

Minutes

COUNCIL

22 January 2026

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



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Councillor Philip Corthorne (Mayor)
Councillor Reeta Chamdal (Deputy Mayor)

	<p>MEMBERS PRESENT:</p> <p>Councillors: Shehryar Ahmad-Wallana Ian Edwards Douglas Mills Kaushik Banerjee Scott Farley Richard Mills Labina Basit Janet Gardner June Nelson Adam Bennett Elizabeth Garelick Barry Nelson-West Kishan Bhatt Narinder Garg Susan O'Brien Jonathan Bianco Tony Gill Jane Palmer Wayne Bridges Ekta Gohil Sital Punja Tony Burles Mohammed Islam John Riley Keith Burrows Rita Judge (in part) Raju Sansarpuri Roy Chamdal Kamal Preet Kaur Jagjit Singh Farhad Choubedar Kuldeep Lakhmana Peter Smallwood OBE Peter Curling Eddie Lavery Colleen Sullivan Darran Davies Gursharan Mand Jan Sweeting Nick Denys Kelly Martin Steve Tuckwell Jas Dhot Stuart Mathers</p>
	<p>OFFICERS PRESENT: Tony Zaman, Steve Muldoon, Dan Kennedy, Sandra Taylor, Matthew Wallbridge, Lloyd White, Mark Braddock and Nikki O'Halloran</p>
40.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Goddard, Haggard, Higgins, Lewis, Makwana and Money.</p>
41.	<p>MINUTES (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2025 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
42.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest in matters coming before this meeting.</p>
43.	<p>MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Mayor advised that former Councillor and Past Mayor, Don Mitchell, had recently celebrated his 100th birthday. The Mayor provided a summary of events and highlights undertaken since the last Council meeting.</p> <p>The Mayor encouraged those present to buy tickets for his Valentine's Quiz which would be held at Aren's in Ruislip on Thursday 12 February 2026 and a Cheese and</p>

Wine evening being held in conjunction with Waitrose in the Council's Astra Suite on Wednesday 11 March 2026. A charity cricket match was also being organised in April and any Member wishing to play should contact the Mayor to express their interest.

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

5.1 QUESTION FROM AHMAD RAFIQUE OF ABBEY CLOSE, HAYES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:

“Given the ongoing and well-documented issues with persistent fly-tipping and delayed waste removal across several wards in Hillingdon, can the Cabinet member explain what specific actions are being taken to improve both enforcement and the timeliness of waste clearance? Residents are increasingly frustrated that reported fly-tips often remain in place for extended periods, attracting vermin, creating health hazards, attracting further dumping, and undermining confidence in the Council’s environmental management.”

Councillor Bridges advised that fly tipping was taken seriously by the Council and cleared efficiently, mostly within the 48-hour standard. However, it was recognised that there were times when these timescales might not be achieved such as if the waste was hazardous or if the waste needed to be searched for criminal evidence. A clear assessment process had been introduced and joint operations had been undertaken in relation to repeat offenders with a successful prosecution being announced today, resulting in a £1,000 fine. Front line capacity had been increased and the Love Clean Streets app would now make it easier for individuals to report instances of fly tipping.

5.2 QUESTION FROM TERENCE MURRAY OF OTTERFIELD ROAD, WEST DRAYTON TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING AND GROWTH – COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:

“Can the Council clarify the status of the planning application at the Morrisons site in Yiewsley? Local residents believed that a planning application was approved by the Council, but the current MP for the area has released a video criticising Council Officers and saying that the Council is delaying signing off legal conditions to enable progress.”

Councillor Tuckwell advised that planning permission had been approved by the London Borough of Hillingdon but could not be issued until the Mayor of London had completed the Stage 2 approval process. Once this had been completed, the Council would be able to sort out the Section 106 agreement. There had been a misrepresentation of facts concerning this application by the local MP as the Council was ready but the Mayor of London had been holding the process up.

5.3 QUESTION FROM DANIEL O’NEILL OF ASHBURTON ROAD, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

“At the September 2025 Council meeting, the then Cabinet Member for Finance described Exceptional Financial Support as an "accounting adjustment", said that "there will not be a cash cost which falls upon local residents", and later explained in writing that it would be "amortised over a period of 20 years".

“However, at the Residents' Services Select Committee in January 2026, the Corporate Director of Finance stated, "just to be clear, EFS ... is not free money ... it needs to be repaid" and that it "comes at a cost to the Council over the coming years".

“Given that meeting those costs over the next 20 years will fall to be met from the Council's revenue budget and therefore affects the funding available for services, does the Cabinet Member accept that, in ordinary language, this represents a cash cost borne by residents through reduced spending power for services, and can he outline the expected annual cost to the Council's budget of repaying this support over that period?”

The Mayor asked the question on behalf of Daniel O’Neill. Councillor Lavery advised that EFS was an accounting adjustment and that, in some cases, the money had been spent years ago delivering services to residents. Every pound was still charged back to the minimum revenue provision with interest if any borrowing was required. These were real audited revenue costs but not costs that added to the original burden as they were built into the Council’s financial plans. This accounting adjustment had protected services and had not been used to hide spending.

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

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

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 urgency decisions detailed in the report be noted.

ii) PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2026/27

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

RESOLVED: That the programme of meetings for 2026/27, as set out in Annex A, 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.

46. **STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY 2026-2031** (*Agenda Item 7*)

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

RESOLVED: That the revised Statement of Licensing Policy be adopted as a policy framework document.

