

Minutes

COUNCIL

11 July 2024

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



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Councillor Colleen Sullivan (Mayor)
Councillor Philip Corthorne MCIPD (Deputy Mayor)

	<p>MEMBERS PRESENT:</p> <p>Councillors: Naser Abby Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana Kaushik Banerjee Labina Basit Kishan Bhatt Jonathan Bianco Wayne Bridges Tony Burles Keith Burrows Roy Chamdal Farhad Choubedar Peter Curling Darran Davies Nick Denys Jas Dhot</p> <p>Ian Edwards Scott Farley Janet Gardner Elizabeth Garelick Martin Goddard Ekta Gohil Becky Haggart Henry Higgins Mohammed Islam Rita Judge Kamal Preet Kaur Eddie Lavery Heena Makwana Gursharan Mand Kelly Martin</p> <p>Stuart Mathers Douglas Mills Richard Mills Peter Money June Nelson Barry Nelson-West Susan O'Brien Jane Palmer Sital Punja John Riley Raju Sansarpuri Jagjit Singh Peter Smallwood Jan Sweeting Steve Tuckwell</p>
	<p>OFFICERS PRESENT: Tony Zaman, Dan Kennedy, Sandra Taylor, Glen Egan, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock, Morgan Einon, Alice Pringault and Nikki O'Halloran</p>
	<p>ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE</p> <p>Those present observed a one minute's silence in memory of former Councillors Paul Harmsworth, Phoday Jarjussey and Anthony Way.</p>
12.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bennett, Reeta Chamdal, Garg, Gill, Lakhmana and Lewis.</p>
13.	<p>MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 22 February 2024 and 9 May 2024 be agreed as correct records.</p>
14.	<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>
15.	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor advised that she had attended a range of events across the Borough since</p>

the last Council meeting and had welcomed various groups into the Parlour. She had laid a wreath at St Paul's Cathedral and one at the Battle of Britain Bunker on D-Day and attended a memorial to recognise the 80th anniversary of the EMI bombing at the end of World War II. The Mayor had also hosted the Armed Forces Flag Raising event on the Civic Centre forecourt.

The Mayor's Picnic in the Park had taken place at Barra Hall Park on Saturday 29 June 2024 and had been very well attended. The weather had been good and the stalls and entertainment had prompted many happy faces. The Mayor thanked those Councillors who had supported the event, including Councillor Haggar who had provided a team to do face painting and Councillor Bianco. She also thanked the officers who had been involved in organising the event and the stewards for their hard work.

16. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME** (*Agenda Item 5*)

5.1 QUESTION FROM MARK MORGAN OF KESWICK GARDENS, RUISLIP, ON BEHALF OF THE RUISLIP WOODS TRUST, TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"At the Full Council Meeting on the 30th November 2023 in response to our question about the recruitment for the new Woodland Officer (the previous one was retiring in December 2023) we were told and recorded in the minutes it states "the recruitment process was currently underway". As at 27th June 2024 no replacement has been appointed so please would the Cabinet Member advise when we can expect a new Woodland Officer to be in post and whether this will be a full time position?"

Councillor Lavery advised that other officers in the Green Spaces Team had been covering the work that would usually have been undertaken by the part time Woodland Officer and that, as the post was currently under review, he was unable to provide an answer to the question.

5.2 QUESTION FROM ANAND PUNJA OF ELMBRIDGE AVENUE, RUISLIP, ON BEHALF OF THE RUISLIP WOODS TRUST TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"According to the National Nature Reserve Management Standards (set by Natural England), there is a statutory duty to have a management plan that must be kept up to date and be reviewed every 5 years. The current plan expired 3 years ago (2021) and therefore the Council is not complying with its statutory duty so please would the Cabinet Member disclose the plans to update, consult and publish it and within what timescales can we expect this to be completed?"

Councillor Lavery advised that a management plan had been created for Ruislip Woods in 1982 with a vision for the site. The current five year review of the plan had been delayed by Covid so work had subsequently been pushed back. He noted that the document was now in the final stages of drafting so would be published shortly.

5.3 QUESTION FROM ROBERT WAS OF EDGAR ROAD, YIEWSLEY TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"Could the council please explain how it monitors the health and safety of unlicensed HMO's and how the planning process ensures that our basic infrastructure is not affected by the change of use of houses, particularly in this area."

