

COUNCIL MINUTES

4 NOVEMBER 2010

- Present:**
- * Councillor Asad Omar (The Worshipful the Mayor)
 - * Councillor Mrinal Choudhury (The Deputy Mayor)
- Councillors:**
- | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| * Husain Akhtar | * Jerry Miles |
| * Sue Anderson | * Mrs Vina Mithani |
| * Nana Asante | * Chris Mote |
| * Mrs Camilla Bath | * Janet Mote |
| * Christine Bednell | * John Nickolay |
| * James Bond | * Joyce Nickolay |
| * Mrs Lurline Champagne OBE | * Christopher Noyce |
| * Kam Chana | * Phillip O'Dell |
| * Ramji Chauhan | * Paul Osborn |
| * John Cowan | * Varsha Parmar |
| * Bob Currie | * David Perry |
| * Margaret Davine | * Bill Phillips |
| * Mano Dharmarajah | * Raj Ray |
| * Tony Ferrari | * Richard Romain |
| * Keith Ferry | * Anthony Seymour |
| * Ann Gate | * Lynda Seymour |
| * Brian Gate | * Navin Shah |
| * David Gawn | * Mrs Rekha Shah |
| * Stephen Greek | * Sachin Shah |
| * Mitzi Green | * Stanley Sheinwald |
| * Susan Hall | * Victoria Silver |
| * Graham Henson | * Bill Stephenson |
| * Thaya Idaikkadar | * William Stoodley |
| * Nizam Ismail | * Krishna Suresh |
| * Krishna James | * Sasi Suresh |
| * Manji Kara | * Yogesh Teli |
| * Zarina Khalid | * Mark Versallion |
| * Jean Lammiman | * Ben Wealthy |
| * Barry Macleod-Cullinane | * Simon Williams |
| * Kairul Kareema Marikar | * Stephen Wright |
| * Ajay Maru | |

* Denotes Member present

PRAYERS

The meeting opened with Prayers offered by the Imam Hafiz Muhammad Akram.

46. COUNCIL MINUTES

RESOLVED: That

- (i) **the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2010 be taken as read and signed as a correct record, subject to a clarification at page 8 (36 - Motion Council Transparency) to read “wished to be recorded as having voted against the decision and for the Motion to be adopted.”**
- (ii) **the minutes of the extraordinary meeting held on 7 October 2010, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.**

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor invited declarations of interest.

- (i) Item 11(2): Motions: Proposed Cap on Housing Benefit
Councillor Nana Asante declared a personal interest as her family was in receipt of housing benefit, but considered that she could speak and vote thereon.

Councillor Thaya Idaikkadar declared a personal interest as his mother was in receipt of housing benefit, but considered that he could speak and vote thereon.

Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar declared a personal interest as she was a Council tenant, but considered that she could speak and vote thereon.

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane declared a personal interest as he was employed by London Councils Ltd, but considered that he could speak and vote thereon.

- (ii) Item 11(5): Motions: Fare Increases
Councillor Sue Anderson declared a personal interest as she was a member of the Harrow Public Transport Users Association, but considered that she could speak and vote thereon.

Councillor James Bond declared a personal interest as an employee of Transport for London, based at North Harrow Station, but considered that he could speak and vote thereon.

Councillor Stephen Greek declared a personal interest as he was employed by the Greater London Authority, but considered that he could speak and vote thereon.

Councillor Manji Kara declared a personal interest as he was employed by Transport for London, but considered that he could speak and vote thereon.

(iii) Item 11(6): Motions: Harrow International Vision

Councillor Nana Asante declared a personal interest as she was born in Tel Aviv, her husband's brother was from Tillberg and her parents were from LA. Councillor Asante was also a trustee of Harrow in Europe but considered that she could speak and vote on the Motion.

Councillors Mrs Lurline Champagnie OBE, Mrinal Choudhury John Cowan, Brian Gate, David Gawn, Manji Kara, Janet Mote, John Nickolay and Joyce Nickolay declared personal interests in that they were trustees of Harrow in Europe, but considered that they could speak and vote thereon.

Councillor Jean Lammiman declared a personal interest as her husband was the Chairman of Harrow in Europe and she was also a trustee of the organisation, but considered that she could speak and vote thereon.

Councillor Chris Mote declared a personal interest in that he was involved with the original twinning of the borough with Broken Hill, Zambia in 1966, but considered that he could speak and vote thereon.

48. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor requested that Council note the engagements he had undertaken. The Mayor paid particular attention to the following:

- On 18 October and 31 August 2010, he had attended the 100th birthday parties for Mrs Jane Jones and Mrs May Richards respectively;
- On 24 October 2010, he had attended a retirement brunch for Rabbi Grunewald at Pinner Synagogue. On the same day he had also attended a mosque in relation to the Pakistan Flood Relief Event and a Church as part of an event hosted by the Gujarati Christian Fellowship United Kingdom. This had demonstrated and contributed towards the theme of Diversity in his Mayoral year.
- On 3 November 2010, he had attended a celebration for Francis Dowley who had worked for the Council for 40 years. He had also attended the Racial Acoustics Queens Awards. On behalf of the Council, the Mayor had congratulated those presented with awards.

The Council joined the Mayor in congratulating Laura Turner, a resident of Harrow, on winning a gold medal at the recent Commonwealth Games in Delhi for the 100 metres sprint relay.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Worshipful the Mayor, as tabled, be noted and received.

49. PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

In accordance with Rule 14.6, the Leader of the Council agreed that the referral of the Harrow International Vision Motion to Cabinet be disapplied. This allowed Council to debate the Motion and make recommendations to Cabinet.

50. PETITIONS

In accordance with Rule 10, a petition was submitted by Councillor Lurline Champagnie, containing 22 signatures of residents, requesting that the Council consider action to address a traffic hazard at Pinner Green lights.

[The petition stood referred to the next meeting of the Traffic and Road Safety Advisory Panel].

51. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

In accordance with Rule 11, the questions submitted by members of the public and responded to by Portfolio Holders, were contained at appendix I.

52. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council introduced his report highlighting achievements and proposals since the last ordinary meeting.

At the conclusion of his report, the Leader responded to questions from Members of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report of the Leader of the Council be received and noted.

53. PETITION DEBATE - Parking Issues in Pinner

- (i) In accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, Council considered a petition which had initially been received at its meeting on 8 July 2010.
- (ii) The petition contained 2487 signatures and its terms were read by Councillor Stephen Wright as follows:

We the undersigned request that Harrow Council urgently address the parking issues in Pinner. Local businesses are suffering as a result of the high car parking charges in comparison with other local High Streets in the area.

We urge Harrow Council to introduce a free ½ hour care parking scheme in Pinner car parks and meter parking areas and to reduce hourly rates to fall in line with Northwood, Ruislip and Eastcote.

- (iii) A debate was held on the content of the petition.

RESOLVED: That the petition be referred to Cabinet for consideration.

54. RECOMMENDED CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

Further to Item 9 on the Summons, the Council received a Recommendation from the Constitution Review Working Group.

The Recommendation was formally moved by Councillor Bill Stephenson (Chairman of the Working Group).

RESOLVED: That the proposed Constitutional changes be approved, as set out in Appendix II to these minutes.

55. QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE

In accordance with Rule 12, the questions submitted by Councillors and responded to by Portfolio Holders, were contained at Appendix III.

56. MOTION - HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

- (i) At item 11(1) the Council received a Motion in the names of Councillors James Bond and Chris Noyce in the following terms:

“This Council notes that the following two statutory instruments came into effect on 1st October 2010:

1. The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No 2) (England) Order 2010 (2010 No. 2134) will make changes of use from Class C3 (dwellinghouses) to Class C4 (houses in multiple occupation) permitted development.
2. The Town and Country Planning (Compensation) (No. 3) (England) Regulations 2010 (2010 No 2135)

This Council notes therefore that the Government has amended the planning rules for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and as a result from 1st October 2010 changes of use from family houses to small HMOs will be able to happen freely without the need for planning applications.

This Council is concerned that appropriate time was not given to consultation with Local Authority Planning Services.

This Council also views with concern the possible detrimental effects such permitted development could have on the character and environmental aspects of residential roads including the increase in motor vehicles, refuse and possible nuisance to surrounding neighbours.

This Council regrets that the new legislation does not allow residents to be alerted to such proposals for houses in multiple occupation.

This Council recognises the extra burden placed on Local Authority Planning Services in order to facilitate Article 4 Directions.

This Council resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Planner at the Department of Communities and Local Government to express our grave concern that such developments can occur without recourse to Local Authority approval.

This Council further instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Members of Parliament for Harrow West, Harrow East and Ruislip, Pinner and Northwood to note our concerns.”

- (ii) There was an amendment proposed in the names of Councillors Keith Ferry and Bill Stephenson, which sought to amend the Motion to read as follows:

“This Council notes that the following two statutory instruments came into effect on 1st October 2010:

1. The Town & Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (Amendment) (No 2) (England) Order 2010 (2010 No. 2134) will make changes of use from Class C3 (dwellinghouses) to Class C4 (houses in multiple occupation) permitted development.
2. The Town and Country Planning (Compensation) (No. 3) (England) Regulations 2010 (2010 No 2135).

This Council notes therefore that the Government has amended the planning rules for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and as a result from 1st October 2010 changes of use from family houses to small HMOs will be able to happen freely without the need for planning applications.

This Council is concerned that appropriate time was not given to consultation with Local Authority Planning Services.

This Council also views with concern the possible detrimental effects such permitted development could have on the character and environmental aspects of residential roads including the increase in motor vehicles, refuse and possible nuisance to surrounding neighbours.

This Council regrets that the new legislation does not allow residents to be alerted to such proposals for houses in multiple occupation.

This Council recognises the extra burden placed on Local Authority Planning Services in order to facilitate Article 4 Directions.

This Council resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chief Planner at the Department of Communities and Local Government to express our grave concern that such developments can occur without recourse to Local Authority approval.

This Council further instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Members of Parliament for Harrow West, Harrow East and Ruislip, Pinner and Northwood to note our concerns.

This Council further requests that the Local Development Framework Panel, as a matter of urgency, to examine the scope for the introduction of an Article Four Direction covering the whole of the Borough to control the number of HMOs.”

- (iii) Upon a vote the amendment was carried;
- (iv) Upon a vote, the substantive Motion, as amended, was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the substantive Motion as amended and set out at (ii) above, be adopted.

