

## **Minutes of the meeting of the Council**

**Date:** Tuesday, 1 November 2022

**Venue:** Council Chamber, Ealing Town Hall, New Broadway, Ealing W5 2BY

### **Attendees (in person): Councillors**

M Midha (Mayor) M Ahmed, S Ahmed, P Anand, J Ball, J Blacker, J Gallant, K Bains, C Anderson, T Sidhu, B Rai, R Dheer, B Mahfouz, L Brett, D Crawford, A Young, P Driscoll, V Alexander, Y Gordon, M Hamidi, B Hashani, C Hersch, M Iqbal, A Jammu, S Jassal, Y Johnson, H Kaur Dheer, A Kelly, S Khan, I Kingston, P Knewstub, S Kohli, S Kumar, K Dhindsa, T Mahmood, G Malcolm, S Manro, D Martin, J Martin, P Mason, F Mohamed, K Mohan, G Murtaza, K K Nagpal, K Nagpal, I Nijhar, G Quansah, F Conti, A Raza, M Rice, R Baaklini, C Sharma, G Shaw, D Costigan, G Stafford, A Steed, K Crawford, H Tailor (Deputy Mayor), C Tighe, L Wall, R Wall, B Wesson, S Donnelly and A Zissimos

### **Apologies:**

G Busuttil, K Sahota, H Haili and S Padda

### **Attendees (virtual): Councillors**

J Anand and C Summers

#### **1 Apologies for Absence and Attendance**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Busuttil, Haili, Sahota and Padda.

Councillors Summers, Kim Nagpal, Hamidi, J Anand and Mohamed were in attendance virtually.

#### **2 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 July 2022**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2022 are agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

#### **4 Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2022**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2022 are agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

## **5 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor wished Council a belated happy Diwali, Vikram new year and Black History Month to all members.

The Mayor updated Council on her activities since the last Council meeting. The Mayor had attended a Windrush plaque unveiling ceremony in Walpole Park and reminded members that Remembrance Sunday was fast approaching.

## **6 Petitions from Members of the Public**

There were no petitions from members of the public.

## **7 Petitions from Members of the Council**

There were no petitions from members of the Council.

## **8 Questions from Members of the Public**

Helen Chan asked the following question of Councillor Raza, Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality:

The latest statistics show that there have been 140,500 applications since the BN(O) visa route's introduction up to June 2022. It is estimated more than 35,000 Hongkongers have resided in London. Ealing Borough has always been Hongkongers' top choice for residing from then and now. According to the 2011 census data, Ealing was one of the top 10 boroughs with the highest numbers of residents of Hong Kong origin. Among all local councils in the UK, Ealing is one of the top 10 most preferable councils for Hong Kong new arrivals and states as the second most desirable in Greater London following Kingston upon Thames. Additionally, Ealing has been the 8th having the highest number of BN(O) children admission in London in the last school placement period.

It is known that more than £200,000 has been granted to local authorities to ensure Hongkongers have the best chance to thrive in London through the Local Welcome Hong Kong Fund provided by the DLUCH. Eight local councils have applied for the funding, whereas Ealing is not on the recipient list. Therefore, will the Council inform the public:

Question: Whether the Council had applied for the funding, if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that.

Councillor Raza responded, confirming that the Council had not applied for this funding. The reason a funding application had not been made was that there had not been a request to submit an application to this fund from the community. Councillor Raza stated that she would like to come and visit the

club and talk to members of the club about what support the Council can provide to those who have moved from Hong Kong to Ealing.

## **9 Questions from Members of the Council**

Councillor Jammu asked Councillor Blacker:

Can the portfolio holder provide an update on providing the Real Living Wage to home care workers?

Councillor Blacker responded:

Building on our manifesto commitment, we are delivering the Real Living Wage ahead of schedule.

The uplift to the home care sector come into effect on November 14th and bring carer pay into line with the Real Living Wage of £11.05 per hour. This commitment will continue into next year and meet the RLW guidance of £11.95 per hour in May 2023.

In May 2022, we committed to invest £8million into adult social care, ensuring workers providing care to residents in their own home could finally be paid the RLW.

This will impact 200+ personal assistants, 75 staff working in extra care and the staff working for 70 home care providers in Ealing. Together the care agencies employ between 3,500 – 4,000 carers – a large proportion being women and from BAME communities.

The only intervention from the short-lived Truss administration on social care was to brief that Boris Johnson's oven-ready reforms – which took two years to unveil – would be delayed. In the reforms, the Tories altogether failed to provide workers with an uplift in pay. In Ealing, we have made it our priority and ensured that within our first six months all home care workers receive the RLW.