Councillor Lavery advised that there was currently no accurate estimate of the number of HMOs in the Borough and that the Council was, in part, reliant on intelligence from the community. Taking action in relation to these properties could prove difficult if the tenants did not want to talk to the Council, as evidence was needed before action could be taken.

The Cabinet Member described the criteria for HMO and noted that a small HMO (for 3-5 unrelated people) did not require planning permission (and an exemption had been put in place for these around Brunel University). A large HMO (for 6+ unrelated people) did require planning permission and the Council would take enforcement action against these if they received evidence of a breach. As such, it was important that residents contact the Council if they were able to provide intelligence in relation to breaches.

5.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY NICKY CROWTHER OF WINNOCK ROAD, WEST DRAYTON TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT – COUNCILLOR BIANCO:

“ULEZ vandals continue to act with impunity in Hillingdon. They destroy traffic and pedestrian lights, and gleefully post footage online. Their actions are shocking and degrading. The results endanger pedestrians. At three sites in Hillingdon these have included schoolchildren, near Vyners High School, Whitehall Primary and Park Academy. It is time to work together to stop the vandalism.”

“Would the Council please consider the formation of a cross-party coalition of councillors, of the Cabinet, the MP and the police? This could be a group or a sub-committee, but it would be regardless of one's position on the ULEZ scheme itself. It would send the message loud and clear to stop, and help the police bring the perpetrators to justice. It is to support the rule of law in our peaceful borough.”

“Please join together to stop the vandalism.”

Councillor Bianco advised that he shared residents' concerns about the damage caused by those who were opposed to ULEZ and that he did not condone their actions. He noted that all traffic signals were owned, operated and maintained by Transport for London (TfL). As such, the Council would continue to work with TfL and the police to support any investigations undertaken in relation to the vandalism to mitigate the impact. The Council's CCTV network was positioned close to some of the targeted areas and had been shared with the police as evidence. However, the cameras did not cover everything.

The Cabinet Member advised that there was already a relevant forum in place to deal with such issues. The Safer Hillingdon Partnership was a multiagency group that was chaired by Councillor Lavery.

5.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY NICOLA DATE OF BREAKSPEAR ROAD, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR RESIDENTS' SERVICES - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

“Please could I have a full explanation why the car pound that was built last year costing £49k is still not operational. I have been told by planning that it is not a planning issue.”

“The revenue generated from the car pound was meant to help pay towards Marshall’s and a tow truck to operate at Ruislip Lido during the summer months. Currently, Hillingdon residents are paying the bill from their council tax.”

Councillor Lavery advised that it had been anticipated that the pound would be used to relocate cars from the Lido but that this had not yet become operational. Civil Enforcement officers were present at the Lido every day and a tow truck was being used to relocate vehicles to Green Lane in Northwood. He noted that any receipts would have been used to offset parking enforcement in the area.

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

Following the parliamentary elections that had taken place on 4 July 2024, Councillor Edwards congratulated Danny Beales MP on winning the Uxbridge and South Ruislip seat and expressed his sympathy to Councillor Tuckwell. The Leader of the Council advised that he had requested a review of the election count procedures and that a report would be considered at the Council meeting on 26 September 2024.

i) URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:

RESOLVED: That the urgent decisions taken since the Council meeting in February 2024, as detailed in the report, be noted.

ii) MOUNT VERNON CANCER CENTRE JOINT HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (MVCC JHOSC) MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:

RESOLVED: That Council join the MVCC JHOSC, that the Chair of the Health and Social Care Select Committee be appointed as the London Borough of Hillingdon representative to the MVCC JHOSC, and the Head of Democratic Services, in consultation with the Chief Whip of the relevant party, be given delegated authority to appoint further Members and / or substitute Members to the Committee should they be requested by the JHOSC.

iii) PAVEMENT LICENSING

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:

RESOLVED: That Chapter 8 (Licensing Decisions) of the Council’s Constitution be amended to provide delegated authority to the Corporate Director of Place to grant, refuse, revoke, consider an internal appeal and enforce all matters relating to pavement licenses.

iv) CORPORATE RESOURCES AND INFRASTRUCTURE SELECT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE - COMPLAINTS

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on

the Order of Business and it was:

