

## Minutes

### COUNCIL

18 January 2024

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><b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b></p> <p>Councillors: Kaushik Banerjee      Scott Farley      Gursharan Mand Labina Basit      Janet Gardner      Stuart Mathers Kishan Bhatt      Elizabeth Garelick      Douglas Mills Jonathan Bianco      Narinder Garg      Richard Mills Wayne Bridges      Tony Gill      June Nelson Tony Burles      Martin Goddard      Barry Nelson-West Keith Burrows      Ekta Gohil      Susan O'Brien Reeta Chamdal      Becky Haggart OBE      Jane Palmer Roy Chamdal      Henry Higgins      Sital Punja Farhad Choubedar      Mohammed Islam      Raju Sansarpuri Philip Corthorne      Rita Judge      Jagjit Singh Peter Curling      Kamal Preet Kaur      Peter Smallwood Darran Davies      Kuldeep Lakhmana      Jan Sweeting Nick Denys      Eddie Lavery      Steve Tuckwell MP Jas Dhot      Richard Lewis Ian Edwards      Heena Makwana</p>
	<p><b>OFFICERS PRESENT:</b> Andy Evans, Dan Kennedy, Sandra Taylor, Salleh Jobbi, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock and Nikki O'Halloran</p>
35.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Abby, Bennett, Chapman, Money and Riley.</p>
36.	<p><b>MINUTES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2023 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
37.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b> (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in any matters coming before the Council.</p>
38.	<p><b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor advised that he had attended a number of events over the Christmas period including the ConneX pantomime and the Yiewsley and West Drayton Band carols on the green. There had been a Council staff Christmas quiz which had raised more than £400 for the Mayor's charities and organisations and individuals had continued to be welcomed to the Parlour, including schools and the Interfaith Group.</p>

	<p>On Sunday 10 March 2024, the Mayor would be taking part in the 5 mile Whittington Walk with other London mayors and urged those present to sponsor him. He also advised that he was looking for runners to take part in the Hillingdon 20 Mile Race, which would take place on Sunday 24 March 2024, to raise money for his charities.</p>
39.	<p><b>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p><b>5.1 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2024/25</b></p> <p>Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business, and it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the programme of meetings for 2024/25 as set out in the Annex to these minutes, be approved and the Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chief Whip of the Majority Party, be authorised to make any amendments that may be required throughout the course of the year.</b></p>
40.	<p><b>COUNCIL TAX BASE AND BUSINESS RATES FORECAST 2024/2025</b> (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Goddard moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <b>the report of the Corporate Director of Finance for the calculation of the Council Taxbase and the Business Rates Forecast be approved.</b></li> <li>b) <b>in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Taxbase) (England) Regulations 2012 the amount calculated by the London Borough of Hillingdon as its Council Taxbase for 2024/25 shall be 104,668.</b></li> <li>c) <b>authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance to submit the 2024/25 NNDR1 return to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing &amp; Communities (DLUHC) and the Greater London Authority (GLA).</b></li> <li>d) <b>the continuation of the Council’s policy of passporting Government discounts and reliefs applied to Business Rates to the ratepayer be approved.</b></li> </ul>
41.	<p><b>MEMBERS' QUESTIONS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p><b>7.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR REETA CHAMDAL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE – COUNCILLOR PALMER:</b></p> <p><i>“How has Hillingdon Adult Social Care reacted to hospital discharge during the doctors’ strike?”</i></p> <p>Councillor Palmer advised that the industrial action undertaken by doctors in January 2024 had coincided with a particularly busy period for adult social care, especially at Hillingdon Hospital. There had been strong collaboration between adult social care and various partners involved in supporting hospital discharges and a close alignment had been developed with integrated discharge teams.</p> <p>In preparation for the strike, the adult social care team had actively participated in North West London meetings, collaborating closely with healthcare professionals and</p>

other stakeholders to strategise for potential disruptions in the healthcare sector. To facilitate a coordinated effort, the team had engaged in multi-agency discharge events at Hillington Hospital which had focused on streamlining the discharge process and creating additional bed capacity by ensuring a steady and safe flow of discharges for Hillington residents.

A notable achievement during this period had been the commitment to confirming discharges on the same day for all Hillington residents, regardless of whether they were admitted to the local hospital or out of borough. Individuals were being promptly discharged and returned home with the necessary support that had been tailored to meet their social care needs.

Between December 2023 and January 2024, the Council had supported 168 people to leave hospital and receive care in the community through a regional approach to healthcare challenges. The importance of a united front in addressing issues relating to patient care was emphasised, especially during periods of heightened strain on the healthcare system. The focus had remained on supporting residents, with adult social care demonstrating resilience, adaptability and effective partnership working during the strike.

Councillor Palmer thanked the staff and managers involved, acknowledging their fantastic work in ensuring that the wellbeing and care of residents remained a top priority throughout this challenging period.

There was no supplementary question.

