to sell to secure tenants under the Housing Legislation subject to obtaining the appropriate statutory consents.
8. To assess, agree and authorise the payments of compensation including home loss and disturbance payments and claims regarding the acquisition of or depreciation in interests or rights in land relating to non-Council tenants.
9. To approve the making of Housing Act advances in accordance with the Council's scheme and to secure recovery of all sums owing to the Council thereunder including where appropriate the exercise of rights of sale, to vary the rate of interest charged on Housing Act advances and to effect the discharge of mortgages.
10. To enter into agreements with tenant management organisations.
11. To operate the housing, community charge and Council tax benefit scheme.
12. To approve re-housing in accordance with current policies and appropriate legislation.
13. To authorise refunds of rent in appropriate cases.
14. To exercise the Council's functions regarding the restoration of gas, electricity and water services for tenants.
15. In relation to residential property to grant secure tenancies (including joint tenancies), licences, wayleaves and other occupational rights and to do all that is necessary to ensure compliance with the terms of such rights once agreed
16. To approve and take steps to institute eviction proceedings in appropriate cases.
17. To take all steps to comply with the Council's obligations arising under Tenancy Agreements and Leases which it has granted.
18. To be responsible for the general management, repairs and maintenance of and investment in Council Housing Stock.



## REPORT TO COUNCIL ON THE WORK OF THE AUDIT COMMITTEE 2009/10

*Reporting Officer: Head of Internal Audit Corporate Governance*

### SUMMARY

This report summarises for Council the work of the Audit Committee during 2009-10 in undertaking its responsibilities for overseeing and challenging the key areas within its remit, specifically:

- Internal Control;
- Risk Management;
- Internal Audit;
- Additional financial assurances;
- Anti Fraud; and,
- Annual Accounts and External Audit.

The report provides an opportunity for members to review the work of the Committee and comment on its contribution and performance.

This report details the key areas reviewed by the Committee in 2009-10. The Committee has had an impact on all areas of its remit. Notable areas were:

- Raising the profile of Internal Audit through its review of its activities and acknowledged support of the function;
- Receiving and reviewing
  - the annual plan for Internal Audit
  - the periodic progress reports presented by the Head of Internal Audit & Corporate Governance;
  - the report on the effectiveness of the systems of Internal Audit;
  - reports on the risk management process;
  - and approving annual accounts and presenting a robust challenge in addressing questions and seeking assurances from both officers and the external auditors;
  - reports on Treasury Management Practice
  - the Balances and Reserves policy
  - regular reports from the external auditors on both the accounts and the Comprehensive Area Assessment process
- Monitoring the production of the Annual Governance Statement and its supporting evidence, and recommending the adoption of the statement to the Leader and Chief Executive.
- Reviewing the council's arrangements for the move to International Accounting Standards.
- Conducting a review of its own effectiveness and producing a plan for improvement.

**RECOMMENDATION: That Council notes the annual report and work of the Audit Committee.**

### INFORMATION

#### 1. Background

The Audit Committee has a wide ranging brief that underpins the Council's governance processes by providing independent challenge and assurance of the adequacy of risk management, internal control including audit, anti-fraud and the financial reporting frameworks. The Audit Committee also approves the Annual Accounts and receives

regular reports on the work of the external auditor. The Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee are reproduced at Appendix 1 for information.

## 2. Membership

- 2.1. Details of the Committee members are in Table 1. They have a wide range of skills and bring both technical and professional experience to the role. The Independent Chairman is a qualified accountant with wide experience in the private and public sector.

Table 1

<b>Member</b>	<b>Role</b>
Mr John Morley	Independent Chairman
Cllr George Cooper	Vice-Chairman
Cllr Tony Egington	Member – (resigned 11March2010)
Cllr Mary O'Connor	Member
Cllr Elizabeth Kemp	Member – (up to 6 May 2010)

- 2.2. During the course of meeting members were briefed on relevant issues in relation to local government accounts, External Audit, Internal Audit, Use of Resources, Anti-Fraud arrangements, and risk management.

## 3. Internal Control

- 3.1. In compliance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 (and 2006 amendment), the Committee has reviewed the effectiveness of the systems of internal control by receiving regular reports from those areas that contribute to the control framework, specifically;
- Internal Audit;
  - External Audit
  - Risk Management;
  - Anti Fraud activities;
  - Annual Governance Statement steering group.
- 3.2. Most of these activities were reported on at every meeting and the Committee's involvement has contributed to a score at level 3 for Internal Control, in the 2010 Use of Resources.
- 3.3. The Committee received regular reports from the Annual Governance Statement Steering Group, which reviews and challenges the assurances used to support the Annual Governance Statement that accompanies the statutory accounts. It also reviewed the resultant draft Annual Governance Statement 2008-9 and recommended its approval to the Leader and Chief Executive and will be asked to do the same for 2009-10.

## 4. Risk Management

- 4.1. Regular reports on the Council's corporate risks are produced and presented to the Audit Committee, which presents a further challenge to the identified risks.
- 4.2. The Committee received assurance that the Corporate Risk Management Group (CRMG) continued to meet regularly and challenge and review the risks and mitigation strategies. During the year the Committee sought and received further clarification of the internal reporting structure for risk within the council.

- 4.3. All corporate risks have a Risk Management Action Plan, which is effectively a strategy for reducing the effect of the risk.

