

## QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

### **5.1 QUESTION FROM TONY ELLIS OF KEWFERRY ROAD, NORTHWOOD TO THE LEADER OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:**

The council's Audit Committee papers confirm that leaders were formally warned of "key governance weaknesses" by CIPFA and auditors in February and March 2025. This was at the exact same time the administration was approving the 2025/26 budget

Given the administration was formally warned of "key governance weaknesses" before the budget was set, I do not understand how it could have been legitimately claimed to have been robust. What accountability has there been for the leadership's failure to act on these warnings, which preceded the £36m financial collapse?

### **5.2 QUESTION FROM PATRICIA WARDLE OF WYE CLOSE ROAD, RUISLIP TO THE LEADER OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL – COUNCILLOR EDWARDS:**

At the HARA meeting on 17 November, the Leader stated the EFS bailout application was for "the region of 40 million". This figure seems too low to be sufficient to cover both this year's overspend and to replenish the reserves, especially as each month in the last three the overspend has increased.

Can the Leader provide a more accurate estimate of the kind of figure that the Council has been requesting from the government, given that the £40 million figure doesn't seem anywhere near sufficient?

### **5.3 QUESTION FROM SUE MIDGLEY OF HOWLETT'S LANE, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN:**

The Council predicts it will have a £78m cumulative deficit in the Dedicated Schools Grant by the end of the year. The statutory override government protection for this deficit expires in March 2028.

What is the Council's plan to handle the £78.4m schools deficit when the government override ends, other than hoping for a second bailout?

### **5.4 QUESTION FROM SALLY WEBB OF LAKESIDE CLOSE, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR LAVERY:**

In April 2025, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Ian Edwards, personally assured the Ruislip Residents' Association that a new, robust risk assessment for Ruislip Lido was a priority and would be 'picked up very quickly' to address the 'obvious risks' of overcrowding.

On June 29th, those risks were realised when emergency services struggled to access the site. Yet, as of November, this vital risk assessment has still not been commissioned, and Council officers have confirmed they are still awaiting responses from external specialists.

Given the Council's failure to deliver this urgent safety review, how does it justify prioritising new, non-essential spending at the Lido, such as the £19,200 approved in October to refurbish the pirate ship and the £76,949 approved in September for 'infrastructure improvements', which includes 'new picnic tables' - all of which will only attract more visitors to a site the Council has not yet made safe?

**5.5 QUESTION FROM DANIEL O'NEILL OF ASHBURTON ROAD, RUISLIP TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND TRANSFORMATION – COUNCILLOR GODDARD:**

The Month 6 Budget Monitoring Report identifies a £4 million "adverse impact" on the budget caused by a review of the asset sales programme. Can the Cabinet Member confirm if this £4 million deficit exists because the Administration had already spent or committed the money before the assets were actually sold and why was such a large sum spent "at risk" before the funds were actually secured in the Council's bank account?

**5.6 QUESTION FROM DAVID EDINGTON OF HOYLAKES CRESCENT, ICKENHAM TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY & ENVIRONMENT – COUNCILLOR LAVERY:**

The Chrysalis Fund criteria, presented to the Residents' Services Select Committee in March 2025, explicitly state the fund cannot fund events, activities or furniture and equipment.

Can the Cabinet Member explain why he subsequently approved £19,200 for 'Playground equipment refurbishment' and £76,949 for a project that includes 'new picnic tables' - in direct contradiction of the programme's published rules - and further explain when and by whom the decision was taken to increase his portfolio's Chrysalis budget from the £1 million stated in his June Capital Release report to the £3 million stated in his September report, given the Council's current severe financial constraints?