

Minutes

PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORT SELECT COMMITTEE

10 January 2024



Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre

	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Keith Burrows (Chair), Alan Chapman, Darran Davies, Alan Chapman (in place of Steve Tuckwell), Elizabeth Garelick, Kamal Preet Kaur, Peter Money (Opposition Lead) and Henry Higgins</p> <p>Also Present: Rakesh Kumar, Local Resident Jaskamal Sidhu, Guru Nanak Sikh Academy head teacher Marina Batros, Teacher at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy X5 Youth Travel Ambassadors</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Andy Goodwin, Head of Strategic Finance Ceri Lamoureux, Head of Finance, Place Anisha Teji, Senior Democratic Services Officer</p>
45.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TO REPORT THE PRESENCE OF ANY SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Steve Tuckwell with Councillor Henry Higgins substituting.</p>
46.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest.</p>
47.	<p>TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes from the meeting on 14 November 2023 be agreed.</p>
48.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT THE ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED AS PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>It was confirmed that all items would be heard in Part I.</p>
49.	<p>SELECT COMMITTEE REVIEW INTO THE COUNCIL'S ROAD SAFETY INITIATIVES AND ACTIVITIES AROUND THE BOROUGH'S SCHOOLS - WITNESS SESSION 3 (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p>

The Committee considered its third and final witness session on its review into the Council's Road Safety Initiatives and Activities Around the Borough's Schools.

Witness testimony from local resident

Mr Rakesh Kumar, a local resident who lived in close vicinity of a school, addressed the Committee. The Committee was informed that on Wood End Green Road there were several education establishments all near each other.

Concerns were expressed about the traffic and safety issues caused by school-related activities in the area. It was noted that the proposed development at the school would cause even further issues with traffic congestion and road safety. Issues highlighted included chaotic road conditions during drop-off and pick-up times, lack of bus stops, disregard for parking rules, and the need for better traffic management and safety measures. The school days started early from 7.30am and activities went on until 6pm where local residents were impacted by school related parking violations and traffic. There was often anti-social behaviour including beeping, swearing and near miss fatal accidents with children crossing roads. The traffic on the road was described as 'horrendous' with 'wild west' driving tactics.

Solutions such as improved infrastructure, increased awareness through multilingual communication, and the possibility of bringing certain services like CCTV monitoring in-house to enhance community involvement. It was also suggested that students become involved in addressing parent behaviour and parking enforcement was undertaken more regularly. There was an overall concern for the safety and well-being of children, residents and the community.

During Member discussions it was noted that there were similar school and road safety issues across the borough. Schools, parents and the Council all had a responsibility to put measures in place to uphold road safety particularly near schools.

The Committee thanked the witness for attending and their frank account.

Witness testimony from a teacher and representatives from Youth Travel Ambassadors (YTA), Guru Nanak Sikh Academy

The Committee heard from Ms Marina Botros, a teacher at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy and a number of Youth Travel Ambassadors who all provided an insight into the different activities undertaken to increase road safety and suggestions for improvements.

It was noted that there had already been a lot of work undertaken between the school, Transport for London and the Council to encourage sustainable methods of school drop offs and pick ups.

Members heard about the YTA's experience with zebra crossings, cycle lanes and walking groups. It was noted that there were issues with the right turn junction on Springfield Road and concerns were raised regarding abandoned vehicles in the area which were sometimes left for months.

It was suggested that staggered drop offs and pick ups, better signage and working with local businesses to manage traffic congestion in the area could improve the situation. The Committee was informed that the YTA hosted competitions to encourage students to ride and walk to school.

In terms of how parents were being engaged with, it was reported that coffee mornings took place, correspondence from the school was sent out and students often relayed the message to be more mindful of the safety issues caused around drop offs and pick ups.

The YTA were encouraged to speak to local businesses in the area to highlight the issues and discuss proposed solutions to manage the issues.

The Committee welcomed initiatives such as the walking group with older students encouraging younger students to walk to school and alleviate any parental safety concerns.

