

Council

Minutes

25 November 2021

Present: Councillor Ghazanfar Ali (The Worshipful the Mayor)

Councillor Sasi Suresh (The Deputy Mayor)

Councillors:

Richard Almond	Ajay Maru
Dan Anderson	Janet Mote
Marilyn Ashton	Angella Murphy-Strachan
Peymana Assad	Phillip O'Dell
Christopher Baxter	Paul Osborn
Philip Benjamin	Nitin Parekh
Simon Brown	Varsha Parmar
Sarah Butterworth	Anjana Patel
Ramji Chauhan	Pritesh Patel
Pamela Fitzpatrick	David Perry
Dean Gilligan	Natasha Proctor
Stephen Greek	Kanti Rabadia
Chetna Halai	Kiran Ramchandani
Graham Henson	Lynda Seymour
Maxine Henson	Rekha Shah
John Hinkley	Sachin Shah
Nitesh Hirani	Norman Stevenson
Hitesh Karia	Krishna Suresh
Jean Lammiman	Adam Swersky
James Lee	Antonio Weiss
Dr Lesline Lewinson	Stephen Wright
Kairul Kareema Marikar	

Apologies received: Councillor Jeff Anderson Councillor Camilla Bath

Absent:

Councillor Sue Anderson	Councillor Jerry Miles
Councillor Michael Borio	Councillor Amir Moshenson
Councillor Kamaljit Chana	Councillor Mina Parmar
Councillor Niraj Dattani	Councillor Primesh Patel
Councillor Keith Ferry	Councillor Christine Robson

Councillor Susan Hall
Councillor Honey Jamie
Councillor Ameet Jogia

Councillor Chloe Smith
Councillor Bharat Thakker

PRAYERS

The meeting opened with Prayers offered by Imam Professor Hafiz Muhammad Akram, Harrow Central Mosque

236. Minute Silence

Members of Council stood and observed a minute silence for the late Councillor Vina Mithani.

Members paid tribute to the late Councillor Vina Mithani.

237. Council Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2021 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

238. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Declarations of Interest published in advance of the meeting on the Council's website be taken as read and noted;
- (2) it be noted that the following interests were also declared:

Item 6 – Public Questions

Councillor Nitesh Hirani declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was member of the temple that the public questioner was asking a question about.

Item 12 – Motions

During the meeting, Councillor Graham Henson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Motion 1, Motion to tackle fly tipping in Harrow, as he was the Chair of the West London Waste Authority.

During the meeting and in the course of the debate on Motion 2, Motion to protect Harrow's Suburban Character, Councillor Paul Osborn declared an interest in that the Vaughan Road development had been mentioned, however, as the planning permission was already in place it was non-pecuniary. He would leave the meeting should his interest become pecuniary.

239. Procedural Motions

The Mayor indicated that given the earlier start time of the Council meeting he proposed that the closure time of the meeting be 9.30 pm. Upon being put to the vote this was agreed.

The Mayor indicated that he would take the urgent item notified on the second supplemental summons after item 7, Leader and Portfolio Holder Announcements.

240. Petitions

In accordance with Rule 10, the following petitions were received:

- (i) Petition submitted by Luke Williams on behalf of residents containing over 2,000 signatures in relation to stopping the Pinner Road development.
- (ii) Petition submitted by Georgia Weston on behalf of residents containing 279 signatures in relation to making North Harrow crossroads safe.
- (iii) Petition submitted by Councillor Angella Murphy-Strachan on behalf of the residents of Camrose Avenue containing 88 signatures in relation to congestion, speeding and parking.
- (iv) Petition submitted by Councillor Richard Almond on behalf of the residents of Cannonbury Avenue containing 174 signatures in relation to resurfacing of the road.

[The petitions stood referred to the Corporate Director of Community. In accordance with the Petition Scheme, the petition in relation to the Pinner Road Development would be debated at the next meeting of Council as it contained over 2,000 signatures].