47. **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME** (*Agenda Item 8*)

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

	<p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the revised Local Development Scheme be adopted with effect from 22 January 2026. b) authority be delegated to the Director of Planning and Sustainable Growth, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, Housing & Growth to make minor and technical updates within the Local Development Scheme, if necessary.
48.	<p>COUNCIL TAX BASE AND BUSINESS RATES FORECAST 2026/2027 (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Lavery moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the motion as set out of the Order of Business and it was:</p> <p>RESOLVED: That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Having due regard to the Review of Working Age Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2026/27 at Appendix 2 of the report and the Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix 2a of the report, the following amendment to the Council’s local Council Tax Reduction Scheme to reform the scheme with effect from 1 April 2026 be approved: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Apply the standard £10.00 non-dependant deduction across all schemes including the vulnerable scheme (unless the non-dependant is a student when no deduction is taken); ii. Reduce the maximum award from 80% to 75% across the vulnerable scheme as part of our phasing in of aligning the vulnerable scheme with the standard scheme; and iii. Increase the non-dependant deduction from £10.00 to £12.00 per week; b) the introduction a Council Tax Premium at an additional 100% on properties designated as second homes from 1st April 2026 be approved; c) the Council Tax Taxbase for 2026/27 be approved as 107,349 Band D equivalent properties, calculated in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Taxbase) (England) Regulations 2012; and d) authority be delegated to the Corporate Director of Finance to submit the 2026/27 NNDR1 return by 31st January 2026 to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Greater London Authority.
49.	<p>MEMBERS' QUESTIONS (<i>Agenda Item 10</i>)</p> <p>10.6 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MARTIN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:</p> <p><i>“Can the Cabinet Member please update Council on the recent article in the Evening Standard that Hillingdon Council are focusing on prioritising Hillingdon residents for housing, ahead of prioritising asylum seekers, which is a choice being made by other London Boroughs.”</i></p> <p>Councillor Tuckwell advised that demand still outstripped supply and Hillingdon would not take part in any scheme which prioritised asylum seekers over residents. The provision of support to asylum seekers was a national responsibility and, although</p>

Hillingdon was a tolerant and diverse Borough, Hillingdon's administration would continue to put the Borough's residents first, today and every day.

There was no supplementary question.

10.11 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURLES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES AND PROPERTY – COUNCILLOR BIANCO:

“Could the Cabinet member please inform this Council of the total amount of unpaid debt on commercial leases of Council owned assets, and explain what robust measures are in place to ensure that these debts are not only pursued but actually collected, so that public assets are not left generating losses due to ineffective debt recovery?”

Councillor Bianco advised that rent for most commercial leases had been invoiced on a quarterly basis in advance which resulted in peaks and troughs. Commercial rent arrears debt was low at around £1.3m in December 2025, a reduction of 27% between September and December and a reduction of 17% for the financial year.

However, as around 98% of the debt sat with 49 cases, officer effort was targeted where it would actually deliver results. £220k had been recovered from Stockley Park Golf Club, £220k had been recovered in historic NHS rents and £39k from Uxbridge market traders in the last few months. All tenants had been treated equally and with respect but this would not stop the Council from taking legal action. Historic unrecoverable sums were being transparently provisioned and written off rather than being quietly ignored and arrears were going down.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Burles asked if the rules were being applied equally when a recent My London article had advised that a former Conservative Councillor had accrued rent arrears but that the Council had decided not to recover the debt as it would be cheaper to sell the property.

Councillor Bianco advised that there was more to this story. The property in question had been an asset in a public space and that its sale would require a consultation which had now been set in motion. Preliminary marketing advice had been obtained but the outcome of the consultation was currently awaited.

Members were reminded that the release of confidential (Part II) information to the media was a serious breach of the Code of Conduct and, as it appeared that a confidential report about this matter had been passed to a journalist, the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer would undertake an investigation with a view to taking further action.

10.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CURLING TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:

“In Hayes Town Ward, we have a number of large developments of mixed tenure, like, High Point Village and the Old Vinyl Factory, amongst others, where High and ever-increasing service charges can be crippling for leaseholders.

“Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that the Labour Government's delays in implementing the Leasehold and Freehold reform act 2024, is causing considerable pain for residents of Hillingdon, who have to suffer excessive service charges by their

landlords, especially in the on-going cost of living crisis?”

Councillor Tuckwell recognised the challenge of rising service charge pressures during a cost of living crisis. The Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act 2024 was supposed to have protected householders but delays in its implementation had left leaseholders in an uncertain position. The administration would ensure that once the national reforms were implemented, residents were able to access any relief available.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Curling asked if the Cabinet Member would like to comment on the steps the Borough’s MPs were taking to press the Government to deliver the promised leasehold reforms.

Councillor Tuckwell was aware that David Simmonds MP had spoken at the dispatch box on this legislation and called for the Government to speed up its implementation. John McDonnell MP had had regular engagement with his residents so there had been cross party support for this legislation from two of the three local MPs to push for it to be implemented as soon as possible.

10.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DAVIES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:

“Could the Cabinet member please set out any measures being introduced to assist residents with the disposal of larger household items that do not fall within the scope of standard waste collection services?”

Councillor Bridges advised that a new pop up community waste facility had been introduced to take place every two weeks at different sites across the Borough, with the first happening on 31 January 2026 in Charville. These events would be held on Saturdays and would be located in popular locations, rotating across the wards. Information on the future events could be found on the Council’s website and within the neighbourhoods in which they would be held.

There was no supplementary question.