It was acknowledged that Guru Nanak Sikh Academy was located in an usual location with many industrial sites nearby and commercial businesses.

The Committee noted the YTA's passion for road safety. Members were pleased to hear from YTA and thanked them for the useful and positive contribution to the review.

Witness testimony from Mr Sidhu, headteacher at Guru Nanak Sikh Academy

The Committee heard about the school's alternative car park at Minnet Although Minnet country car park was available for car parking on a daily basis. Although the use of this car park helped during rush hour times, many parents were often in a rush so did not always use the car park. Staff members usually directed parents to areas of safe parking and ensured the flow movement of traffic. There were some safety issues with using the Minnet country car park however the introduction of lighting and CCTV could improve the situation. .

A new initiative had been introduced encouraging parents to use the Lombardy car park, a 10-minute walk from the school. Students were encouraged to walk to school as much as possible particularly as many children lived nearby. This initiative had been welcomed by parents.

In response to questions about the use of the Lombardy car park, it was noted that parents and children usually travelled underbridge to attend the school and there were some safety issues. There was a good relationship with the Safer Neighbourhoods Police Team but it was noted that it would be difficult to deploy someone on a daily basis. It acknowledged that this area needed to be looked into particularly in relation to lighting. In terms of managing parent behaviours such parking on pavements and blocking driveways, correspondence was sent from the school through a regular newsletter and road safety was always an agenda item for the school's Health and Safety Committee. It was noted that some schools had used a "name and shame" policy for parents violating rules and it had worked to prevent road safety issues.

It was agreed that educating children about road safety was a good way to hold parents accountable.

There was an issue with abandoned lorries and enforcement help was requested.

The Committee thanked all the witnesses for their attendance and useful input into the review. The Committee was pleased to hear from a diverse range of witnesses. It was clear to the Committee that discussions emphasised the importance of collaboration between the school, local authorities, and parents to address safety concerns and traffic issues around school areas.

RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the evidence received.

50. **CABINET'S BUDGET PROPOSALS FOR NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Head of Strategic Finance and Head of Finance for Place introduced the report detailing the draft revenue budget and capital programme for the services within the remit the Committee.

Key points from the report were highlighted, including details of the financial pressures generated by the ongoing inflation, growing demand for services and a lack of certainty over Government funding beyond 2024/25, with the budget taking a prudent approach to support financial resilience over the medium term.. It was reported that the balanced budget was set to be achieved through a combination of efficiency savings and increases in Council Tax and Fees and Charges.

Budget proposals for 2024/5 had been prepared in the context of a wider strategy addressing the five-year MTFF period. The latest monitoring position for the 2023/24 financial year reported a net underspend of £2k which would leave uncommitted General Balances at £26,848k entering the 2024/25 financial year.

The Committee noted that Cabinet would consider the budget proposals on 15 February 2024 and the report would include comments from Select Committees. Members were informed that Council would meet to agree the 2024/25 budgets and Council tax levels on 22 February 2024.

The Committee considered that this was a sound balanced budget in comparison to other local authorities and the Council was still delivering services for residents.

In response to clarification about zero based reviews, it was explained that this was the process involved with building from the ground up analysing factors such as service requirements, service objectives, contract outsourcing, costs and levels of demand. This was a good way to ensure an accurate budget.

Members discussed the further £117k savings to be delivered from reviewing staffing vacancies. It was noted that this was not intended to include a reduction in staff but a review of budgets, analysis on vacancies and recruitment generally.

	<p>RESOLVED: That the Committee:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. noted the budget projections contained in the report. 2. delegate to the Democratic Services Office in conjunction with the Chairman (and in consultation with the Opposition Lead) to agree comments to be submitted to Cabinet. 3.
51.	<p>CABINET FORWARD PLAN (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Committee noted the Forward Plan.</p>
52.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>It was agreed that Democratic Services would liaise with officers to identify what information was available in respect of the West Drayton leisure centre. The Chair would be provided with an update.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the updates and work programme be noted.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.25 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on 01895 277655 or ateji@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.