

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

**Date:** Tuesday, 26 July 2022

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

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

M Midha (Mayor) M Ahmed, S Ahmed, J Anand, P Anand, J Ball, J Blacker, G Busuttil, J Gallant, K Bains, C Anderson, T Sidhu, R Dheer, B Mahfouz, D Crawford, A Young, V Alexander, Y Gordon, H Haili, 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, T Mahmood, G Malcolm, S Manro, J Martin, F Mohamed, K Mohan, G Murtaza, K K Nagpal, K Nagpal, I Nijhar, S Padda, 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:**

K Sahota, C Summers, L Brett, P Driscoll, D Martin, P Mason and G Quansah

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

B Rai

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mason, Summers, Brett, Quansah, Sahota, Driscoll, and D Martin.

Councillors Rai and Dhindsa were in attendance virtually.

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

There were no declarations of pecuniary interest.

#### **3 Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 June 2022**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2022 are agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

#### **4 Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor had attended the Descendants Awards ceremony a Civic Mass at Ealing Abbey

The Mayor was due to hold an awards ceremony for NHS staff on the following Friday, to recognise and celebrate their work over the course of the

pandemic. All Councillors were invited to the award ceremony and reception.

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

There were no petitions from members of the public.

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

There were no petitions from members of the Council.

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

Margaret Thomas asked Councillor Costigan:

Why are four parking spaces in Strauss Road W4 reserved for the exclusive use of the Chiswick Family Practice from 7am to 7pm each weekday when that practice moved to new premises in Acton in March 2022? Assuming that the practice is no longer paying to reserve these four parking spaces I request please that they be returned to public use subject to the restrictions between 9am and 10am and between 3pm and 4pm imposed by the provisions of Controlled Parking Zone R

Councillor Costigan responded that:

Officers are currently taking steps to change the designation of those parking spaces and work will be complete in 6-8 weeks.

The Highways department is responsible for controlled parking zones on these roads and the practice hadn't given the Council advance notice that they were going to vacate the premises.

However the Council found out at the end of March and the Council prepared to change the bays. Unfortunately it isn't as simple as just changing the markings and signage, there are legal proceedings that need to be taken including changing the traffic order. Changing traffic orders is costly, so they are done in batches. This change of the traffic order to incorporate this set of bays into resident only parking is due to be taken in the next six to eight weeks.

Ting Ting Zhang asked Councillor Raza:

I feel unsafe walking to Ealing Broadway Station through Haven Green at night, or walking to St Mary's, Perivale through Pitshanger park. When I walk through Bunny Park I see blatant drug-taking. There have been robberies in broad daylight in Ealing Broadway. Is the council proposing any new measures to counter crime and make women like me feel completely safe in this borough?

Councillor Raza responded:

The Council is currently considering the findings of the Safer Ealing for Women survey, which was a listening exercise for women across the Borough. The locations that you had identified in your question had also been reported in this survey.

An action plan will be put together once the results of the survey have been analysed. These actions will improve safety for women in the borough.

In addition to this, Churchfield Recreation Ground and Brent Valley Park, often referred to as Bunny Park, have been allocated Council fund Antisocial Behaviour patrols, carried out by Parkguard. These patrols are effective, and recently they assisted the police in arresting three individuals for possession with intent to supply.

Richard Ward asked Councillor Costigan:

Can the council please consider allowing businesses located on a school street to be able to apply for a permit to drive on the school street at operational times, regardless of where their vehicle is registered?

Councillor Costigan responded:

One of the aims of school streets is part of the fight against air pollution, and particularly so around our schools. This is so our children and young people don't have to walk through pollution in the morning. Another reason for school streets is safety – to allow children to walk to school without having to dodge cars.

To achieve these objectives we need to significantly reduce the number of motor vehicles going down the streets the schools are located on.

The point is not to have lots of exemptions. This would mean that the restrictions wouldn't be as effective and would dilute the benefits of the scheme. In order to create this safer, clean environment there are only a very limited number of exemptions allowed. However it should be noted the restrictions are only in place in the morning and the afternoon meaning that the rest of the time the roads are available for general use.

Business owners can apply for a permit for vehicles that are registered to the vehicles to the business that is located in a school street. But exemptions don't go any wider than that for business owners. I know that for staff in schools, they come in 15 minutes earlier to avoid the school street. Most delivery drivers have a trolley and if they can't get to an address they can always use a trolley to make a delivery.

