

## Minutes

### COUNCIL

22 February 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> <table><tr><td>Councillors: Naser Abby</td><td>Scott Farley</td><td>Gursharan Mand</td></tr><tr><td>Kaushik Banerjee</td><td>Janet Gardner</td><td>Stuart Mathers</td></tr><tr><td>Labina Basit</td><td>Elizabeth Garelick</td><td>Douglas Mills</td></tr><tr><td>Adam Bennett</td><td>Narinder Garg</td><td>Richard Mills</td></tr><tr><td>Kishan Bhatt</td><td>Tony Gill</td><td>Peter Money</td></tr><tr><td>Jonathan Bianco</td><td>Martin Goddard</td><td>June Nelson</td></tr><tr><td>Wayne Bridges</td><td>Ekta Gohil</td><td>Barry Nelson-West</td></tr><tr><td>Tony Burles</td><td>Becky Haggard OBE</td><td>Susan O'Brien</td></tr><tr><td>Keith Burrows</td><td>Henry Higgins</td><td>Jane Palmer</td></tr><tr><td>Reeta Chamdal</td><td>Mohammed Islam</td><td>Sital Punja</td></tr><tr><td>Farhad Choubedar</td><td>Rita Judge</td><td>John Riley</td></tr><tr><td>Philip Corthorne</td><td>Kamal Preet Kaur</td><td>Raju Sansarpuri</td></tr><tr><td>Peter Curling</td><td>Kuldeep Lakhmana</td><td>Jagjit Singh</td></tr><tr><td>Darran Davies</td><td>Eddie Lavery</td><td>Peter Smallwood</td></tr><tr><td>Nick Denys</td><td>Richard Lewis</td><td>Jan Sweeting</td></tr><tr><td>Ian Edwards</td><td>Heena Makwana</td><td>Steve Tuckwell MP</td></tr></table>	Councillors: Naser Abby	Scott Farley	Gursharan Mand	Kaushik Banerjee	Janet Gardner	Stuart Mathers	Labina Basit	Elizabeth Garelick	Douglas Mills	Adam Bennett	Narinder Garg	Richard Mills	Kishan Bhatt	Tony Gill	Peter Money	Jonathan Bianco	Martin Goddard	June Nelson	Wayne Bridges	Ekta Gohil	Barry Nelson-West	Tony Burles	Becky Haggard OBE	Susan O'Brien	Keith Burrows	Henry Higgins	Jane Palmer	Reeta Chamdal	Mohammed Islam	Sital Punja	Farhad Choubedar	Rita Judge	John Riley	Philip Corthorne	Kamal Preet Kaur	Raju Sansarpuri	Peter Curling	Kuldeep Lakhmana	Jagjit Singh	Darran Davies	Eddie Lavery	Peter Smallwood	Nick Denys	Richard Lewis	Jan Sweeting	Ian Edwards	Heena Makwana	Steve Tuckwell MP
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	<p><b>OFFICERS PRESENT:</b> Andy Evans, Dan Kennedy, Sandra Taylor, Glen Egan, Andy Goodwin, Iain Watters, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon, Alice Pringault and Nikki O'Halloran</p>																																																
43.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Dhot, Roy Chamdal and Chapman.</p>																																																
44.	<p><b>MINUTES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>It was agreed that an amendment be included in relation to Agenda Item 7.5 to reflect the fact that Councillor Curling had informed the meeting that the Freedom of the Borough events held in 2018 and 2022 had both been similar in nature and had included three course meals.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED:</b> That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2024, as amended, be agreed as correct record.</p>																																																
45.	<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>																																																

46.	<p><b>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor advised that he had welcomed a number of local groups to the Parlour since the last Council meeting and had also attended a number of events around the Borough. He noted that the annual Battle of Britian Bunker event would be taking place on 27 February 2024 and invited Members to sponsor him for the Whittington Walk which would take place on 10 March 2024.</p> <p>The Mayor thanked his Mayoresses for their continued support during his mayoralty.</p>
47.	<p><b>REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</b> (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p><b>i) Urgent Implementation of Decisions</b></p> <p>The recent urgent decisions taken were noted.</p> <p><b>ii) Political Groups on the Council and Calculation of Political Balance</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 alteration of the Political Balance of the Council as a result of Councillor Basit no longer being a member of the Labour Group, be noted.</b></p> <p><b>iii) Members' Allowances 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:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a) the current Members' Allowances Scheme be revoked as of 31 March 2024 and the new Scheme for 2024/25, as shown in the Appendix to the report, be approved for implementation from 1 April 2024.</b></li> <li><b>b) the Head of Democratic Services be authorised to increase the level of Members' allowances in line with any subsequent annual pay award to staff for 2024/25. Such increase to also be applied to the separate allowance paid to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.</b></li> </ul> <p>At this point, the meeting was adjourned for a short time following a disturbance in the Council Chamber.</p>
48.	<p><b>GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET, HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024 / 2025</b> (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Councillor R Mills moved, and Councillor Davies seconded, the suspension of Council procedure rule 14.4 to allow unlimited speaking time for the mover and seconder of the motion and the principal speaker / mover and seconder of the amendment from the Labour Group.</p> <p><b>RESOLVED: That the mover and seconder of the budget motion and the principal speaker / mover and seconder of the principal amendment from the Labour Group be allowed unlimited speaking time on this item.</b></p>

