

Minutes

COUNCIL

30 November 2023

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



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Councillor Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana (Mayor)

Councillor Colleen Sullivan (Deputy Mayor)

	<p>MEMBERS PRESENT:</p> <p>Councillors: Naser Abby Scott Farley Stuart Mathers Kaushik Banerjee Janet Gardner Douglas Mills Labina Basit Elizabeth Garelick Richard Mills Adam Bennett Narinder Garg Peter Money Kishan Bhatt Tony Gill June Nelson Jonathan Bianco Martin Goddard Barry Nelson-West Wayne Bridges Ekta Gohil Susan O'Brien Tony Burles Becky Haggard OBE Jane Palmer Keith Burrows Mohammed Islam Sital Punja Farhad Choubedar Kamal Preet Kaur John Riley Philip Corthorne Kuldeep Lakhmana Raju Sansarpuri Peter Curling Eddie Lavery Jagjit Singh Darran Davies Richard Lewis Peter Smallwood Nick Denys Heena Makwana Jan Sweeting Jas Dhot Gursharan Mand Steve Tuckwell MP Ian Edwards</p>
	<p>OFFICERS PRESENT: Tony Zaman, Andy Evans, Dan Kennedy, Glen Egan, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon and Nikki O'Halloran</p>
27.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Reeta Chamdal, Roy Chamdal, Alan Chapman, Henry Higgins and Rita Judge.</p>
28.	<p>MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
29.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in any matters coming before the Council.</p>
30.	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>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>

	<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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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.

*Source Local Government Association

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,

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.

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.

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.

The motion was put to the vote and lost.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.37 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.