

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON TUESDAY, 11TH FEBRUARY, 2025, 6.30 - 8.16 pm**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Ajda Ovat, Peray Ahmet (Chair), Mike Hakata, Emily Arkell, Zena Brabazon, Dana Carlin, Lucia das Neves, Ruth Gordon and Sarah Williams**

### **124. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

The Chair referred to the filming at meetings notice, and attendees noted this information.

#### **RESOLVED:**

To note the filming procedure

### **125. APOLOGIES**

There were apologies received from Cllr Chandwani.

### **126. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

### **127. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Hakata declared a prejudicial interest as a former governor of Tiverton Primary School and recused himself for item 16.

### **128. NOTICE OF INTENTION TO CONDUCT BUSINESS IN PRIVATE, ANY REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED AND THE RESPONSE TO ANY SUCH REPRESENTATIONS**

There were none.

### **129. MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting, dated 21 January 2025, were discussed

#### **RESOLVED:**

The minutes of the previous meeting, dated 21 January 2025, were approved as a true and accurate record of proceedings.

**130. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS**

There were none.

**131. MATTERS REFERRED TO CABINET BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Scrutiny Panel Chair for Housing, Planning and Development introduced the report of the Housing, Planning & Development Scrutiny Panel – Undertaking a review of the Housing Register.

It was explained that the Panel had resolved to submit a formal recommendation to Cabinet, that the Council should undertake a review of the housing register and that the Council should write to everyone on the housing register and ask them to provide an updated return on their current housing status. It was felt that the most appropriate time to do this was as part of the consultation process for the updated housing allocations policy.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning (Deputy Leader) outlined the response to the recommendations, explaining that, as part of the implementation process of a revised Housing Allocation Policy, the Council would need to reassess all existing applications against any changes to assessment criteria. It was explained that this would include ensuring that the Council had up to date information for all existing applicants on which to base an accurate assessment against the new policy. It was explained that, as part of this process, applicants would be invited confirm or otherwise update their current circumstances. It was additionally explained that, following implementation of the new the new policy, the Council would ask for applications to be renewed and conduct reviews of applications at regular intervals. It was explained that the approach would be set out in the draft policy that will go out to consultation.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

- Agreed with the scrutiny recommendation to contact everyone on the housing register and take forward a review of the register, in order to ascertain the extent to which the information held by the Council was up to date and whether, in light of the length of time some people spend on the register, their housing needs had changed.

**132. 2025-26 BUDGET AND 2025-2030 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY REPORT**

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services introduced the report. It was explained that Haringey was a borough rich in diversity, creativity and talent. It was also noted that it was a borough where life expectancy dropped eight years from west to east and where levels of deprivation were amongst the highest in the country. It was explained that the Council's driving ambition was to create a fairer and greener borough, where everyone could belong and thrive.

It was explained that it was within those parameters that the Council budget was set, noting that, after successive changes to the funding formulae from 2010, Haringey lost circa £143m to our budget. It was additionally explained that Haringey was also still considered an outer London borough for funding purposes (although an inner London borough for statistical ones) and receives less funding than our inner London neighbours. In the current financial year, like other boroughs, Haringey had seen significant increases in the demand for and cost of local services. It was particularly noted that there had been increases in adult social care and temporary accommodation and that the cost of temporary accommodation increased by 68% in London last year.

It was noted that, while significant savings were proposed, the Council had worked very hard to protect the local services that residents rely on and need.

It was explained that, in 2025/26, the Council would invest almost £1bn to deliver local public services. It was explained that the Council would build hundreds of new council homes, help hundreds of people into work, fix hundreds of roads and pavements, plant hundreds of street trees, among many other key actions to make this borough fairer and greener. It was explained that this was being undertaken, not only because it is the right thing to do, in a borough such as Haringey, but because many of local services were preventative. It was noted that further cuts to frontline services could result in increased costs to statutory services, with residents and the Council less resilient in the face of increased need.

