

# COUNCIL (EXTRAORDINARY)

## MINUTES

### 10 MARCH 2011

- 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                 |                     |

## PRAYERS

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

### 65. EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL

**RESOLVED:** To note that this Extraordinary Council meeting had been convened in accordance with Rule 3.1, following the decision of the GLA to alter its precept setting date.

### 66. COUNCIL MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2010 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

### 67. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Mayor invited appropriate declaration of interests. Members declaring interests considered these to be personal and that they could speak and vote thereon.

Item 8 – 12: Corporate Plan – Vision and Corporate Priorities; Final Revenue Budget 2011/12 – 2015/16; Housing Revenue Account Budget 2011/12 – 2015/16; Capital Programme 2011/12 – 2015/16; Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Strategy 2011/12

Councillor Sue Anderson declared that she worked for NHS Harrow and was a member of Unison.

Councillor Mrs Camilla Bath stated that her husband undertook financial voluntary work for a number of local organisations.

Councillor Mrs Lurline Champagnie OBE declared that she was member of the Royal College of Nursing.

Councillor Mrinal Choudhury stated that he belonged to a number of organisations which received a grant from Harrow Council.

Councillor John Cowan declared that his grandson was in receipt of an education grant, and he was involved in local charities.

Councillor Stephen Greek stated that he was employed by the Greater London Authority (GLA).

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane declared that his sister was employed at Hatch End High School.

Councillor Jerry Miles advised that he was a member of Unison.

Councillor Chris Mote declared that his sister was a teacher at a school in Harrow.

Councillor Janet Mote declared that she was an ATL Union representative, and that her sister-in-law was a teacher at a school in Harrow.

Councillor Paul Osborn declared that he had been in receipt of hospitality from Capita which was declared in his register of gifts and hospitality. He was also the Council representative on the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

Councillor Anthony Seymour declared that his sister was in receipt of Council Tax benefit and Job Seekers Allowance.

Councillor Lynda Seymour declared that her sister-in-law was in receipt of Council Tax benefit and Job Seekers Allowance. She was also a member of Unison.

Councillor Navin Shah declared that his daughter worked for St Luke's Hospice and that he was a member of the Mahatma Gandhi Foundation. He was also a member of GMB Branch of Harrow.

Councillor Mrs Rekha Shah declared that her daughter worked at St Luke's Hospice. The Councillor also declared that she was a member of Unison.

Councillor Mark Versallion declared that he was a non-executive member of the North West London NHS Hospital Trust. This interest also applied to Item 16 – Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee Terms of Reference.

Councillor Stephen Wright declared that his wife was a teacher at a school in Harrow.

#### Item 18 (2) – Motions - Local Government Association

Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane declared that he was employed by London Councils Ltd.

### **68. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS / PRESENTATIONS**

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

- On 1 January 2011, he had supported Harrow's entry in the New Year's Day Parade and that he was proud to announce that Harrow had won a prize of £1,500. He thanked all those who had supported this event, including former Mayor, Councillor Jean Lammiman;
- He had attended 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebratory parties for Mrs Gladys Bubb and Mrs Gwendoline Melita Hill, respectively. The Mayor was proud to have attended four 100<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations during his current Mayoral Year.

The Council congratulated those Harrow residents that had been awarded New Year Honours by Her Majesty the Queen, noting with particular pleasure that Harrow's former Chief Executive, Mr Antony Gerard Redmond, had received a Knighthood for services to local government.

The Council joined the Mayor in congratulating Councillors Mr and Mrs Seymour on the birth of their twins, Jonathan and Charlotte.

The Mayor then referred to those instances where a serving Deputy Mayor did not ascend to the position of the Mayor of the Borough. He spoke highly of the hard work and commitment such appointees gave to the role and that this went unmarked by the authority. In recognition of their hard work and commitment, he proposed a new tradition whereby a memento of appreciation be awarded where these unusual instances arose. To this end, the Mayor welcomed Mary John and Councillor Chris Mote to the Dais and presented them with a memento in recognition of their Deputy Mayoral Years.

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

## **69. PROCEDURAL MOTIONS**

- (1) The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, moved a procedural motion under Rule 26.1 that, for the purposes of the debate on the Revenue Budget, the rules of debate be varied, as set out in the tabled documents, and that the procedure therein be also applied to the reports on the Housing Revenue Account, the Treasury Management Strategy, the Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision, the Capital Programme and the Corporate Plan insofar as the recommendations and amendments be debated jointly.
- (2) Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane, duly seconded by Councillor Paul Osborn, proposed a variation of the order of the business on the Summons to permit the hearing of Item 17 – Questions with Notice prior to the commencement of the joint debate on Items 8-12 on the Summons. Upon a vote, this Motion was lost.
- (3) The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, rose to request the Mayor to reconsider his decision concerning the admission of the Motion at Item 18(3) – EU Funding. The Mayor reconsidered the content of the Motion and ruled that the Motion, as worded, was not relevant to Harrow and therefore Out of Order. He therefore withdrew the item and his previous decision.
- (4) The Mayor advised that Item 14 – Draft West London Waste Plan was withdrawn as the issue had been resolved under the urgency process.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the meeting be conducted in the order of the business set out on the Summons;**
- (2) the partial suspension under Rule 25.1 regarding the moving of Recommendations from Cabinet and the rules of debate (including extended time for opening speeches by all three political groups), as set out in the tabled papers, be approved for the purposes of the debate on:
  - 1. Item 8 – Corporate Plan – Vision and Priorities**
  - 2. Item 9 – Revenue Budget 2011/12 to 2015/16**
  - 3. Item 10 – Housing Revenue Account Budget 2011/12 – 2015/16**
  - 4. Item 11 - Capital Programme 2011/12 – 2015/16**
  - 5. Item 12 - Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Strategy 2011/12;****
- (3) the withdrawal of Item 14 – Draft West London Waste Plan be noted.**
- (4) the withdrawal, by the Mayor, of Motion 18(3) ‘EU Funding’ as not being relevant to Harrow and therefore Out of Order, be noted.**