Thanks for the Tories underfunding and undercutting of healthcare budgets, we now face an unprecedented staff crisis in the NHS with vacancies in the sector reaching 165,000 – a 52% rise, meaning that one in 10 social care posts in England are unfilled – putting both the NHS and vulnerable residents at risk. In Ealing, we are supporting workers as much as we can but we know more needs to be done to elevate the pressure the Government relentlessly subject frontline workers to.

Faced with a cost of living crisis, at a time when we need to desperately fix adult social care, we are so pleased to be able to announce that we are putting into action the commitment we made to introduce the real living wage ahead of schedule.

This will make a huge difference to the pay packets and the wellbeing of care workers, and ultimately to the people they care for, who can be confident that their carers are earning a decent living.

Councillor Malcolm asked Councillor Mason:

Given the comments made by Rupa Huq MP, at a conference fringe event, does The Leader agree that these comments were totally wrong, condemn the comments and if found guilty do you believe she should be asked to resign her position as a local MP?

Councillor Mason responded:

I am unable to answer this question given that it is subject to an ongoing Labour Party disciplinary investigation.

Councillor Conti asked Councillor Costigan:

We are getting regular reports of tree surgeons not giving notice to residents of when they are going to particular streets. Cars are therefore often parked under the tree that requires pruning, preventing work being carried out. Very often there is no clear timetable for when tree surgeons are planning to return. How is the tree contract being monitored for performance?

Councillor Costigan responded:

Madam Mayor, this Labour administration has committed to one of the largest tree planting programmes in the country, which will see an additional 50,000 trees planted across Ealing by 2026. This is essential to tackle the air pollution, biodiversity, and climate crises we are facing, an unprecedented challenge.

And we know that regular tree pruning, and leaf cleaning is essential to keep our streets clean, beautiful and safe.

Unfortunately, there is currently a London wide shortage of labour and skills in the Arboricultural industry, impacting boroughs across the city. I would encourage Cllr Conti to get in touch with his colleagues in government and request that they work with boroughs to overcome the challenges we are facing across the board in recruitment, as a result of their damaging Brexit, punitive immigration scheme, and compounded by their catastrophic economic mismanagement which led to record breaking inflation.

The Council's previous contract arrangement with Advanced Tree Services expired at the end of March, and due to inflation, they were unfortunately unable to accept a three-year extension. We are now in the process of completing a new procurement exercise using our

Social Value principles.

But we are taking steps to do ensure services are maintained. As an interim solution during the summer, we offered a number of approved contractors the opportunity to compete for work on a mini-quotation basis, so that we can respond to demand and the risks are minimised. We know that this process has delivered mixed success and are actively working to ensure consistent high standards by prioritising the highest performing contractors.

Councillor Brett asked Councillor Mahfouz:

Can the portfolio holder provide an update on how Ealing Council is supporting the lowest income households during the cost-of-living crisis, via Ealing's council tax reduction scheme?

Councillor Mahfouz responded:

Madam Mayor, when I was last asked to provide an update on the cost-of-living crisis and what support Ealing Council was offering its residents, I commented on the 40-year high inflation rates we faced, a fumbling government and an intervention package that barely scratched the surface in providing families with real viable support.

Now, here we are. Just over 3 months later, with failed 2 prime ministers, 3 botched chancellors and a revolving door of tory chaos. It continues to be Labour, and Labour only who are continuing to support people, provide families with real help and stand with them in the face of this Conservative-caused cost-of-living crisis.

And even then, we continue to stand out from other councils: Our council tax support scheme: is amongst the most progressive in the country and we are pushing this even further. We are currently consulting with the public on increasing the maximum Council Tax Reduction for non-protected categories to be increased from 75% to 80% from April 2023 - directly supporting those who fall in the lowest income band.

We have delivered over 8,000 vouchers of over £100 to eligible pensions, delivered vouchers to over 15,000 families to support them with free school meals over the holidays and provided over 95,000 residents with an energy rebate payment of £150 to help them with the energy crisis. And we are not stopping there.

There is a straight blue line between Liz Truss's failed mini-budget and the multi-billion-pound blackhole in the nation's finances: The Conservatives crashed the economy and now they want someone else to pick up the tab. They must not take it out on our communities.

That is why we are also providing £100k to voluntary sector

organisations to support the most vulnerable in their local communities and make sure everyone across our seven towns has access to necessary support.