10.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MATHERS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

“The Council’s Chief Finance Officer confirmed at the Corporate Infrastructure and Finance Select Committee on 6 January 2026 that accepting Exceptional Financial Support will cost residents around £10 million every year.

“Why has the Leader of the Council failed to make this clear in the budget consultation, and does he accept that residents have been denied full and honest disclosure about the true cost and long-term consequences of this Exceptional Financial Support bid?”

Councillor Edwards advised that he did not accept that residents had been denied full and honest disclosure about the true cost and long term consequences of the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) bid. Although the Council’s Chief Finance Officer (CFO) was capable and valued, they were not able to see into the future. The repayment costs depended on a number of variables which were not yet known. As such, no one would be able to state today with any degree of certainty what the cost of the repayment of EFS would be. However, the Council needed EFS as a result of

its sustained underfunding.

It was anticipated that about half of London councils would need EFS by 2029. The new Fair Funding Formula (FFF) reflected the assessment of financial need of local authorities to deliver statutory services and was based on data largely from 2023/24 but going back as far as 2021. The Government did not intend to fund these costs fully until 2028/2029 which meant that £65m of funds would be withheld whilst the FFF was phased in. As such, the Council had sought this £65m through EFS.

The Council had requested £20m of support to repay the deficit that had built up in relation to supporting asylum seekers, which was a national responsibility. The local authority would continue to challenge the repayment of this deficit and the FFF underfunding that would persist for at least another two years. The Government had agreed to pay £500k towards the support being provided to Chagossian arrivals.

The consultation on the budget report had included a section about the remaining gap and EFS, with potential repayment costs being set out therein. However, the actual cost of EFS would only become clear once the Council knew how much borrowing was required and when it would take place.

The Government now needed to determine how much EFS it believed Hillingdon needed and on what terms it would be provided. It appeared that the Council's request for £40m for 2024/25 to restore reserves might not be agreed but the Government might decide that a lower amount was sufficient. The requests for 2025/26 and 2026/27 had been based on worst case scenarios. It had been argued that £20m should be funded through grant (and not repayable) to pay for the high level of asylum seekers in the Borough. Whilst there was little hope of receiving the full FFF amounts immediately, it was possible that the terms attached to the EFS relating to the £65m might be more favourable than usual.

Costs would only arise from the amount that was actually borrowed and capital receipts could be used from asset sales to reduce the borrowing. For all of these reasons, it was not yet possible to state what the revenue costs of EFS would be. However, the CFO had been prudent in making provisions for the worst case scenario.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mathers asked why the administration had downplayed the reality of the EFS debt.

Councillor Edwards advised that the situation had not been downplayed and that the administration had been transparent about EFS and open to discussion in the Chamber. Information about EFS had also been clearly set out in Cabinet reports.

10.7 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BENNETT TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:

“Could the Cabinet member please advise on the progress being made in rolling out food waste collection services to residents living in flats and apartments?”

Councillor Bridges advised that plans for a major expansion of the service had been put in place to provide improved recycling facilities with more than 180 food waste units installed at over 140 blocks of flats. Building works to facilitate collection had been scheduled and preparation work had been completed in privately managed blocks and the rollout started on 19 January 2026 with food waste collection

extending to around 900 blocks (17k homes) by the end of February 2026. Services would also be extended to flats over shops with rollout starting in mid-February. Residents were being given clear information from the outset.

The programme had been fully funded through DEFRA's new burdens grant and had been supported by investment in new vehicles that would arrive in June 2026.

There was no supplementary question.

10.13 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GARELICK TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

"The Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation has publicly admitted - via a post on the Ruislip Facebook page - that the proposed parking charges for Ruislip Lido were wrong in the 2026/27 draft budget currently out for public consultation.

"Given that this draft budget was delivered late and already contains acknowledged errors, can the Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation tell this Council what confidence residents should have in the accuracy of the remainder of the budget, and what other mistakes they now expect to emerge before it is finalised?"

Councillor Lavery advised that there had been a single error in the 99 page fees and charges document which would be corrected and which had not affected the budget.

There was no supplementary question.

10.10 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DHOT TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:

"Can the Cabinet member please share an update on the new pothole technology repair machine that has been invested in by the Council, and how it has been used to date?"

Councillor Tuckwell advised that roads were being fixed faster and with minimal disruptions. The new technology could not only deal with reactive patching but could also fix cracks. Hillingdon was one of only two London boroughs using this technology and it had been delivering real improvements and results.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Dhot asked how this new technology had helped the Highways team to improve safety and accessibility.

Councillor Tuckwell advised that there had been around £2m of improvements in Yeading on footway and carriageway resurfacing, drainage works and street lighting upgrades (nearly 5km of roads and pavements had been renewed, 12k streetlights upgraded and 1700 gulleys maintained or improved). It was this work that had placed Hillingdon amongst the best in London and the UK.

10.15 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MAND TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

"The Council's borrowing has exploded from £349million at 31 March 2024 to £518million by 31 March 2025. The December 2025 budget report (paragraph 11.12) confirms that a further £267million of borrowing is required to fund the General Fund Capital Programme, on top of the anticipated £150 million of Exceptional Financial

Support borrowing simply to pay for day-to-day spending until March 2027.

“Taken together, this administration is driving the Council towards £1 billion of debt yet still cannot produce a legally balanced budget. The Leader has been forced to go cap in hand to the Labour Government for Exceptional Financial Support, not for investment or regeneration, but purely to stop the Chief Finance Officer issuing a Section 114 bankruptcy notice.