*Councillors Husain Akhtar, Mrs Camilla Bath, Christine Bednell, Mrs Lurline Champagnie OBE, Kam Chana, Ramji Chauhan, John Cowan, Tony Ferrari, Stephen Greek, Susan Hall, Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Mrs Vina Mithani, Chris Mote, Janet Mote, John Nickolay, Joyce Nickolay, Paul Osborn, Richard Romain, Anthony Seymour, Lynda Seymour, Stanley Sheinwald, Mark Versallion, Simon Williams and Stephen Wright wished to be recorded as having voted in favour of varying the order of business set out on the Summons.*

**70. PETITIONS**

No petitions were presented.

**71. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

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

**72. CORPORATE PLAN - VISION AND CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- (i) Further to item 8 on the Summons, the Council received Recommendation I of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 February 2011.**
- (ii) The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, formally moved the Recommendation.**

- (iii) Following a full debate and, upon a vote, the substantive Recommendation was carried and adopted.

**RESOLVED: That the Vision and Priorities together with the Corporate Plan prepared to reflect the Vision and Priorities be adopted.**

*Councillors Husain Akhtar, Mrs Camilla Bath, Christine Bednell, Mrs Lurline Champagnie OBE, Kam Chana, Ramji Chauhan, John Cowan, Tony Ferrari, Stephen Greek, Susan Hall, Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Mrs Vina Mithani, Chris Mote, Janet Mote, John Nickolay, Joyce Nickolay, Paul Osborn, Richard Romain, Anthony Seymour, Lynda Seymour, Stanley Sheinwald, Mark Versallion, Simon Williams and Stephen Wright wished to be recorded as having voted against the Recommendation set out on the Summons.*

### **73. FINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2011/12 - 2015/16**

- (i) Further to item 9 on the Summons, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, moved Recommendation II of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 February 2011
- (ii) Following a full debate, during which in accordance with Rule 12.1, a number of Questions Without Notice were asked and responded to, and upon a vote, the Recommendations were carried and adopted.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Revenue Budget 2011/12 – 2015/16 be approved, to enable the Council Tax for 2011/12 to be set;**
- (2) the model Council Tax resolution at Appendix II to these minutes, be approved;**
- (3) Members' Allowances be frozen and the current Members' Allowances Scheme be adopted for 2011/12;**
- (4) the proposed Virement Rules be added to the Financial Regulations;**
- (5) the Policy on the Use of Contingency be approved;**
- (6) the Schools Budget be approved;**
- (7) the Reserves Policy be approved.**

*Councillors Husain Akhtar, Mrs Camilla Bath, Christine Bednell, Mrs Lurline Champagnie OBE, Kam Chana, Ramji Chauhan, John Cowan, Tony Ferrari, Stephen Greek, Susan Hall, Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Mrs Vina Mithani, Chris Mote, Janet Mote, John Nickolay, Joyce Nickolay, Paul Osborn, Richard Romain, Anthony Seymour, Lynda Seymour, Stanley Sheinwald, Mark*

*Versallion, Simon Williams and Stephen Wright wished to be recorded as having voted against the Recommendations set out on the Summons.*

#### **74. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUDGET 2011/12 - 2015/16**

With regard to item 10 on the Summons the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, moved Recommendation III of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 February 2011.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Housing Revenue Account for 2011/12, at Appendix III to these minutes, be approved;**
- (2) the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme, at Appendix IV to these minutes, be approved.**

*Councillors Husain Akhtar, Mrs Camilla Bath, Christine Bednell, Mrs Lurline Champagnie OBE, Kam Chana, Ramji Chauhan, John Cowan, Tony Ferrari, Stephen Greek, Susan Hall, Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Mrs Vina Mithani, Chris Mote, Janet Mote, John Nickolay, Joyce Nickolay, Paul Osborn, Richard Romain, Anthony Seymour, Lynda Seymour, Stanley Sheinwald, Mark Versallion, Simon Williams and Stephen Wright wished to be recorded as having voted against the Recommendation set out on the Summons.*

#### **75. CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/12 - 2015/16**

Concerning item 11 on the Summons the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, moved Recommendation IV of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 February 2011.

**RESOLVED: That the Capital Programme for 2011/12 to 2015/16 be approved.**

*Councillors Husain Akhtar, Mrs Camilla Bath, Christine Bednell, Mrs Lurline Champagnie OBE, Kam Chana, Ramji Chauhan, John Cowan, Tony Ferrari, Stephen Greek, Susan Hall, Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Mrs Vina Mithani, Chris Mote, Janet Mote, John Nickolay, Joyce Nickolay, Paul Osborn, Richard Romain, Anthony Seymour, Lynda Seymour, Stanley Sheinwald, Mark Versallion, Simon Williams and Stephen Wright wished to be recorded as having voted against the Recommendation set out on the Summons.*

#### **76. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY, PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION (MRP) POLICY AND STRATEGY 2011/12**

Further to item 12 on the Summons the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, moved Recommendation V of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 February 2011.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators be approved;**
- (2) the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Strategy for 2011/12 be approved.**

*Councillors Husain Akhtar, Mrs Camilla Bath, Christine Bednell, Mrs Lurline Champagnie OBE, Kam Chana, Ramji Chauhan, John Cowan, Tony Ferrari, Stephen Greek, Susan Hall, Barry Macleod-Cullinane, Mrs Vina Mithani, Chris Mote, Janet Mote, John Nickolay, Joyce Nickolay, Paul Osborn, Richard Romain, Anthony Seymour, Lynda Seymour, Stanley Sheinwald, Mark Versallion, Simon Williams and Stephen Wright wished to be recorded as having voted against the Recommendations set out on the Summons.*