Monika Williams asked Councillor Costigan:

Are there any exceptional circumstances whereby a tree which is currently under a Tree Protection Order can be cut down?

Councillor Costigan responded:

This is something you can apply for if there is a tree that you think needs protecting in your area, if you think the tree has very strong amenity value. You can apply to the Council to get a TPO made. There are exemptions to tree protection orders, for example if you are a homeowner and you have a TPO protected tree on your property you can work on it if it is dangerous or is dying or diseased.

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

Councillor Jammu asked Councillor Manro:

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the progress on work on the Southall reset?

Councillor Manro responded:

At our most recent meeting, Cabinet pressed the Southall reset button, to kickstart a new approach to community-led development in Southall. Southall has experienced significant changes over the past decade, primarily due to the large-scale investment in residential development. But we know this has created significant challenges for local people.

The pandemic has hit the community hard, with residents in Southall having had the highest rate of furlough in the country. And now the cost of living crisis has the potential to be disastrous for many residents.

This Labour administration has a new vision and ambition for Southall, which puts decent living incomes and supporting local businesses to thrive at the centre. We know that Southall has great potential to achieve more in bringing in new jobs and growing the local economy as a destination for visitors and shoppers from across London, the UK and the world.

We will embed the principles of community engagement, and have committed to bringing forward a Community-led Regeneration Charter that sets out clear rights for residents to shape and control the decisions being taken in their communities on housing and employment.

Finally, we have committed to investing nearly £9m in active travel in Southall, and supporting Let's Go Southall's amazing social movement to distribute 1,000 bikes to local people. This is in addition to the new Wellbeing Way project, which was launched yesterday and will invest

nearly £1m in improving the towpath for people walking, cycling, running and scooting.

We know we need to reset our relationship with the local community, and this programme sets out how we will do that. Officers are now putting in place the internal governance and decision-making structures to implement and deliver the Southall Reset. This agreement will then enable the council to quickly set up an external stakeholder engagement and delivery framework to ensure partners including the GLA and TfL release the funding for delivery and to ensure the Southall community are at the very heart of the decision making going forward.

Councillor Ball asked Councillor J Anand:

Will the new Town Forums be as well as or instead of Ward Forums?

Councillor J Anand responded:

When Ealing Labour were elected in May, we pledged to establish seven new Town Forums that will be an open, transparent and inclusive vehicle for local communities and stakeholders to have a greater say on what matters to them in their town. The new Town Forums will replace Ward Forums, and we are determined to ensure they are led by the community, for the community.

The Town Forums will also enable local communities to have more power to set the spending priorities for their local area from the £2m raised from the developer tax, i.e. the portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy that can be spent by communities on what they want, facilitating community initiatives and microfinancing. The CIL scheme will be adopted later in this administration. In advance of this, initial funding will be set aside for projects to be developed by the Town Forums, and an ICMD report to Cabinet in September will set out our proposals for how the forums will work for local people. Ward councillors will be consulted extensively on proposals.

This is part of our new approach to engagement in Ealing, which will help us to create a two way dialogue between the council and local people, with a council that truly listens and values what our residents tell us they want and need. That's why in our manifesto, and as you will hear in the Council Plan, we also pledged to introduce a Community Charter, setting out residents' rights and what can rightly be expected from the council in being open, inclusive, and transparent in everything we do. This means handing over power to communities and supporting residents to come together to take mutual ownership and management of the public assets you love, sustaining them well into the future.

Councillor Young asked Councillor Donnelly:

What services can be accessed in-person at the Customer Service Centre in Perceval House?

Councillor Donnelly responded:

Currently, services that can be accessed in-person from the Customer Service Centre in Perceval House by appointment are:

- Ealing Registration Service
- Social Care
- Archived planning documents

But we know that people don't want to have to travel to Perceval House for everything. It is our priority to ensure that our services are convenient and responsive for all residents. For some, that means ensuring our services are accessible online. For other residents, having the opportunity to discuss a problem face to face with an adviser is the best way to resolve an issue. When we were elected in May, we pledged to launch new community hubs, located within our seven towns, supporting residents to access council services at a one-stop place that can support those most impacted by the Tory cost of living crisis with wraparound support.