Councillor Goddard moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the budget recommendations as set out on the Order of Business.

Councillor Mathers moved, and Councillor Curling seconded, the following amendment:

**Proposal to be moved:**

- a) **That the Cabinet be invited to consider the Labour Group's amendments to the Cabinet's budget proposals set out in the Council Tax Resolution and report back to the Council;**
- b) **In relation to the General Fund Revenue Budget the proposals are based on the budget proposals approved by Cabinet on 15 February 2024, subject to the following amendments;**
- c) **In relation to the General Fund Capital Budget, the proposals are based on the budget proposals approved by Cabinet on 15 February 2024, subject to the following amendments;**
- d) **In relation to the Housing Revenue Account Revenue Budget, the proposals are based on the budget proposals approved by Cabinet on 15 February 2024, subject to the following amendments;**
- e) **In relation to the Housing Revenue Account Capital Budget, the proposals are based on the budget proposals approved by Cabinet on 15 February 2024, subject to the following amendments;**

**Supporting Information for the above proposals:**

**Council Tax Levels and Medium-Term Impact**

The following amendments to Cabinet's budget proposals have been developed in the context of the cost-of-living crisis, with the amendment including the creation of a Local Household Support Fund and reductions in a number of the proposed uplifts to fees and charges and a number of additional service priorities being funded by additional savings proposals, with the most material being digitalisation of Hillingdon People and carrying out a BID Review of the Communications Team.

Amendments to the Capital Programme outlined later in this document would result in a minor increase in prudential borrowing of £17k for invest to save schemes, increasing prudential borrowing to £63,099k over the next five years to 2028/29, with amendments based on commercial opportunities.

These budget amendments include increasing General Balances by £503k, with £500k of this funded by a transfer from Member-led Earmarked Reserves and increases the total balances on reserves in 2024/25 by £3k to £38,887k. With an increased investment in the HRA aimed at increasing Housing Stock numbers to secure an additional £150k per annum benefit from 2026/27 by reducing the pressure on Looked After Children's budgets from a lack of General Needs properties, with this benefit to increase General Balances by a further £450k by 2028/29. A further proposal based on running heritage sites on a trust basis is forecast to increase the contribution to General Balances by £1,260k by 2027/28.

## Changes to 2024/25 Revenue Budget

Specific amendments to the 2024/25 budget proposals have been developed and set out in table 1 below. These proposals include:

### Reserves

**Earmarked Reserve Repurposing:** It is proposed that Earmarked Reserves controlled by Members are reduced by £700k, with £500k of this being contributed to General Balances to accelerate the rate at which the Council will meet the minimum reserves level, with a further £200k being used to create a new Digital Disaster Reserve to enable the Council to quickly respond to any new and emerging issues that could arise from the new Digital Strategy.

### Services to Residents

**Scale Back the Street Cleaning Saving:** With a 2023/24 saving of £400k, this budget amendment proposes reducing the saving by £144k to increase the number of street cleaning operatives by 4 to continue to offer a more personalised service and maintain a presence on the high streets.

**Local Household Support Fund:** With the Government set to close the nationally funded Household Support Fund, it is proposed that £110k is set aside to support households facing financial difficulty with the purchase of white good and school uniforms to offset the impact of the fund closing on 31 March 2024.

**Reverse the Fortnightly Garden Waste Collections in Winter Months saving:** The budget amendment includes the reversal of this saving a cost of £105k to ensure that residents have a consistent service throughout the year on all waste services, including garden waste.

**Remove the increase proposed for 1<sup>st</sup> permits:** To support Local Residents during the cost-of-living crisis following the introduction of charges for 1<sup>st</sup> permits, it is proposed that the uplift in this charge for 2024/25 is reversed from the budget proposals at a minor cost of £5k.