It was explained that the Council applied to the government for a maximum of £37m in Exceptional Financial Support (EFS). It was explained that this was required in order for us to set a balanced budget. For the future, it was explained that the Council would continue to work to reduce costs and to make every penny count and minimise use of EFS as much as possible. It was noted that, in the longer term, the Council need fair funding reform from the government. The government is reviewing funding allocations to local government and is due to have proposals for 2026/27. The Council was pressing for change to make sure that funding is driven by local need.

The Cabinet Member explained that they were grateful for the funding allocated to the Council by the new government from the Recovery Grant, which was based on levels of deprivation and Haringey's relatively low Council Tax base.

The Cabinet Member stressed that there were significant challenges but that the Council budget would start with local priorities, focus on the needs of local people and build towards our shared ambition of a fairer and greener borough.

The Vice Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Chair of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel introduced scrutiny recommendations and highlighted:

- The difficulties of not having a settled budget before the end of February 2025. It was explained that there were concerns regarding the need for additional financial support to set a balanced budget in 2025/26.
- That Overview and Scrutiny Committees had asked for quarterly financial performance data.
- That the 2023/24 Statement of Accounts – External Auditors Annual Report published in January 2025 noted that the external auditors were not satisfied with the level of scrutiny of the 2023/2024 budget, that information provided at that point was limited, and that good scrutiny of the budget was optimal.

In response the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Resources:

1. Stressed the difficult financial position of local authorities across London and that Haringey was not in a unique position in that regard. It was noted that there was an increased demand for statutory services which had amplified pressure on the Council's finances. It was additionally noted that there were increased costs to delivery of statutory services, due to external factors, as well as an increase in the level of complex cases.

In response to comments and questions from Cllrs Das Neves, Gordon, Brabazon, Arkell and Cawley-Harrison, the following information was shared:

- That Haringey had received around £16mil in new funding from the local government funding settlement. It was explained that some of this funding was part of a recovery grant which was based on local deprivation and capacity to raise income. It was additionally explained that there was a high level of funding within the homelessness prevention funding.
- That it was estimated that there was around a £143 mil shortfall in funding in real terms from 2011.
- It was explained that there was a need for Central Government to review the need of individual boroughs and that local authorities require a fairer funding formula to ensure equity and sustainability. It was explained that there was a positive direction of travel with the distribution of the recovery grant from Central Government.
- That there was a need to remove the outdated definition of Inner and Outer London Boroughs, which limited funding considerably.

- That around 61% of the budget was spent on adult's, children's and Temporary Accommodation services.
- That the Council had made an application for in year financial support.
- That the report contained the maximum borrowing requests that could be utilised in order to develop a balanced budget. It was explained that the Council would, wherever possible, ensure that the maximum was not spent. It was additionally noted that the Council would utilise Capital Receipts to undertake works and that borrowing would be at the normal rates of around 5%.
- It was explained that the Council expected that the funding that was allocated would be sufficient, but that there was an unpredicted level of complexity and need which had increased the cost of statutory services. It was explained that this was not a unique position, and that several other comparable local authorities had applied for exceptional financial funding. Officers noted that the borrowing rates would be dictated by the timing of the borrowing, so it was hoped that rates would decrease.

## **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Considered the outcome of the budget consultation as set out in Appendix 5, to be included in the report to Council.
2. Approved the responses made to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations following their consideration of the draft budget proposals.
3. Proposed that the Council approve the 2025/26 Budget and MTFS 2025/30 Budget, new budget requirements and savings proposals.
4. Proposed that the Council approve the 2025/26 General Fund Revenue Budget, including specifically a General Fund budget requirement of £348.9m, but subject to final decisions of the levying and precepting bodies and the final local government finance Settlement.