And we are already delivering. The customer services and community engagement teams have been piloting projects to place advisors in libraries in Ealing, Northolt, Acton and Southall. So far, around 500 residents have spoken to our advisors, which has driven footfall into libraries and meant people have avoided unnecessary journeys to Ealing Broadway.

We want to make sure that all our residents across all seven towns have convenient, nearby access to advice, not just residents of Ealing. That will truly demonstrate our commitment to equality, openness, and inclusion.

Councillor Mohamed asked Councillor Costigan:

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on progress on the Air Quality Strategy?

Councillor Costigan responded:

The air pollution and climate crises are two of the biggest issues facing our borough, which we are committed to working together with our communities to tackle. London's air pollution can be fatal and tragically it contributed to 4,000 deaths across the capital in 2019 alone. For this reason, tackling air pollution is one of the council's top priorities, but we can't do it alone. The action we take as a council has to work for residents.

That's why we have been extensively engaging with residents, to understand their priorities for tackling air pollution, and what ideas local people have for improving their area. This could be solutions that enable walking and cycling to take dirty cars off the road, or greening our borough so trees help clean up our air.

We also asked people what has worked so far – and what hasn't. We are committed to continuously learning and improving on our successes, but we know that to be open, transparent and inclusive we also need to be honest and prepared to change our approach when needed.

We had an overwhelming response to the consultation – Ealing residents have yet again told us how important this is to them. Our survey received over 1,250 responses, and we held virtual focus groups which were attended by over 100 residents.

The responses from this initial engagement exercise have been used to help inform and develop a draft Air Quality Strategy and Action Plan. The drafts are in the final stage of review by officers and once finalised, it is the intention to seek comment on the draft strategy as part of a further public consultation exercise scheduled to commence in early September 2022.

The AQS will provide a guide to the air quality challenges facing Ealing, and set out actions being, or planned to be, implemented across the Borough to improve air quality. It offers a range of goals that will contribute to tackling poor air quality, pushing for future activities and developments to continually improve air quality, the wellbeing and sustainability for residents and visitors. We have a long way to go to clean up our air, but we are committed to doing all we can, and will be bringing forward ambitious targets and actions to match.

Councillor Steed asked Councillor Blacker:

As cases of the new covid variant increase with more hospital admissions, has the council considered introducing free covid test kits?

Councillor Blacker responded:

As a council, we share the concerns of rising covid cases. With rising hospital admissions, lack of adequate testing and blatant neglect by the government – covid-19 is still very much with us.

In London last week, the daily number of people testing positive was reported as 17,000. But we know that number is just a fraction of the whole picture.

In the face of rising cases, hardworking families cannot work amidst a

cost-of-living crisis and since the government ended universal testing on March 31st the NHS has been pushed to breaking point – declaring just last week ‘black alert’.

A benchmarking exercise was undertaken at a Northwest London level to investigate the viability of offering free universal testing, and at this subregional level, the decision taken was not to take this forward. We are of course limited by resource. If Cllr Steed and his colleagues want to be taken seriously as an official opposition – that is a challenge they must rise to face.

Our answer is to focus on what resources we have for the most vulnerable residents, and on communities most affected by Covid and the comorbidities associated with the highest risk.

Since April 1st, we have made surplus LFD tests from the universal testing programme available to council staff working with vulnerable residents to ensure we do not put them at risk.

And two weeks ago at Cabinet, we invested an additional £400,000 into tackling health inequalities in a borough where life expectancy is shorter in Southall than it is in Southfield.

We continue to promote covid vaccination, engaging with communities – understanding their hesitancy and using this work to tailor the vaccine offer. The government cut funding for community vaccine champions, but it is there that we can make the most difference and there we have invested another £90,000 a year to support this important work.

Councillor Sidhu asked Councillor Mahfouz:

Can the cabinet member bring an update on how the council is supporting residents during the current cost-of-living crisis?

Councillor Mahfouz responded:

In the face of 40-year high inflation rates, a fumbling government and an intervention package that barely scratched the surface in providing families with real, viable financial support, we are supporting residents as best we can in the face of this crisis.

We stand out from other local councils, with our generous and clearly focused Household Support Fund, which supports those who are on Free School Meals and those on benefits with children under five.