**77. SINGLE EQUALITIES SCHEME**

With regard to item 13 on the Summons the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, moved Recommendation I of the Cabinet meeting held on 15 December 2010 and noted the submission of Recommendation I of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 9 February 2011.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be received;**
- (2) the Single Equalities Scheme (SES) be approved.**

**78. CORE STRATEGY - PROPOSED SUBMISSION VERSION**

With regard to item 15 on the Summons the Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, moved Recommendation VI of the Cabinet meeting held on 10 February 2011.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the submission version of the Core Strategy be placed on a six week statutory pre-submission consultation subject to authority being delegated to the Divisional Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise, to agree amendments to the proposed submission version of the Core Strategy to reflect any changes deemed appropriate prior to the pre-submission publication;**
- (2) the Core Strategy be approved for submission to the Secretary of State following the pre-submission consultation, subject to the following:**



- (a) authority being delegated to the Divisional Director Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise, to agree a schedule of any minor amendments to the Core Strategy resulting from the six week pre-submission consultation and to submit the schedule of minor amendments to the Secretary of State along with the Core Strategy;
- (b) any substantial amendments to the Core Strategy being reported back to the Cabinet.

## **79. HEALTH SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

With regard to item 16 on the Summons the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Jerry Miles, moved Recommendation II of the meeting held on 9 February 2011.

**RESOLVED:** That the change to the name of the Sub-Committee to Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee, with its revised terms of reference as set out at Appendix IV to these minutes, be ratified.

## **80. QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE**

In accordance with Rule 12, the questions submitted by Councillors to which written responses were provided by Portfolio Holders, are contained at Appendix VI to these minutes.

## **81. MOTION - FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**

- (i) At item 18(1), the Council received a replacement Motion, in the tabled papers, in the names of Councillors Paul Osborn and Barry Macleod-Cullinane with the following terms:

“This Council fully supports the plan put forward by the Director of Legal & Governance Services in ‘The Lawyer’ magazine to automatically publish all information that could be disclosed under an FOI request on the Council’s website.

This plan will:

- further the understanding of and participation in the public debate of issues;
- promote accountability and transparency in decisions made by the Council;
- promote accountability and transparency in the spending of public money.

This Council fully supports the transparency agenda and welcomes public interest in its activities and decisions. Harrow could be an exciting example of a public authority showing what you can do when you think of the FOI Act as an opportunity, not a burden. It is committed to turning the traditional edifice on its head and moving away from the defensive position of keeping everything to itself and towards making information public whenever possible. This Council wants to be one which publishes information because it wants to, not because it has to.

This Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to work with the Director of Legal and Governance Services, other senior officers and Councillors of all parties in bringing this plan to fruition as soon as possible – with a full report brought to Cabinet within the next 12 months.”

- (ii) There was an amendment proposed in the names of Councillors Graham Henson and Victoria Silver, which sought to amend the Motion to read as follows:

“This Council fully supports openness and transparency and welcomes public interest in its activities and decisions.

This Council will publish information not because it has to, but because it wants to. However, this Labour-led Council believes that 'open government' should go well beyond the publication of information and data. This Council will continue to seek every opportunity to not only inform residents about what their Council is doing in a way that is truly transparent but , more importantly, to actively involve and engage them in issues affecting their community.”

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

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

## **82. MOTION - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION**

- (i) At item 18(2), the Council received a Motion in the names of Councillors Barry Macleod-Cullinane and Susan Hall in the following terms:

“This Council believes that the Local Government Association (LGA) should properly recognise the full reality of the reduction in government funding faced by local authorities, both in terms of the subscription charged to member authorities and in decisions taken about its Chief Executive’s pay and conditions.

This Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to write to the LGA to ask that Harrow's subscription be reduced proportionate to the reduction in central government funding to free up more money to pay for front line services to the benefit of Harrow residents.

Furthermore, should the LGA not agree to such a reduction and not respond before the close of business (5pm) on 28<sup>th</sup> March, this Council instructs the Chief Executive to immediately write to the LGA, ensuring receipt of this letter by 31<sup>st</sup> March, giving the required 12 months' notice of Harrow's intention to withdraw from the LGA, with such withdrawal to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012."

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

"This Council believes that all bodies to which it is affiliated to should properly recognise the full reality of the reduction in government funding faced by local authorities in terms of the subscription charged to member authorities and the services which they provide. Council further notes that its subscription to the Local Government Association has been cut by 13% for next financial year.

This Council instructs the Chief Executive to set up a review of all major organisations to which it is affiliated to consider whether it should continue its affiliation and to make the above points to those organisations to which it decides to remain affiliated."

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

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

**83. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURE BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS, LEADER AND DEPUTY LEADER, AND USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROCEDURE**

The 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 meeting.