**Make Tennis Courts free to book:** To support families during the cost-of-living crisis and support local residents with their physical and mental wellbeing, it is proposed that Council tennis courts are made free to use through an online booking system. To support this bid, it is also proposed that one site is used as a commercial tennis site, with a capital investment of £250k required to build a club house, with year 1 forecast to breakeven, with the income forecast to cover both the lost fees and charges income and the capital financing cost associated with the borrowing required to build the clubhouse.

**Introduce a Landlord Licensing Scheme:** A breakeven proposal is included to introduce a Landlord Licensing Scheme aimed at improving standards within the private rented sector, with the investment to be offset through fees and charges. Ultimately it is anticipated that this will also support the physical and mental wellbeing of residents, whilst also reducing demand on the Council's own housing stock in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

**Introduce Regulatory Officer for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs):** Employing an officer to monitor HMOs and reduce the negative impact of HMOs on

neighbours and costs on the Council. Including waste management, anti-social behaviour and energy meter disputes information to tenants. This officer will also investigate the feasibility of a HMO landlord standards registration. The cost of this officer will be charged back through HMO application fees through the full cost recovery model. This post will contribute to future council savings through early prevention.

## Finance & Corporate Items

**Set up a Trust to run the Council's heritage sites:** With the Council now running the Battle of Britain Bunker on a Trust basis, it is proposed that this approach is broadened across other heritage sites, with the year 1 impact forecast to be a £19k saving, with this forecast to increase to £1,260k by 2027/28, with this additional benefit in later years to be used to increase General Balances.

**Capital Financing Impact from Updates to the Capital Programme:** With two invest to save additions proposed to be added to the capital programme, the capital financing impact is forecast to add £17k to 2024/25, with this cost ultimately being over recovered by the saving proposals.

**Transformation – Investment in cross cutting bid writing team:** It is proposed that the Council invest in a team with the primary focus of securing additional funding from external sources, with one officer focused on General Fund activities and another focused on supporting the Schools Budget Safety Valve Agreement. The officer focused on the General Fund is expected to generate income sufficient to cover the expenditure in year 1 but is expected to exceed this level of the medium-term. The post supporting the DSG can be funded from capital receipts under Government direction, with a view to the team becoming self-financing and generating a net benefit for the Council from 2025/26 onwards.

**Savings Proposals:** The budget amendment includes a number of savings proposals including the repurposing of Hillingdon People to a more digital offer to make a saving against the printing and distribution costs saving £156k, a BID review of the communications team to save £100k, a reduction in the Mayor's Expenses budget of £9k, with proposals to lease out a site as a café in Ruislip generating £15k and a further proposal to lease out an area of the Civic Centre to the Home Officer for a further £15k, with these saving initiatives reducing spend by £292k per annum.

**Table 1: Changes to 2023/24 General Fund Revenue Budget**

	2024/25 £'000	2024/25 £'000
<b>Council Tax Requirement based on Cabinet Proposals</b>		<b>145,751</b>
<b>Earmarked Reserve Repurposing</b>		<b>0</b>
Create a Digital Disaster Reserve	200	
Transfer Earmarked Reserves to General Balances	500	
Reduce the Balance on Member Driven Earmarked Reserves	(700)	
<b>Services to Residents</b>		<b>294</b>
Scale back the Street Cleansing saving	144	
Local Household Support Fund Scheme	110	
Local Household Support Fund Scheme - Centralise Council Functions	(60)	

Reverse the Fortnightly Garden Waste Collections in Winter Months saving	105	
Remove the increase proposed for 1 <sup>st</sup> permits	5	
Make Tennis Courts free to book	20	
Commercialise One Tennis Court Site	(30)	
Introduce a Landlord Licensing Scheme	100	
Generate Fees & Charges from the Landlord Licensing Scheme	(100)	
Introduce Regulatory Officer for HMOs	60	
Increase HMO Licence Fee	(60)	
<b>Finance &amp; Corporate items</b>		<b>(2)</b>
Set up a Trust to run the Council's heritage sites	(19)	
Capital Financing Impact from Updates to the Capital Programme	17	
Transformation: Investment in cross cutting bid writing teams	60	
Transformation: Funding Obtained from Bid Writing	(60)	
Transformation: Investment in DSG bid writing team	60	
Transformation Capitalisation Funding	(60)	
<b>Savings Proposals</b>		<b>(1,041)</b>
Repurposing of Hillingdon People	(156)	
BID Review of Communications	(100)	
Reduction to Mayors Expenses Budget	(9)	
Generate Income from the Middlesex Suite	0	
Generate Lease Income from a Café by Cow Byre, Ruislip	(15)	
Generate Lease Income from the Home Office in the Civic	(15)	
<b>General Balances</b>		<b>(3)</b>
<b>Increase in General Balances</b>	(3)	
<b>Change in Council Tax Requirement</b>		0
<b>Council Tax Requirement based on Labour Group Proposals</b>		<b>145,751</b>

### Changes to the General Fund Capital Programme

There are two proposed changes to the General Fund Capital Programme, with both these being invest to save additions, with the details being:

**Cow Byre Café Development:** It is proposed that a café is introduced on a vacant site by the Cow Byre site in Ruislip, with an investment of £150k required to deliver the site. The lease income from the site will generate £15k per annum, more than covering the £6k capital financing cost and generating an ongoing net benefit for the General Fund.