We have issued nearly 15,000 supermarket vouchers and are not stopping there. This autumn we will utilise the fund further to ensure pensioners receive a one-off payment via the Post Office of over £100. Helping them with rising costs and dramatic jumps in the costs of



living.

We are also continuing our discretionary council tax discount to residents who could benefit from the support, to pay their council tax bills.

To date over 53,000 residents have received their £150 payments as part of the energy rebate scheme. That is over 55% of those eligible. Applications for the scheme remain open and continue to be promoted through targeted emails, social media, and wider publications to ensure that everyone eligible can benefit from the payment.

Our community hubs and dedicated customer phone lines remain open to support any resident in filling out their application, asking any questions and physically providing support amidst the cost-of-living crisis.

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. Decades of austerity have hacked away at people's social security – and have 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 Nijhar asked Councillor Donnelly:

Can the cabinet member provide an update on how the Government is supporting local councils to provide services to residents amidst the current inflation crisis?

Councillor Donnelly responded:

Colleagues have heard me say time and again that we are facing unprecedented, colliding crises of Brexit, covid, inflation, energy and the cost of living. These are hitting our residents hard and stretching council budgets to their limit. It is plainly clear that the Tory Government's so called 'levelling up' agenda means levelling down for local government, and for London in particular.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 9.4% in the 12 months to June 2022, up from 9.1% in May. London Councils has warned of £400m of additional budget pressures on boroughs in the capital as a result of skyrocketing inflation and those vital local services and economic recovery will be jeopardised without immediate extra investment and certainty over future funding.

And it's not just London - the cross-party, national Local Government

Association said local services that were seemingly secure just three months ago were now at risk of closure or cuts as we are alone scrambling to manage an unforeseen £2.4bn rise in costs.

Although there were some positive signals by the now former Department for Housing, Levelling Up and Communities Secretary of State, Michael Gove, that the Government would seek to move towards two year financial settlements, colleagues will of course be aware that shortly after that speech he was unceremoniously removed from his position. Neither of his colleagues now on the ballot for leadership have indicated that they would seek to honour his welcome commitments. Instead, they are proposing unfunded tax cuts and arguing about culture wars.

In the meantime, inflation continues to make almost all our service delivery considerably more challenging, and to date the government has not made any announcements or assurances to provide councils with additional financial support or increases in grant funding to manage these significant financial pressures.

This is hitting hardest in capital projects, where the impact of Covid, Brexit and the war in Ukraine have led to significant cost increases and pressures relating to the supply chain, labour and materials. Inflation pressures are also acute in adult social care, an already vulnerable market, with increases in energy, fuel and staff costs. The impact on inflation and the cost-of-living crisis on residents is also likely to increase demand for our services such as homelessness and adults and children's social care.

It has never been clearer that councils need certainty over in-year support and future local government finance settlements. We will continue to campaign for reliable and secure funding from Government, so that we can always be confident of being there when residents need us.

## **9 Council Plan 2022-26**

Councillor Costigan moved, and Councillor Kingston seconded to Council Plan 2022-26. Councillors Malcolm, Conti, Wesson, Hersch, Gallant, J Anand, Ball, Stafford, Manro, Busuttil, Young, L Wall, Steed, Kumar, Kamaljit Kaur Nagpal, Blacker, Raza, Mahfouz, Donnelly, Bains, D Crawford and Shaw debated the content of the plan.

A vote was taken and it was **RESOLVED**: That Council:

- a) Agreed the Council Plan for 2022-26 (included as Appendix 1)
- b) Authorised the Director of Strategy and Engagement following consultation with the Leader, to make any amendments to the draft Council Plan for 2022-26 to take account of feedback from Council,

prior to publication.

## **10 Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Costigan moved, and Councillor Kingston seconded and it was

**RESOLVED:** That Council:

1. Noted the contents of this report
2. Amended the constitution to substitute the attached updated contract procedure rules (Appendix 1) for the previous version of those rules (Appendix 2)
3. Authorised the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, following consultation with the Director of Finance to fully implement the updated contract procedure rules

## **11 Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting was due to be held on 1 November 2022.

Meeting commenced: 7.00 pm

Meeting finished: 9.30 pm

Signed:

Dated:

M Midha (Mayor)