**RESOLVED: That the report be noted.**

#### 84. DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROCEDURE - COUNCIL

The Extraordinary Council received a report of the Director of Legal and Governance Services advising of one urgent decision 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 decision taken under delegation by the Chief Executive, on behalf of Council, be noted.**

#### 85. PROCEDURE FOR TERMINATION OF MEETING

- (i) At 10.26 pm, during the debate, the Mayor asked if Members wished to extend the meeting. The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bill Stephenson, proposed that the time be extended until the conclusion of the debate on items 8-14, upon which the guillotine procedure be implemented. There was no dissent and this ruling was applied by the Mayor;
- (ii) at 10.35 pm, upon the conclusion of the debate on items 8-14, 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 the following Items:

<b>Items</b>	<b>Reports</b>
8	Corporate Plan – Vision and Corporate Priorities
9	Final Revenue Budget 2011/12 – 2015/16
10	Housing Revenue Account Budget 2011/12 – 2015/16
11	Capital Programme 2011/12 – 2015/16
12	Treasury Management Strategy, Prudential Indicators and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy and Strategy 2011/12
13	Single Equalities Scheme
15	Core Strategy – Proposed Submission Version
16	Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee
17	Questions with Notice
18(1)	Motion – Freedom of Information
18(2)	Motion – Local Government Association

- |    |  |
|----|--|
| 19 | Decisions Taken Under Urgency procedure by Portfolio Holders, Leader and Deputy Leader, and Use of Special Urgency Procedure |
| 20 | Decision Taken Under Urgency Procedure - Council.  |

**(CLOSE OF MEETING:** All business having been completed, the Mayor declared the meeting closed at 10.39 pm).

**LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW**

**EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL MEETING**

**10 MARCH 2011**

**PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM 7)**

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:** Malcolm Parr, Harrow in Business

**Asked of:** Councillor Bill Stephenson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation) / Councillor Keith Ferry (Portfolio Holder for Planning, Development and Enterprise)

**Question:** “Is the Council aware that Harrow in Business, a not-for-profit organisation and one of the few Enterprise agencies left in London, supported over 500 people considering a business start-up last year and helped create 180 jobs in the borough; that funding has already been cut by 50% and that the further removal of grant by Harrow Council will have a profound effect on the viability of the agency and will place at risk the livelihood of small firms in Harrow, which are essential for the local economy?”

**Answer:** My short answer was going to be “no” but a greater explanation is appropriate.  
**(Councillor Ferry)**

Harrow in Business (HiB) has supplied Harrow Council with monthly data on the number of actual business start ups. The performance in the 12 months from January to December 2010 shows that HiB supported 56 business start ups.

HiB is also a member of the Sustainable Development and Enterprise Group and contributes to the delivery of the Enterprising Harrow Strategy. HiB is asked to supply quarterly updates and whilst the figure of 180 jobs created is welcome, I have to express some surprise at the announcement of this figure, which has not been reported or verified before.

As HiB is an Enterprise Agency the Council is interested in

the impact of business support and not the number of people it has seen that had considered starting a business. In this the Council takes a commercial approach. For example, a commercial business can be measured by sales, income and profit. It is not measured by the number of people that visit the premises.

The Council is keen to continue to support HiB's work but needs to ensure that it delivers clear and beneficial outcomes, in return for any funding it receives from the Council in the future.

There is a misconception over the Council's funding of HiB going forward. We are not ceasing funding, rather we will continue to fund HiB through a two year transitional period where we will support the movement away from a reliance on a public subsidy.

HiB will, however, only receive this funding on the delivery of agreed outcomes. These will include business growth and support to business start ups. We hope paying HiB in this manner will be a more effective way to ensure local business needs are met.

Harrow Council is considering the deletion this evening from salary budgets, of the post of HiB Chief Executive. The HiB Chief Executive is a Council employee. HiB does not receive funding directly from the Council for this post. HiB is currently using a proportion of the salary of the Chief Executive to secure match funding from ERDF (European Union funding). Providing a direct grant to HiB will allow it to potentially secure additional match funding and more money from ERDF.

Public funding for the Chief Executive post could not be provided without an Agreement for the use of the funds. HiB have refused to sign a proposed Service Level Agreement and Secondment Agreement for the Chief Executive post. It is unfortunate that HiB has lost 50% of its funding. However, the Council is not responsible for the decisions of other funding bodies.

HiB's business start up programme was funded by the London Development Agency (LDA) through the Business London Programme, and not by Harrow Council. Harrow Council has lobbied for additional funding for HiB, including a meeting with Richard Barnes, Deputy Mayor of London. Unfortunately, this was not forthcoming and it is another example of the extreme financial pressures currently being faced by all public sector organisations across the United Kingdom.

The Council does expect HiB to develop an income generating model independent of public subsidy. It therefore expects HiB will use the opportunities provided by Harrow Council through the Transition Grant, the incubator space at Honeypot Lane and the LAA funding to deliver outcomes for Harrow businesses and generate income for itself.

**Supplemental Question:** Is the Council aware that an incubation Business Centre is nearing completion at Stanmore which will more than double the chance of success of start-up businesses of succeeding in the first 3 years? If the Council is aware of this, the question therefore would be that we have an opportunity, from Berkeley Homes who are developing the site, to actually take over on behalf of the business community; not only the management but the ownership, the direction and the development of this incubation site which will benefit the whole of the business community in Harrow and its neighbouring boroughs.

Is the Council prepared to support that Berkeley Homes application and develop it through and give the business community the reason to succeed over the next few, very difficult, years?

**Supplemental Answer:** My answer was going to be “yes” to that but I will elucidate a bit.

The HiB premises in Honeypot Lane was obtained by Harrow Council, in fact by the previous administration, as part of the Section 106 agreement for the development of the Government offices site by Berkeley Homes. In that agreement they are given, rent free for the next year, premises to move into when they move out of Enterprise House. They have the opportunity to produce a business case for running the incubator unit and I very much hope, as a Director of Harrow in Business, that they can secure that opportunity to provide them an income stream independent of any public subsidy and I hope Harrow in Business will succeed over the forthcoming years.

2. **Questioner:** Eric Silver

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

**Question** “Has an assessment been carried out to ensure that the new self-service equipment being installed in Harrow's libraries is suitable for Harrow residents who may suffer from disabilities or physical difficulties?”