**Build Club House at one Tennis Court Site for Commercial Offer:** It is proposed that the Council changes one of the tennis court sites to operate on a commercial basis, with an investment of £250k being required to build a club house for the operating to run the venue from, which can also include a café and shop. The investment is expected to breakeven in year 1, with the lease income of £30k covering both the capital financing costs and also funding the removal of the tennis court booking fee. The investment will further support the physical and mental

wellbeing of residents, offering a pay-as-you-go tennis offer in the borough, for adults and children, with an increased children's offer in school holidays.

**Table 2: Capital Programme Changes**

	Project Budget £'000	Grants and Contributions £'000	CIL £'000	Capital Receipts £'000	Prudential Borrowing £'000
<b>Capital Programme</b>	<b>377,109</b>	<b>145,380</b>	<b>23,463</b>	<b>103,950</b>	<b>104,316</b>
Cow Byre site, Ruislip Café Development	150				150
Build Club House at one Tennis Court Site for Commercial Offer	250				250
<b>Total Updates</b>	<b>400</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>400</b>
<b>Revised Capital Programme</b>	<b>377,509</b>	<b>145,380</b>	<b>23,463</b>	<b>103,950</b>	<b>104,716</b>

### HRA Budget Changes

Housing Revenue Account (HRA) revenue budget amendments include a proposal to double the repairs growth in the budget proposals over a three-year period, increasing the 2024/25 growth by £350k, with this growth item to scale up to £1,000k by 2026/27, before unwinding the additional investment at £500k per annum in 2027/28 and 2028/29, with a forecast reduction in the revenue impact of repairs of £500k by year-five from the upfront investment, with the objective of the investment to be an acceleration of the work required to improve the Council's housing stock and avoid disrepair claims.

Included in the HRA Amendment is a capital proposal to increase the Council's housing stock above the current budget proposals by a net 100 homes in 2025/26 and 2026/27, effectively increasing the stock growth to compensate for the Right-To-Buy sales of 40 per annum in those two years, with a total capital investment of £35,200k. This investment will yield additional rental income of £1,031k per annum by the end of the five-year budget cycle. It is then proposed that a BID Review is carried out on both tenancy management and the repairs service, ensuring that efficiency gains from the upfront investment in repairs are maximised, securing an additional £382k saving that will support the additional capital financing cost above the rental income yield, with this saving being less than 1% of these two service areas.

The increase in the Council's housing stock will also benefit the General Fund and can be used to either support the growing homelessness pressure or address the lack of General Needs properties for Looked After Children, with an estimated benefit on the General Fund of £150k per annum by 2027/28.

**Table 3: HRA Revenue Changes**

	2024/25 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26-2028/29 £'000	2025/26-2028/29 £'000
<b>HRA Planned Use of Balances</b>		<b>(101)</b>		<b>0</b>
Double the growth item in the budget for repairs work	350		0	
Repairs saving from early investment	0		(500)	
Increase the stock numbers by a net 100 in 2025/26 and 2026/27	0		(1,031)	
Capital Financing Impact	0		1,913	
Carry out a BID Review of Tenancy Management & The Repairs Service	0		(382)	
<b>HRA Planned Use of Balances from Labour Group Proposals</b>		<b>249</b>		<b>0</b>

**Table 3: HRA Capital Changes**

	2024/25 £'000	2024/25 £'000	2025/26-2028/29 £'000	2025/26-2028/29 £'000
<b>HRA Capital Budget</b>		<b>550,150</b>		<b>550,150</b>
Increase the stock numbers by 100 in the medium-term			35,200	
<b>HRA Capital Budget from Labour Group Proposals</b>		<b>550,150</b>		<b>585,350</b>

**Table 4: HRA Stock Numbers**

Tenanted Stock	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	Change
Projected Opening Stock	10,253	10,295	10,518	10,603	10,714	10,694	N/A
Forecast Right-to-Buy Sales	(50)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(25)	(235)
New Units	114	300	100	100	20	20	654
Housing Regeneration voids	(22)	(37)	(66)	0	(79)	(94)	(298)
Housing Regeneration new build	0	0	91	51	79	53	274
<b>Projected Closing Stock</b>	<b>10,295</b>	<b>10,518</b>	<b>10,603</b>	<b>10,714</b>	<b>10,694</b>	<b>10,648</b>	<b>395</b>
Budget Amendment			40	40			80
<b>Revised Closing Stock</b>	<b>10,295</b>	<b>10,518</b>	<b>10,643</b>	<b>10,754</b>	<b>10,694</b>	<b>10,648</b>	<b>475</b>