“When Thurrock Council collapsed into effective bankruptcy, its debt had only just breached £1 billion.

“Given the strikingly similar debt levels, reliance on borrowing to fund revenue spending, and the need for emergency Government support, will the Leader of the Council explain what concrete action he as Leader of this Council is taking to prevent a Section 114 notice?”

Councillor Edwards advised that debt management was sometimes overlooked but that the comparison with Thurrock was misleading as its debt had been driven by speculation. Hillingdon’s current debt was £588m (the Government had published this data) and included £256m of general fund and £332m of housing revenue debt, which reduced revenue costs to the Council by providing housing for residents. Housing Revenue Account borrowing had been covered by rental income and would only be a risk if the Council was unable to rent out its social housing properties.

Hillingdon’s total debt was lower than every neighbouring Labour council and, insofar as debt as a percentage of council income was concerned, had the 22nd lowest level of borrowing across London at 75%. Neighbouring boroughs exceeded 150% and the five London boroughs with the highest debt to income ratios had three to six times worse levels than Hillingdon and were all Labour-run. Hillingdon’s finances were well managed and prudent and continued to demonstrate sound financial management.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Mand asked if, as the financial crisis that the Council found itself in had unfolded under his watch, the Leader accepted that the ultimate responsibility rested with him and questioned why residents should have any confidence in his leadership.

Councillor Edwards advised that he, as Leader, had always accepted responsibility as the buck stopped with him. However, the Council was not responsible for the levels of funding that had been received. Services had not been slashed and the authority had not been overspending but it had been underfunded. Residents would have the opportunity to endorse the position that the Council had taken at the election in May.

10.8 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR AHMAD-WALLANA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:

“With the opening of the new Platinum Jubilee Leisure Centre imminent, could the Cabinet member please outline any plans to promote its use and, in doing so, support local residents in leading healthy lifestyles?”

Councillor Bridges advised that the new leisure centre would provide high quality facilities for residents including a climbing wall, roof top pitch and pool. An open weekend had been organised where residents would be able to try out the facilities at the leisure centre free of charge. A communications plan had also been developed

which would be reviewed and updated regularly.

There was no supplementary question.

10.14 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR KAUR TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:

“As the 25/26 budget was based on using Capital Transformation to achieve a target of £34million in-year savings, can the Cabinet member please tell this Council what percentage of the £34million saving target was achieved by Capital Transformation and what was achieved by the Managed Vacancy Factor?”

Councillor Lavery noted that an explanation had already been provided about how local government finances worked. Capital transformation did not deliver in-year revenue savings and related to the use of flexible capital receipts to cover and fund the costs of change and, as such, had covered 0% of the £34m savings target. £5.8m of capital receipts in 2025/26 had supported £9.6m of future savings and cost avoidance. The managed vacancy factor reflected normal staff vacancies across the Council and contributed around £1.1m of the £34m savings target (3%).

There was no supplementary question.

10.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURROWS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR BRIDGES:

“Could the Cabinet member please provide an update on the current status and future plans for the borough’s archives and museum?”

Councillor Bridges advised that the Borough’s archives and museum service had relocated to its new home at the Civic Centre on 17 December 2025 and formed part of the plan to bring services together. The service was open 9am-5pm from Monday to Saturday and 10am-1pm on a Sunday. Artefacts on display would be rotated every eighteen months and archives and collection materials could also be accessed through a search room (which was available by appointment) and a drop in service would be available for items on general display.

The Museums and Archive Team had been looking at digitising the collection so that it was available to a wider online audience for them to explore the Borough’s heritage. A full programme of events and outreach activities had been planned for 2026.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Burrows asked if the Cabinet Member was able to provide any clarity on the sale of the former Uxbridge Library site.

Councillor Bridges advised that an offer had been received from a well respected local institution for the sale and renovation of the former Uxbridge Library site. Further announcements would be made when it was appropriate to do so.

10.9 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SWEETING TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

“In his ‘Happy New Year’ message in the January edition of Hillingdon People, the Leader of the Council claimed that £40 million is being withheld from Hillingdon Council, implying that the Labour Government is deliberately denying him funding.

“It has long been clear that this is a three-year settlement, and it is up to this Council to operate within its financial capacity. Yet Conservative decisions - chronic overspending, missed savings targets, and exhausted reserves have left the Council in its current precarious position.

“Why has the Leader of this Council failed to acknowledge that Hillingdon has gained substantially from the Labour Government's Fair Funding Settlement, as set out in the Cabinet Report of 23rd December 2025, and has instead chosen to mislead residents about where the blame lies?”

Councillor Edwards advised that the Council had not overspent, the Government had failed to provide funding for the statutory duties that the Council was required to provide. This underfunding had been compounded by an increase in demand and a population with an increased level of needs which had driven up the cost of Council services. The huge increase in Employers National Insurance contributions had also had an impact but the Government refused to fund the Council for this increase.

Unemployment had risen to almost 7% in London and had been concentrated amongst those in lower paid roles which then increased demand for Council services. There had been a sustained attack on private landlords which had driven some out of the area and meant that housing availability had reduced and rent and temporary accommodation costs had increased. Despite this, the Council continued to deliver exceptional value for money with the fourth lowest spend per resident in London. Hillingdon's spend on adult social care was the second lowest in London and the seventh lowest for children's services.