**Answer:** The Intellident self-service kiosks are fully DDA compliant and have been successfully installed and used by all sections of the community in other Local Authorities. So we have seen them in practice.

The screen contrast and font complies with visually impaired requirements. John Gill from the RNIB was instrumental in the design of the self-service kiosk interface advising on colours, fonts and the way the graphics operate. The kiosk height is also suitable for wheelchair users.

Harrow User Group Sessions have been timetabled for 24 and 25 March 2011, to enable the elderly, children and people with disabilities to test the self-service equipment. These sessions have been set up by contacting Harrow Association of Disabled people and other relevant Harrow organisations.

Library staff will be available to help those members of the public with severe visual impairments.

**Supplemental Question:** As part of this assessment process, did you consider the inter-library loan charged by nearly 10% which at £5 is already one of the most expensive in London and which is a service used by many of those residents unable to get themselves to other libraries outside the borough to collect their books?

Your nearest borough only charges £1.50 and yet Harrow has £5 and is now going to increase to £5.40, which I just cannot see the justification of.

**Supplemental Answer:** The cost of hiring of books at the libraries in Harrow has been given consideration. I will give you an answer in writing.

3. **Questioner:** Pravin Seedher

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

**Question** “Do you not agree that, before the Coalition Government’s in-year emergency budget, and well-before December’s local government finance settlement’s spending reductions, required to deal with the financial mess left by the Blair-Brown Labour Government, your first press release as Leader of the Council (26 May), stated that your administration needed to find some £50m of savings over 3 years, and can you detail what measures – aside from

the Council Tax Freeze funded by an extra grant from the Coalition Government – are your administration implementing to lift the burden on Harrow’s taxpayers while ensuring that no frontline services are cut?”

**Answer:** The difficult financial situation in which this country and the whole western world finds itself is not due to any particular politicians in any one country, but is solely down to the irresponsible bankers. The former PM, Gordon Brown, is to be congratulated for his leadership in taking the international lead in preventing a worldwide depression. We should pay very careful attention to the Governor of the Bank England who claims that the very same bankers are about to repeat their folly all over again.

However, I do agree with you that the present government has imposed a very heavy burden on local government and on Harrow Council Tax payers. Although we are one of the most efficient parts of the public sector, local government has been picked out and hardest hit by this government.

The Council’s approach to meeting this very significant funding imposed by the government is to make genuine savings at the same time as protecting and enhancing front line services. My budget speech and speeches of my colleagues later this evening will explain in great detail how we intend to do this.

**Supplemental Question:** Will he accept that this situation arose during a Labour government?

**Supplemental Answer:** I think I made it very clear that it was the irresponsible bankers that caused the problem. The former PM, Gordon Brown, was part of the solution helping to make sure that the country did not end up with a worldwide depression.

**4. Questioner:** Jeremy Zeid

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

**Question** “In view of the tight budgetary situation, what efforts, savings and changes have been made to reduce the size and cost of the authority and its bureaucracy in order to ensure that front-line services are protected?”

**Answer:** In proposing the budget tonight, the Council has worked hard to protect front line services and to maximise the opportunity to make ourselves more efficient, leaner and fitter. Our Vision is Working Together: Our Harrow, Our

Community and we developed the priorities that underpin this budget by involving our residents in an ambitious new type of dialogue for this Council called Let's Talk.

As we laid out at Cabinet in July, we have developed proposals with three objectives in mind:

1. Being a more efficient and effective organisation that can live within its means.
2. Joining up and personalising customer service for our residents.
3. Building on the community spirit of residents to be more involved in the future of their borough.

My budget speech and the speeches of my colleagues later this evening will explain in detail how we intend to do this. In particular, I will be drawing attention to a very significant reduction in senior management; a programme of spans of control to reduce layers of management and to ensure every manager manages 6-7 people; the introduction of mobile and flexible working; transformation of business support – hub and spokes; encouraging residents to carry out transactions via the web; getting rid of unnecessary paperwork and making full use of our powerful IT system; the use of various sorts of IT to modernise and transform the way we work. That is just a summary of what we are going to talk about and I hope you will listen to the debate.

**Supplemental Question:** With borrowing rising by £23m this year, a £27m contract signed for new IT, is this a case of Browning economics of taking a loan to pay off the credit card and how do you estimate the costs of the borrowing to be covered without further cuts to front line services and business damaging, hiked parking charges, that businesses remember paying their rates which get fed back to the borough?

**Supplemental Answer:** My administration inherited a dysfunctional IT system when it came to power. 95% of the hardware was at the end of its life and the Council did not have a disaster recovery system. This administration took a sideways step to renew the IT that will support many of the initiatives, such as mobile and flexible working, business support and increasing support to Access Harrow.

Model Council Tax Resolution

# Harrow Council

## Council Tax Resolution 2011-2012

Cabinet to approve as part of the Summons for Council, the model budget and Council Tax resolutions reflecting the recommendations of Cabinet and the GLA precept.

Council is requested to determine the level of the Council Tax for 2011-2012 in the light of the information on the precept and make the calculations set out in the resolution shown below.

- (1) To note that at its meeting on 15 December 2010 the Council calculated the amount of 87,148 as its Council Tax Base for the year 2011-2012 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
  
- (2) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2011-2012, in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:
  - (i) Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (2) (a) to (e) of the Act. (**Gross expenditure**)
 

£559,815,183
  
  - (ii) Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3)(a) to (c) of the Act. (**Gross income including use of reserves**)
 

£384,306,299
  
  - (iii) Being the amount by which the aggregate at (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, **as its budget requirement for the year.**

£175,508,884
  
  - (iv) Being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates, revenue support grant, increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its Collection Fund its Collection Fund in accordance with Section 97(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Collection Fund Surplus)
 

£72,103,425

(v) Being **the amount to be raised from Council Taxes**

Calculated as the amount at 2 (iii) above less the amount at 2 (iv.) above.

