



MEETING OF THE COUNCIL 11 SEPTEMBER 2025

Order of Business

ORDER	BUSINESS
1.	Apologies for Absence - <i>To receive any apologies for absence.</i>
2.	Minutes - <i>To receive the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 10 July 2025.</i>
3.	Declarations of Interest - <i>To note any declarations of interest in any matter before the Council.</i>
4.	Mayor's Announcements - <i>To receive the Mayoral Announcements.</i>
5.	<p>Public Question Time</p> <p><i>To consider questions submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10. Public question time is limited to 30 minutes.</i></p> <p>5.1 QUESTION FROM ANDREA SCRIVENS OF BROADWOOD AVENUE, RUISLIP, TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES & PROPERTY - COUNCILLOR BIANCO:</p> <p>Since the announcement on 30th May of the plan to close the RAGC the Council has repeatedly stated that it has no other plans for the site. There is a rumour that the land has been offered for sale. Please could you confirm or deny this rumour?</p> <p>5.2 QUESTION FROM JOHN SCRIVENS OF BROADWOOD AVENUE, RUISLIP, TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES & PROPERTY - COUNCILLOR BIANCO:</p> <p>Friends of RAGC used the procedures laid down on the Council website to nominate the Rural Activities Garden Centre as an Asset of Community Value as specified in the Localism Act 2011. The statutory 8-week period during which the Council is required to make a decision on the nominations expired before the end of August so at the time of writing, the Council is in breach of the Localism Act.</p> <p>Why did the Council neither process these ACV nominations within the statutory time limit nor provide us with any reason for this failure?</p>

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Public Question Time <i>(continued)</i>	<p>5.3 QUESTION FROM LYNN JACKSON OF DOWNS BARN ROAD, RUISLIP, TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:</p> <p>Having paid to have our garden waste collected, can I please ask why bags are being collected from homes where no payment has been made and the bags have no address or green tags on either? Is there a protocol in place to ensure this doesn't happen, if so, are all workers fully appraised of it? Are the Council also ensuring that garden waste placed in black bags are being refused?</p> <p>5.4 QUESTION FROM DANIEL O'NEILL OF ASHBURTON ROAD, RUISLIP, AND ON BEHALF OF THE HILLINGDON ALLIANCE OF RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES & PROPERTY - COUNCILLOR BIANCO:</p> <p>The July Cabinet meeting was informed of a "particularly damning" fire risk assessment which identified urgent building safety concerns from inadequate fire detection systems at the Union Park Estate on Packet Boat Lane.</p> <p>Consequently, Cabinet approved funding for a 'Walking Watch' at £4200 per day for six weeks, a measure deemed more cost-effective than the alternative of rehousing 250 households.</p> <p>Could the Cabinet member please provide an update on the situation, including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how our borough came to have thirteen residential units on a new development with such safety concerns?, • what the Walking Watch entails? • how its contract was awarded? • what the day-to-day situation is for the residents on the estate? • the future plan to ensure the buildings are made safe? • when that might be and how the cost will be borne? <p>5.5 QUESTION FROM ADE BANJOKO OF THE FAIRWAY, SOUTH, RUISLIP TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:</p> <p>The protests on Saturday 30th August have spurred racial hatred both online and on the streets of Hillingdon, with calls for immigrants to be sent back. As a resident of the borough, I am deeply saddened and concerned by the rising levels of racial hatred being experienced here.</p> <p>How can the Council reassure residents that it takes hate crime seriously when its own communications appear to be fuelling hostility against migrants.</p> <p>I am especially worried about the impact this environment is having on children and young people. Research shows that racial prejudice can begin from as early as the age of four, and recent data reported in the Evening Standard shows over 15,000 suspensions last year for racist behaviour in schools – more than doubling since the pandemic, with incidents involving</p>

