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Minutes of the meeting of the Council

Date: Tuesday, 5 March 2024

Venue: The Atrium - Perceval House

Attendees (in person): Councillors

H Tailor (Mayor)M Ahmed, S Ahmed, P Anand, J Ball, G Busuttil, J Gallant, K Sahota, K Bains, C Anderson, T Sidhu, B Rai, R Dheer, B Mahfouz, C Summers, L Brett, D Crawford, A Young, P Driscoll, Y Gordon, H Haili, M Hamidi, B Hashani, C Hersch, M Iqbal, A Jammu, S Jassal, Y Johnson, A Kelly, I Kingston, P Knewstub, S Kohli, S Kumar, T Mahmood, G Malcolm, S Manro, D Martin, J Martin, P Mason, M Midha, 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, C Tighe, L Wall, R Wall, B Wesson, S Donnelly and A Zissimos

1 Apologies for Absence and Attendance

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alexander, J Anand, Khan, Padda, Dhindsa and Kaur Dheer.

Councillor Blacker was in attendance virtually.

2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 December 2023

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2023 be agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

4 Minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2024 be agreed as a correct record of proceedings.

5 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor updated Council on the activities of the Mayoralty, which included:

- The Mayor and Leader attended the Ukrainian Cathedral to commemorate two years since the full scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.
- He had attended an event at Gunnersbury Park for Brentford Penguins, which was a football club for young people with Downs Syndrome.

- The Mayor thanked members for donating generously to his charities.

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

9 Questions from Members of the Council

Councillor Baaklini asked Councillor Knewstub:

Can the portfolio holder give us an update on progress on Gurnell Leisure Centre?

Councillor Knewstub responded:

The Council has committed to deliver a new state of the art leisure facility at Gurnell. In February 2023 Cabinet agreed the principal of bringing forward a new leisure centre. The new centre will be a hub for the community allowing people of all ages to exercise, relax and socialise. The new leisure centre will have a 50 metre pool and improved gym. I know how loved Gurnell was so we are committed to delivering a range of facilities including a climbing wall, soft play areas, meeting rooms and a new café. The latest update is that in February 2024 we approved the procurement strategy and to move to the next stage of design development. The planning application is due to be submitted imminently and a new leisure centre well on the way.

Councillor Malcolm asked Councillor Costigan:

Could the portfolio holder please outline how much the total changes were, made in 2023 to Southall Square? And how much of that money came from Ealing Council?

Councillor Costigan responded:

80% of the costs of the Southall Square project were covered by the Mayor of London's Build Back Greener fund. 20% of it was covered by the UK government's Shared Prosperity fund so overall 100% of the cost came in from external funding. Which shows how great the council is on maximising inward investment from external sources for green investments.

Councillor Conti asked Councillor Manro:

How will CIL be “sliced” and by what measure will it be awarded to Ealing's seven Town Forums?

Councillor Manro responded:

We are currently consulting on the draft Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule with consultation ending on 10 April. This is the first step in introducing CIL which will ensure infrastructure is delivered in our communities. We were very clear in our manifesto that we were aiming to raise £12 million in CIL money in order to set aside £2 million of this for Town Forums. Through producing our Infrastructure Development Plan we know what infrastructure projects are needed where. In the meantime we continue to engage with our residents to understand what their priorities are, ready for when CIL is introduced and we can use the funds from this developer tax to deliver the infrastructure they need.

Councillor Hamidi asked Councillor Mahfouz:

Could the portfolio holder provide an update on what the council is doing to support homeless households and rough sleepers in Ealing?

Councillor Mahfouz responded:

Just like other local authorities across London and the UK Ealing continues to do its best to support residents faced with homelessness or who are sleeping rough. We are one of the best performing boroughs in London and the country in preventing homelessness from occurring in the first place. Of the 2,600 homelessness applications we have received in the last 12 months the team have prevented over half of them through early intervention. At the last Cabinet meeting we took the decision to allocate a further £150 million to purchase properties to use for temporary accommodation in an effort to house some of our most vulnerable residents and reduce dependence on expensive and unsuitable Hotel accommodation. We are seeing an increase in private rented sector evictions as despite promising to do so the government have not ended no fault evictions in the private rented sector. Rents also remain at high levels as supply of privately rented sector accommodation dwindling.