£103,405,459

(vi) Being the amount at (v) divided by the Council Tax Base, calculated by the Council at its meeting on 15 December 2010 in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year. (**The average Band D Council Tax**)

£1,186.55

(vii) Valuation Bands

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	791.03	922.87	1,054.71	1,186.55	1,450.23	1,713.90	1,977.58	2,373.10

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at (vi.) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

(3) That it be noted that for 2011-2012 the Greater London Authority stated the following amount in precept issued to the Council, in accordance with section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below

Valuation Bands

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	206.55	240.97	275.40	309.82	378.67	447.52	516.37	619.64

(4) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (2)(vii) and (3) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2011-2012 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below

Valuation Bands

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	997.58	1,163.84	1,330.11	1,496.37	1,828.90	2,161.42	2,493.95	2,992.74

**HARROW COUNCIL**  
**REVENUE BUDGET SUMMARY 2011-2012**

	2010-2011 Original Budget  £000	2011-2012 Original Budget  £000
<b>Local Demand - Borough Services</b>		
Adults and Housing	70,029	67,208
Children's	40,437	40,832
Community and Environment	46,496	43,797
Place Shaping	4,332	4,439
Legal and Governance	1,174	3,566
Assistant Chief Executive	5,076	2,422
Corporate Finance	21,691	18,083
Transformation Programme	0	-389
<b>Total Directorate Budgets</b>	<b>189,235</b>	<b>179,958</b>
Inflation and Corporate items	2,075	2,269
Provisions for debt/litigation	225	325
Capital Financing adjustments	-6148	-3,989
Interest on Balances	-690	-474
Council Tax Support Grant	0	-2580
Area Based Grant	-12922	0
<b>Total – Baseline</b>	<b>171,775</b>	<b>175,509</b>
Capitalisation	-90	0
Contribution to Balances	0	0
<b>Total Net Expenditure</b>	<b>171,685</b>	<b>175,509</b>
Collection Fund Surplus b/f	-1448	-1978
Formula Grant	-67,764	-70,126
<b>Local Demand on Collection Fund</b>	<b>102,473</b>	<b>103,405</b>
<b>Funds / Balances</b>		
Balances Brought Forward	5,716	6,294
Adjustment to Balances	0	0
Balances Carried Forward	<b>5,716</b>	<b>6,294</b>
<b>Council Tax for Band D Equivalent</b>		
Harrow (£)	<b>1,186.55</b>	<b>1,186.55</b>
<u>Increase</u> Harrow (%)	<b>0.00%</b>	<b>0.00%</b>
<b>Taxbase</b>	<b>86,362</b>	<b>87,148</b>

## APPENDIX III

### HRA Budget 2011-12 to 2015-16

	Budget 2011-12 £	Budget 2012-13 £	Budget 2013-14 £	Budget 2014-15 £	Budget 2015-16 £
<b>Operating Expenditure:</b>					
Employee Costs	1,564,300	1,466,670	1,544,030	1,557,760	1,571,560
Supplies & Services	639,260	639,260	539,260	539,260	539,260
Utility cost (Water, Gas, Elec)	679,000	679,000	679,000	679,000	679,000
Estate & Sheltered Services	2,680,040	2,774,510	2,798,680	2,817,790	2,837,070
Central Recharges	3,028,200	3,088,770	3,150,540	3,213,550	3,277,820
<b>Operating Expenditure</b>	<b>8,590,800</b>	<b>8,648,210</b>	<b>8,711,510</b>	<b>8,807,360</b>	<b>8,904,710</b>
<b>Repairs Expenditure:</b>					
Repairs - Voids	619,100	636,410	654,500	673,400	693,160
Repairs - Responsive	2,652,850	2,744,430	2,840,120	2,940,120	3,044,630
Repairs – Other	2,048,640	2,091,140	2,135,290	2,181,150	2,228,750
<b>Total Repairs Expenditure</b>	<b>5,320,590</b>	<b>5,471,980</b>	<b>5,629,910</b>	<b>5,794,670</b>	<b>5,966,540</b>
<b>Other Expenditure:</b>					
Contingency - General	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
Charges for Capital	6,943,390	6,918,420	6,950,980	6,962,440	6,995,430
Bad or Doubtful Debts	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000
HRA Subsidy	6,988,350	6,988,350	6,988,350	6,988,350	6,988,350
<b>Total Other Expenditure</b>	<b>14,331,740</b>	<b>14,306,770</b>	<b>14,339,330</b>	<b>14,350,790</b>	<b>14,383,780</b>
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>28,243,130</b>	<b>28,426,960</b>	<b>28,680,750</b>	<b>28,952,820</b>	<b>29,255,030</b>