5. Proposed that the Council approve of the General Fund Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/2030.
6. Proposed that the Council approve that the overall Haringey element of Council Tax to be set by London Borough of Haringey for 2025/26 will be £1,717.56 per Band D property, which represents a 2.99% increase on the 2024/25 Haringey element and with an additional 2% for the Adult Social Care Precept amount.
7. Noted the Council Tax Base of the London Borough of Haringey, as agreed by the Section 151 Officer under delegated authority (Article 4.01(b), Part 2, of the Constitution), as 82,589 for the financial year 2025/26.
8. Proposed that the Council approve of the Capital Strategy 2025/26 to 2029/30, including the General Fund capital programme.
9. Proposed that the Council approve of the strategy on the use of flexible capital receipts to facilitate the delivery of efficiency savings including capitalisation of redundancy costs.
10. Proposed that the Council approve of the 2025/26 Minimum Revenue Policy.
11. Proposed that the Council approve the Dedicated Schools Budget (DSB) allocations for 2025/26 of £253m.
12. Noted the funding to be distributed to primary and secondary schools for 2025/26 based on the figures advised to Schools Forum and submitted to the Education Funding Agency in January 2025.
13. Noted the budgets (including the use of brought forward DSG) for the Schools Block, Central Services Block, High Needs Block and Early Years Block.
14. Delegated authority to the Director of Children Services, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families, authority to amend the Delegated Schools Budget to take account of any changes to Haringey's total schools funding allocation by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.
15. Delegated authority to the Section 151 officer, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services, authority to make

further changes to the 2025/26 draft budget to Full Council up to a maximum limit of £1.0m.

### **Reasons for decision**

The Council had a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget for 2025/26 and the report formed part of the budget setting process for setting out the forecast funding and expenditure for 2025/26 to be presented to Full Council on 3 March 2025. As part of good financial management and transparency, this report set out the current funding and expenditure assumptions for the following four years in the form of an updated Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The final budget for 2025/26, Council Tax levels, Capital Programme, Treasury Management Strategy, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) budget and Business Plan will be recommended to Full Council on 3 March 2025 following consideration at Cabinet on 11 February 2025.

### **Alternative options considered**

The Cabinet must legally consider how to deliver a balanced 2025/26 budget and sustainable MTFS over the five-year period 2025/30, to be reviewed and adopted at the meeting of Full Council on 3 March 2025.

The Council had developed the proposals contained in this report in light of its current forecasts for future income levels and service demand. These took account of the Council's priorities; the extent of the estimated funding shortfall; the estimated impact of wider environmental factors such as inflation, interest rates, household incomes and, in some service areas, the legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **133. HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT 2025/26 - 2029/30**

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, and Deputy Leader of the Council introduced the report. It was explained that Haringey was committed to fairer housing, explaining that means making sure residents had safe, stable, warm and comfortable homes. It was noted that the Council invested the HRA (Housing Revenue Account) into repairing and renovating existing Council homes and into building new homes for people on the waiting list. It was explained that the Council wanted both existing Council tenants and new Council tenants to live in high quality homes and that more families and individuals in the borough who needed the security of social housing to be able to set down roots and thrive. It was explained that key investments made in existing council homes included: improving kitchens and bathrooms; keeping estates safer, and; keeping homes warm and dry – and making homes cheaper to heat.

It was explained that investment in new Council homes and renovation work to existing council homes would help reduce the need for future expenditure on repairs.

The Cabinet Member explained that, as well as capital investment, the HRA delivered important services to tenants and leaseholders, including tenancy services, income services (including the financial inclusion service), estates and neighbourhood services. It was noted that residents that need support would be able to live well in their homes and communities utilising these services.

It was stressed that setting a sustainable HRA had become significantly more challenging in recent years. It was noted that higher interest rates and inflation were driving up costs across the board and that construction costs had been rising for some years, increasing the cost of repairs and important building safety works. It was explained that, at times, Council rent rises were kept below inflation, either by national government or by local councils, with a series of 1% rent cuts between 2016 and 2020 and a sub-inflation rise in 2023-24. The Council were able to continue to provide services to tenants and leaseholders, to invest in their homes and to build thousands of new council homes over time, a major programme that is delivering genuinely affordable homes that local people need.

In response to comments and questions from Cllr Cawley-Harrison, the following information was shared:

- That new builds go through a value engineering process to ensure that development contracts offer the best value for money at the time.
- That Long-Term Voids, those that required major structural works, had work nearly completed, and that the Voids team has been exceeding targets. It was noted that there was an impetus to continue and expand this work.
- Officers explained that the business plan had reduced the cost of the housing delivery programme by 14% through good procurement and forward planning.
- Officers explained that they had increased the budget in the Housing Revenue Account to support target of delivery of additional homelessness discharge acquisitions and that the Council had also applied to the Greater London Authority (GLA) for additional funding for acquisition of Council homes to discharge this duty.