57. MOTION - PROPOSED CAP ON HOUSING BENEFIT

- (i) At item 11(2) on the Summons, the Council received a Motion in the names of Councillors Kairul Kareema Marikar and Ben Wealthy in the following terms:

“This Council deplores the unreasonable cap on Housing Benefit which will export poverty to Outer London Boroughs like Harrow. London suffers severe housing shortages which have not been helped by the Conservative Right to Buy Policy as it depleted housing stock. To make matters worse, the Tory policy of offering private housing as an option for homeless families will mean that Councils in inner London will be setting up a revolving door for families in temporary private housing who will have to be moved to outer London or beyond.

This Council notes that 59% of families in private housing are living in poverty. The cap on Housing Benefit is neither fair nor reasonable as it affects the poor and impacts on children who are more likely to be moved several times resulting in unstable education with its consequent impact on education attainment.

This Council draws the attention of Government to the fact that high rents in London are not a new phenomenon but are driven by the housing shortage. When the Local Housing Allowance was introduced the average rent in Central London for a 3 bedroom house was £700, twice the cap. This Council draws the Government's attention to the fact that it is Landlords who profit from Housing Benefit not tenants.

As a Council committed to listening and leading, this Council urges Government to look at the root causes of high rents in London and bring out policies which deal with problem instead of ideological cuts which play well in Tory heartlands but penalise the poor and those unfortunate enough to lose their jobs.

This Council urges the Government to reconsider the cap and reduce the housing benefit bill by funding Councils to build enough social housing thereby stimulating the building industry, creating jobs and giving the country the much needed optimism which will take us out of recession and avoid a depression.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister expressing our concern about this retrograde step which penalises families;
 - (2) write to Harrow's MPs and GLA Member to ask them to raise these concerns in Parliament and the London Assembly;
 - (3) work with the other London Boroughs through London Councils to lobby against the Housing Benefit cap;
 - (4) support the voluntary and community sector to campaign for fairness for families."
- (ii) During the debate on this item, Councillor Brian Gate moved a Motion that the question now be put. Upon a vote this Motion was carried.

RESOLVED: That the Motion, as set out above, be adopted.

58. MOTION - GOVERNMENT SPENDING REVIEW IMPLICATIONS FOR WOMEN

- (i) At item 11(3) on the Summons, the Council received a Motion in the names of Councillors Sue Anderson and Victoria Silver in the following terms:

"This Council notes with deep concern the huge cuts announced during the spending review contain measures that will hit women twice as hard as men in our communities in Harrow.

The Council believes urgent action is needed by the government to tackle the effect these cuts will have on households and female workers in Harrow - and across the country - because the clear effects will be damaging throughout our communities if the consequences of cutbacks on females and families are not significantly addressed.

The Council is resolutely committed to helping those in greatest need but the targeting of local government for cuts is tantamount to singling out women for the greatest hit as 75 per cent of local government workers nationally are women and the rolling back of public services hits women particularly hard because they tend to use services more frequently and more intensively, because of their sizable caring responsibilities.

The Council hopes the government will reconsider its plans because making women bear the brunt of cuts makes a mockery of its claimed commitment to fairness. We also hope the Council will commit to closely monitoring the impact of changes on women and families in the borough through proper impact assessments and evaluation."

- (ii) There was an amendment proposed in the names of Councillors Paul Osborn and Susan Hall, which sought to amend the Motion to read as follows:

“This Council notes with deep concern the huge cuts announced during the spending review contain measures that will hit women twice as hard as men in our communities in Harrow.

The Council believes urgent action is needed by the government to tackle the effect these cuts will have on households and female workers in Harrow - and across the country - because the clear effects will be damaging throughout our communities if the consequences of cutbacks on females and families are not significantly addressed.

The Council is resolutely committed to helping those in greatest need but the targeting of local government for cuts is tantamount to singling out women for the greatest hit as 75 per cent of local government workers nationally are women and the rolling back of public services hits women particularly hard because they tend to use services more frequently and more intensively, because of their sizable caring responsibilities.

The Council hopes the government will reconsider its plans because making women bear the brunt of cuts makes a mockery of its claimed commitment to fairness. We also hope the Council will commit to closely monitoring the impact of changes on women and families in the borough through proper impact assessments and evaluation

This Council should lead by example, therefore a full Equalities Impact Assessment should be completed and available for inspection before any decision can be made by Cabinet or by a portfolio holder.”

- (iii) During the debate on this item, Councillor Brian Gate moved a Motion that the question now be put. Upon a vote this Motion was carried;
- (iv) Upon a vote, the amendment at (ii) was lost;
- (v) Upon a further vote the substantive Motion, was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the substantive Motion, as set out at (i) above, be adopted.

[Note: Councillors Husain Akhtar, Mrs Camilla Bath, Christine Bednell, Mrs Lurline Champagnie OBE, Kam Chana, Ramji Chauhan, John Cowan, Tony Ferrari, Stephen Greek, Susan Hall, Manji Kara, Jean Lammiman, Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Mrs Vina Mithani, Chris Mote, Janet Mote, John Nickolay, Joyce Nickolay, Paul Osborn, Richard Romain, Anthony Seymour, Lynda Seymour, Stanley Sheinwald, Yogesh Teli, Mark Versallion, Simon Williams and Stephen Wright wished to be recorded as having voted for the amendment to the Motion and against the adoption of the substantive Motion].

59. MOTION - STANDING UP FOR HARROW

- (i) At item 11(4) on the Summons, the Council received a Motion in the names of Councillors Bill Stephenson and Ben Wealthy in the following terms:

“This Council notes that the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review threatens Harrow’s economic recovery.