RESOLVED: That the Terms of Reference of the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee be updated to reflect its role as the “Member Responsible for Complaints”.

v) LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2024

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:

RESOLVED: That the revised draft Local Development Scheme be adopted.

vi) PROCUREMENT AND COMMISSIONING

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded, the motion as set out on the Order of Business and it was:

RESOLVED: That:

- a) the changes to the Procurement Standing Orders (Chapter 18 of the Council Constitution) as set out in the body of the report, be approved.**
- b) the Cabinet Scheme of Delegations (Chapter 5) and Responsibilities and Delegations to Officers (Chapter 12) be updated to vary capital release approval to align with the changes to procurement changes, as set out in the report.**

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

7.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BRIDGES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE – COUNCILLOR GODDARD:

“Could the Cabinet Member for Finance please explain the role which the Counter Fraud Team is playing in respect of Social Housing in the Borough?”

Councillor Goddard advised that housing fraud had been one of the largest areas of fraud exposure dealt with by the Council. This type of fraud deprived deserving and needy families of a place to live. As such, there had been increased investment in the Counter Fraud Team so that action could be taken to deter and identify fraudulent activity in housing (application, tenancy and homelessness). The team had been spectacularly successful.

In 2022/23, the team had achieved housing savings equating to £5.6m, recovered 84 Council properties and closed 24 emergency B&B accommodations. In 2023/24, the team had made £6.1m in savings, recovered 103 properties and closed 42 emergency accommodations. In 2024/25 to date, the team had already made £2.2m in savings, recovered 30 properties and closed 7 emergency accommodations. This investment had generated a valuable return for residents. The Cabinet Member applauded the outstanding achievements of the Counter Fraud Team and noted that he was currently evaluating options to increase this investment further.

There was no supplementary question.

7.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SWEETING TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT – COUNCILLOR BIANCO:

“The West Drayton Station Approach is still closed to buses due to the road surface collapsing over the sunken sewer, although local councillors and residents have been lobbying both the Council and Network Rail Infrastructure Limited for years for this repair to be undertaken. On the 18th January this year it was reported to this Chamber that the work had a potential completion date of July 2024. However, this date has now slipped, and I have been advised that we now have an aspiration for the repair from Network Rail set at December 2024 with the word “HOPE” used to describe this completion date.

“Given past assurances by Network Rail over this issue which have been repeatedly broken, what is the Council doing to turn “HOPE” into reality, seeing that it is now 25 months, (11th June 2022), since buses have been able to drop off and pick up residents and travellers alike from trains from the line named after our late Queen?”

Councillor Bianco advised that this was a subject that caused joint frustration amongst all Members. The Council had been pressing Network Rail for a resolution for many months but the organisation had not stuck to the timetable. A meeting had been held on site with senior directors to establish a realistic and firm timetable for moving forward. This meeting had been attended by the Leader of the Council as well as Network Rail and the local MP. Assurances had been given that the repairs to the sewer would start in August 2024, surface water drainage works would be undertaken in October, the road resurfaced in November and access to Station Approach opened in December 2024.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Sweeting noted that this problem dated back to January 2020. As the Council had not previously submitted a complaint to the Ombudsman, she asked whether the Council would now be prepared to make a formal complaint to ensure that this newly promised timescale did not slip and cause more hardship.

Councillor Bianco advised that he was unable to give that assurance but noted that the Council had gotten its message across that this needed to be addressed. If the work did not start as agreed, the Council would address this.

7.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DENYS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE – COUNCILLOR GODDARD:

“Could the Cabinet Member for Finance please provide an update of the position of external audits on the Council’s published financial statements for the financial years ended 31 March 2023 and 31 March 2024?”

Councillor Goddard advised that it was mandatory for financial statements to be subject to independent audit. However, seven or eight of the largest accounting firms in England and Wales had been struggling with their workload of public sector audits with around 69% from 2022/23 not yet having been audited, 40% from 2021/22 and around 17% from 2020/21 not having yet received an opinion, 6% from 2019/20 and 2% from 2018/19. These audit companies had cited the increasing complexity of public sector accounts as a reason for the delay but it was suggested that the companies had been under resourced for the work.