## **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approved the proposed increases in rent of 2.7% to existing tenancies and noted that rents on other forms of tenancies would continue as approved in prior years by Cabinet.

2. Approved the proposed average service charge increases. However, noting that the increases in service charges to individual tenants would vary depending on the service they receive.
3. Proposed that the Council approve on 3 March 2025 the HRA 2025/26 Budget and 2025/26-29/30 MTFS, which included the proposed revenue and capital spend over the period.

### **Reasons for decision**

The Council must legally set a balanced HRA budget and have a sustainable HRA Business Plan to ensure that it is able to manage and maintain its homes, provide services to tenants and leaseholders and build much needed new Council homes.

### **Alternative options considered**

Not Applicable

## **134. DETERMINATION OF THE COUNCIL'S SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2026/27**

The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families introduced the report. It was explained that, as a result of a very full consideration of all the available evidence, that the Cabinet Member recommended that Cabinet agree to determine the Council's admission arrangements for the academic year 2026/27 and that the proposal to reduce the published admission number (PAN) for the primary and secondary schools be agreed.

In response to comments and questions from Cllrs Hakata and Cawley-Harrison, the following information was shared:

- The Cabinet Member stressed that birth rates across London had decreased significantly, which had led to a substantial decrease in pupil numbers. Officers explained that they had undertaken strategic decisions to plan for future pupil numbers and helped schools to additionally plan for these numbers, including working with school Governing Bodies to potentially redeploy and restructure staff dependant on school pupil numbers.
- The Cabinet Member explained that work had been undertaken to understand the contributing factors to the reduction of pupil numbers in the borough. It was explained that there were many different factors, including the impact of the housing market on decisions to start a family. It was explained that the Council was undertaking work, wherever possible, to build family homes to help alleviate these limiting factors. Officers

explained that officers within the Planning team work closely with Children's Services Directorate to ensure that school place planning was undertaken effectively and that family housing policies were strengthened wherever possible.

## **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Considered and took into account the feedback from the consultation undertaken.
2. Considered and took into account the equalities impact assessment of the proposals on protected groups.
3. Agreed to proceed with the proposal to reduce the published admission number (PAN) for the primary and secondary schools from September 2026.
4. Agreed the Council's admission arrangements for the academic year 2026/27.
5. Agreed Haringey's fair access protocol to come into force from 1 March 2025.
6. Agreed that the determined arrangements for all maintained primary and secondary schools in the borough should be published on the Council's website by 15 March 2025, with an explanation of the right of any person or body, under the School Admissions (Admission Arrangements and Co-ordination of Admission Arrangements) Regulations 2012, to object to the Schools Adjudicator in specified circumstances .

## **Reasons for decision**

In common with many London authorities, Haringey had been experiencing a decrease in demand for reception school places for several years. The reasons for Haringey's declining numbers were multifaceted, but included a combination of falling birth rates, changes to welfare benefits, the housing crisis, increases in the cost of living, the withdrawal of the right of entry and freedom of movement from EU nationals (Brexit) and families leaving London during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of these factors remained outside the Council's control and are at no fault of the schools or their current leadership.

A report on Managing falling school rolls in London published by London Councils in January 2024 provided some wider context and independent analysis of the issue.

At secondary school level, forecasted demand was also now declining. Demand for Year 7 places between now and the end of the decade was set to decline and fall

below the notional existing capacity of 2,628 places. Reductions in secondary capacity should also therefore be undertaken to bolster sustainability across the school estate and ensure the provision of places meets projected demand.

Falling rolls, due to lower birth rates and out-migration rate, demanded changes to the published admission number in recent years whilst Reception place surplus was forecast to grow further. Smaller primary cohorts had also now started to work their way through to the secondary phase and demand for Year 7 places was also declining. The proposals for reductions in PAN are designed to improve schools' ability to efficiently plan their staffing and educational provision by offering a more accurate number of places.