Those speaking in support of the amendment suggested that the proposed budget was not fit for purpose and would result in an increase of £18m in the funding gap. The budget was becoming more of a challenge but the administration's lack of forethought and lack of ideas would lead the Council to financial ruin. The amendment provided a more pragmatic approach to the budget and would rebuild general balance reserves, which were currently under the recommended threshold.

The administration had failed to generate income from its existing assets, with only £1,100 raised from the Middlesex Suite in the previous year, and the lack of reserves would lead the authority down the path to bankruptcy. The amendment looked to support public health initiatives, retain the weekly waste collection and build more Council homes whilst remaining financially responsible. Although in July 2023 Cabinet Members had stated during a Council meeting that green waste was a vital part of waste management and that it would continue to be collected weekly, the budget proposed that green waste be collected fortnightly during the winter months.

It was suggested that the bid writing team included in the amendment would pay for itself, whilst also reducing the deficit. This initiative had been introduced in Lewisham and had unlocked significant funding in relation to things like the Pupil Premium. Transferring the Battle of Britain Bunker to a Charitable Trust would also save the Council money and secure the heritage site's future.

The Household Support Fund, which had provided help to residents with the cost of living, would shortly be coming to an end and the administration had not been



lobbying Government to stop it from disappearing. The amendment would look to freeze the increase in parking permit fees to reduce the financial impact on residents and invest in housing stock to compensate for Right To Buy sales. The administration should have been ensuring that social housing had been included in developments that were being approved by the Council. The Housing Revenue Account budget had been broken and there had been an increase in the number of residents who were unable to afford to rent a property – the Council had been depriving residents of a decent home. Affordable social housing would be key.

A BID review would also be undertaken into tenancy management and repairs to improve the Council housing stock and avoid repair costs. A landlord licensing scheme would also improve standards in the private rented sector.

It was recognised that voting for the amendment would not assume that there was agreement with everything that had been suggested, but it would ask the Cabinet to rethink its proposals.

Those speaking against the amendment suggested that it had not been properly thought through and, despite having previously expressed concern about digital exclusion, the opposition was now proposing that Hillingdon People be distributed electronically. The amendment had not included capital investment in early years nurseries or provided any capital support for Uxbridge Library. It had also included a budget for repairs when it actually needed to be looking at a budget for planned maintenance.

The amendment had included proposals that the administration had already been investigating as well as ideas that were not feasible. The Council already provided tennis courts and did not need to provide a new pavilion when the money could be better spent elsewhere. Many of the suggestions being made in the amendment should have been issues raised in the relevant Select Committee before now.

The amendment was put to a recorded vote:

Those voting for: Councillors Abby, Basit, Burles, Curling, Farley, Gardner, Garelick, Garg, Gill, Islam, Judge, 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, Reeta Chamdal, Choubedar, Corthorne, Davies, Denys, Edwards, Goddard, Gohil, Haggard, Higgins, Lavery, Lewis, Makwana, D Mills, R Mills, O'Brien, Palmer, Riley, Smallwood and Tuckwell.

Those abstaining: None.

The amendment was lost.

Those speaking in support of the original motion noted that the budget had been formulated in the face of challenging worldwide and domestic issues as well as fundamental changes in public sector finance. Following the consultation on the budget in December 2023, which had received positive support overall, a few changes had been made and set out in the Cabinet report.

It had been recognised that changes might need to be made to service delivery to be

able to continue to meet increased demand. It was likely that the cost increases associated with social care would exceed the prevailing rate as the demand for these services continued to increase (social care accounted for approximately 66% of service expenditure). Although the administration had invested in front line services rather than cutting them, the reality was that there would inevitably be some cost escalation.

Work had been undertaken to maintain the savings programme by creating service efficiencies and reducing administration costs through the use of digital technology. Consideration was also being given to optimising the use of, and return from, assets. If an asset did not make a useful contribution, consideration would be given to selling it.

A Zero Based Budgeting exercise was currently being undertaken across the whole Council. It was anticipated that this process would deliver long term savings and would be refreshed in future years. Investing to save money in the future on initiatives such as the purchase of a care home would also drive down costs.

There had been a significant increase in the number of asylum seekers in the Borough (there had been more than 650 requests during the current financial year in comparison to 136 in the previous year). The Council had not been provided with additional funding to meet the associated increase in costs.