While the Conservatives have been crashing the economy, we have been fighting to provide the support and services people need. Our residents shouldn't pay the price for their failure.

We are doing all we can in the face of rising inflation, escalating energy costs and unsustainable price increases. But we know more needs to be done. Over a decade of Tory and Lib Dem austerity has hacked away at people's social security – and has left families on the breadline.

As Ealing Labour, we want to see people not just survive but thrive. Alongside our generous support packages and scheme - we continue to campaign to get the Government to do more, acknowledge the challenges and demand action in the face of this crisis.

Councillor Ball asked Councillor Mason:

Does the Leader agree with Labour Party Conference that “Labour must make a commitment to introduce proportional representation for general elections in the next manifesto”?

Councillor Mason responded:

I know many people are dissatisfied with our political system and I appreciate that voters in safe seats can sometimes feel disenfranchised because of a sense that their vote does not count.

Parliament must be representative of our communities and reflect different views and concerns, and we must make it easier for people to vote and engage in politics. In particular, the scale of the challenges of the Coronavirus pandemic should have been the time for the Government to work with and empower local communities to bring the country together by devolving power down from Westminster to regions and local councils.

Labour would like to see a new long-term political and constitutional consensus developed through consultation with communities across the UK. This could be facilitated through a UK-wide Constitutional Commission – such as the one established by the Official Opposition – which could consider the case for electoral reform while also looking at wider democratic renewal.

There are, of course, strengths and weaknesses to all voting systems and we must recognise that changing the voting system alone would not address the disconnect that some voters feel about our political process. I think we should therefore consider this question as part of a

wider package of constitutional reform to address the growing democratic deficit across the country.

As a Labour Council, we are already creating a more democratic and more inclusive local system which allows as many people as possible to be engaged in the process, which can be seen through how we have involved the community in our Travel in Ealing charter, the Southall Reset, Warren Farm and Gurnell redevelopment.

Councillor Baaklini asked Councillor Costigan:

Can the portfolio holder confirm whether the Government is providing sufficient support to local authorities to retrofit homes, which saves residents money and tackles the climate crisis?

Councillor Costigan responded:

The catastrophic situation we are facing right now shows us that we need to act on the energy efficiency of our homes. Action to retrofit housing to deliver warmer homes, lower household bills and good jobs, while reducing energy use and emissions, is an obvious part of the solution for the multiple crises we are facing, from the cost-of-living crisis to the climate emergency, to the need to increase energy security following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Unfortunately, I believe the Government has failed to take this issue seriously for a decade and is still not doing enough. Indeed, the independent Committee on Climate Change has said there is "a shocking gap" in Government policy when it comes to energy efficiency in homes. While it promised significant public spending in 2019 and committed to new policies last year, it is yet to deliver on either. Installations of insulation remain at rock bottom – the average annual energy bill for UK households is around £40 higher than if insulation rates from pre-2012 had continued for the last decade. Furthermore, when the Government published its energy security strategy in April, it once again missed the opportunity to act in this most basic and obvious area, by failing to provide any additional funding for energy efficiency.

UK homes contribute around 14% of the country's greenhouse gas emissions and are much worse insulated than those in Europe. Indeed, emissions from buildings are higher now than in 2015. Properly insulating our homes would allow us to cut household energy bills by up to £400. It would cut gas demand by 7-8% and gas imports by 15% and reduce fuel poverty. Insulation should therefore be a national mission and is something that we could start doing right now.

Labour back plans to retrofit 19 million homes, backed by investment of £6 billion a year. I will continue to support efforts to press the Government on this issue, to get it to invest at the scale we need in the

solutions we need for energy security, the climate crisis and cutting bills.

Councillor Wesson asked Councillor Nagpal:

Can the portfolio holder update members on the Young Adults Centre in Southall?

Councillor Nagpal responded:

Last year we made a commitment to find a new permanent home for the Southall Young Adult Centre. We started a big conversation with young people and the public in Southall about how we would do that.

Over 3,000 young people from across Southall came together to make clear that they wanted to keep the YAC where it is, and from listening to them– we agree.

At the core of our consultation, was a commitment to co-design our proposals with young people – putting them at the heart of what we do. This has not gone away. We will continue to work with them as we improve the centre, upgrading and revamping the facilities to make sure the centre is truly reflective of the needs of the community.

We will be carrying out the necessary improvements over the next year, with the hope of having the centre back open by summer 2023.