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Public Question Time (continued)	<p>children as young as four.</p> <p>Given this worrying trend, what specific actions will the Council take both to challenge racial hatred in our communities and to prevent the normalisation of racism among the next generation?</p>
6.	<p>Report of the Head of Democratic Services</p> <p><i>To consider the following:</i></p> <p>i) URGENT IMPLEMENTATION OF DECISIONS</p> <p>Members are asked to note the urgent decisions taken since the Council meeting in July 2025, as detailed in the report.</p> <p>ii) CABINET PORTFOLIOS</p> <p>Members are asked to note that the responsibility for Fleet Management has been transferred from the Finance & Transformation Portfolio to the Planning, Housing and Growth Portfolio.</p> <p>To be moved by Councillor Edwards and seconded by Councillor Bianco.</p> <p>Other speakers: None</p>
7.	<p>Issuance of Recommendations Under Section 24 Schedule 7(2) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014</p> <p><i>To consider the contents of the report issued by the External Auditor under Section 24 Schedule 7(2) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014::</i></p> <p>RECOMMENDATIONS: That:</p> <p>a) the recommendations of the external auditor contained within the report issued under Section 24 Schedule 7(2) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, be accepted.</p> <p>b) the programmes of work and actions which were already in place to address the S24 Report recommendations, as clearly set out in the Financial Modernisation Programme (FMP) which commenced in February 2025, and the Governance Review Improvement Plan (GRIP) which commenced in March 2025, be welcomed and approved.</p> <p>c) the Audit Committee, who have already been monitoring the progress of the FMP and GRIP, be instructed to continue to monitor the delivery of the actions and report back to Council in no later than 12 months, or earlier if required, to ensure the S24 Report recommendations have been fully addressed.</p> <p>To be moved by Councillor Edwards and seconded by Councillor Goddard.</p> <p>Other speakers: Councillors Burles, Denys, Mand, Mathers and D.Mills.</p>

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<p>Section 24 Report (continued)</p>	<p>NB: Councillor Mathers to move and Councillor Punja to second the following amendments (additional words in <i>bold italics</i> and deleted words crossed through):</p> <p>That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the recommendations of the external auditor contained within the report issued under Section 24 Schedule 7(2) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, be <i>welcomed and</i> accepted. b) the programmes of work and actions which were already in place to address the S24 Report recommendations, as clearly set out in the Financial Modernisation Programme (FMP) which commenced in February 2025, and the Governance Review Improvement Plan (GRIP) which commenced in March 2025, be welcomed and approved. <i>revised immediately to be sufficiently robust in order to meet the urgent pace of action required.</i> c) the Audit Committee, who have already been monitoring the progress of the FMP and GRIP, be instructed to continue to monitor the delivery of the actions and report back to Council <i>in a separate itemed report at every Council meeting ahead of the February budget setting meeting, as well as finally</i> report back to Council in no later than 42 6 months, or earlier if required, to ensure the S24 Report recommendations have been fully addressed. <p>The amended motion then to read:</p> <p>That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the recommendations of the external auditor contained within the report issued under Section 24 Schedule 7(2) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, be welcomed and accepted. b) the programmes of work and actions which were already in place to address the S24 Report recommendations, as clearly set out in the Financial Modernisation Programme (FMP) which commenced in February 2025, and the Governance Review Improvement Plan (GRIP) which commenced in March 2025, be revised immediately to be sufficiently robust in order to meet the urgent pace of action required. c) the Audit Committee, who have already been monitoring the progress of the FMP and GRIP, be instructed to continue to monitor the delivery of the actions and report back to Council in a separate itemed report at every Council meeting ahead of the February budget setting meeting, as well as finally report back to Council in no later than 6 months, to ensure the S24 Report recommendations have been fully addressed.