In September 2023, homelessness had been at its highest level since records began. Addressing this challenge had been the highest driver of the use of earmarked reserves during 2023/2024.

Although the proposed 2024/25 budget was balanced, there had been a slight increase in the budget gap. It was noted that this gap had been largely caused by the uncertainty in relation to the level of Government grants that would be received during that year. Despite the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities identifying a reduction in local authority spending power whilst facing increasing demand for services, the Council would be receiving a reduction in Government grants next year.

It was recognised that Hillingdon's reserves had reduced during the ten years to 2018/19 when Council Tax had been frozen. However, Council Tax in Hillingdon had increased by only 15% over the last 15 years, whereas the contributions made by residents to the London Mayor had increased by more than 70% in the last eight years. Fees and charges in the Borough continued to be amongst the lowest in London and improvements had been made to leisure centres, tennis courts, playgrounds and town centres. Car parking machines had been upgraded, new housing had been built and the Council's children's services had recently been rated as "Excellent" by Ofsted.

The number of children with Education, Health and Care Plans had increased by 14% in the previous year and the Council had continued to invest in its schools. Two Family Hubs had been established in the Borough (in Uxbridge and Hayes) to put relationships at the heart of family support. These Hubs had collocated services to simplify access for residents, made integration easier and filtered out waste and duplication.

Health and social care needed to be addressed together and an early intervention approach had been adopted to encourage independent living for as long as possible.

New diagnostic equipment would be introduced and the TeleCareLine provision would be reviewed.

The Council remained committed to the 16 libraries in the Borough and had been investigating a temporary site for the library in Northwood. Residents continued to be encouraged to recycle their waste with a promotion in relation to recycling food waste and the remodelling of the site at New Years Green Lane.

With regard to bid writing, it was noted that all senior managers were already required to seek additional funds. This had resulted in securing £188m of grants over the lifetime of the MTFF.

It was suggested that the proposal provided a strong and sound budget which was forward looking and dynamic and which also preserved the administration's manifesto promises. The budget provided realistic and sensible provision that increased the level of reserves each year and would result in a smaller, simpler and smarter Council.

Those speaking against the original motion expressed concern that the administration continued to cut front line services such as bowls clubs, a garden centre tea room, children's centres, Harlington Library and free weekly green waste collection. Fees had been increased by 5% and the administration could no longer afford to pay for services as a result of its poor financial management.

A national newspaper article had recently identified Hillingdon as the most unhappy place to live whilst another had shown it to be the most NIMBY council. The budget was not resilient or strong, did not support older residents and would result in reduced resident satisfaction and reduced reserves (Hillingdon's reserves were one of the lowest in London). As well as having problems achieving savings during the current year, it was suggested that the budget had only been balanced by "selling off the family silver". The sale of these assets would be attributed to excuses such as decarbonisation and structural damage.

The proposed budget would leave the Council with an £18m deficit in five years. It was suggested that the administration should be lobbying the Government for more funding. The budget was high risk, unsustainable and not fit for purpose.

The original motion was put to a recorded vote:

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

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

Those abstaining: None.

The original motion was carried and it was:

**RESOLVED: That the Cabinet budget recommendations, as set out below, be**

approved.

1. The General Fund revenue budget proposals made by Cabinet be approved, resulting in a Council Tax requirement for 2024/25 of £145,751,237;
2. Council note that, at its meeting on 18 January 2024, the Council calculated the amount of 104,668 as its Council Tax Base for the year 2024/25. This was calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, as its Council Tax Base for the year (*Item T in the formula in Section 31B (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992*);
3. The Hillingdon element of Council Tax be set at £1,392.51 for a Band D property. Taking into account the precept levied by the Greater London Authority, this results in an overall Band D Council Tax of £1,863.91 for the borough;
4. The following amounts have been calculated by the Council for the year 2024/25, in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (the Act):

a) £966,906,538 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) (a) to (f) of the Act. (*Gross Expenditure including the amount required for additions to working balances*)

b) £821,155,301 being the aggregate of the amounts that the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the Act. (*Gross Income including reserves to be used to meet Gross Expenditure*)

c) £145,751,237 being the amount by which the aggregate at 4 (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 4 (b) above. This is calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (*Item R under Section 31B of the Act*)

d) £1,392.51 being the amount at 4 (c) above divided by Item T (2 above). This is, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year. (*Council Tax at Band D for the Council*)

e)

The London Borough of Hillingdon Council Tax (£)			
Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D
928.31	1,083.04	1,237.78	1,392.51
Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H
1,701.93	2,011.39	2,320.81	2,784.97

being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 4 (d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to

dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation B and D. This is calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