Councillor D Martin asked Councillor Blacker:

Can the portfolio holder provide an update on the work that the council is doing to address health challenges in the borough and the recent grant we have received that will support this?

Councillor Blacker responded:

The Council's approach is comprehensive and holistic. In Ealing we recognise health is intertwined with different aspects of life. We will provide a full update in the annual health of the borough report, and for now I will share a few examples. We have empowered tenants and leaseholders to shape the services on their estates. In Northolt we have worked hand in hand with 300 local residents to shape the space they were living in. And in the Winter months we provided grants to voluntary organisations to provide warm spaces which provided vital help to those who were struggling to heat their homes. We are working through the action plan that accompanies Ealing's Health and Wellbeing strategy which works to improve the building blocks of health for every individual. Recently we co-produced a suicide prevention strategy with local residents who had lived experience of issues relating to suicide, demonstrating our active commitment to listening to our residents and looking to meet their needs. From these examples it is clear we are making progress and I am delighted to announce we have been allocated £5 million from the National Institute of Health Research which will bolster our ongoing efforts to tackle health inequalities and improve health outcomes in our borough.

Councillor Ball asked Councillor Manro:

When will the Council publish the responses to the public consultation on the proposed Northfields conservation area?

Councillor Manro responded:

As you are aware the team are working around the clock on the local plan and CIL charging schedule consultation. We are working to increase capacity in the team with the current plan to have an urban design team, including a conservation officer, in place by summer this year. We will publish the results of the consultation on Northfield conservation area later this year.

Councillor Haili asked Councillor Kamaljit Kaur Nagpal:

Can the portfolio holder provide an update on the performance of schools in Ealing at the moment?

Councillor Kamaljit Kaur Nagpal responded:

98% of our schools are rated good or outstanding by Ofsted, which far surpasses the national average by a margin of 7% and placing Ealing in the top 10 local authorities across the borough. I also want to highlight the transformational progress of our schools with many moving from requires improvement to good or outstanding. An example of this is Hobbayne Primary School has moved from requires improvement to good. Our indicators in Ealing are above the national average at all levels, primary, secondary and post 16. Every single secondary school in Ealing is graded good or outstanding by Ofsted.

Alongside our secondary school our special schools have achieved remarkable success with all graded good or outstanding and surpassing the national average by 11%. Our pupil referral units, working with our most vulnerable students, also all received good or outstanding ratings.

10 2024-25 Budget Strategy

Councillor Donnelly moved, and Councillor Mason seconded, the Budget Strategy.

Councillor Busutil moved and Councillor Malcolm seconded an amendment.

Councillors Mahfouz, Costigan, Rai, Young, Knewstubb, Haili, Mason, Ball, Kelly, Nagpal, Hashani, Gallant, Johnson, D Crawford, Rice, Kumar, Wesson, K Crawford, Quansah, Conti and Manro responded to the motion and amendment. Councillor Busutil summed up the amendment and Councillor Donnelly summed up the motion.

A vote was taken on the amendment and it fell.

A recorded vote was undertaken on the motion and it was

RESOLVED: That Council

Revenue Budget 2024/25 and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/25 to 2027/28:

1. Considered and approved the Revenue Budget for 2024/25 as summarised in Appendix 1 (Revised).
2. Considered the advice of the Strategic Director, Resources on the levels of reserves and robustness of estimates in setting the budget as required by Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 (Appendix 0, Section 17).
3. Noted the financial risks and pressures set out in the report (Appendix 0, Section 11 and Section 21).
4. Approved the Parking Account 2024/25 (Appendix 0, Section 12 and Appendix 5).
5. Approved the draft Schools budget of £335.412m and agrees that any changes to the budget reasonably required as a result of the final 2024/25 DSG settlement are delegated to the Strategic Director, Children's Services following consultation with the Strategic Director, Resources (Appendix 0, Section 13).
6. Approved the Strategic Director, Resources may agree appropriate actions to comply with DSG guidance, including agreeing the appropriate Deficit Recovery plan for DSG (Appendix 0, Section 13).

Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28

7. Approved General Fund capital programme additions totalling £151.601m,

£1.962m of budgets to be decommissioned and budget re-profiling (Appendix 0, paragraphs 15.7 & 15.8 and Appendix 6).