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8.	<p data-bbox="336 136 1492 208">Members' Questions - <i>To consider Questions submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.</i></p> <p data-bbox="336 248 1023 286"><i>Members' question time is limited to 45 minutes.</i></p> <p data-bbox="336 327 1492 427">8.3 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MAKWANA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:</p> <p data-bbox="427 468 1492 577">Can the Cabinet member please provide an update on the progress of managing the High Needs budget and how the team are progressing the SEND improvement plan whilst being more financially efficient?</p> <p data-bbox="336 618 1492 719">8.15 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BURLES TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR GODDARD:</p> <p data-bbox="427 759 1492 943">The Chief Finance Officer's Section 25 Statement clause 21 stated, <i>"Government will be reluctant to provide exceptional financial support midyear and therefore, were the authority to be in a position where its outgoings were to exceed its income there is a possibility that a s114 Notice would need to be issued"</i>.</p> <p data-bbox="427 983 1492 1093">With a forecast opening balance of £6.7M, a £16.4M in-year overspend and a Section 24 notice by external auditors Ernst & Young, the then fragile balanced budget for 2025/26 now looks untenable.</p> <p data-bbox="427 1133 1492 1272">What level of Exceptional Financial Support funding from central Government does the Cabinet member calculate that the Council needs to avoid a Section 114 Notice and what will be the cost to Hillingdon Tax Payers?</p> <p data-bbox="336 1312 1492 1413">8.13 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BANERJEE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR GODDARD:</p> <p data-bbox="427 1453 1492 1603">There has been much comment in the national media about the indebtedness of councils and the amount of residents' council tax used to pay the interest on the debt. Would the Cabinet member please tell me what is our level of borrowing and how we compare with other councils?</p> <p data-bbox="336 1644 1492 1744">8.7 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SINGH TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR GODDARD:</p> <p data-bbox="427 1785 1492 2007">The budget report agreed by Cabinet in July 2025 points the finger at previous Section 151 officers for not remedying the situation. So, will the Cabinet member now be seeking to provide an independent report from Ernst and Young on the reported actual savings against target for the past 15 years, so that this Council has a clearer picture on the state of the Council's finances?</p>

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Member Questions (continued)	<p>8.12 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR BRIDGES TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:</p> <p>The Home Office told the Court of Appeal that the rights of people who are in this country illegally outweighed the concerns of British citizens. Does the Leader agree with the Home Secretary, and will her approach determine the actions of this Council?</p>
	<p>8.5 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SWEETING TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:</p> <p>The Audit Committee report of 28th August 2025, page 60, provides details, in the Value For Money section, of the weaknesses highlighted with regards to Financial Sustainability and Quality of Council information, with 7 recommendations proposed in the Final 2023/24 Auditor's Annual Report, one of which being: <i>"that the Council should seek to balance the schools' budget to prevent further growth in its Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit.....and that the Council should also perform scenario planning for how it would manage the impact of the current deficit on its financial position when the current statutory override ends."</i></p> <p>Although the Government statutory override has now been extended to March 2028, and although the Council has taken action to reduce annual overspend on DSG to £15M at the end of March 2025, could the Cabinet member, provide details of how the deficit of £65.71M is being addressed, as it is still the highest of any London borough and is still increasing?</p>
	<p>8.1 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GOHIL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PLANNING, HOUSING & GROWTH – COUNCILLOR TUCKWELL:</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member provide an update on the practical steps the Council has been taking, alongside government, the London Fire Brigade, and the freeholder, to address the building safety issues at Union Park in Cowley - and to give residents the reassurance they need?</p>
	<p>8.9 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GILL TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR GODDARD:</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member provide clarity on the reasons why there is now an adverse variance of £31.5M against the outturn 2024/25, representing an adverse movement of £20.5M from month 10 which is made up of the need to write out a negative reserve of £5.5M, an assessment of the Council's Treasury Approach which has led to an adjustment of £4.5M and an evaluation of the bad debt provision policy which has led to an adverse movement of £4.1M along with £5.1M of previously reported intervention not crystallising, meaning that reserves at the end of the 2024/25 financial year are now a meagre £6.7M which are deemed inadequate by the Section 151 officer?</p>

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<p>Member Questions (continued)</p>	<p>8.4 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DAVIES TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:</p> <p>Could the Leader of the Council share his view on what message is sent to residents when Full Council votes unanimously to oppose plans for a 3rd runway at Heathrow and then one member of the opposition, who joined the vote to oppose the expansion, then appears in a promotional video supporting the scheme?</p> <p>8.8 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR GARELICK TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR GODDARD:</p> <p>The Annual Audit report by external auditors, Ernst & Young, page 12, states that <i>"We have not been able to complete our specific processes to address the risk of mis-statements due to fraud or error, nor were we able to complete all of our audit procedures over the financial statements and are therefore unable to conclude on whether the financial statements are materially misstated as a result of fraud or error."</i></p> <p>When will this Conservative administration be in a position to provide the required information to the independent auditor which would establish whether the issue is either misstated information or actual fraud?</p> <p>8.2 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DENYS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:</p> <p>The government announced in November 2024, wide reaching reforms to Children's Social Care. Can the Cabinet member provide an update on progress made to date in preparing for these reforms and offer assurance of readiness for 2026?</p> <p>8.6 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PUNJA TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION - COUNCILLOR GODDARD:</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member explain why Grant Thornton were procured for the implementation of the Financial Modernisation Programme in a sole procurement tender, when Cabinet had resolved in February in 2025 that CIPFA would be delivering on financial improvements?</p> <p>8.11 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MAND TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CORPORATE SERVICES & PROPERTY - COUNCILLOR BIANCO:</p> <p>At the Corporate Resources and Infrastructure Select Committee Meeting of 23rd July 2025, (page 16 refers), it was confirmed that, <i>"There is still no central register of all known hireable Council spaces and buildings, who is responsible for them, how they are let, or importantly, how they are promoted or if they are promoted at all. It appears that there is a lack of comprehensive understanding of what spaces are available, their potential</i></p>