241. Public Questions

To note that six questions from members of the public had been received and five were responded to, and the recording of these question and the answers given had been placed on the Council's website.

242. Leader and Portfolio Holder Announcements

- (i) The Leader of the Council, Councillor Graham Henson, introduced the item highlighting the achievements, challenges and proposals since the last ordinary meeting.
- (ii) Other Members spoke and/or asked questions of the Leader of the Council which were duly responded to.

243. Urgent Item - Memberships

The Mayor advised that notification had been received from the Leader of the Labour Group that he wished to make changes to the membership of the Planning Committee and an outside body appointment.

Councillor Dean Gilligan, Chief Whip of the Labour Group, announced that the Labour Group now comprised 34 members and that Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick was an Independent Member. Under proportionality rules, the Labour Group were entitled to 4 seats on the Planning Committee and given that Councillor Fitzpatrick was now an Independent Member, she was no longer entitled to a seat on the Planning Committee. The Labour Group wished to appoint Councillor Rekha Shah as a main member of the Planning Committee in place of Councillor Fitzpatrick.

Having received two nominations for the Chair of Planning Committee, which were duly seconded and put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Councillor Nitin Parekh be appointed as Chair of the Planning Committee for the remainder of the municipal year;**
- (2) it be noted that Councillor Rekha Shah was a main member of the Planning Committee in place of Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick;**
- (3) Councillor Nitin Parekh be appointed as the London Councils' Planning/ Infrastructure / Development Lead Member.**

[The Conservative Group wished to be recorded as having voted against Resolution 1 as follows:- Councillors Almond, Ashton, Baxter, Benjamin, Chauhan, Greek, Halai, Hinkley, Hirani, Karia, Lammiman, Dr Lewinson, Janet Mote, Osborn, Anjana Patel, Pritesh Patel, Rabadia, Seymour, Stevenson and Wright].

244. Revised Statement of Principles - Gambling Act 2005

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Revised Statement of Principles, as set out in Appendix A to the officer report, be approved, noting the following:**
 - a) each application would be considered on its own individual merits without regard to demand and regulate gambling in the interests of public interest; and**
 - b) each application should uphold the three gambling objectives:**
 - Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with**

crime and disorder or being used to support crime

- **Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way**
- **Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling**

- (2) **That a “no casino” resolution be continued as previously agreed by the Authority as there was no evidence base to show the need for a casino or the benefits of such an establishment (the policy continues to support well-run, compliant gambling premises).**

245. Constitution Update

RESOLVED: That

- (1) **the amendments to the Constitution, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed;**
- (2) **it be noted that the Monitoring Officer had a delegation to make minor housekeeping amendments prior to the new document being published.**

246. Information Report - Decisions taken under the Urgency Procedure - Executive

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

247. Questions with Notice

To note that two questions from Councillors to the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders had been received and that the recording was on the Council's website.

248. Motions

- (i) **“Motion to tackle fly-tipping in Harrow**

Motion in the names of Councillor Paul Osborn and Councillor Anjana Patel

This Council notes:

- The number of articles in the local press about incidences of fly-tipping in Harrow has seen an increase in the last year.
- That Harrow Council's street cleaning teams do their very best, under difficult circumstances, to clear fly-tips and keep our borough clean.
- Government data shows that there were 11,151 fly-tipping

incidents for 2019/2020, which was slightly lower than 2018/19, but is still significantly higher than 2016/17.

- At the 2021 Budget Full Council meeting the Conservative Group proposed pilot schemes:
 - Investing £474,000 in a specialised street cleaning taskforce to tackle fly-tipping head on and keep our neighbourhoods clean.
 - Providing £200,000 of funding to set up a free bulk waste collection service for large items, such as sofas and mattresses.
- These measures were proposed to encourage local people to dispose of items through the proper channels, rather than dumping them in the streets.
- These costed pilot schemes were voted down by Harrow's Labour Councillors.