	<b>Budget 2011-12 £</b>	<b>Budget 2012-13 £</b>	<b>Budget 2013-14 £</b>	<b>Budget 2014-15 £</b>	<b>Budget 2015-16 £</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Rent Income – Dwellings	-24,501,410	-25,397,420	-26,325,020	-27,285,280	-28,284,000
Rent Income – Non Dwellings	-754,090	-761,970	-770,000	-778,200	-786,560
Service Charges - Tenants	-649,380	-665,540	-682,100	-699,080	-716,600
Service Charges – Leaseholders	-657,140	-760,410	-763,750	-767,150	-770,620
Facility Charges (Water & Gas)	-507,170	-517,320	-527,660	-538,200	-548,980
Interest	-6,120	-6,120	-6,120	-6,120	-6,120
Other Income	-183,010	-183,010	-83,010	-83,010	-83,010
Transfer from General Fund	-163,000	-163,000	-163,000	-163,000	-163,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-27,421,320</b>	<b>-28,454,790</b>	<b>-29,320,660</b>	<b>-30,320,040</b>	<b>-31,358,890</b>
<b>In Year Deficit / (Surplus)</b>	<b>821,810</b>	<b>-27,830</b>	<b>-639,910</b>	<b>-1,367,220</b>	<b>-2,103,860</b>
<b>BALANCE brought forward</b>	<b>-3,503,540*</b>	<b>-2,681,730</b>	<b>-2,709,560</b>	<b>-3,349,470</b>	<b>-4,716,690</b>
<b>BALANCE carried forward</b>	<b>-2,681,730</b>	<b>-2,709,560</b>	<b>-3,349,470</b>	<b>-4,716,690</b>	<b>-6,820,550</b>
<b>BALANCE Business Plan</b>	<b>-5,319,000</b>	<b>-5,460,000</b>	<b>-4,539,000</b>	<b>-3,572,000</b>	<b>-2,899,000</b>

\* Note: Balances brought forward 01 April 2010 £4,783,836 less forecast outturn Qtr 03 £1,280,296 yields estimated balances at 31 March 2011 £3,503,540



**HRA Capital Programme**

	<b>2011-12 No. of properties</b>	<b>2011-12 £'000</b>	<b>2012-13 £'000</b>	<b>2013-14 £'000</b>	<b>2014-15 £'000</b>	<b>2015-16 £'000</b>
Decent Homes :						
Capitalised salaries	-	310	310	310	310	310
Contingency	-	50	50	50	50	50
Major voids	25	50	50	50	50	50
Kitchens including rewiring	105	625	650	1,000	1,000	1,000
Bathroom including rewiring	109	500	700	1,000	1,000	1,000
Health & Safety programme	1,250	625	500	500	500	500
Gas heating programme	156	500	450	500	500	500
Enveloping programme	75	900	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Door entry upgrade/renewal	40	480	500	500	500	500
Lifts	120	300	300	200	200	200
Digital TV aerials	2,000	700	-	-	-	-
Electric night storage heating	166	500	250	-	-	-
Water tank replacement	5	25	-	-	-	-
Sheltered warden call	-	-	50	-	-	-
Structural issues / drainage	3	250	500	200	200	200
Boiler replacement programme	100	250	250	250	250	250
Partial heating upgrade	50	100	-	-	-	-
Garages	60	30	-	-	-	-
Aids & Adaptations	100	600	600	600	600	600
<b>HRA Capital Programme – Council Funded (including over programming)</b>	<b>4,364</b>	<b>6,795</b>	<b>6,160</b>	<b>6,160</b>	<b>6,160</b>	<b>6,160</b>
Less over programming	-	(635)	-	-	-	-
<b>HRA Capital Programme – Council Funded</b>	<b>4,364</b>	<b>6,160</b>	<b>6,160</b>	<b>6,160</b>	<b>6,160</b>	<b>6,160</b>
Grant funded Extensions	-	200	200	-	-	-
<b>Total HRA Capital Programme</b>	<b>4,364</b>	<b>6,360</b>	<b>6,360</b>	<b>6,160</b>	<b>6,160</b>	<b>6,160</b>

**HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE****TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee is responsible for scrutinising matters in relation to health, public health and social care. The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee also has responsibility for considering matters related to other general policy proposals and issues beyond the remit of health and social care but with implications on health outcomes.

The Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee has the following powers and duties:

1. To be the key driver of the scrutiny function's health and social care scrutiny programme and maintain relationships with health and social care colleagues and partners in relation to shared stated priorities, in consultation with the Overview & Scrutiny Committee.
2. To be responsible for the discharge of the functions conferred by Section 21(f) of the Local Government Act 2000 of reviewing and scrutinising, in accordance with regulations under Section 7 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001, matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health and social care services in Harrow.
3. To have specific responsibility for policy development and scrutiny of the following functions:
  - Health and social care infrastructure and service
  - GP Consortia and the Health and Wellbeing Board
  - Public Health
  - Other policy proposals which may have an impact on health, public health, social care and wellbeing
  - Collaborative working with health agencies
  - Commissioning and contracting health services
4. To conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
5. To consider and make recommendations for response to NHS consultations on proposed substantial developments/variations in health services that would affect the people of LB Harrow.
6. To consider and make recommendations for response to consultations from local health trusts, Department of Health, Care Quality Commission and any organisation which provides health services outside the local authority's area to inhabitants within it.

7. Continue to seek the development of relationship with GP consortia, Health and Wellbeing Boards, Care Quality Commission, LINK/ HealthWatch and the LMC.

Any health matter requiring an urgent decision/comment before the next meeting of the Health Committee will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee if that is sooner.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**10 MARCH 2011**

**QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE (ITEM 17)**

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

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

**Question:** “Can you explain your decision to factor a 2% assumption for inflation into the budget given that the Bank of England’s February inflation report predicts inflation has a 100% chance of being above 2% for the entirety of 2011?”

**Answer:** I think Councillor Macleod-Cullinane must be suffering from repetitive question syndrome since he asked the same question at the February Cabinet. I will give him the same very comprehensive answer which I gave him in writing just in case he has not quite understood everything.

The 2011-12 budget includes a provision for inflation on goods and services equivalent to 2% of the budgets concerned. This is **not** the same as predicting that general inflation will run at 2%. The published indices of general inflation such as the Retail Price Index (RPI) and the Consumer Price Index (CPI) are not directly relevant to Council services. They are based on a basket of consumer goods, many of which the Council does not buy in any quantity. They also include the increase in VAT which the Council does not pay and RPI also includes the price of housing.