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<p>Member Questions <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p><i>and strategic management of these spaces.”</i></p> <p>Therefore, could the Cabinet member provide the timescale for when this vital and important audit of the Council's spaces and buildings will be completed which would need to show where the responsibility lies for ensuring <i>all</i> marketing potentials are explored?</p> <p>8.10 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MATHERS TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:</p> <p>A report on Hillingdon's Youth Offer was presented to the Children, Families and Education Select Committee Meeting of 13th November 2024 which stated that, <i>“the Transporter buses were an invaluable resource in youth work...and that funding for two new Transporter buses had been secured and that the Fleet Team were currently working on the tender process, using a similar specification to that of the London Borough of Barnet Youth bus.”</i></p> <p>Therefore, could the Cabinet member explain why it has taken multiple attempts by opposition members of the Select Committee in November, January, April and June, plus a Member's Enquiry and a further enquiry through Democratic Services, to establish that the procurement process for delivering the 2 new Transporter buses had only started in late July 2025, with the estimated completion date being as late as June 2026, meaning that certain areas of the borough with limited or no venues to deliver the Youth Offer will, until June 2026, continue to be deprived of this publicly acknowledged “invaluable resource”.</p> <p>8.14 QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR NELSON-WEST TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT - COUNCILLOR LAVERY:</p> <p>Can the Cabinet member explain the rationale behind closing the RAGC to members of the public who also used and enjoyed the garden for a place of sanctuary and peace?</p>
<p>9.</p>	<p>Motions - <i>To consider Motions submitted by Members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.</i></p> <p>9.4 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR RILEY</p> <p>That this Council has a proud record and tradition of promoting Civic Pride in many forms and celebrating its heritage encouraging the coming together of our diverse communities.</p> <p>This Council, therefore, reaffirms and supports whole heartedly the Leader's words in his recent statement about the flying of the flags of the United Kingdom and England across the borough. Those flags represent the history, freedoms and values of this country and its people and they are a beacon to others. We eschew the disgraceful negative attitude of those who are willing to surrender our national flags to extremists by</p>

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<p>Motions (continued)</p>	<p>claiming them to be symbols of racism. Flying our country's national flags serves any numbers of good purposes, providing a sense of identity and belonging and it is supported by our residents.</p> <p>This Council also recognises that increasing protest against the failure of the government to stop illegal entry into this country and stop the housing of asylum seekers in our hotels, may be unnerving to more recently settled residents of this country. It therefore welcomes the recent public statement by Hillingdon Inter Faith Network and commits to working with the Network to ensure community cohesion.</p> <p>To be seconded by Councillor Burrows</p> <p>Other speakers: Councillors Ahmad-Wallana, Edwards, Mathers and Tuckwell.</p> <p>NB: Councillor Mathers to move and Councillor Punja to second the following amendments (additional words in <i>bold italics</i> and deleted words crossed through):</p> <p>That this Council has a proud record and tradition of promoting Civic Pride in many forms and celebrating its heritage encouraging the coming together of our diverse communities.</p> <p>This Council, therefore, reaffirms and supports whole heartedly the Leader's words in his recent statement about the flying of the flags of the United Kingdom and England across the borough. Those flags represent the history, freedoms and values of this country and its people and they are a beacon to others. We eschew the disgraceful negative attitude of those who are willing to surrender our national flags to extremists by claiming them to be symbols of racism. <i>Appropriate</i> flying <i>of</i> our country's national flags serves any numbers of good purposes, providing a sense of identity and belonging and it <i>which</i> is supported by our residents.</p> <p>This Council also recognises that increasing protest against the failure of the government to stop illegal entry into this country and stop the housing of asylum seekers in our hotels, may be unnerving to more recently settled residents of this country. It therefore welcomes the recent public statement by Hillingdon Inter Faith Network and commits to working with the Network <i>increase tangible council activities to reduce hate crime and increase</i> ensure community cohesion.</p> <p>The amended motion then to read:</p> <p>That this Council has a proud record and tradition of promoting Civic Pride in many forms and celebrating its heritage encouraging the coming together of our diverse communities.</p> <p>Appropriate flying of our country's national flags serves any numbers of good purposes, providing a sense of identity and belonging which is supported by our residents.</p>