### **Alternative options considered**

The Council would not be proposing a change to the oversubscription criteria for our community and VC schools for 2026/27. Whilst there were other ways that admission arrangements could influence the allocation of school places set out in the Code (e.g., designated catchment areas, identified feeder schools or giving priority in oversubscription criteria to children eligible for the early years premium/ pupil premium) no alternative option was being considered at the time of writing this report.

The overarching aim was to assist schools in helping to enshrine sustainability and to introduce greater flexibility within the school estate to respond to the increasing rate of variation in population demand. PAN reduction was one of several solutions that schools can explore, and future sustainability can also be achieved through other strengthening partnerships e.g. soft/hard federations and memorandums of understanding between schools. Some neighbouring London authorities had taken radical measures to address surplus capacity (school closures / amalgamations). Haringey was also currently consulting on options for the future of one of its most at risk primary schools, but this would not impact on the consultation and determination of the admission arrangements for the schools governed by the Local Authority.

## **135. CARBON OFFSET FUND ALLOCATION STRATEGY 2025-2029**

The Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Environment and Transport introduced the report. The Cabinet Member explained the proposed strategy for allocating £2.23 million from our Carbon Offset Fund over the next four years to deliver carbon reduction projects across Haringey. It was explained that it was not always possible for developments to achieve net zero carbon. In these instances, the London Plan allowed developers to offset residual emissions through cash-in-lieu contributions. These would feed into Haringey's Carbon Offset Fund, providing a source of funding to deliver strategic carbon reduction projects in the borough.

It was explained that the proposed projects would form a core part of delivering on the Climate Change Action Plan and achieving the target for Haringey to be net zero carbon by 2041. The projects proposed were based on ideas from and with support

across the Council and the community. The seven projects span initiatives to decarbonise our corporate estate, support community action, tackle fuel poverty, increase urban tree planting, and drive behaviour change.

It was explained that the allocation included provision for the next four years of the Haringey Community Carbon Fund. This fund empowers residents and community groups to deliver grassroots carbon reduction projects, and is a shining example of the Haringey Deal principles of co-production and community collaboration in action.

It was stressed that the Community Carbon Fund was a key tool in our arsenal as we rise to the challenge of the Climate Emergency and build a greener, cleaner and more sustainable Haringey.

In response to comments and questions from Cllr Ovat and Cawley-Harrison, the following information was shared:

- It was explained that the last round of Community Carbon Fund applications had been completed and there had been a number of submissions. It was noted that there were a broad range of applications to the fund and that this was a positive for the borough.
- That there was a need to ensure the Council uses its leverage to get best results and that they were working to finalise work on a number of carbon efficient projects across the borough, including eco-schools.
- That the criteria for the Community Carbon Fund was developed collaboratively and that they were: the effectiveness of reducing carbon, Value for Money, community engagement, and whether there any other permissions/consents that were required. It was explained that the service would work with other portfolio leads to measure and ensure effectiveness of these criteria across completed projects.
- That schemes were selected by aligning with projects that were currently within the current Capital Programme and ensure that they projects aligned with carbon offset requirements.

## **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approved the use of £2.23 million of carbon offset monies collected from Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the seven carbon reduction programmes and their administration, with the aspiration to use this funding to leverage in match funding to support the delivery of these projects and to maximise impact:

- a. £0.64 million to the extension of the Haringey Community Carbon Fund for another four years (Years 5-8);
  - b. £0.15 million to a climate resilience project on a council-owned and community used building;
  - c. £0.15 million to fuel poverty action and supporting green skills;
  - d. £0.68 million to solar and energy efficiency projects within the council and school estate, working in partnership with Community Energy Companies;
  - e. £0.32 million to energy efficiency audits on the corporate estate to bring forward a pipeline of projects;
  - f. £0.09 million to urban tree planting; and,
  - g. £0.2 million to behaviour change initiatives.
2. Agreed that the detailed spending and sign off process for the Haringey Community Carbon Fund extension to Years 5 to 8 is deferred to a later meeting.
3. Agreed that the decision to approve the detailed spending plans for carbon reduction projects 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 were delegated to the Director of Environment and Resident Experience or Assistant Director for Planning, Building Standards & Sustainability, where appropriate, subject to decisions being taken by Cabinet where a key decision, and following relevant procurement regulations and any contractual requirements for spending the carbon offset contributions in the S106 planning obligations, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Environment & Transport and the relevant Cabinet Member for each project area.