Many senior economists believe that the scale and speed of cuts in public spending will damage business and lead to job losses.

Experts have also warned that the Coalition Government’s spending plans are regressive, not progressive, and will hit the poorest hardest.

This Council notes:

- Following the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s budget, the Office for Budget Responsibility downgraded its growth forecast for next year from 2.6% to 2.3% in response to the increased pace of public spending reductions.
- In their independent assessment of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Institute for Fiscal Studies said that the measures were ‘more regressive, than progressive’ and made clear that children were the biggest losers, not bankers.
- The Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review, outlines big cuts in Local Government spending of almost 30%. The Local Government Group has been clear that such reductions ‘will lead to cuts at the front line.’
- Local Government has had some of the biggest cuts in the public sector, and most authorities’ cuts are significantly front-loaded to 2011/12.
- The Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government have admitted that at least 1 million jobs will be lost - half in the public sector and half in the private sector.
- Other cuts to funding for new social housing, child tax credits, university teaching budgets and school modernisation programmes will curb aspirations and opportunities for many people in Harrow.
- The Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s decision to raise VAT to 20% in 2011 will damage Harrow businesses and is unfair, hitting those on low and fixed incomes hardest.

This Council believes that the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review will hinder, not help Harrow’s economic recovery. Furthermore, their wider economic policies

are deeply unfair and will hit the poorest and most vulnerable in Harrow hardest.”

- (ii) There was an amendment proposed in the names of Councillors Barry Macleod-Cullinane and Paul Osborn, which sought to amend the Motion to read as follows:

“This Council notes that the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review threatens Harrow’s economic recovery.

Many senior economists believe that the scale and speed of cuts in public spending will damage business and lead to job losses.

Experts have also warned that the Coalition Government’s spending plans are regressive, not progressive, and will hit the poorest hardest.

This Council notes:

- Following the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s budget, the Office for Budget Responsibility downgraded its growth forecast for next year from 2.6% to 2.3% in response to the increased pace of public spending reductions.
- In their independent assessment of the Comprehensive Spending Review, the Institute for Fiscal Studies said that the measures were ‘more regressive, than progressive’ and made clear that children were the biggest losers, not bankers.
- The Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review, outlines big cuts in Local Government spending of almost 30%. The Local Government Group has been clear that such reductions ‘will lead to cuts at the front line.’
- Local Government has had some of the biggest cuts in the public sector, and most authorities’ cuts are significantly front-loaded to 2011/12.
- The Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government have admitted that at least 1 million jobs will be lost - half in the public sector and half in the private sector.
- Other cuts to funding for new social housing, child tax credits, university teaching budgets and school modernisation programmes will curb aspirations and opportunities for many people in Harrow.
- The Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s decision to raise VAT to 20% in 2011 will damage Harrow businesses and is unfair, hitting those on low and fixed incomes hardest.

This Council believes that the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Coalition Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review will hinder, not help

Harrow's economic recovery. Furthermore, their wider economic policies are deeply unfair and will hit the poorest and most vulnerable in Harrow hardest.

This Council agrees that Councils have a duty to ensure their plans for working through economically challenging times are robust, and in terms of the Council Vision and Priorities report passed by Cabinet on 7 October 2010, considers whether this is the case for Harrow."

- (iii) Upon a vote, the amendment at (ii) was lost;
- (iv) Upon a further vote the substantive Motion, was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the substantive Motion, as set out at (i) above, be adopted.

60. MOTION - FARE INCREASES

- (i) At item 11(5) on the Summons, the Council received a Motion in the names of Councillors Navin Shah and Phillip O'Dell in the following terms:

"Harrow Council deplores London Mayor Boris Johnson's proposals for a devastating rise in bus and tube fares with an average increase of 7% going up to an actual increase of 74%.

This Council notes that:

- Tube and bus fares went up by 6% in the first year of his Boris Johnson's Mayoralty and last year single bus journeys went up by 20 %;
- the coalition government is already hitting Harrow residents with a likely cut of at least 30% in its grant to Harrow Council in addition to the above inflation rises in tube and bus fares;
- the only legacy of Boris Johnson has left so far as the people of Harrow are concerned is that of closing ticket offices like North Harrow Station, endless weekend closures of the Jubilee and Metropolitan line services and the scrapping of funding for disabled access to Harrow on the Hill and Stanmore tube stations.

This Council instructs the Chief Executive to communicate this motion to the three Harrow MPs and the London Assembly Member for Brent and Harrow asking them to oppose these fare increases and further instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Mayor of London demanding that the fare increases be scrapped."

- (ii) There was an amendment proposed in the names of Councillors Barry Macleod-Cullinane and Susan Hall, which sought to amend the Motion to read as follows:

“Harrow Council deplores London Mayor Boris Johnson’s proposals for a devastating rise in bus and tube fares with an average increase of 7% going up to an actual increase of 74 %.

This Council notes that:

- Tube and bus fares went up by 6% in the first year of his Boris Johnson’s Mayoralty and last year single bus journeys went up by 20 %;
- the coalition government is already hitting Harrow residents with a likely cut of at least 30% in its grant to Harrow Council in addition to the above inflation rises in tube and bus fares;
- the only legacy of Boris Johnson has left so far as the people of Harrow are concerned is that of closing ticket offices like North Harrow Station, endless weekend closures of the Jubilee and Metropolitan line services and the scrapping of funding for disabled access to Harrow on the Hill and Stanmore tube stations.