The administration had not lost control of the Council's spend. The new funding formula reflected the increased costs and recognised the local needs and demands on the Council that had existed last year and this year and going forward but the Government had still decided to phase the support in. This decision to phase in the funding formula was separate to the decision to return to a three-year funding settlement for local government. As such, the Government had made a decision to continue to underfund Hillingdon for the next two years. The Council would continue to press the Government on this issue.

AS THE 45 MINUTE TIME LIMIT FOR MEMBER QUESTIONS HAD BEEN REACHED, THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS WOULD RECEIVE WRITTEN RESPONSES.

By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Sweeting stated that, for the first time in many years, the budget for 2026/27 included areas of growth due solely to the Fair Funding Settlement from the Labour Government and asked the Leader which areas of new growth he would be most proud to deliver.

WRITTEN RESPONSE TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

As I have repeated said, our underfunding will continue for a further 2 years with the government withholding £65m in grant funding to us that their new fair funding formula shows we need to pay for statutory services. So rather there being the opportunity for growth in services the squeeze will continue until 2028/29 when we finally receive the full settlement from the fair funding review.

10.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BANERJEE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH - COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:

“Can the Cabinet member please provide a summary of how the Council has undertaken gritting of roads within the Borough during the recent cold weather?”

WRITTEN RESPONSE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Keeping Hillingdon moving safely during cold weather is a top priority. Our Highways team began preparations back in July, and across the borough’s 450-mile road network we have more than 4,000 tonnes of grit available for use. Crews use hyper-local forecasts four times a day to decide where and when to treat roads. Black spots like hills and junctions are treated first, followed by main roads, bus routes, and resilience network roads.

To do this efficiently, the Council operates a fleet of eight gritting vehicles, ensuring the borough is covered quickly and effectively. Our crews work early in the morning before freezing conditions. Smaller roads and footways are treated depending on the forecast.

I went out myself with a gritting crew recently and saw firsthand the hard work and dedication involved. In addition to treating our road network – our Highways Team also respond to real time incidents. During the recent cold spell, our Highways Team dealt with 36 burst water mains, gritting around each one to stop ice forming and working closely with Affinity Water to get them fixed quickly. Thanks to their planning and long hours, residents have stayed safe and the borough kept moving.

Not all heroes wear capes - some wear a high-vis and make sure Hillingdon keeps moving.

10.12 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PUNJA TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:

“The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy—CIPFA—has now been asked by MHCLG to assess the in-principle decision to pursue Exceptional Financial Support.

“That is somewhat ironic, given that Councillor Edwards previously chose to award a single-tender contract to Grant Thornton, instead of CIPFA, to deliver this Council’s Financial Modernisation Programme which has now cost around £1.7million and failed to deliver on time and to budget.

“At the July Cabinet meeting, the Leader went further, proudly stating that this Conservative administration had uncovered £14.1million of accounting errors dating back to 2014 and therefore did not require independent scrutiny.

“Does the Leader of Council now accept the need for independent scrutiny from CIPFA, or was the reason that CIPFA were not appointed in the first place because he has something to fear from it?”

WRITTEN RESPONSE PROVIDED AS FOLLOWS:

We have engaged - and will continue to engage - constructively with central

government and with any professional or regulatory body that requires assurance that the London Borough of Hillingdon is acting responsibly and maintaining sound financial management, even in the context of prolonged and chronic underfunding.

Cllr Punja's question reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the respective roles of the organisations involved.

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) is a UK-based international professional body and standard-setter for public financial management. Its role is to set standards, provide independent scrutiny, and offer assurance. In that capacity, CIPFA was well suited to review our financial systems and processes. However, it is not an organisation designed to provide the operational capacity required to implement large-scale change.

That implementation support is precisely why Grant Thornton was engaged. Grant Thornton has been providing the additional expertise and capacity needed to deliver our Financial Modernisation Programme, and that support continues to be effective.

CIPFA is now undertaking its appropriate role on behalf of government: assessing our application for Exceptional Financial Support and evaluating our plans to return the Council's budget to balance once fair funding is fully implemented.

In parallel, Grant Thornton continues to support the Council in delivering the Financial Modernisation Programme, which I am pleased to confirm remains on track to be delivered on time and within budget.

50. **MOTIONS** (Agenda Item 11)

11.3 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL

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

That this Council unequivocally condemns the proposed changes to national and London-wide planning legislation, which represent a direct threat to Green Belt land, Metropolitan Open Land, and the long-term sustainability and character of communities across the London Borough of Hillingdon.

These proposals amount to a centralising power grab that prioritises developer interests over residents, weakens local democratic control, and undermines decades of hard-won protections for open space and community infrastructure.

Council expresses grave concern at the following:

- The unprecedented threat to Metropolitan Open Land, opening the door to wholly inappropriate development on some of the borough's most cherished and irreplaceable open spaces, in direct contradiction to their intended purpose and historic protections.
- The introduction of a sweeping default position in favour of development, particularly around stations, which would expose large parts of Hillingdon to high-density, unsuitable development imposed without proper local consultation or accountability.
- Proposals for so-called emergency Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) relief in London, which would encourage overdevelopment while stripping away essential funding needed to support schools, healthcare, transport, and other vital local infrastructure.

- Proposed changes to the Mayor of London's call-in powers, which would allow City Hall to override the clearly expressed views of democratically elected local councillors, riding roughshod over local decision-making and silencing the voices of residents, making Hillingdon residents pay for the Mayor's failure to deliver housing in central London Zones 1& 2 where they are desperately required.