5. Council note that for the year 2024/25 the Greater London Authority and its functional bodies have stated the following amounts in precepts. These have been issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

<b>The Greater London Authority Precept (£)</b>			
<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>
314.27	366.64	419.02	471.40
<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>
576.16	680.91	785.67	942.80

6. The Council has calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 4 (e) and 5 above. The Council in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 hereby sets the Council Tax for the year 2024/25 for each category of dwelling below:

<b>Total Council Tax 2024/25 (£)</b>			
<b>Band A</b>	<b>Band B</b>	<b>Band C</b>	<b>Band D</b>
1,242.58	1,449.68	1,656.80	1,863.91
<b>Band E</b>	<b>Band F</b>	<b>Band G</b>	<b>Band H</b>
2,278.09	2,692.30	3,106.48	3,727.77

7. The Council Tax Discount for Older People be retained for 2024/25 with a 1.12% discount on Hillingdon's element of the Council Tax for those who joined the scheme on or after 1 April 2020, 2.56% for those who joined the scheme before or on 31 March 2019 and 5.47% for those who joined before or on 31 March 2018, with the scheme closed to new applicants from 1 April 2021;
8. The General Fund Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29 as set out in Appendix A8 of the report to Cabinet be approved;
9. The Housing Revenue Account budget proposals, HRA Capital Programme and housing rents set out in Appendix B of the report to cabinet be approved;
10. The proposed amendments to Fees and Charges set out in Appendix C of the report to Cabinet be approved;
11. Capital Investment Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2024/25 to 2028/29 as set out in Appendix D of the report to Cabinet be approved;
12. The London Borough of Hillingdon Pay Policy Statement for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix E of the report to Cabinet be approved;

	<p><b>13. Council note the Corporate Director of Finance’s comments regarding his responsibilities under the Local Government Act 2003 as set out from paragraph 154 of the Cabinet’s Budget Proposals;</b></p> <p><b>14. Council note the planned use of the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts to fund transformation activity as outlined in Appendix 6a of the report to Cabinet;</b></p> <p><b>15. Council (as set out in Schedule G of the Constitution - Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules) resolves that Cabinet may utilise the general reserves or balances during 2024/25 in support of functions designated to the Cabinet in line with Part 4 of the Constitution;</b></p> <p><b>16. Council confirm that the Council’s relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992 and therefore a referendum will not be triggered.</b></p>
	<p><b>MINUTE ANNEX A</b></p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.05 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 250636. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

### MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2024/25

#### 1. Introduction

In accordance with Local Authorities (Members Allowances) England Regulations 2003 No. 1021 (as amended) the London Borough of Hillingdon makes the following scheme: -

#### 2. Basic Allowance

For 2024/25 an allowance of **£12,481** will be payable to all Councillors and will be paid in equal monthly instalments. The basic allowance includes intra borough travel and subsistence costs.

#### 3. Special Responsibility Allowances

Special responsibility allowances of the following amounts shall be paid in equal monthly instalments to Councillors holding the following responsibilities:

	(£)
1. Leader of the Council	58,700.29
2. Deputy Leader of the Council	49,447.58
3. Chief Whip of Largest Party	23,725.26
4. Cabinet Member	41,351.55
5. Chairman of Select Committee	23,725.26
6. Chairman of Planning Committee	23,725.26
7. Chairman of Licensing Committee	23,725.26
8. Chairman of Standards Committee	3,343.46
9. Standards Committee Independent Person	500 (per meeting)
10. Chairman of Audit Committee*	3,180.83
11. Champion	6101.08
12. Council representative on Adoption and Permanency Panel	13,373.87
13. Cabinet Assistant	9,252.71
14. Leader of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Party	23,725.26
15. Chief Whip of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Party	6101.08
16. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Party Lead on Select Committee	6101.08

\* Where a non-Councillor is Chairman or Vice Chairman a co-optees' allowance is payable as set out in the Scheme under section 9.

#### 4. Limit on Payment of Special Responsibility Allowances

Individual Councillors may not claim a special responsibility allowance for more than one position for which they qualify.

#### 5. Renunciation

Councillors may elect to forego any of their entitlement to an allowance under the scheme by giving written notice to the Corporate Director of Finance.