This Council agrees that, in order to protect and assist some of Harrow’s most vulnerable people from the uncertainty and vagaries of fare prices charges, this Council guarantees that no resident who currently receives a discretionary disabled Freedom Pass will cease to do so as a result of any action taken or decision made by this Council.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to communicate this motion to the three Harrow MPs and the London Assembly Member for Brent and Harrow asking them to oppose these fare increases and further instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Mayor of London demanding that the fare increases be scrapped.”

(iii) Upon a vote, the amendment at (ii) was lost;

(iv) Upon a further vote the substantive Motion, was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the substantive Motion, as set out at (i) above, be adopted.

61. MOTION - HARROW INTERNATIONAL VISION

At item 11(6) on the Summons, the Council received a Motion in the names of Councillors Nana Asante and Graham Henson in the following terms:

“This Council notes with some concern the pessimism of the governments’ spending plans and the short-sighted cuts which threaten the economic recovery. The Council notes with great concern the in-year cut of the Migrants Impact Fund which has cost London authorities an estimated £2.4 million. This Council also puts on record its concern at the cut in LAA Reward Grant, an act which undermines the credibility of future agreements with

Government. This assault on Local Government funding makes the silence on the important area of community and social cohesion even more worrying.

The Council believes that the Government should take some lessons from a Council that listens and leads, and tap into the optimism and potential of residents and enable them to work towards a brighter future. This Council is resolutely committed to furthering Community Cohesion and celebrating the fact that Harrow is the most religiously diverse borough of England and Wales.

This Council commits to renewing its international vision by:

- working towards recognition of Harrow as a Fair Trade borough in March 2011;
- following the example of its twin town Douai and exploring the possibility of twinning with more towns and cities such as Balakot, Bhuj, Broken Hill, Hargeisa, Pattan, Port au Prince, Kingston, La, Tilburg and Tel Aviv, underlining the tremendous advantage such links can bring, both to the harmony of the Borough and its future development.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) explore the feasibility of Harrow twinning with further towns and cities;
- (2) involve residents in creating opportunities for experiencing and exploring other cultures thereby building an atmosphere for economic development and trade opportunities, a positive climate to counterbalance the doom and gloom coming from the current Government;
- (3) work with London Councils to mitigate the impact of the short-sighted cuts on our residents.”

RESOLVED: That the substantive Motion, as set out above, be recommended to the Executive.

62. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER THE URGENCY PROCEDURE BY CABINET AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Further to item 12 on the Summons, Council received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services providing a summary of the urgent decisions taken by Cabinet, and the use of the special urgency procedure since the last ordinary meeting of Council on 8 July 2010.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

63. URGENT DECISIONS ON MATTERS RESERVED TO COUNCIL

The Director of Legal and Governance Services advised of three urgent decisions taken in respect of matters reserved to Council, following consultation with the Leaders of each of the Political Groups, since the last meeting.

RESOLVED: That the decisions taken under delegation by the Director of Legal and Governance Services, on behalf of Council, be noted.

64. PROCEDURE FOR TERMINATION OF MEETING

- (i) At 10.28 pm, during the debate on the Item 11(4) (Motion: Standing Up for Harrow), the Mayor put to the vote a procedural motion under Rule 9.2 that the closure of time for the Council meeting be extended until the completion of all remaining business on the Summons. Upon a formal vote, this proposal was not agreed;
- (ii) At 10.30 pm, in the course of the consideration of Item 11(4) (Motion: Standing Up for Harrow), the Mayor advised that the 'guillotine' procedure had come into operation for the determination of the remaining business on the summons and was applied to Items 11(4) (Motion: Standing Up for Harrow), 11(5) (Motion: Fare Increases), 11(6) (Motion: Harrow International Vision), 12 (Decisions Taken Under the Urgency Procedure by Cabinet and Portfolio Holders), and 13 (Urgent Decisions on Matters Reserved to Council).

RESOLVED: That the provisions of Rules 9.2 and 9.3 be applied as set out at (i) and (ii) above.

(CLOSE OF MEETING: All business having been completed, the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 10.33 pm).

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING

4 NOVEMBER 2010

PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM 6)

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by members of the public of a Member of the Executive, or the Chairman of any Committee.

1. Questioner: Cassie Marie McDonagh

Asked of: Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise

Question: "What are the plans to build more sites for the Gypsy and Traveller communities in Harrow?"

Answer: Written answer to be provided as the questioner was not present.

2. Questioner: Jeremy Zeid

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: "In the light of the public consultation on the Equalities Act and its implications, could the Leader of the Council affirm that he and his administration are committed absolutely to the principles of equality, freedom and justice for all?"

Answer: Thank you for your question. Can I remind you of the motto of this fine Council? "Salus Populi Suprema Lex" – "the well-being of the people is the highest law".

I can confirm that I and my administration are fully committed to the principles of equality, freedom and justice for all and will, of course, abide by the laws of this country such as the Equalities Act, as best we can. We mean it and will act upon it.

Supplemental Question: Could the Leader therefore explain how it can be right that we consider twinning with regimes that proscribe and legislate against and generally persecute gays, lesbians and the transgendered?

Supplemental Answer: This Council does not work with regimes, the Government does. Therefore you should take it up at a higher level.

3. **Questioner:** Christine Jones

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety

Question: "There seems to be some confusion in the way the Neighbourhood Champion system is working.