## **Reasons for decision**

Addressing the Climate Emergency was a key corporate priority for Haringey Council. The Carbon Offset Fund Allocation Strategy would make a key, ongoing contribution to the borough's approach to decarbonising the Council, local economy and wider community. Specifically, allocating the carbon offsetting funds to these carbon reduction projects would help achieve several objectives within the Haringey Climate Change Action Plan (HCCAP, 2021): C1, H1, H3, H4, H5, W4, Com2 and Com3.

The Greater London Authority (GLA) encouraged councils to set out and make public declarations on how the local carbon offset funds will be spent. The GLA monitored these to demonstrate the value of the policy within the London Plan.

Agreeing the principle of allocation to the Haringey Community Carbon Fund (HCCF) allowed officers to work up this in more detail for a later decision and engagement to take place with the relevant internal services, external partners and the community to help reshape the HCCF programme.

Agreeing the delegation of the detail of programmes 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 to a Director or Assistant Director allowed these to be developed further with relevant project, finance and procurement teams.

### **Alternative options considered**

Do nothing, accumulate a larger pot of funds to spend at a later date – rejected.

Delaying the allocation of S106 carbon offset monies until a further higher amount was available for spend had been rejected as the currently available amount of £2.59 million is already a substantial pot of money. The Greater London Authority indicated in their latest Carbon Offset Funds report they want boroughs to increase their carbon offset spending. Not utilising this funding now would result in higher capital borrowing costs for the Council for the carbon reduction programmes.

S106 clawback clauses enabled developers to request financial contributions to be paid back to them if the Council had not spent the money by a specified future date (usually 5 years from the date the contribution is paid to the council). Allocation of S106 carbon offset monies would ensure that the risk of repayment is avoided.

This option would not reflect the urgency of the Climate Emergency, the scale of action required to implement the objectives in the HCCAP and help the borough to get to the net zero carbon target by 2041.

Alternative allocation of funds – rejected

Allocating more to Council projects and not fund community projects – The Council had limited direct control or influence over borough emissions, and supporting community action and behaviour change initiatives was a core part of being able to deliver the borough-wide net zero carbon target by 2041.

Allocating more to the community and not fund Council projects – Within the current budget constraints that all public bodies were facing, the ability to borrow and fund projects is reduced. Therefore, it is desirable to fund some of these measures within the council's and schools' existing buildings. This would reduce operational costs (on energy) that will benefit the users and the wider community.

Other projects - In forming the list of projects to be delivered by this fund, the Council engaged with various community groups, Councillors, previously funded community groups, and council services. The objective was to conform with the requirements for the carbon offset contributions in the S106 planning obligations, but also to deliver an impact across the community and deliver carbon and financial savings.

## **136. CONTRACT AWARD FOR THE NORTH CENTRAL LONDON (NCL)- INTEGRATED SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE TO CENTRAL NORTH WEST LONDON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST (CNWL)**

The Cabinet Member for Health, Social Care and Wellbeing introduced the report. It was explained that sexual and reproductive health was an area of commissioning that benefited from the transfer of Public Health Services into the local authority. Faced with escalating costs and poor outcomes, the Council had, over the past 10 years, implemented a broad range of new sexual health services which improved the offer locally, sub-regionally and London wide. Where it's better for residents, the Council maintained services locally. It was explained that young people prefer a choice of in-borough services, and so the Council implemented two dedicated young people's clinics. Women also want to access Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC) locally, and so they can either access our Haringey based clinic or go to one of 17 Haringey General Practices. It was stressed that equity remained a priority and Haringey was proud of its sexual health outreach service aimed at our ethnically diverse population and our 25 Healthy Living pharmacies offering a range of sexual health provision to residents of all age groups. It was noted that, more recently, many residents have shifted their regular testing to using the Sexual Health London (SHL) pan-London online testing service, which Haringey is part of commissioning.