## 6. Part-Year Entitlements

- (a) This paragraph regulates Councillors' entitlement to allowances where the scheme is amended during the year or where an individual ceases to be a Councillor or accepts or relinquishes a position of special responsibility.
- (b) If an amendment to this scheme is made during the year to which it refers and changes the amount which a Councillor may claim in basic allowances the annual entitlement shall be calculated using the following method: -

Annual entitlement to basic allowance	=	Days at unamended rate divided by 365	X	Annual payment at unamended rate	+	Days at amended rate divided by 365	X	Annual payment at amended rate
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- (c) Where the term of office of a Councillor begins or ends part way through the year the annual entitlement to basic allowance shall be calculated using the following method:

Annual entitlement to basic allowance	=	Days as a Councillor divided by 365	X	Annual rate of allowance
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- (d) Where this scheme is amended during the year to which it refers the annual entitlement to basic allowance of Councillors beginning or ending their term of office part way through the year shall be calculated using the following method:

Annual entitlement to basic allowance	=	Days as a Councillor during unamended scheme divided by 365	X	Annual payment at unamended rate	+	Days as a Councillor during amended scheme divided by 365	X	Annual payment at amended rate
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- (e) Where Councillors hold positions of special responsibility during part of the year their annual entitlement to special responsibility allowance shall be calculated using the following method:

Annual entitlement for special responsibility allowance	=	Days holding position of special responsibility during unamended scheme divided by 365	X	Annual payment at unamended rate	+	Days holding position of special responsibility during amended scheme divided by 365	X	Annual payment at amended rate
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## 7. Out of Borough Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

Councillors shall be entitled to claim for out of borough travelling allowances incurred in undertaking approved duties as agreed in advance by the Council.

The out of borough car mileage allowance for Councillors shall be paid at the same rate as those paid to officers for the Standard Mileage User Allowance.

The amounts paid for out of borough subsistence shall be in accordance with the maximum levels laid down from time to time by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government, but claims may only be made for approved duties.

## 8. Dependent / Carers Allowance



A dependent / carers allowance shall be payable at the National Minimum Wage for Adults hourly rate based on the following criteria:

- payments should be subject to a maximum weekly payment, equivalent to seven-and-a-half hours of care per week;
- the maximum rate should be set locally to reflect local costs, in accordance with social service departments levels;
- payment should be claimable in respect of children aged 15 or under or in respect of other dependants where there is medical or social work evidence that care is required;
- only one weekly payment should be claimable in respect of the household of each Member, except in special circumstances to be judged by the Council's Standards Committee;
- the allowance should be paid as a reimbursement of incurred expenditure against receipts;
- the allowance should not be payable to a member of the claimant's own household and;
- any dispute as to entitlement and any allegation of abuse should be referred to the Council's Standards Committee for adjudication.

## **9. Co-optees' Allowances**

Where a co-optee and non-Councillor is the Chairman of the Audit Committee, an annual entitlement allowance of £3,180.83 may be paid. This will be paid on a pro-rata basis if the appointment of the co-optee begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year. Where a co-optee is an Independent Person on the Standards Committee an entitlement allowance of £500 per meeting required and attended may be paid. Where a co-optee is one of the three statutory education co-optees on the Executive Scrutiny Committee, an annual entitlement allowance of £445.80 may be paid. This will be paid on a pro-rata basis if the appointment of the co-optee begins or ends otherwise than at the beginning or end of a year. These allowances will cover expenses, such as travel and subsistence, related to the duties of the postholder.

## **10. Claims and Payments**

- (a) All claims for out of borough travelling and subsistence and carers allowances must be submitted within two months of the date of the approved duty to which they relate, made on the standard form as used by officers and returned to the Head of Democratic Services.
- (b) Payments shall be made in respect of basic and special responsibility allowances subject to sub-paragraph (c) below in Instalments of one twelfth of the amount specified in this scheme on or before the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month direct to each Member's bank or building society account.
- (c) Where the payment of allowances in one-twelfth instalments would result in a Councillor receiving more than he or she is entitled to because of a part year effect (as defined in paragraph 9 above) the payment shall be restricted to the annual entitlement.

## **11. Withholding Members' Allowances**

Where there has been an adjudication, which suspends or partially suspends a Councillor from office following a breach of the Code of Conduct, the Council may withhold all allowances paid to that Councillor with immediate effect.

## **12. Records of Allowances and Publicity**

In accordance with the 2003 regulations a detailed record will be kept of the name of the recipient and the amount and nature of each payment made. This will be available for public inspection at all reasonable times or copies supplied following the payment of a reasonable fee.

As soon as is reasonably practicable after the end of the municipal year to which the scheme relates the total sum paid to each recipient in respect of basic allowances, special responsibility allowance, dependant carers allowance and out of borough travelling and subsistence allowance will be published on the Council's website and local newspaper.

## **13. Independent Remuneration Panel**

Hillingdon Council has had regard to the recommendations made by the Independent Panel for the Remuneration of Councillors in London in developing its Members' Allowances Scheme.