We are also developing a sustainable funding model to ensure the YAC gets the necessary improvements to meet its important requirement of being a safe inclusive place for young people and an important community asset that can be used by all.

And the improvements will help us reach our ambitious targets of having 20,000 attendees across our three wonderful youth services this year alone, increasing year-on-year.

Not only that, but we will also be working with our young people across Southall to make the YAC even better and to find a way to put it into their hands permanently, for good.

We know that the best decisions are the ones taken together, and as part of our commitment to running an open, transparent, and inclusive council we will continue to work with our young people who need the YAC most to find out how we can make it even better for all who use or will use it.

## **10 Opposition Group Motion for Debate**

Councillor Gallant moved, and Councillor Stafford seconded, the following motion for debate:



This Council notes that it is nearly six months since this administration was elected and that, in that time, no progress has been made in the following areas, thus rendering the Council Plan mere empty words:

- Conversion of Ealing Town Hall into an hotel
- Demolition of Perceval House and building of “Gotham Tower” in its place
- Replacement of Gurnell Swimming Pool
- Falling recycling rates

This Council calls for the Executive to abandon the first two projects, and to make progress on the second two issues.

Councillors Manro, Malcolm, Costigan, Conti, Driscoll, Ball, Knewstub, Kumar, Blacker, Young, Johnson, Baaklini, D Crawford, Rice and Kamaljit Kaur Nagpal responded to the motion.

Councillor Gallant summed up the motion.

A vote was taken and the motion FELL.

## **11 Majority Group Motion for Debate**

Councillor Mason moved, and Councillor Donnelly seconded, the Majority Group motion for debate.

Councillor Steed moved, and Councillor Hersch seconded, the Liberal Democrat amendment.

Councillor Conti moved and Councillor Gallant seconded, the Conservative amendment.

Councillors Nijhar, Jassal, Gallant, Iqbal, Stafford, Kohli, Mahfouz, Kumar, Young, Brett, Kaur Dheer, Hashani, Alexander, Manro and Raza responded.

Councillors Steed and Conti summed up their amendments, and Councillor Mason summed up the motion.

A vote was taken on the Liberal Democrat Group’s amendment, and the amendment FELL.

A vote was taken on the Conservative Group’s amendment, and the amendment FELL.

**RESOLVED:** That

This Council notes that:

- Households across Ealing are under massive strain and public services are seeing their budgets squeezed dramatically as mortgages rise, the pound has crashed, inflation takes hold, and a recession looms.
- Liz Truss has been one of the shortest serving Prime Ministers in history, but her time in office has been devastating for people in Ealing – the pound and gilt markets have crashed, the rent crisis in London has worsened and ordinary people are paying hundreds more a month for their mortgages.
- This is a Tory crisis made in Downing Street, paid for by working people.
- There is a straight blue line between Liz Truss's failed mini-budget and the multi-billion-pound blackhole in the nation's finances: The Conservatives crashed the economy and now they want someone else to pick up the tab. They must not take it out on our communities.
- None of us voted for this ridiculous failed experiment – and Ealing shouldn't be punished for the Government's mistakes. Local services were already under serious strain due to rampant inflation, soaring interest rates, and rising demand.
- Roads need to be repaired, we must bring down crime, children need after-school clubs, bins have to be emptied, and streets must be kept clean. We need to build affordable housing, and we need to invest in the support that business needs to thrive.
- Ealing is an open, honest and transparent council. With hope and creativity, Ealing Council is already doing everything we can to support families through the Conservatives' cost of living crisis.
- While the Conservatives have been crashing the economy, we have been fighting to provide the support and services people need. Our residents shouldn't pay the price for their failure.

This Council therefore resolves to declare a 'Cost of Living and economic emergency' and calls on the Government to:

- Provide extra support for councils struggling with the effects of inflation and the possible impact of a recession.
- Ensure that councils, public services, and ordinary people don't pay the price for the Government's incompetence.
- Call a general election so that the British public can have their say on

this disastrous government.

## 12 Motions not for Debate

**RESOLVED:** That

1. This Council notes that:

- Ealing is proud of our history of welcoming people seeking safety
- There are significant problems with the UK asylum system that affect people in Ealing including a record backlog of cases awaiting a decision, a de facto ban on working, and enforced poverty and homelessness.
- The Nationality and Borders Act does not address these issues, and has instead created a two-tier system, punishing people seeking safety based on the journeys they make.
- Under these laws, people seeking safety will be criminalised and threatened with removal to Rwanda.
- People will be warehoused in large accommodation centres, segregated from communities and denied support.
- Many recognised refugees will receive a temporary and precarious status.