It was explained that residents with complex sexual and reproductive needs would require access to a Genito-Urinary Medicine (GUM) and Contraception and Sexual Health (CaSH) clinic service. These types of clinics were open access, meaning residents can choose to use any clinic in England. Most Haringey residents access a service in North Central London (NCL) because these clinics had good transport links, extended opening hours and long-established reputations. It was noted that there continued to be benefits to Haringey residents in the commissioning of these services as an NCL sub-regional partnership in terms of ensuring high quality provision and stimulating innovation and the efficient use of limited NHS resources.

In response to comments and questions from Cllr Cawley-Harrison, the following information was shared:

- That the Council would take a balanced and strategic approach to service provision and that there was a diverse programme to deliver required services to residents effectively.
- Officers explained, following questions about the higher rates of HIV within Haringey than the national average, that they had undertaken work across communities most at risk of HIV and taken preventative measures and helped increase access to medicines with those groups.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Agreed to approve the award of contract for the provision of the (NCL) Integrated Sexual Health (ISH) service to Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) via a Direct Award (process C) under the Provider Select Regime (PSR).
2. Agreed that the contract shall be for a period of three years commencing 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2028 plus two extensions of one-year each. For the avoidance of doubt, the maximum contract length will be five years, inclusive of extension period.
3. Agreed that the estimated contract value for Haringey was £2,139,743 per annum and a total value over the lifetime of the contract (inclusive of extension period) would be estimated at a maximum of £10,698,715.

### **Reasons for decision**

Local authorities were mandated to ensure provision of sexual health services with costs met from the ring-fenced public health grant. While local authorities could make decisions about provision based on local need, there were also specific legal requirements to provide open access GUM and CaSH services.

The current contract was due to expire on 30 June 2025. Under PSR legislation, commissioning authorities had the option to directly award a contract to an incumbent provider if they are satisfied with the performance, quality and value of the current contract and are satisfied this was likely to continue.

Commissioners from all the boroughs agreed that CNWL were providing a service that performed well, met quality standards and demonstrated value for money. All four boroughs were also satisfied that CNWL could deliver the new contract to a sufficient standard against the five key criteria.

Although there were some changes in the types and levels of activity since the pandemic e.g. an increase in online activity such as STI (sexually transmitted infections) testing and a consequent decrease of “in clinic” testing, the core principles, objectives and requirements of the current service specification would remain

Sexual health services were under intense pressure financially, within the backdrop of rising STI prevalence regionally (London) and nationally, presenting a significant challenge for providers to respond at the scale needed, within the budgets made available. Despite this, the re-commissioning of CNWL as the North Central London integrated sexual health provider would continue to;

- a) Deliver sexual services as per the current model within the agreed budget from the local authority Public Health grant.
- b) Deliver an Integrated Sexual Health Service, as a partnership of 4 local authorities with a pooled budget, under one single contract.

The sub regional commissioning approach worked well for residents by widening access through having a broader range of specialist clinics available, improved opening hours and a more diversified and mix-skilled workforce which was more reflective of the population mix of the NCL Boroughs. Furthermore, commissioning at scale through the NCL partnership ensured good value for money,

An analysis of CNWL's performance when benchmarked against other providers commissioned by other London sub-regional partnerships indicated that CNWL was both meeting its targets and doing significantly better than London as a whole. Additionally, other initiatives and performance measures considered demonstrate that CNWL is performing well against the PSR assessment criteria.

### **Alternative options considered.**

#### **Do nothing:**

The council could do nothing and let the contract expire. However, Local Authorities had a statutory duty to commission open access sexual health services for their residents. who had or were experiencing complex needs for their sexual and reproductive requirements would be able to access appropriate testing and treatment.

#### **Insourcing:**

Insourcing was considered but found not to be viable, Integrated Sexual Health Services require specific expertise, experience and competence and is highly specialist in nature which the Council could neither deliver in-house or meet the financial requirements to do so. Therefore, this option was rejected.

#### **Commission services independently:**

This was considered not to be a viable option because of the open access nature of sexual health provision meaning that we could not restrict residents to a Haringey based service and so the Council would still need to negotiate tariff with NCL and other London boroughs. The purchasing power of the NCL partnership creates economies of scale and a good bargaining position as well as other benefits such as better monitoring, access to wider data for better planning, reduction in administration costs etc.