It had been proposed that a crude fix be applied whereby the 2022/23 audits be abandoned and that the focus be on 2023/24 but it was unclear whether or not this fix would be implemented. Unlike many other local authorities, Hillingdon had received full clean audit opinions up to and including 2021/22. Although ready for audit, the draft financial statements for 2022/23 had not yet been audited and there was no realistic expectation that this would take place.

The Council's value for money statement and pension fund had been subjected to full audit scope procedures and the 2023/24 draft financial statements had been published and it had been agreed with the auditors that these would be completed and signed off by 30 November 2024. It would be important to ensure that the Council did not suffer reputational damage as a result of what was clearly a national issue rather than a local one. As such, Councillor Goddard had been in close discussion with the auditors to ensure a smooth transition through the publication of the finalised 2022/23 and 2023/24 financial statements.

There was no supplementary question.

7.7 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CURLING TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

“Over the past few months there has been an increase in criminal damage to traffic signals which have caused serious accidents and congestion. This vandalism poses a number of hazards to members of the public, such as obstacles for the vision impaired, elderly and disabled to navigate, sawn metal and exposed cables in the traffic signal columns, as well as heightened risks of accidents and personal injury to both drivers and pedestrians.

“Will the Leader of the Council join me in condemning the criminal activities of damaging and sawing down traffic signals, or does he agree with this criminal activity?”

Councillor Edwards advised that, having given 31 years of his life to uphold the law, it would not surprise anyone that he would not condone criminal activity. He condemned the action that had been taken and urged anyone with information on the identity of the perpetrators to come forward so that they could be brought to justice.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Curling asked whether Councillor Edwards also condemned the social media and political rhetoric which could be seen to add approval to the criminal and hazardous behaviour.

Councillor Edwards noted that the actions taken to damage traffic signals had resulted in Council property being damaged and posed a risk to the public. There had been extensive damage caused but this had not been caused by social media. Transport for London had refused to provide the Council with information about the extent of the damage caused and the police had not been able to provide information on numbers as these incidents had not been flagged in a way that could identify them. However, Councillor Edwards had been able to establish that, six months ago, there had been around 1,000 more incidents of cameras being damaged or stolen than in the preceding six months.

It was noted that, in April 2024, the number of unpaid fixed penalty notices in relation to ULEZ had stood at 810k. Civic disobedience was often driven by a sense of social injustice. ULEZ was seen as an unjust tax which targeted those households and

business on low and modest incomes. It had forced thousands of households to spend their savings or go into debt and take action such as cancelling their holidays. This sense of injustice had been compounded by the speed at which the Mayor of London had introduced the ULEZ scheme in outer London. Up until February 2024, more than £250k had been paid by Hillingdon residents in fixed penalty notice charges.

Councillor Edwards suggested that the criminal behaviour should be condemned but that the sense of social injustice sat with the Mayor of London and politicians, not with social media platforms.

7.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GOHIL TO THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET MEMBER FOR PROPERTY, HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORT – COUNCILLOR BIANCO:

“Please can the Cabinet member provide an update on the current state of construction of the new Platinum Jubilee Leisure Centre in West Drayton?”

Councillor Bianco advised that the building contractor for the leisure centre had gone into administration in 2023 and the decision had been taken to secure the site and undertake work to ensure that the building was weathertight. Possible solutions had been reviewed and risks assessed and it had been decided that the Council would continue to undertake the client management works itself. The building was now weathertight and the scaffolding had been taken down. Most of the windows had been fitted, the roof had been completed and the pool structure was in place. The fit out and mechanical works had now started and it was anticipated that the new leisure centre would be opened in the summer of 2025.

There was no supplementary question.

7.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR REETA CHAMDAL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE – COUNCILLOR PALMER:

“Could the Cabinet member confirm the benefits to the Council of the decision by our NHS colleagues to rent part of the Civic Centre?”

The Mayor read out Councillor Reeta Chamdal’s question in her absence.

Councillor Palmer advised that adult social care and Hillingdon Health and Care Partners (HHCP) continued to work closely together and that working together in the Civic Centre would enable even greater collaboration and demonstrate the strength of partnership working. The combined priorities of HHCP and the Council would mean a single base of operation for services.

It was noted that the partnership had already resulted in an excellent hospital discharge service and Hillingdon was highly thought of across North West London. Colocation would enable this integration to go even further whilst continuing to make efficient use of the services. Councillor Palmer thanked partners and officers for making this possible.