## **5. Internal Audit**

- 5.1. The Council's Internal Audit is mainly provided by an in-house team, with IT audit outsourced to a private firm. Staffing and resources have continued to improve with 95% of the plan completed to draft stage by the end of May 2010. High levels of assurance are key to the production of the Head of Audit's assurance statement, which in turn supports the Annual Governance Statement. During the year 99% of audit recommendations were accepted, against a target of 95% and an improvement of 1% over the previous year. Acceptance and implementation of audit recommendations is a key element of improving overall control. Implementation rates of over 80% were achieved at first follow up and the Committee continues to present a challenge where recommendations have been outstanding for long periods of time.
- 5.2. During the year, the Audit Committee received regular updates on performance and summaries of audit reports. Their input has been fundamental in raising the profile of Internal Audit and its important role in assisting management in the Council. Senior officers are required to provide a commentary on the actions they are taking where a report received no or limited assurance and the Committee can, if it considers it necessary, ask officers to appear before it. The Committee also invited the Director of Education and Children's Services to attend one of its meetings to discuss the issues around the control issues and action plan at Hillingdon Grid for Learning.
- 5.3. The audit plan and strategy approved by the Committee for 2010-11 is based on a risk based methodology adopted two years ago. Using this methodology the highest risk-ranked audits are undertaken each year with the risks being re-evaluated annually to take account of emerging and receding issues.
- 5.4. In line with CIPFA guidance, an annual review of the effectiveness of the systems of Internal Audit was undertaken. This year, having previously conducted a self-assessment, a review by a Committee member and a peer review by another authority, a self assessment has again been carried out. The service was found to be largely compliant and minor improvements will be actioned in the forthcoming year.

## **6. Additional Financial Assurance**

- 6.1. The banking crisis continued to have an effect on the finance of all areas of government and during the year the Committee received reports on the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.
- 6.2. The Committee also asked for assurances that the budget process operated effectively and were presented with a paper in March 2010.

## **7. Anti-Fraud**

- 7.1. During the year, the Audit Committee received summarised reports of the outcome of Internal Audit investigations into Fraud and Irregularity.
- 7.2. The Committee reviewed an amended whistleblowing policy in December 2009.

- 7.3. Fourteen investigations were carried out into fraud or irregularities and these have been reported to the Committee in updates throughout the year. Largely they have fallen into four categories:
- No issue at the conclusion of the investigation.
  - Issues to be addressed by management action
  - Disciplinary issues
  - Prosecutions
- 7.4. Internal Audit has an established protocol with the Housing Benefit Fraud Team which makes full use of the skills in both teams and facilitates in-house prosecutions. During the year one prosecution case started in 2008-9 reached court and the staff member was convicted. One case started in 2009-10 reached court in May 2010 and again there was a successful conviction.
- 7.5. Larger investigations continue to account for a significant proportion of the total time for all investigations.

## **8. External Audit**

The external auditors have attended each meeting of the Committee. The Head of Audit continues to meet with Deloitte's Audit Manager to discuss the respective approaches to audit and how co-operation could increase the reliance they placed on our work. This continues to be useful and the relationship is working well. Deloitte are currently reviewing Internal Audit files for their 2009-10 audit and we expect that they will be able to place reliance on the work. Representatives from both Deloitte and the Audit Commission have attended Audit Committee meetings to present various reports and answer questions. The Chairman of the Audit Committee has met the Deloitte auditors independently, in keeping with good governance arrangements.

## **9. Annual Accounts and Financial Reporting**

- 9.1. The Audit Committee approved the 2008/09 Statement of Accounts and Pension fund Annual Report in June 2009, an auditor's report on the statement of Accounts in September 2009 and the Annual Audit letter and Final Reports on the audit of accounts in December 2009.
- 9.2. The final use of resources report was presented to the Committee in September 2010.
- 9.3. The Committee have maintained an active interest in accounting treasury management issues. Reports have been received on Treasury Management Practices and on the conversion to International Accounting Standards.
- 9.4. In support of 2009-10 work, the Committee received an Audit and Inspection plan from Deloitte in March 2010.

## **10. Committee Training and Development**

The Committee membership was unchanged during the year, with most members serving for at least their second term, which provided good continuity and members were able to effectively challenge papers brought before them. An Audit Committee workshop facilitated by the Head of Audit at Southend Borough Council reviewed the Committee's own effectiveness and produced a plan to address minor compliance issues.

## **11. Conclusion**

The Audit Committee believes it has made 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.

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Terms of reference for Audit Committee; Annual Governance Statement Framework

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## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

**8.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR WHITE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND CHILDRENS' SERVICES – COUNCILLOR SIMMONDS**

Can the Cabinet Member for Education & Children's Services please update us on the GCSE results ?

**8.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR HARMSWORTH TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND BUSINESS SERVICES – COUNCILLOR BIANCO**

Why wasn't the Pool Petitioners' meeting postponed, considering one Ward Councillor was unconscious and another tending to him?

**8.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MACDONALD TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION – COUNCILLOR BURROWS**

Is Southlands going to be included on the LDF?

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## MOTIONS

### 9.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR EAST:

As part of the Healthy Hillingdon Strategy to protect and encourage healthy eating habits from the earliest age this Council proposes to introduce policies close to parks, playgrounds, schools, youth centres and facilities for young people to:-

- (i) reduce planning permissions for new hot fast food outlets
- (ii) not grant licenses to mobile food outlets

Work on the first policy to be developed within the context of the emerging Local Development Framework and planning policies but have reference to the Council's work on obesity and health. Work on the second policy to be developed in conjunction with the first by Streetscene Enforcement.

### 9.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR HARMSWORTH:

That this Council notifies the Secretary of State for Transport that it broadly supports the recommendations of Lord Mawhinney's report, 'High Speed Rail Access to Heathrow'.

However, the Council wishes to state its opposition to any major hub development within, or adjoining Hillingdon, not only for both environmental and budgetary reasons, but because it will have a major disruptive effect outside of the Yiewsley and West Drayton area impacting on the Green Belt.

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