This Council resolves:

- To call on the Executive to implement the fully costed pilot schemes put forward by Harrow Conservatives at the February Full Council meeting and introduce:
 - A specialised street cleaning taskforce to tackle the blight of fly-tipping.
 - A free bulk waste collection service for Harrow residents.”

Upon the meeting moving to the vote, the Conservative Group requested that their vote be recorded. The Motion was lost.

[For the Motion: Councillors Almond, Ashton, Baxter, Benjamin, Chauhan, Greek, Halai, Hinkley, Hirani, Karia, Lammiman, Dr Lewinson, Janet Mote, Osborn, Anjana Patel, Pritesh Patel, Rabadia, Seymour, Stevenson and Wright].

Against the Motion: The Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Ghazanfar Ali, Councillors Dan Anderson, Assad, Brown, Butterworth, Gilligan, Graham Henson, Maxine Henson, Lee, Marikar, Maru, Murphy-Strachan, O'Dell, Parekh, Varsha Parmar, Perry, Proctor, Ramchandani, Rekha Shah, Sachin Shah, Krishna Suresh, Sasikala Suresh, Swersky and Weiss.

Abstain: Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick.]

(ii) “Motion to protect Harrow’s Suburban Character

Motion in the names of Councillor Marilyn Ashton and Councillor Paul Osborn

This Council notes:

- The current Labour administration, at best, has done little to protect Harrow's suburban character, and at worst, has wilfully encouraged tall and densely packed developments in our leafy borough.
- That current planning policies used by the Council are not creating a family friendly environment or delivering desirable homes for families to inhabit.
- The report by the GLA Planning & Regeneration Committee, *Housing typologies investigation findings*, which states the following.
 - That tall buildings are less sustainable.
 - That tall buildings are often inappropriate for families.
 - That tall buildings have become even less desirable in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This Council believes:

- It should do everything possible to resist the ravages of inappropriate development in our borough.
- It should control the density of developments and ensure people are not forced to live in cramped conditions.

This Council resolves:

To expedite and resource the work on adopting a Core Strategy that will protect Harrow's suburbs from high-rise development before it's too late."

Upon the meeting moving to the vote, the Conservative Group requested that their vote be recorded. The Motion was lost.

[For the Motion: Councillors Almond, Ashton, Baxter, Benjamin, Chauhan, Greek, Halai, Hinkley, Hirani, Karia, Lammiman, Dr Lewinson, Janet Mote, Osborn, Anjana Patel, Pritesh Patel, Rabadia, Seymour, Stevenson and Wright.

Against the Motion: The Worshipful the Mayor Councillor Ghazanfar Ali, Councillors Dan Anderson, Brown, Butterworth, Gilligan, Graham Henson, Maxine Henson, Lee, Marikar, Maru, Murphy-Strachan, O'Dell, Parekh, Varsha Parmar, Perry, Proctor, Ramchandani, Rekha Shah, Sachin Shah, Krishna Suresh, Sasikala Suresh, Swersky and Weiss.

Abstain: Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick.

Absent: Councillor Peymana Assad.]

(iii) “Stop Abuse of Women in Public Office Motion

Motion in the names of Councillor Pamela Fitzpatrick and Councillor Peymana Assad

Women who put themselves forward to stand for public office will no doubt expect a higher level of scrutiny than that of the general population. Increasingly however, the experience is one that goes far beyond what is acceptable scrutiny and the experience drives them out of politics and deters other women from standing.

A review from the Independent Committee for Standards on Public Life undertaken in 2018 revealed that in the UK, political candidates endure threats and intimidation far beyond the scope of “scrutiny” and that female politicians are disproportionately the targets of intimidation.

Lord Bew, Chair of the Committee at the time, said:

“This level of vile and threatening behaviour, albeit by a minority of people, against those standing for public office is unacceptable in a healthy democracy. We cannot get to a point where people are put off standing, retreat from debate, and even fear for their lives as a result of their engagement in politics. This is not about protecting elites or stifling debate, it is about ensuring we have a vigorous democracy in which participants engage in a responsible way which recognises others’ rights to participate and to hold different points of view.”