There was no supplementary question.

7.6 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MAKWANA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:

“Can the Cabinet member please update Council on the progress of the Specialist Resource Provision and Assessment Centre at Ruislip Gardens Primary School?”

Councillor O'Brien advised that the Council wanted to ensure that children in the Borough had high quality access to education near to their homes. The school expansion programme had been delivering places for children with special educational needs (SEN). To this end, the Ruislip Gardens Primary School specialist resource provision (SRP) and assessment centre had recently been opened and would be fully subscribed from September 2024. Officers were in the process of allocating places for the assessment centre from referrals - this had been a completely new type of provision in Hillingdon.

Consideration needed to be given to how spaces were used or how they could be repurposed to ensure that the Council could meet the demand for specialist provision. At Ruislip Gardens Primary School, classrooms had been newly reappointed, there were sensory rooms, accessible toilets, storage facilities and a kitchen. These facilities had provided 32 additional schools places for children with SEN. The school's new bespoke SRP enabled 16 primary school aged children with autism to access personalised support whilst being part of the mainstream school.

The assessment centre offered 16 full time places and 32 part time places for children aged 3 to 5 who had severe development delays and other complex needs. These children would have the option of remaining at the centre until they transitioned to primary school.

There was no supplementary question.

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

8.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

Councillor Edwards moved, and Councillor Bianco seconded the following motion:

That Hillingdon Council welcomes the chance to continue its work with Government and we commit to use our position and influence to secure the following seven key aims that reflect the priorities of both the Council and its residents:

- 1. The full funding by Government of the support provided by the Council to asylum seekers that present in this borough as a consequence of it being a major port of entry as it is clearly unfair that Hillingdon's residents should shoulder the cost of this national responsibility.*
- 2. Grant funding is provided to fully meet the increasing cost to the Council of providing care support to both adults and children.*
- 3. The ring fence on the dedicated support grant is maintained until the deficit can be eliminated by way of an agreed action plan.*
- 4. The ability of the Council to veto regional transport initiatives that either limit the freedom of motorists to use their local road network or that impose a charge on road use.*
- 5. Oppose the reclassification of our green belt land and retain the existing Localism powers to over-ride planning policies that would be detrimental*

to character street scene of our neighbourhoods.

- 6. Amend national aviation policy to remove the threat of a third runway at Heathrow thereby releasing land for much needed housing and freeing existing communities from planning blight.*
- 7. Retain the cap on council tax increase that can only be exceeded by means of approval from a residents' referendum.*

Those speaking in support of the motion welcomed the new Prime Minister's declaration that he would give local authorities more power. The administration had previously had good routes into central Government and it was hoped that the new MP for Uxbridge and South Ruislip would work with the Council to put residents first. The motion set out the Council's priorities in working with Government to achieve success. It was anticipated that the opposition would support the full cost recovery for asylum seekers as this should be a national responsibility and the administration was open to working with Labour MPs to progress this. The Dedicated Schools Grant deficit had resulted from underfunding and system problems and lobbying would also need to be undertaken to get this ringfenced.

Hillingdon Hospital had been described as a 'Dad's Army' site by Wes Streeting MP. It was hoped that he would honour his commitment to get a new hospital on the site as it was not fit for purpose. Decant and enabling works in preparation for the new hospital had already started on the site and staff had worked hard to keep Hillingdon Hospital towards the top of the list for redevelopment. It was hoped that the new MP would work as hard as the old one to ensure that Hillingdon Hospital was rebuilt.

The motion was not intended to be political and that the issues included therein affected all residents in the Borough. The administration was keen to work with the new Government in the same way as it had with the last one but concern was expressed that they might not be so keen to work with Hillingdon.

Those speaking against the motion stated that the Labour Group had always put people before the party whereas the administration had prioritised working with the Conservative Government for the last 14 years. The Labour Group had put forward a motion some time ago asking the administration to lobby the former Government for additional funding but they had refused to do so. The current Prime Minister had not yet been in position for a week and the administration was already expecting more from him in relation to the issues raised in the motion than they had from the previous Conservative Prime Ministers. This motion detailed a list of things that the Conservatives had failed to deliver and were issues that had arisen from the financial incompetence of the previous Government.