This Council believes that:

- Everyone's claim for asylum should be treated equally and fairly.
- These are fundamentally 'anti-refugee' laws that undermine internationally recognised rights for people fleeing war and persecution to seek safety.
- These measures will create ever-longer delays in the asylum process, lead to greater poverty and homelessness in Ealing and will undermine people's ability to rebuild their lives.
- People seeking safety should be housed as our neighbours and as a part of our communities.
- The UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and enables communities to welcome them.

This Council resolves to:

- Defend the right to seek safety from war and persecution in the UK and sign the national 'Fight the Anti-Refugee Laws' pledge.
- Call on the UK Government to withdraw the UK-Rwanda agreement, repeal the Nationality and Borders Act, and work with Local Authorities and communities to build a refugee protection system that treats all people with dignity and compassion.
- Join the network of cities and towns which promote the inclusion and welfare of people who are fleeing violence and persecution and work to become a recognised Council of Sanctuary.

2. This Council wishes to congratulate the England Lionesses for their historic achievement in winning this summer's Women's European Championship. Throughout the tournament the entire squad, coaching and support staff dedicatedly worked to produce a number of fantastic performances.

This Council particularly recognises the resilience of Ealing's Chloe Kelly in recovering from a serious injury to make England's squad for the finals and scoring her first international goal in the final against Germany in July to win the game, securing the nation's first international silverware since 1966.

This Council further congratulates Chloe Kelly and the Lionesses for qualifying for the Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand next summer and sends our best wishes to Serina Wiegman's squad as they attempt to become the first nation in the history of women's football to win the European Championship and the World Cup consecutively.

This Council recommends to the Freedom of the Borough Committee that Chloe Kelly is nominated for Freedom of the London Borough of Ealing in recognition of her rise from Ealing student to role model for the nation's women and for her continued advocacy for women's sport.

3. Ealing Council notes that the Leader, Cllr Peter Mason, and the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Deirdre Costigan, have written to the Chief Executive of Thames Water to demand that action is taken to stop future occurrences of the recent sewage floods affecting our borough.
4. Ealing Council notes the comments by the Health Secretary Therese Coffey who admitted to sharing antibiotics with friends. Ealing Council further notes that the British Medical Association described those actions as both dangerous and against the law. Ealing Council calls on the Department of Health and Social Care and the NHS to issue public health messaging stressing the importance of anti-microbial resistance and that courses of prescribed antibiotics should be completed and not shared with others.
5. Ealing Council notes the cost-of-living crisis and the associated higher energy bills many residents in Ealing will be seeing. Ealing Council notes the Council's plan to link residents up with existing council-run warm spaces and to provide grants to the local voluntary and community sector to assist them in providing warm spaces for residents over the winter, to keep people out of the cold in the same way as food banks have been used to feed the hungry.
6. Ealing Council notes that in London there are eleven 'Library of Things' including one in Hammersmith where people can rent items at a lower

cost. The Council notes the Labour administrations manifesto and the Council's recently adopted Council Plan, that pledges to end the need to send any of Ealing's waste to landfill and introduce the borough's first Library of Things.

### **13 Treasury Management Outturn 2021-22**

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The Treasury Management activities and performance against targets for the period to 31 March 2022 are noted.
2. The Council's investment balance of £528.725m at 31 March 2022 of which £492.000m was invested with the Debt Management Office (DMO) are noted.
3. The Prudential Indicators outturn for 2021/22 which have all been maintained within the limits set by Full Council in March 2021 (set out in Appendix 1) are noted.

### **14 Appointments to Committees**

**RESOLVED:** That the following appointments to committees are agreed:

- Councillors Shaw, Gordon, Summers and Rai be appointed to the Planning Pool for Planning Committee
- Councillors Donnelly (First Reserve) and Manro (Second Reserve) be appointed to the Old Oak Common and Park Royal Development Corporation Board
- Councillors R Wall (Member) and Manro (Reserve) be appointed to the Old Oak Common and Park Royal Development Corporation Planning Committee
- Councillor Raza to replace Councillor Rai on Corporate Parent Committee
- Councillor Anderson to replace Councillor Kamaljit Kaur Nagpal on Ealing Schools Forum

### **15 Urgent Key Decisions Exempted from Call-in**

**RESOLVED:** That the urgent key decisions exempted from call in are noted.

Meeting commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting finished: 10.10 pm

Signed:

Dated: Tuesday, 13 December 2022

M Midha (Mayor)