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

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

Councillor Lavery noted that advice from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport had confirmed that a formal public consultation had not been legally required for library relocations. However, a public engagement exercise had commenced on 10 November 2023 to allow residents, both online and those visiting Uxbridge library, to review the proposals. A set of frequently asked questions had been compiled and residents had been able to share their views by email. The engagement exercise would end on 19 January 2024.

Approximately 6,000 active users of Uxbridge library (those who had used the library within the last 12 months) had been contacted by email, and information had been posted in other Hillingdon libraries to inform users of the proposal. If the Cabinet approved the proposal, it would require planning permission and the standard statutory planning consultation would also be carried out.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Burles noted that there had not been any information about the proposal in Hillingdon People and asked how minority groups were being engaged.

Councillor Lavery stated that he had already set out details of the engagement activity that was being undertaken and affirmed that all groups were being given the opportunity to participate.

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

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

Councillor Goddard stated that a GB News report had inaccurately claimed that Hillingdon had filed for bankruptcy. A local authority was considered bankrupt under the Local Government Act 1988 when a council finance officer issued a Section 114 notice, indicating imminent unlawful expenditure that exceeded income. Councillor Goddard assured Members that no such notice had been issued in Hillingdon, and that the current consultation budget for 2024-25 had been satisfactorily balanced.

There was no supplementary question.

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

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

Councillor Edwards advised that a new payment system had been implemented in September 2021 which had caused delays in reconciling some claims, particularly those from special schools. Funding arrangements for special schools were notably more complex due to varying levels of funding based on individual needs. The Council had been in discussions with one special needs school regarding claims that couldn't be reconciled with the evidence that was held by the Council. In the context of 959 payment claims submitted by 54 special needs providers in the 2022-23 period, sound financial management was crucial to ensure the validity of claims before payment was made and finance officers were required to act diligently to prevent inappropriate payments.

The specific school presumed to be the subject of Councillor Mathers' question had claimed to be owed £250,000 over and above the amounts already paid. This sum was not related to a single claim, but was an aggregation of elements from multiple claims over several payment periods. Officers had met with the school three times since September and had maintained regular contact by email in an effort to resolve the matter. The school had agreed to review its claim, given the information provided by the Council, and the outcome of the school's review was now awaited. If the school was able to provide evidence to substantiate the outstanding sums, the Finance team would expedite the payment.

There was no supplementary question.

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

*“Can the Cabinet Member update Council on the progress of the proposed Yiewsley housing scheme and its contribution to affordable housing targets?”*

Councillor Lavery advised that approval for the development in Falling Lane, Otterfield Road in Yiewsley had been granted by the Planning Committee in December despite

the opposition's attempt to advocate for fewer affordable homes within the development. This development had been highlighted as a high-quality project located in a brownfield area, aiming to provide 100% affordable housing on the site. The 95 units would include a mix of sizes, notably featuring 19 three-bedroom units which would contribute to the demand for larger housing options.

The standard mandate for development plan requirements was 50% affordable homes on public sector land. However, the Yiewsley housing scheme had surpassed this by delivering 100% affordable housing without encroaching on the designated Metropolitan open land, specifically the recreation ground. There continued to be a pressing demand for affordable housing in Hillington and the broader context of London, where property prices and private sector rents were notably higher.

To prevent the placement of homeless families into temporary accommodation, 950 properties were needed each year. However, it had been forecast that 12,200 homeless households would be in temporary accommodation by March 2024 which had prompted the need for around 1,100 additional properties annually.

The Cabinet Member had been surprised that Members of the opposition had been opposing the development, given that it would be creating 95 affordable units, and had been stating that poor air quality would prevent residents from opening their windows. The Council collected data from air quality monitoring locations across the Borough (three of which were in Yiewsley), all of which indicated levels which were below the limits for principal particulates, including particulate 2.5 which was already meeting the 2030 target.

The administration was committed to delivering affordable housing for residents, as indicated by the approved Yiewsley housing scheme.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Smallwood asked whether the new development would have an impact on the Yiewsley Recreation Ground. Councillor Lavery advised that the Yiewsley scheme would have a positive impact with the development of a new family landscape garden, bowling green and playground area, increased tree planting and additional footpaths at the Recreation Ground. These enhancements would be included in the first phase of the development and not deferred to the future.

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

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

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

Councillor Edwards advised that the ceremonies referred to by Councillor Curling were entirely different and reminded him that he had seconded the motion for the Freedom awards to be conferred at a Civic dinner in honour of Sir Ray Puddifoot MBE

and Ms Jean Palmer, former Deputy Chief Executive of the Council. Councillor Edwards emphasised that it would be naive to believe that a civic dinner at the Battle of Britain Bunker Visitor Centre could cost the same in 2022 as an event in a room at the Civic Centre in 2018. The dinner in 2022 had taken place to honour Sir Ray's achievements in managing the budget and reducing Council Tax rates and his efforts in challenging the Government in relation to the third runway at Heathrow and HS2.