With regard to Heathrow Airport expansion, it was noted that one of the former Conservative MPs for Uxbridge and South Ruislip had said that they would lay down in front of the bulldozer but was then out of the country when a vote was taken in the House of Commons. Although the motion was asking the Labour Government to do what the Conservative Government would not do, more needed to be done to negotiate with Heathrow as residents in the Heathrow Villages were now in a position where they were unable to sell their properties.

The Leader of the Council had previously stated that the administration would not lobby Government which was why the opposition would not be supporting this motion.

The motion was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED: That Hillingdon Council welcomes the chance to continue its work with Government and we commit to use our position and influence to secure the following seven key aims that reflect the priorities of both the Council and its residents:

- 1. The full funding by Government of the support provided by the Council to asylum seekers that present in this borough as a consequence of it being a major port of entry as it is clearly unfair that Hillingdon's residents should shoulder the cost of this national responsibility.**
- 2. Grant funding is provided to fully meet the increasing cost to the Council of providing care support to both adults and children.**
- 3. The ring fence on the dedicated support grant is maintained until the deficit can be eliminated by way of an agreed action plan.**
- 4. The ability of the Council to veto regional transport initiatives that either limit the freedom of motorists to use their local road network or that impose a charge on road use.**
- 5. Oppose the reclassification of our green belt land and retain the existing Localism powers to over-ride planning policies that would be detrimental to character street scene of our neighbourhoods.**
- 6. Amend national aviation policy to remove the threat of a third runway at Heathrow thereby releasing land for much needed housing and freeing existing communities from planning blight.**
- 7. Retain the cap on council tax increase that can only be exceeded by means of approval from a residents' referendum.**

8.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PUNJA

Councillor Punja moved, and Councillor Abby seconded, the following motion:

That this Council recognises the problems caused by unlicensed HMOs in the borough, from anti-social behaviour to poor housing conditions.

This Council is committed to ensuring good quality housing in the borough and resolves to extend licensing obligations to all properties with 3 bedrooms housing multiple unrelated occupants.

Those speaking in favour of the motion stated that it had been drafted in response to poor housing conditions in HMOs. In 2015, there had been 153 mandatory licenced HMOs in the Borough. This had increased to 650 in 2021 when the licensing scheme had lapsed and was at 729 in 2023.

Councillor Lavery moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the following amendment:

To delete the second paragraph and replace with:
"This Council is committed to ensuring good quality housing in the Borough and resolves that a report be sent to Cabinet considering the sufficiency of evidence required under Part 2 Housing Act 2004 to extend licensing obligations to all properties with 3 bedrooms housing multiple unrelated occupants and to commence consultation on the implementation of this additional licensing obligation where it is justified."

Those speaking in support of the amendment noted that a significant proportion of HMOs were being improperly managed and that a coordinated approach was needed.

Licensing was all about the internal state of the property and did not look at the impact on the neighbourhood. An Article 4 direction was already in place in the Borough which removed permitted development rights. Officers had been asked if it would be possible to extend this but this would require a twelve month notice period and approval from the Secretary of State. It was suggested that Heathrow Villages would benefit from an Article 4 direction as properties there were being sold to cash buying investment companies. Residents in the area were now unable to get mortgages or remortgages on properties because of the threat posed by Heathrow expansion.

It would be important to gain accurate information on where the HMOs were so that this could be used as evidence. An accurate list did not yet exist.

There had been reports of an increase in the number of people living in dangerous or overcrowded properties as well as the number of hidden bedsits. It was estimated that around 367k smaller bedsits housed around a million people. Working together would show residents that the Council was committed to doing more to support people in private rented accommodation. It would be important to have the same standards in the north and south of the Borough.

The amendment was put to the vote and unanimously agreed. The substantive motion was then put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED: That this Council recognises the problems caused by unlicensed HMOs in the Borough, from anti-social behaviour to poor housing conditions.

This Council is committed to ensuring good quality housing in the borough and resolves that a report be sent to Cabinet considering the sufficiency of evidence required under Part 2 Housing Act 2004 to extend licensing obligations to all properties with 3 bedrooms housing multiple unrelated occupants and to commence consultation on the implementation of this additional licensing obligation where it is justified.

The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.13 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 democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.