I am concerned because the original remit that I signed up to appears to have been widened from a fairly passive role of 'reporting issues seen locally as you go about your normal business' to a much more proactive one where we are asked to look out for 'wanted individuals' and more.

Would the Portfolio Holder say when this was agreed and by whom as I have not been consulted on it nor asked to sign any new agreement?"

Answer: Thank you for your question. First of all I would like to thank all Neighbourhood Champions throughout the borough for the voluntary contribution that they are making.

It was the intention from the start of the scheme to provide Neighbourhood Champions with information updates and feedback to be able to support their neighbours in keeping their locality clean and safe and to report issues to the Council and Police.

Supplemental Question: In a number of cases I have received an incomplete response or even no response to issues I have reported, which makes me wonder how well this scheme is working overall. Would the Portfolio Holder accept, as with any new project, it is time to take stock and have a comprehensive review to report what the level of satisfaction is amongst the Neighbourhood Champions, whether or not they are all active and what the fallout rate is and of course, how this is measured?

Supplemental Answer: I agree with your comments, there should be. We are in the process of reviewing the Neighbourhood Champions scheme. Neighbourhood Champions will be asked to give feedback to the system, so we can take and evolve your views of taking part in order to roll the scheme forward across Harrow. Thank you.

4. **Questioner:** Eileen Kinnear

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation

Question: For those of my then colleagues who were present on the course for Resonance at the end of last year, my name is Eileen Kinnear and I am here to ask a question of the Leader of the Council.

“At its meeting on 14th June this year the Standards Committee adopted a Statement of Intent which indicated that it would strive to be a model among local authorities in promoting high standards of conduct ... and stated

"The committee will seek transparency in the Council's decision-making so that anyone interested - internal and external - can find out how the Council ensures high standards of conduct and governance. The ethical governance regime at Harrow will be open to scrutiny from the Council as a whole and the wider community".

It then set out 4 main categories for the future work of the Committee to do this, which included working with the public so that they can make their views known. I cannot trace that there has yet been any consultation on this.

Will the Leader please indicate when this consultation should commence and what form it will take?"

Answer: Thank you. The Standards Committee is a Committee appointed by Council with 6 Councillors and 4 Independent Members. It is, as such, answerable to Council and is totally independent of the Executive. I therefore have no direct say or control on the matter you raise.

I have, however, asked that your question be referred to the Chairman of the Standards Committee for him to reply to you. As you will be aware, we have 2 Independent Members of the Committee here, as well as all the Council Members of the Standards Committee.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my congratulations to the Standards Committee on its relaunch. Much has already been achieved, such as the adoption of a Statement of Intent and General Objectives as indicated by the question; new webpages which provide greater detail to members of the public about its role and purpose with a list of frequently asked questions with answers. These are innovative actions among local authorities nationally.

I am confident that the Committee will continue to lead the way in ensuring transparency and accountability in this important area.

Supplemental Question: I thank the Leader for his statement just made. Residents see ethical governance as a concept whereby the whole Council is firmly committed to adherence to the procedures for good conduct of business. Harrow Council recently told the Information Commissioner that they did not investigate how certain Councillors, who last year obtained copies of restricted papers from a closed Standards Sub-Committee, came to be aware that those papers contained their personal data.

As this question still concerns a number of residents, would the Leader kindly agree to meet us to discuss how this occurred?

Supplemental Answer: Thank you for your question which does not seem to be a supplementary to the one before.

I would need to take some legal advice on whether it would be appropriate for me to meet you. In principle, I would not have any objection to having a discussion but it is obviously something which I do not know about and which has been dealt with by the Standards Committee.

5. **Questioner:** Pravin Seedher
- Asked of:** Councillor Bill Stephenson, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation
- Question:** "Given that the Council needs to save £50 million over the next 3 years, how does spending several million pounds extra on new IT equipment help meet this objective, and wouldn't it be best practice to put a contract of this scale out to public tender?"

Answer: Thank you for your question. I think you were present when the Council had a wide, full ranging debate on this matter when all the questions you have asked were answered comprehensively and in full by my colleague, Councillor Graham Henson, who has the overall responsibility as Portfolio Holder for IT.

However, as a reminder, when we came to power we found that the previous administration had neglected the Council's IT, which is currently in a disjointed, dysfunctional state with 95% of the hardware beyond its useful life, totally out of date email systems and software which is extremely hard to maintain and no disaster recovery system. I could go on.

The Council was spending 0.6% of its budget on IT as compared to an average CIPFA benchmark of 2.9%. We could not afford to let this situation continue and had to ensure we had an IT system fit for purpose. We also need an upgraded IT system so we can extend Access Harrow, introduce mobile and flexible working which will lead to considerable savings to the Council and underpins many of our other savings proposals. In short, the Council cannot afford not to invest in better IT.

The procurement process we followed was the one put in place by the previous administration and we believe that this is absolutely the right way forward in these circumstances.

Supplemental Question: You will have heard the old adage "a bad workman blames his tools". In your case, your administration is blaming your IT.

Would you not agree that your administration would look pretty poor when after spending millions on new tools, it delivers budget overspends and tax rises?

Supplemental Answer: Mr Mayor, I am not blaming any tools, I am blaming the previous administration.

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING

4 NOVEMBER 2010

QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE (ITEM 10)

Fifteen minutes will be allowed for Members of the Council to ask a Portfolio Holder a question on any matter in relation to which the Executive has powers or duties.