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<p>Motions (continued)</p>	<p>This Council also recognises that increasing protest may be unnerving to residents. It therefore welcomes the recent public statement by Hillingdon Inter Faith Network and commits to increase tangible council activities to reduce hate crime and increase community cohesion.</p> <p>9.2 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR PUNJA</p> <p>That this Council notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's finances are in a "critical" state, according to independent auditors Ernst & Young (EY) who have served notice under the Section 24 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. • The Council's reserves are the lowest of any London borough with insufficient reserves for this financial year. • This Council has had 4 Section 151 officers in the past 18 months. • Persistent delay notices relating to the Financial Report for year ending 2024-25 • Auditors Ernst Young report "fundamental governance weaknesses", including poor-quality data and unreliable forecasting. • The Internal Audit report offered "no assurance" on internal controls, risk management, or governance. • The Council Forecasts for 2025-26 show a further £16.4m overspend, more than double the reserves left. • The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) deficit has hit £65.71 million, nearly ten times the Council's reserves, threatening the future of education funding. • Failure to achieve savings targets year on year leaving £34million in year savings target for 2025/26. • The Council is now seeking an unplanned, midyear "Exceptional Financial Support" from the Labour Government, to cover up their inability to deliver a balanced budget, proving that the Conservative administration has lost complete control of the accounts. <p>Therefore, this Council expresses its complete lack of confidence in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Ian Edwards, Leader of Hillingdon Council – for failing to provide leadership or accountability during this financial collapse; and • Cllr Martin Goddard, Cabinet Member for Finance – for presiding over catastrophic budget management, failed reforms, and a total loss of public trust. <p>This Council calls upon the two Members to resign with immediate effect and further instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Government calling for an urgent formal investigation into the financial position of this local authority.</p> <p>To be seconded by Councillor Mathers</p> <p>Other speakers: Councillors Bianco, Gill, Kaur, Mand and Sweeting</p>

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Motions <i>(continued)</i>	<p>9.1 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR CURLING</p> <p>That this Council notes that research clearly demonstrates adult gaming centres and betting shops are disproportionately located in some of the most deprived areas, and that places such as Hayes Town already has more than its fair share, with yet another gaming centre due to open in the old Barclays Bank building.</p> <p>Council also notes that, with changing shopping habits, all our high streets are subject to dramatic change and susceptible to increased gaming centres and betting shops, which could come to dominate our local high streets, if their proliferation is not more robustly controlled.</p> <p>Council further notes that local councils have very little powers to stop new gaming centres opening, and that a coalition of over 40 councils, of all political persuasions, is calling for 'urgent gambling reform' to prevent betting shops and gaming centres from 'taking over' high streets.</p> <p>Council therefore calls for the Cabinet to consider joining the coalition of councils seeking the appropriate changes to gambling regulations.</p> <p>To be seconded by Councillor Basit</p> <p>Other speakers: Councillors Davies, Gardner, Lavery and Sansarpuri.</p> <p>9.3 MOTION FROM COUNCILLOR GARELICK</p> <p>That this Council recognises that the presentation and cleanliness of our residential streets across the whole borough have been in sharp decline this year, clearly indicating that the Council's financial troubles are having a significant impact on our frontline services such as refuse collection, street cleansing, and weed removal.</p> <p>Therefore, this Council calls on the administration to take action to improve these frontline services, in order to keep our streets clean and restore a sense of pride in our communities.</p> <p>To be seconded by Councillor Mathers</p> <p>Other speakers: Councillors Islam, Kaur and Lavery.</p>

END OF COUNCIL MEETING