

2024/25 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM - FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024/29

Liberal Democrat Group Budget Amendments in accordance with CSO 15.8b.

AMENDMENT 1

Proposer: Councillor Luke Cawley-Harrison

Secunder: Councillor Dawn Barnes

That the 2024/25 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy 2024/29 be amended as follows.

That 3.1.(a) be amended to read:

(a) To approve the proposed 2023/24 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (2023/28) agreed by Cabinet on 7th February 2023 as set out in Annex 1, with the following exceptions:

(i) Given the huge opposition in the borough to cutting library budgets, reducing opportunities for many of our most disadvantaged residents to access books, computers and community spaces, the proposed cut to library opening hours will be reversed;

(ii) Access to hard copy newspaper titles in libraries is far more valuable to residents than access to the council's own magazine, and therefore the cut to hard copy titles will be reversed, and spending cut on the council's self-promotion magazine, Haringey People;

(iii) Cuts to libraries in future years, whether as removal of librarians and introduction of self service, or repackaged as a libraries strategy which removes the same money from the budget, is unjustified and will be reversed.

(iv) The council was forced by resident opposition to backtrack on introducing charging for public tennis courts in 2020, and has faced opposition to subsequent introduction of a strict booking system, reduction of court availability to allow private coaching and introduction of locking gates, and therefore the increase in tennis court charges, which will bring in less revenue than the council spends on promoting itself through social media ads, will be reversed, and spending cut on advertising;

(v) Given the council's past record on allowing unpopular events in the borough's parks, including the 2024 Tough Mudder event in Finsbury Park, branded an "environmental disgrace" by David Lammy, the expansion of events in parks will be reversed.

(vi) What matters to residents when it comes to delivery of leisure services is the quality of delivery, not the model, so given the significant additional cost implication

of bringing leisure centres in-house vs an external provider at a time of severe financial strain, retendering the contract and securing a well-regarded national provider to run the centres will now be the preferred option;

(vii) Spending hundreds of thousands of pounds on the leader's office is unjustifiable given the cuts being implemented to front-line services, and cutting spending on the leader's office will be preferred;

(viii) Haringey has a higher number of directors than many comparable London boroughs, such as Camden and Enfield, yet has no better a record of service delivery, so restructuring and consolidating the number of directors for further savings will be implemented;

(ix) The council's reliance on agency staff, now making up over a third of the workforce, is an unjustifiable loss of taxpayers' money, and converting a number of agency staff to permanent status is warranted;

(x) The council's finances are in an unprecedented position, so making further savings now to reduce the use of reserves in 2024-25 will have a positive compounding impact on the availability of these reserves to help us balance future years' budgets and give greater future breathing room to council finances.

With the above changes financed using the details laid out in Liberal Democrat Amendment Annex X, which should be considered as amending the proposals as laid out in the Budget report and Appendices, still ensuring a balanced budget.

This will have consequential changes to the text of the budget report and appendices which will be enclosed with the minutes of this Council meeting which will be agreed on the 14th of March 2024.