8. Approved the updated profile of the current Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix 0, Section 15 and Appendix 7.

Capital Strategy, Treasury Management and Pension Fund

9. Approved the Treasury Management Strategy including the associated Prudential Indicators and Annual Investment Strategy (Appendix 0, Section 16 and Appendix 9).
10. Approved the Treasury Management Policy Statement (Appendix 9).
11. Noted the Strategic Director, Resources will implement the Treasury Management Strategy under existing officer delegated powers (Appendix 9).
12. Approved the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy (Appendix 9).
13. Noted that the council manages cash on behalf of the Pension Fund and West London Waste Authority in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix 9).
14. Approved the Capital Strategy (Appendix 8).

Council Tax and Business Rates

15. Approved the officer recommendation of an increase of 2% for the social care precept and an increase of 2.99% for council tax in 2024/25 (Appendix 0, paragraph 8.7).
16. Noted the proposed Greater London Authority (GLA) Band D precept of £471.40 for 2024/25 (Appendix 0, paragraph 8.3).
17. Noted that the Strategic Director, Resources calculated under delegated authority on 11 January 2024 the amount of 123,109.5 as the council tax base, being the number of properties in Bands A-H in the borough, expressed as an equivalent number of Band D units for the year 2024/25, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities Calculation of Council Tax Base Regulations 1992 (as amended) made under Section 335 and 344 of the Local Government Finance Act (LGFA) 1992 (Appendix 0, paragraph 8.1).
18. Noted the forecast Collection Fund position for 2023/24 (Appendix 0, paragraph 9.5).
19. Noted the council's share of the council tax and business rates income forecast for 2024/25, as approved by the Strategic Director, Resources (Appendix 0, paragraph 7.3 and paragraph 8.8).
20. Approved the continuation of a premium for properties which have been empty for more than 2 years and to commence an additional 100% charge for the properties empty for more than one year from 1 April 2024 (Appendix 0, paragraphs 8.9-8.15).

21. Approved the introduction for charging a premium for properties which are not occupied as a household's sole or main residence (second homes) from 1 April 2025 (Appendix 0, paragraph 8.16).
22. Approved the continuation of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the financial year 2024/25 as approved by Cabinet on 7 December 2022 (paragraphs 8.17 to 8.37, Appendix 4).

Council Tax Resolution

23. In respect of the calculation and setting of council tax, the Council considers and approves:
 - a) the council tax requirement for the council's own purposes for 2024/25 is £181,825,345 [Item R in the formula in Section 31B of LGFA 1992, as amended]
 - b) a basic amount of council tax at Band D for Ealing's services for 2024/25 of £1,476.94, a 2% increase for the social care precept and a 2.99% increase for Ealing's share of the standard council tax
 - c) an overall Band D council tax of £1,948.34 including the GLA precept.
24. Agreed the calculations as set out in Table 1 below for 2024/25 prepared in accordance with Sections 31A and 31B of the LGFA 1992 (as amended):
25. Agreed the calculation of the basic amount of council tax required is as follows (see Table 2), calculated by dividing the council tax requirement by the council tax base for 2024/25 (items R and T respectively, in Section 31B of the LGFA 1992 (as amended)):

Table 1: Section 31A Calculation.

(A)	Aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) (a) to (f) of the LGFA 1992 <i>(a) = Council's gross expenditure and transfers to reserves.</i>	£1,154
(B)	Aggregate of the amounts which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) (a) to (d) of the LGFA 1992 <i>(b) = Council's gross income and transfers from reserves. This includes RSG and surpluses transferred from the Collection Fund.</i>	£973
(C)	Calculation of the council tax requirement under section 31A (4), being the amount by which the sum aggregated at (A) (above) exceeds the aggregate of (B) (above). <i>(c) = Council's council tax requirement.</i>	£181

26. Agrees the calculation of the basic amount of council tax required is as follows (see Table 2), calculated by dividing the council tax requirement by the council tax base for 2024/25 (items R and T respectively, in Section 31B of the LGFA 1992 (as amended)):

Table 2: Section 31B Calculation.