This council agrees:

While debate and having different views is all part of a healthy democracy; abuse, public intimidation and threats are designed to undermine democratic decision making by generating fear in those who represent it and this behaviour is totally unacceptable.

It is the responsibility of all of us in public life to play our part by setting a tone which respects the right of every individual to participate and does not, however inadvertently, open a door to intimidation.

Political parties have an important duty of care to candidates, members and supporters. Intimidation takes place across the political spectrum, both in terms of those engaging in and those receiving intimidation. The leadership of political parties must recognise this.

All parties must show greater leadership in this issue. All parties must call out members who engage in this appalling behaviour and must ensure appropriate sanctions are imposed swiftly and

consistently.

The Council resolves:

1. For the Leader and Leader of the Opposition to, as a priority, ask current councillors to come forward with examples of any abuse they may have received and to work with the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer on a programme of training and support to raise awareness and put in place appropriate measures to deal with any instances.
2. To call on our three Harrow MPs to support legislative and systemic change to support those in public office.”

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

- (iv) **“Motion requesting the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer to apologise for delivering poor value for money for Harrow Taxpayers**

Motion in the names of Councillor Antonio Weiss and Councillor Natasha Proctor

Following this government’s poor handling of the Covid-19 pandemic and mismanagement of the economy, [Harrow households face an increasing tax burden of £3,000 per household, per year, according to the Resolution Foundation.](#)

The government, through its recent Comprehensive Spending Review and anticipated Local Government Finance Settlement, has placed a starting assumption that all councils will be required to raise Council Tax in order to cover the costs of more than a decade of cuts to local authority budgets.

Harrow is regarded by peers as a high quality, low cost authority, with an extremely low level of financial reserves.

Harrow has been a historically underfunded borough compared with peers. It is widely regarded that Harrow Council provides good value for money for Harrow residents and businesses.

Harrow remains one of the lowest funded Councils both within London and nationally and Council notes: -

- The Council’s Revenue Support Grant (RSG), its main source of funding from central government, has reduced by 97% to just £1.6m, a reduction of £50.5m since 2015.
- The Council receives no additional funding to meet demographic and inflationary pressures. Therefore, growth of

£77.4m has had to be provided to fund the continued pressures on front line services

- The total budget shortfall to find over the nine years of £147.3m to achieve a balanced budget.
- Council Tax has been increased largely in line with referendum limits and full use has been made of the Adults Social Care precept, but this has still been below the amount needed to properly fund services.
- The reduced funding grants have meant a transfer of responsibility onto the council taxpayer to 78% - from 51% in 2014.

By contrast, this Conservative government has been found to have egregiously wasted taxpayers' money on a £20bn Test & Trace system of limited efficacy, handed out contracts without due procurement processes to friends of Ministers, and supported and backed Conservative MPs who have run inappropriate second jobs, on occasions, not even from this country, let alone their constituency.

This government is failing to provide value for money to Harrow residents.

THIS COUNCIL RESOLVES:

- For the Leader of the Council and Leader of the Opposition to write to the Prime Minister requesting an apology for this government's wasteful use of Harrow taxpayer's money
- For the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition, and the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, requesting that Harrow is properly funded for the national services provided
- That once proper funding is reinstated, the Leader of the Council commits to implementing a freeze in Council Tax, in order to protect Harrow residents from the £3,000 per annum tax increases imposed by this Conservative government."

A tabled amendment was received and duly seconded. Upon being put to the vote the amendment was lost.

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

249. Procedure for the Termination of Meeting

At 9.22 pm, during the debate on item 12 (3) Stop Abuse of Women in Public Office Motion, it was proposed that the guillotine be extended to 9.40 pm. Upon being put to the vote this was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the provisions of Rules 9.2 and 9.3 be applied as set out above.

(Close of Meeting: All business having been completed, the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 9.43 pm).