- 1. Questioner:** Councillor Susan Hall
- Asked of:** Councillor Margaret Davine (Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing)
- Question:** “Will you guarantee that no Harrow resident who currently receives a discretionary disabled Freedom Pass will cease to do so as the result of any decision taken by your administration?”
- Answer:** We are currently consulting Adults Services users on a range of issues including concessionary travel. No decision is to be made until the outcomes of the two consultations which are being conducted are known.
- (Cllr Stephenson)**
- We conducted a thorough review of concessionary travel, Freedom Passes, blue badges and taxicards and have identified some issues concerning eligibility criteria, the way in which the system is administered and how assessments are carried out. We are now looking at the possibility of centralising all concessionary travel, administration and assessment works to ensure the service is more integrated and efficient and in particular, avoiding duplication and ensuring consistency of decision making.
- As I said, this is out for two consultations. One is going out now, there will be one in the new year. Until we have had the outcome of those consultations, we cannot give you any assurances either way.
- Supplemental Question:** Can you please give us some indication because clearly we are being lobbied for a decision? Can you give us some idea when you may have an answer to the posed question?

Supplemental Answer: At the moment we are discussing the consultation and people will remember for Social Care, that we have to go through an elaborate form of consultation, both consulting about what we can consult about and then going out for the consultation. We will not have outcomes until February / March 2011. We will then be able to have some indication as to what we may be proposing.

I have given an indication of the areas under consideration in the consultation paper. If anybody has any concerns please do make your views known. That is what the consultation is all about. It is one of the biggest consultations that has ever been carried out in this Borough on Social Care.

2. **Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation)

Question "As part of fulfilling your pledge to listen to residents, have you considered implementing something along the lines of Redbridge Council's online 'YouChoose' scheme, which allows residents to prepare dummy budgets – seeing the financial and service impacts of their decisions – and to submit suggestions on how the Council should make spending choices?"

Answer: Thank you for the question. As I have indicated on several occasions, we are always ready to learn from what other councils are doing and indeed, many councils are contacting us to learn about our innovative Transformation Programme.

As you will be aware, I have also suggested to the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, that it might be interested in undertaking some work in this area. They could perhaps look at what happens in Redbridge and elsewhere. However we are already exploring the possibility of developing a 'YouChoose' scheme on the website and we have contacted Redbridge to understand how they have taken this forward, as well as speaking with the Local Government Improvement and Development, formerly IDeA, who actually developed the tool.

Supplemental Question: The Leader of Redbridge Council wrote to you on 11 October 2010, telling you about the Redbridge scheme, which has now clocked up over 3,700 submissions to it. Instead of taking this forward, which is a free piece of software and making sure that it is online and operative before we start really getting the budget sorted out, we seem to have instead an administration which seems to be committed to more gimmicks that does not seem to know what it is doing.

Do you regret having wasted almost a month before actually getting on with actually implementing a Redbridge type scheme?

Supplemental Answer: Councillor Macleod-Cullinane seems to know all about my correspondence.

I have not received a letter from the Leader of Redbridge Council as far as I am aware. As I have just indicated to him, we are on the case. We are looking at it and we are considering it.

3. Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Rekha Shah (Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services)

Question "What progress have you made in developing libraries as "community hubs", as stated in your manifesto?"

Answer: Thank you. This is work in progress and we will put forward proposals when they are ready.

Supplemental Question: Whatever you are doing, do you not then think that it is going to be extremely difficult to do, given that you will have a third less staff?

Supplemental Answer: I will provide you with a written response to your question.

4. Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Phillip O'Dell (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety)

Question "Can you update the Council on any responses received as a result of the Motion passed on 8th July 2010, regarding the Kenton Road right turning?"

Answer: In response to the Motion, the Chief Executive wrote to Boris Johnson, Mayor for London. He responded to the matter and said that it was one for Brent Council as the relevant Highway Authority to deal with.

Supplemental Question: We are aware of that because we said this was the case in the first place. Do you regret therefore, the rash statement made by our GLA member, Councillor Navin Shah, saying we were not to worry because he would sort this out by Christmas?

Supplemental Answer: At the time that comment was made, Councillor Shah was making a factual statement. As we all know, this government has made cuts on the Department of Transport funding (which funds Transport for London and other London boroughs). Therefore I presume the proposed scheme has not been deemed to go ahead because obviously the costs would be considered to be disproportionate to the benefits.

5. **Questioner:** Councillor Anthony Seymour

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation)

Question "What steps is the Council taking to embrace and implement the government's proposals for the 'Big Society'?"

Answer: You are making a big assumption that we embrace the 'Big Society', I do not. I fully accept the general aims and objectives of getting more people directly involved in their local communities, something which is hardly new in Harrow or elsewhere in the country. It is certainly not such a big idea, as it is so often made out to be.

However, the research we have done with Harrow residents under our 'Better together' project shows that people are very willing to get involved and want to have a greater say. There is however a great reluctance among many of them to take over full responsibility for running services. You heard a Neighbourhood Champion articulating that sentiment.

The 'Big Society' is predicated on the principle that councils are part of the problem and that other people should take over from them. I do not accept that at all. Councils are actually part of the solution. We are the key to achieving these aims and objectives of the 'Big Society'.