This Council believes these proposals fundamentally undermine local democracy, weaken environmental protections, and place intolerable pressure on already stretched communities and infrastructure. Whilst the Council will respond to the 225 questions in the usual manner It also requests the Leader of the Council to write urgently to the borough's three Members of Parliament, demanding that they publicly oppose these proposals, raise Hillingdon's objections forcefully in Parliament, and take all necessary steps to defend the borough's residents, communities, and green spaces from inappropriate and imposed development.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that Labour had been divided nationally and had been reaching for centralised control in a panic despite Hillingdon having delivered affordable homes in the right places. Environmental protections had never meant to be optional but the Labour Government had now decided to build on green belt land. Proposals for the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) relief were about control, not partnership, and would make communities pay the price and sideline residents and Councillors.

The motion gave Members the option to either side with residents to defend the principle of a democratically accountable planning programme or side with a Government that put residents last. The proposals threatened to weaken the guardrail and risked normalising high density schemes – once the green belt land was gone, it was gone and the decision should lie with the local decision makers. Shifting decision making about the development of 1000m² of green belt land to the Mayor of London was not the answer – the areas would be better served by improved transport links and empowering communities to be more resilient.

There was no disagreement that the provision of housing and the shortage of homes that people could afford posed a challenge as house building in London had collapsed based on costs and demand volatility. The Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025 had been created to meet the housing targets but it was queried whether this legislation was the right way to meet that need. What was needed was a faster and more predictable planning regime (rather than sweeping powers) and a way to maintain local voices in the process. Members should stand together to prevent swathes of the Borough being built on.

Those speaking against the motion recognised that precious areas of green belt could come under threat when what was needed was a mass 1950's type council house building programme because building lots of high density flats that no one could afford was not the answer. This direction of travel had started during the coalition Government and policies had since become increasingly less robust.

It was suggested that the motion delivered false messages for political purposes, sewing discord and burying the real story. The legislation looked to deliver homes for Hillingdon's residents when there were thousands on the housing waiting list and sought to meet the urgent need in the best possible way. The pleas of local people had been ignored in the past when West Drayon and Hayes had transitioned from

suburban to urban and the post office was now going to be turned into one bedroom flats.

Conservative Members had previously made provision for the use of green belt land in exceptional circumstances so this appeared to be a political stunt to inflame fear with no credible alternative being offered up.

The motion was put to a recorded vote:

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

Those voting against: Councillors Burles, Garelick, Garg, Gill, Islam, Kaur, Lakhmana, Mand, Mathers, Nelson, Nelson-West, Punja, Sansarpuri, Singh and Sweeting.

Those abstaining: Councillors Basit, Curling, Farley and Gardner.

The motion was carried and it was:

RESOLVED: That this Council unequivocally condemns the proposed changes to national and London-wide planning legislation, which represent a direct threat to Green Belt land, Metropolitan Open Land, and the long-term sustainability and character of communities across the London Borough of Hillingdon.

These proposals amount to a centralising power grab that prioritises developer interests over residents, weakens local democratic control, and undermines decades of hard-won protections for open space and community infrastructure.

Council expresses grave concern at the following:

- **The unprecedented threat to Metropolitan Open Land, opening the door to wholly inappropriate development on some of the borough's most cherished and irreplaceable open spaces, in direct contradiction to their intended purpose and historic protections.**
- **The introduction of a sweeping default position in favour of development, particularly around stations, which would expose large parts of Hillingdon to high-density, unsuitable development imposed without proper local consultation or accountability.**
- **Proposals for so-called emergency Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) relief in London, which would encourage overdevelopment while stripping away essential funding needed to support schools, healthcare, transport, and other vital local infrastructure.**
- **Proposed changes to the Mayor of London's call-in powers, which would allow City Hall to override the clearly expressed views of democratically elected local councillors, riding roughshod over local decision-making and silencing the voices of residents, making Hillingdon residents pay for the Mayor's failure to deliver housing in central London Zones 1& 2 where they are desperately required.**

This Council believes these proposals fundamentally undermine local democracy, weaken environmental protections, and place intolerable pressure

on already stretched communities and infrastructure. Whilst the Council will respond to the 225 questions in the usual manner It also requests the Leader of the Council to write urgently to the borough's three Members of Parliament, demanding that they publicly oppose these proposals, raise Hillingdon's objections forcefully in Parliament, and take all necessary steps to defend the borough's residents, communities, and green spaces from inappropriate and imposed development.

11.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR MATHERS

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

That this Council welcomes and expresses its gratitude to the Labour Government for stepping in to provide fairer local government funding, including an increase of £126.7 million for Hillingdon - addressing years of underfunding under the previous Conservative government - and enabling the Council to meet its statutory responsibilities, invest in transformative services, and focus on positive outcomes for residents rather than firefighting budget shortfalls.

That this Council recognises that this increased funding provides Hillingdon Council with the opportunity to deliver long-term, outcomes-focused improvements for residents, including:

- Greater stability and resilience for frontline services
- Enhanced capacity to protect vulnerable children and adults
- Investment in community safety, public health, and preventative services
- Reduced financial risk and stronger long-term sustainability for the Council

This Council notes that in the last settlement under the last Conservative government, core funding power was cut by 7% in real terms, leaving councils like Hillingdon under significant financial pressure.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- publicly thank the Labour Government for its fair funding settlement and
- call on the Conservative-led local administration to use this funding responsibly, focus on outcomes for residents rather than blaming them.