Sir Ray's leadership had been fundamental in preserving the Battle of Britain Bunker at RAF Uxbridge and this achievement had been considered a legacy of national and international importance. It had been fitting that the civic dinner had been located at the Bunker.

It was recognised that there had been an error by officers in presuming that the catering contract held by the Council extended to the special event and officers had taken this learning on board.

At this point, the meeting was adjourned for a short time following a disturbance in the Council Chamber.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Curling asked whether Sir Ray would have expected robust scrutiny of the event and whether expenditure of £15k of public money could be considered in the best interests of the residents when they had not been invited.

Councillor Edwards queried why Councillor Curling had not raised this as an issue earlier if he had been so concerned by it and suggested that it was only being raised now as others had brought it to his attention. Councillor Edwards advised that he welcomed scrutiny but felt that he had justified the expenditure in his response.

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

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

Councillor Bianco advised that the entirety of Station Approach at West Straton station was owned by Network Rail. A package of improvements outside the station had originally been agreed as part of the Crossrail Improvement Programme, funded by the Government through Transport for London (TFL). The approval and agreements for the work had been protracted, and progress had finally been made as a result of the determination of the administration, relentless efforts by the officer team and assistance from the new MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip.

A major part of the improvement work near the new station building and the Grand Union Canal had started before Christmas, and good progress had been reported, with a target for completion by the end of March 2024. Efforts had been made to seek intervention from the Chief Executive of Network Rail and the Secretary of State for Transport in relation to the delays. However, significant problems remained in relation to the roadway element of Station Approach, particularly the partial collapse of a deep-buried sewer which had impacted buses and rail passengers. Network Rail and its specialists were investigating the collapsed sewer, with the Council and local MP urging for action but the resolution was dependent on Network Rail, who had

promised to conclude its investigations and prioritise the necessary work.

Network Rail had acknowledged the impact of the delayed work and indicated a potential completion date in July 2024. The slow pace of action had been frustrating and there was a need for action rather than words. The Council would continue to press for a firm date at the highest level.

There was no supplementary question.

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

**8.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR KAUR:**

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

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

Those speaking in support of the motion sought a commitment from the administration that over 700 locally and nationally listed assets owned by the Council would remain under its ownership for generations to come. The concern had arisen as Hillingdon had been ranked 31 out of the 33 London boroughs in terms of financial reserve levels so the motion aimed to prevent the sale of listed assets to bolster the Council's financial position. Although the Council had often cited its financial efficiency, it had relied on asset sales, including listed assets, to balance the books.

Several listed buildings, including Barra Hall, the Granaries at Knightscode Farm in Harefield and Gatehouse at Hillingdon Uxbridge Cemetery, were mentioned as being at risk. Some of these buildings were already on Historic England's risk register and there were concerns that neglect and lack of maintenance could lead to selling off valuable assets.

Reassurance was sought on behalf of residents that the Council would not sell its heritage assets and would instead respect the Borough's and gifts passed down through generations. Members were urged to vote in line with their conscience to save these buildings for posterity.

Those speaking against the motion noted that the Council, like other public authorities, needed to continuously review its asset holdings to ensure they served their intended purposes. The idea of holding onto assets indefinitely, regardless of their use, was deemed financially burdensome to taxpayers and not a sound financial management practice.

Planning policies and relevant legislation aimed to conserve and enhance the Borough's historic landscape and, whilst these policies strongly supported the retention of heritage assets, the ownership of these assets was not entirely relevant. The emphasis had been placed on the obligation to preserve, conserve or enhance the asset itself, regardless of ownership.

	<p>Under planning policy, a heritage asset could be designated as Grade II or Grade I listed, and there were approximately 430 such buildings in Hillingdon. The protections offered to these nationally listed buildings were greater than those for locally listed buildings, but ownership was not a decisive factor in planning applications. The council's planning policies for locally listed buildings applied irrespective of ownership.</p> <p>The local planning authority would individually assess any proposals to alter or redevelop a building in accordance with the development plan. Examples of successful redevelopment or approved plans for both designated and undesignated heritage assets included the Randall building in Uxbridge and the Nestle factory.</p> <p>The motion was put to a recorded vote:</p> <p>Those voting for: Councillors Basit, Burles, Curling, Dhot, Farley, Gardner, Garelick, Garg, Gill, Islam, Kaur, Lakhmana, Mand, Mathers, Nelson, Nelson-West, Punja, Sansarpuri, Singh and Sweeting.</p> <p>Those voting against: The Mayor (Councillor Ahmad-Wallana), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Sullivan), Councillors Banerjee, Bhatt, Bianco, Bridges, Burrows, Reeta Chamdal, Roy Chamdal, Choubedar, Corthorne, Davies, Denys, Edwards, Goddard, Gohil, Haggar, Higgins, Lavery, Lewis, Makwana, D Mills, R Mills, O'Brien, Palmer, Smallwood and Tuckwell.</p> <p>Those abstaining: None.</p> <p>The motion was lost.</p>
	<p><b>MINUTE ANNEX A - PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2024/2025</b></p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.42 pm.</p>

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