In Harrow we have so many community projects exemplifying the ideas of the 'Big Society'. Volunteers running 'Under One Sky' and the Harrow Museum; Neighbourhood Champions; all our carers in Harrow; volunteer escorts on Special Educational Needs transport; Civic Centre staff acting as special constables and more generally the One-4-One scheme; our wonderful school governors, all rated good or excellent by Ofsted; numerous sports coaches out there every weekend coaching our young people; all the work done by faith groups and churches, temples, synagogues and mosques. I could go on. These few examples exemplify what I believe should be the aim of the 'Big Society'.

In Harrow we are fortunate that we do have a fantastic community spirit, which we hope to build on. The Council

has a co-ordinating and facilitating role in getting local residents involved in various parts of the Council work and supporting the work of the voluntary community sector. We want to build on this.

The Mayor ruled the supplementary question invalid.

6. Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Graham Henson (Portfolio Holder for Performance, Customer Services and Corporate Services)

Question “Now that your administration has finally launched its proposals for listening and engagement with residents, do you regret referring to Harrow residents who might be interested in how the Council is run as “armchair auditors” at July’s Council meeting?”

Answer: This Council in Harrow believes thoroughness and transparency is about real engagement and ongoing conversation with residents, not just publishing online statistics. We believe in taking influence beyond the town hall.

We fully support the transparency agenda and welcome public interest in the activities of the Council. We also support the proposal that the Council should publish details of their expenditure over £500.

The term ‘armchair auditor’ has been widely used in this context. Indeed Eric Pickles himself said “the simple task of putting spending online will open the doors to an army of armchair auditors, who will be able to see at a glance exactly where millions of pounds was spent last year”. He also stated that he wants to see an army of armchair auditors pore over the information.

I do, however, have concerns about the rules the Government has proposed for this. Harrow Council makes around 24,000 payments each year. The draft guidance requires 15 different pieces of information to be published for every transaction.

My concerns are, and I think all our concerns are, there will be significant effort required to set up new reports on our systems that include all 15 elements. Some of the data may have to be inputted manually, if it cannot be extracted from the system. The plethora of data that will be generated, most of which will not interest the public, will make it harder for the public to find what they want to know.

The requirements seem to be more about comparing councils than allowing residents to see what their council spends its money on. There is a significant fraud risk posed by the publication of so much detail. A significant amount of work would be required to produce the reports each month, review them, redact any sensitive information and deal with questions arising and detailed Government guidelines on what should be published goes against the Localism agenda.

Officers have set up a working group to ensure that we comply with the requirements and we have about 6 months to get this all up and running. The estimate is that costs will be around £20,000. I am sure you will agree with me that this added burden is difficult to manage in a time of such severe funding reductions.

Supplemental Question: Thank you. We are being told that we are going to have pop-up living rooms with armchairs across the Borough. When those armchair auditors turn up into those pop-up living rooms, would it not make sense for them to be more equipped with the facts about what Harrow Council is doing, be able to actually have some of that information needed to make real, meaningful engagement and discussion with the Council? Could you tell us tonight where in each ward these pop-up living rooms will actually be?

Supplemental Answer: I refer to the answer I have given to the earlier question, except for the part where the pop-ups will be. The Leader has said that he will e-mail that information out tomorrow.

7. Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Bill Stephenson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation)

Question "Since you last updated us at October's Cabinet, how many more members of the Labour Group have begun "acting within identified roles" but have yet to receive formal appointment and backdated payments?"

Answer: Briefly in response to the previous questioner, the packs informing the locations of all the pop-ups and roadshows, will be delivered to Councillors on Friday. The Councillors representing South Harrow have already been advised.

With regard to your question the answer is a very simple one - none.

(A) Council Procedure Rules (Rule 14.6)

14.6 Motions Relating to a Matter Delegated to the Executive or a Committee

14.6.1 If the Mayor, in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, considers that any motion made under this Rule refers to matters within the powers of the Executive or a Committee of the Council, then it shall be indicated on the Council summons, supported by reasons, that the motion shall stand referred to the next meeting of the Executive or to a Committee. Any Member may move that any such referral should not apply to a motion, and if seconded, that motion shall be put to the vote without any discussion, provided that after disposal of any motions relating to business reserved to the Council the Leader of the Opposition may move one motion at a meeting of Council (excluding the Annual Meeting) relating to a matter within the powers of the Executive which shall not stand automatically referred to the next meeting of the Executive but shall be dealt with as if paragraph 14.7.1 below applied, ***such motion having been identified to the Director of Legal and Governance Services at the time of the deadline for submission of motions.***

(continues as per Constitution thence on)

(B) Committee Procedure Rules (Rule 46)

46. Call-in

46.1 Call-in is the process whereby a decision of the Executive, Portfolio Holder or Officer (where the latter is taking a Key Decision) taken but not implemented, may be examined by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to implementation. They may recommend that the Executive reconsider the decision. For the avoidance of doubt a decision may only be subject to the call-in procedure once.

46.2 The process for call-in

46.2.1 Six Members of the Council ~~comprising Members from at least two political groups~~ can call in a decision of the Executive, which has been taken but not implemented. In relation to Executive decisions on education matters only the number of Members required to call in a decision which has been made but not implemented shall be six ~~Councillors being representatives from either two political groups~~ or, in the alternative, **six persons comprising** representatives of the voting co-opted members and at least one political group on Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Only decisions relating to Executive functions, whether delegated or not, may be called in.

(continues as per Constitution thence on)