

## LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING -

28 SEPTEMBER 2017

### QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by Members of Council or a Member of the Executive or the Chair of any Committee.

**Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

**Asked of:** Councillor Sachin Shah (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships and Devolution)

#### Question 7:

“The last time Harrow Council froze council tax, was in 2014 when it was led by Cllr. Susan Hall and the Conservatives. After Labour’s 3 successive council tax rises, adding over 11% to our residents’ bills, will you rule out further council tax rises in 2018?”

#### Answer:

In answering this question, it’s important to understand how the primary source of funding for Local Government, the Revenue Support Grant, has been significantly reduced since 2014 and how it will continue to reduce until 2019/20, alongside unprecedented growth in demand pressures, which has inevitably meant increasing Council Tax to protect front line services.

#### Revenue Support Grant

2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
42,628	32,034	21,935	13,019	7,332	1,559
Cumulative reduction in RSG					
	25%	49%	69%	83%	96%

The budget for 18/19 will be brought to December Cabinet for consultation which will include a proposal for council tax.

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**Questioner:** Councillor Richard Almond

**Asked of:** Councillor Christine Robson (Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Schools)

#### **Question 8:**

Do you believe that your department's budget was actually sound and realistic when you proposed it to Council in February and are you confident that you will contain your department's spending within the budgeted figure by the end of the current financial year?

#### **Answer**

In 2017/18 £2.9m of growth was included in the budget to support increased demand in children's services. Of this, £1m was for SEN Transport which is anticipated to be within budget this financial year. The remaining £1.9m was for social care staffing and children's placements & accommodation. However, since the budget was set in February, there has been a further increase in demand, in particular, for more costly children's placements and accommodation. There are a number of actions taking place to mitigate the pressures as far as possible and it is forecast that the Council wide budget will report a balanced position by the end of the year, whilst accepting that there will be pressures and opportunities across the directorates.

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**Questioner: Councillor Marilyn Ashton**

**Asked of: Councillor Sachin Shah (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships and Devolution)**

#### **Question 9:**

“Are the increasing missed bin collections one of those “little big things” the Leader is so proud of?”

#### **Answer**

The issue of Little big things is something that is very important to me and the residents of Harrow. I will always focus on them. Sometimes we do miss bins, I want that number to be as low as possible, but if we do miss a bin, we should communicate why we missed the bin, and if it should have been picked up we should go back as quick as possible and collect it.