Those speaking in support of the motion stated that fairer local government funding would address the real time increase in costs around London and recognised the need that was there. It was suggested that the Council should praise the Government when its actions provided Hillingdon with benefits as well as criticise when there was a negative impact. Residents deserved honesty about the Council's finances and the motion did not pretend that fairer funding was a reward for overspending. It was suggested that the administration needed to use the Council's funds responsibly to provide longer term sustainability.

The motion thanked the Government for providing the Council with funding well into the future after a decade of accounting errors. Residents were not interested in blame shifting and just wanted good service delivery and the funding would provide stability for services and enable planning for the future. The £126.7m increase and three year funding settlement had provided the Council with stability, breathing space, predictability and sustainability.

The Labour Government's commitment to provide this funding would deliver growth in

Hillingdon and enable the Council to step out of the quicksand. However, even with this substantial settlement, Hillingdon would still need £150m so humility was needed. It was suggested that the Leader of the Council had advised the Leader of the Hayes Independent Party Group that he could not wait until the Labour Government had sorted out local government funding. **[Councillors Curling and Edwards raised a point of personal explanation (SO14 Rules of Debate 14.5(f)) that neither of them had any recollection of such a conversation.]**

The administration had prioritised austerity over savings and the country now had a Labour Government that valued local government with every pound received helping to improve residents' lives. The Government had recognised that Hillingdon deserved fairer funding and had come to the rescue.

Those speaking in favour of the motion did not want to see a massive increase in Business Rates or hikes in fees and charges. EFS would mean that services would need to be cut year on year so this funding would make a difference.

Those speaking against the motion noted that it appeared to be smoke and mirrors - Heathrow would appeal the proposed Business Rate hike so the figures contained within the motion were not what they seemed. The administration welcomed the increase in funding but not all of the £126.7m was Government funding as £28.7m was in relation to an assumed increase in Council Tax over the next three years. Furthermore, the Business Rate increase risk was not realistic as Heathrow would appeal and businesses would close as a result.

The funding settlement would force the Council to increase Council Tax by 4.99% each year for the next three years else Hillingdon would not receive the funding. The Conservative Group would continue to fight for fairer funding for residents as it was not being delivered.

The motion was put to a vote and lost.

11.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR GARDNER

Councillor Gardner moved, and Councillor Curling seconded, the following motion:

That this Council recognises that a well-resourced and well-managed CCTV system can play an important role as one of the key factors in tackling crime and many forms of antisocial behaviour.

This Council notes that Hillingdon now has about 3000 CCTV cameras, surely making it one of the best-provided Boroughs in London and that there have been numerous examples of excellent work by the staff of the Control Room in catching criminals as a result of close working with the local police.

However, this Council regrets that for an extended period there have been only a few members of staff to monitor such a large number of cameras and that this is making it impossible to provide effective monitoring.

The situation is becoming increasingly unacceptable with frequent instances of only one member of staff on duty and occasions when residents have tried calling there is nobody present at all and therefore one has to assume that the CCTV room isn't covered 24/7, so, presumably, also calls from the police go unanswered.

This Council therefore calls on the Cabinet to review, as a matter of urgency, the level of funding needed to ensure the proper functioning of this service which is vital for the safety and security of the local community. Surely a well-staffed CCTV room will comply with Hillingdon's strategic objective of providing safe & strong communities and also being a digitally enabled modern council.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that, if the CCTV room had three or four officers covering 24/7, it was more likely that offenders such as fly tippers and burglars would be caught in the act. Currently, members of staff were working solo which meant that they were taken away from their duties when they were answering Members' telephone queries. Catching more people would result in more prosecutions and more revenue from fines.

A more proactive CCTV service would be welcomed where antisocial behaviour (ASB) could be reported directly to the police. Whilst it was acknowledged that some Councillors worked closely with their local policing teams, the police would be able to do more if they received additional support from CCTV.

Those speaking against the motion noted that residents were told that Hillingdon was a safe Borough and that community safety was a priority but the reality was that there were not enough staff. Staff were needed as CCTV cameras did not prevent crime on their own or liaise with the police or answer the telephone. There was no need to have thousands of cameras if there was no one to monitor them. Community safety was a core responsibility and the Cabinet needed to act quickly to ensure the safety of Hillingdon's streets and neighbourhoods.

Councillor Bridges moved, and Councillor Edwards seconded, the following amendment (additional words in ***bold italics*** and deleted words ~~crossed through~~):

That this Council recognises that a well-resourced and well-managed CCTV system can play an important role as one of the key factors in tackling crime and many forms of antisocial behaviour.

This Council notes that Hillingdon now has about 3000 CCTV cameras, surely making it one of the best-provided Boroughs in London and that there have been numerous examples of excellent work by the staff of the Control Room in catching criminals as a result of close working with the local police.

~~However, this Council regrets that for an extended period there have been only a few members of staff to monitor such a large number of cameras and that this is making it impossible to provide effective monitoring.~~

~~The situation is becoming increasingly unacceptable with frequent instances of only one member of staff on duty and occasions when residents have tried calling there is nobody present at all and therefore one has to assume that the CCTV room isn't covered 24/7, so, presumably, also calls from the police go unanswered.~~

~~This Council therefore calls on the Cabinet to review, as a matter of urgency, the level of funding needed to ensure the proper functioning of this service which is vital for the safety and security of the local community. Surely a well-staffed CCTV room will comply with Hillingdon's strategic objective of providing safe & strong communities and also being a digitally enabled modern council.~~

Council therefore requests that the Residents Services Select Committee undertake a review of the CCTV service for Hillingdon to establish where any improvements can be recommended to further enhance the safety and security for Hillingdon residents.