As in previous years, directorates are required to manage within the provision for goods and services inflation by:

- Negotiating with all suppliers on contract prices
- Allocating the 2% provision to the areas within their service where it is needed most
- Making efficiencies to deal with any shortfall.

Work so far to negotiate with suppliers is proceeding well and I do not at this stage envisage a call on the contingency

due to inflation.

We are also undertaking major procurement exercise and would hope to make very significant savings for every directorate.

It should be noted that the same approach to inflation was used by the previous administration. For example, in the 2010/11 budget, the provision made for inflation for directorates was 1% when both RPI and CPI were around 3.5%. But Cllr Macleod-Cullinane seems to suffer the same collective amnesia as many of his other colleagues.

Taking account of the Contingency Fund the risk assessment shows that the net risk is £4.8 million at a time when we actually have £6.3 million in reserves.

- 2. Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane
- Asked of:** Councillor Bill Stephenson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation)
- Question:** “Has an assessment been carried out to determine what further savings, increased charges, service cuts or other budgetary changes will be required in the event that continued inflation rates of well in excess of 2% cause an in-year gap to emerge in the Council’s finances?”
- Answer:** This yet another example of repetitive question syndrome. I have covered all the points in your question in my answer to your first question. Your concerns about goods and services inflation are not well founded and any risks of in-year gaps will be found as is standard practice by finding savings elsewhere in the directorate as indicated in the budget report. I do not envisage this happening.
- 3. Questioner:** Councillor Nana Asante
- Asked of:** Councillor Bill Stephenson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation)
- Question:** “Can you explain why it has taken six years for Harrow to apply for Fairtrade Status?”
- Answer:** This is not a very happy episode in the history of Harrow Council. In October 2005 Council adopted a motion for Harrow to seek Fairtrade status. A Steering Group was set up and two events were held on 6 March and 17 March 2006.

Following the change in administration in May 2006 nothing

further happened. In 2008 I asked a Cabinet question to find out why. The then Leader of the Council (Councillor David Ashton) indicated a full support for the initiative and volunteered to Chair the Steering Group. But, nothing happened.

Following the change in administration in May 2010, the Steering Group was revived under your dynamic leadership with, I should add in all fairness, enthusiastic cross-party support. I am very pleased that a completed application form for Fairtrade status for Harrow has now been submitted. In addition several Harrow Wards will be applying for Fairtrade status as well. On 8 March 2011 a wonderful event was held to support both Fairtrade and International Women's Day and we welcomed colleagues and friends from our twinned town Douai. I had the pleasure of meeting Douai's Mayor as well as Fairtrade representatives who were very impressed by Harrow's enthusiasm and commitment.

Gaining Fairtrade status is one of our Priority Actions which we have just discussed. This is a can-do Council and it is very pleasing to see what can be done if there is a real will to get on with things unlike the lethargy shown elsewhere.

- 4. Questioner:** Councillor Kam Chana
- Asked of:** Councillor Phillip O'Dell (Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Safety)
- Question:** "The previous Conservative administration wanted to introduce an innovative programme called Park Partners, which your party resisted.
- The intention of Park Partners was to rejuvenate Harrow's parks and pavilions and make them hubs of the community. What schemes is your administration introducing which recognise the value to residents of Harrow's parks, pavilions and open spaces, and how are said schemes reflected in this budget?"
- Answer:** The public of Harrow already show a great interest in supporting the Council in the provision of high quality parks, through both informal and formal user groups. The Community and Environment service plan sets out a proposal for establishing more user groups. Parks featured strongly in the Let's Talk sessions and I am looking to development further opportunities for public contributions through the Pride in Harrow programme.

- 5. Questioner:** Councillor Kam Chana
- Asked of:** Councillor Bill Stephenson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation)
- Question:** “Do you have any plans to increase the council tax collection rate this year and in future years, beyond the 98.25% you have currently budgeted for?”
- Answer:** For 2011-2012 the percentage collection rate used was 98.25%. This takes into account the current economic climate and the expected higher losses due to the higher irrecoverable debt expected. The expected collection rate is the percentage of Council Tax to be collected after estimating uncollectable amounts. This is because the legislation provides for non-collection to be compensated for by an element within the Council Tax Base itself.

This does not mean that collection efforts will stop once the budgeted collection levels have been reached, or that eventual losses will necessarily be 1.75%. It is, however, essential that an adequate non-collection allowance be made each year. The Government recognises that no billing authority can collect every pound of Council Tax and that an element of collection will continue after the relevant year.

If the Council collects more than the 98.25%, then any overcollection will be reflected as a surplus in the Council Tax Collection Fund. This surplus is then used as a first call in setting the next year’s budget which has the effect of lowering the take from Council Tax for that year. As such there is no reason to increase the figure.

As Harrow is one of only 4-5 London authorities which actually collects 97% or above in year, and that collects its full budgeted amount of 98.25% with 24 months of the relevant financial year ending, we are already maximising collection and this is reflected in our high budgeted rate when compared with the average for London which is around 96-97% compared with Harrow's 98.25%. Changing the percentage to an even higher figure could prejudice the collection fund and create issues around bad debt provisions so on that basis there are no plans to change the current figure used.

- 6. Questioner:** Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane
- Asked of:** Councillor Bill Stephenson (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Business Transformation)
- Question:** “Can you provide a monthly breakdown of the Council’s expenditure on taxis (excluding Taxicard) during 2010/11?”
- Answer:** The breakdown below shows the use of taxis in each month. Approximately 95% relates to the use of taxis to transport children with special needs to school and the transport of adults social care clients.

**Expenditure on Taxis 1/4/10 to 28/2/11**

Month	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Total
	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s	£000s
	81.50	33.60	51.80	56.10	16.80	13.50	44.10	42.00	55.60	36.80	50.00	<b>481.80</b>