	Council Tax Requirement (Table 1 (C))	£181,825,345
(D)	Council tax base for 2024/25	123,109.5
(E)	Tax per Band D Property	£1,476.94

27. Agreed the calculation made in accordance with Section 36 of the LGFA 1992 (as amended), the following amounts for Ealing's services in 2024/25 (see Table 3). These being the amounts given by multiplying the amount shown as 'Tax per Band D Property' (Table 2) by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the LGFA 1992 (as amended), 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, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.
28. Notes that for 2024/25 the GLA, the major Precepting Authority, has stated the following amounts of precepts issued to the council, in accordance with Section 40 of the LGFA 1992 (as amended), for each of the categories of dwellings shown in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Ealing's Council Tax and GLA Precept by band of property

Valuation Band	A	B	C	D	E	F
Core Council Tax	£855.27	£997.81	£1,140.36	£1,282.90	£1,567.99	£1,853.0
Social Care Precept	£129.36	£150.92	£172.48	£194.04	£237.16	£280.2
Total Ealing Council Tax	£984.63	£1,148.73	£1,312.84	£1,476.94	£1,805.15	£2,133.3
GLA Precept	£314.27	£366.64	£419.02	£471.40	£576.16	£680.9
Total Council Tax	£1,298.90	£1,515.37	£1,731.86	£1,948.34	£2,381.31	£2,814.2

29. Having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts in recommendations 1.3 and 1.4 above, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the LGFA 1992 (as amended), approves the amounts in Table 3 to be set as the amounts of council tax for 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings.
30. Determined that, with reference to principles approved by the Secretary of State under Section 52ZB and 52ZC of the LGFA 1992 (as amended), the level of council tax for Ealing is not excessive and as such no referendum is required (Appendix 0, paragraph 5.10).

31. Determined that, as the billing authority, the council has not been notified by the GLA that its relevant basic amount of council tax for 2024/25 is excessive and therefore the council is not required to hold a referendum in accordance with Section 52ZK of the LGFA 1992 (as amended).

Voting

For – Councillors Shaw, Mason, Costigan, Mahfouz, Manro, Donnelly, Kamaljit Kaur Nagpal, Brett, Knewstub, R Wall, Gordon, Haili, Sahota, Kingston, Rice, Kelly, D Martin, Johnson, J Martin, M Ahmed, Mahmood, S Ahmed, Mohamed, L Wall, Jammu, Iqbal, Anderson, Hashani, Kohli, Kim Nagpal, Driscoll, P Anand, Mohan, Dheer, Raza, Jassal, Nijhar, Baaklini, Wesson, Tighe, Summers, Murtaza, Hamidi, Rai, Quansah, Sharma, Midha, K Crawford, Bains and D Crawford

Against – Councillors Busuttil, Steed, Malcolm, Zissimos, Hersch, Ball, Gallant, Kumar, Conti, Young and Stafford.

Abstentions – Councillor Tailor

11 2024-25 Pay Policy Statement

RESOLVED: That Council

1. Approved the attached Pay Policy Statement (appendix 1) and noted the supporting appendices 2, 3, 4 and 5.
2. Approved a policy, for 2024-25, to pay the rLW formerly known as the LLW rate or above to direct employees (whether permanent or fixed term) and to ensure agency workers are paid the rLW. The rLW will be paid for the time periods during which employees are carrying out what might be described as (for example) the normal duties of the post. 2 However, it will not be paid for the time periods on which employees are on a standby shift, or a sleep-in shift, and not carrying out the normal duties of the post.
3. Noted and agreed that decisions on pay grade bands for chief officers will be determined by Chief Officer Panel, in accordance with their existing terms of reference;
4. Commended to Governing Bodies of Schools that they consider paying the rLW rate to schools-based employees (whether permanent or fixed term) and to agency workers working in Schools.

12 2024-25 Members Allowances Scheme

Resolved: That Council

1. Noted and had regard to the report and recommendations of the

London Councils' independent panel, 'The Remuneration of Councillors in London 2023'.

2. Approved the proposed Ealing Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

13 Motions not for Debate

There were no motions not for debate.

14 Urgent Key Decisions Exempted from Call-in

There were no urgent key decisions exempted from call-in.

15 Appointments to Committees and Other Bodies

There were no appointments to Committees and other bodies.

Meeting commenced: 7.06 pm

Meeting finished: 9.28 pm

Signed:

Dated: Tuesday, 16 April 2024

H Taylor (Mayor)