Those speaking in support of the amendment welcomed the suggestion that the Select Committee undertake a review of Hillingdon's CCTV service. CCTV cameras in the Borough were proactively monitored and staff provided footage for prosecutions / evidential purposes for things such as environmental crimes and insurance related matters (one member of staff during the day and two overnight).

In 2025, the CCTV control room had monitored 7,928 incidents and produced 791 evidential packages. Staff identified an additional 20-30 incidents including safeguarding concerns (e.g., rough sleeping) and liaised with the police 20-25 times each day. The control room relied on radios rather than the telephone and members of the public were not permitted to contact them directly. Rather than assuming that more staff were needed, it was better to look at how many might be needed and how artificial intelligence could be used to support them.

Resident community groups seemed happy to accept the proposal for the Select Committee to review CCTV provision and staff would be involved in identifying the best way forward.

Those speaking against the amendment stated that it diluted the original motion and took away its urgency. There was a clear gap between what the administration said and what happened on the ground. Members of the Residents' Services Select Committee had visited the CCTV control room which had skilled operators monitoring hundreds of cameras. However, if CCTV was supposed to keep residents safe, it was queried why Hillingdon still had ASB. Whilst the CCTV infrastructure had received investment, there had been no investment in the staff.

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

RESOLVED: That this Council recognises that a well-resourced and well-managed CCTV system can play an important role as one of the key factors in tackling crime and many forms of antisocial behaviour.

This Council notes that Hillingdon now has about 3000 CCTV cameras, surely making it one of the best-provided Boroughs in London and that there have been numerous examples of excellent work by the staff of the Control Room in catching criminals as a result of close working with the local police.

Council therefore requests that the Residents Services Select Committee undertake a review of the CCTV service for Hillingdon to establish where any improvements can be recommended to further enhance the safety and security for Hillingdon residents.

11.4 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR EDWARDS

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

That this Council expresses its deep concern at the decision by the Home

Office last month to restrict local authorities' access to data relating to the placement of asylum seekers in taxpayer-funded accommodation.

This decision is further evidence of the failure of the Government's asylum and immigration policy that is characterised by poor planning and a failure to work transparently or constructively with local government and that has cost Hillingdon taxpayers millions of pounds in unfunded demand pressures.

The Parliamentary Home Affairs Select Committee has reported that failure to share of data on asylum seekers with Local Authorities limits their ability to plan and respond to asylum seeker placements effectively. Where data on new arrivals, move-ons, or transfers isn't shared in a timely and detailed manner it makes it difficult for Councils to allocate resources in education, health, social care or homelessness prevention, since authorities cannot anticipate demand reliably.

The decision also damages trust in the Home Office, weakens accountability, and irresponsibly risks fuelling community tensions at a time when the Government should be focused on supporting local authorities, not sidelining them. Secrecy and centralised decision-making do nothing to fix a broken asylum system and instead place additional pressure on councils, frontline services, and local residents as well as potentially harming the welfare of asylum seekers.

This Council, therefore, calls on the Government and the Home Office to urgently reverse this decision, restore full transparency with local authorities and work in genuine partnership with councils to deliver a fair, effective and properly managed asylum system that commands public confidence.

Those speaking in support of the motion noted that the Government's decision to stop sharing information had had tangible consequences in that the Council would be unable to discharge its responsibilities effectively if it was kept in the dark. It would also be harder to reassure local communities and to prepare properly if the Council had no information about the asylum seekers being placed in the Borough.

The Council had been required to manage complex issues and local residents had had legitimate concerns about using hotels for asylum accommodation. Concerns were being expressed by a range of people and organisations but the local authority was unable to provide answers to basic questions. This had been a difficult time with the Government placing asylum seekers in Hillingdon resulting in the risks and costs being shifted without consent or compensation.

This had been bad policy making and bad management and had created greater community tension. This approach did nothing to improve the asylum system. Residents deserved clarity and services needed better support.

Those speaking against the motion stated that this was another example of the Leader playing the blame game and came dangerously close to scapegoating. It fuelled community tensions by using asylum seekers as an excuse and, either the Leader of the Council had no idea of the true cost, or he was just not sharing this information.

The motion was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED: That this Council expresses its deep concern at the decision by the Home Office last month to restrict local authorities' access to data relating to the placement of asylum seekers in taxpayer-funded accommodation.

This decision is further evidence of the failure of the Government's asylum and immigration policy that is characterised by poor planning and a failure to work transparently or constructively with local government and that has cost Hillingdon taxpayers millions of pounds in unfunded demand pressures.

The Parliamentary Home Affairs Select Committee has reported that failure to share of data on asylum seekers with Local Authorities limits their ability to plan and respond to asylum seeker placements effectively. Where data on new arrivals, move-ons, or transfers isn't shared in a timely and detailed manner it makes it difficult for Councils to allocate resources in education, health, social care or homelessness prevention, since authorities cannot anticipate demand reliably.

The decision also damages trust in the Home Office, weakens accountability, and irresponsibly risks fuelling community tensions at a time when the Government should be focused on supporting local authorities, not sidelining them. Secrecy and centralised decision-making do nothing to fix a broken asylum system and instead place additional pressure on councils, frontline services, and local residents as well as potentially harming the welfare of asylum seekers.

This Council, therefore, calls on the Government and the Home Office to urgently reverse this decision, restore full transparency with local authorities and work in genuine partnership with councils to deliver a fair, effective and properly managed asylum system that commands public confidence.

ANNEX A

The meeting, which commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 10.21 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.