### **Competitive re-procurement process**

Although this was permitted under the new PSR regulations, this is not recommended and would not be a good use of public funds, given that the existing provider is performing well and owns accessible and central delivery sites in NCL.

### **Most Suitable Provider Process:**

This was not a competitive process but allows the relevant authority to make a judgement on which provider is most suitable, based on consideration of the key criteria. Despite the limitations of the small, local market, the potential risk of challenge means that although permitted under the PSR regulations, this option is not recommended.

### **137. FACILITIES MANAGEMENT AND PREMISES RESPONSIBLE PERSONS POLICIES**

The Cabinet Member for Placemaking and Local Economy introduced the report. It was explained that the Council's operational buildings had an important role to play in the life of the borough. It was stressed that Council buildings were the setting of innumerable interactions between Council services, voluntary and community services, and the residents of the borough, where people come seeking to access services, to get support at difficult times in their life, and to engage in the cultural and civic life of the borough. It was additionally stressed that they were also a physical manifestation of the civic pride as part of Haringey.

The Cabinet Member explained that there was an importance of strengthening how we manage property, through the development of the Strategic Asset Management and Property Improvement Plan (SAMPIP). It was explained that proposals laid down foundations of a clear and stronger facilities management offer, recasts the relationship between the central facilities team and Council services, and committed to high standards in how all of the council's buildings would be managed.

In response to comments and questions from Cllr Cawley-Harrison, the following information was shared:

- The Cabinet Member explained that an annual report to monitor progress against the Strategic Asset Management and Property Improvement Plan objectives which would be returned to Cabinet in order to monitor progress.
- Officers explained that the Council had a thorough knowledge of the condition of local buildings and undertake frequent compliance checks to assess need of repairs and maintenance. It was explained that any assessment which determined a need for investment to ensure adequate condition would be included within the Capital Programme.
- The Cabinet Member explained the investment plan and noted that all buildings were assessed through a clear process to determine purpose, requirement and potential future investment or disposal opportunities.

## **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approved the Facilities Management and Premises Responsible Persons Policies that will support implementation of the Corporate Property Model.

### **Reasons for decision**

Facilities Management (FM) services ensure Council buildings were compliant, safe and well maintained. The FM Policy and Premises Responsible Persons (PRP) Policy were essential elements of the Corporate Property Model (CPM) that clearly define the following:

- The FM Policy set out overall objectives for the FM service and defined the service provision to the various building types outlined in the policy.
- The PRP Policy clearly defined the split in responsibilities between the FM team (as corporate landlord) and service 'tenants', and how we would identify/confirm who takes day-to-control of each building.

These policies would ensure greater efficiency and clarity in FM service provision which will ultimately benefit residents, community organisations and council staff.

### **Alternative options considered**

Do Nothing – without these policies there would be a lack of clarity and control over the services that could potentially lead to wasted resources and a negative impact on overall delivery of the CPM.

## **138. HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24**

The Cabinet Member Housing and Planning, and Deputy Leader of the Council introduced the report. It was explained that, as a Council landlord, the Council was obliged by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) to be accountable, accessible and transparent in the way we deliver services. The Housing Annual Report supported that obligation by providing residents and stakeholders with a review of what the Council had done to maintain good quality and safe homes; to support neighbourhoods and communities; and manage our tenancy services well. It also provided tenant satisfaction data, complaints figures and a breakdown of budget allocation and how the Council had spent the income received.

It was explained that the report for 2023-24 described ongoing priorities and next steps to continue the transformation process set out in the Housing Improvement Plan. It sets out the progress made in respect of:

- compliance with fire and electrical safety standards

- making more homes decent
- delivering major works schemes
- tackling repairs issues
- improving tenancy management and continued support for tenants with the cost-of-living crisis and migration to Universal Credit
- involving residents in shaping services through resident engagement framework.

It was explained that the report also reflected a positive shift in around half of our tenant satisfaction measures. The Cabinet Member noted that the Council was meeting regularly the Housing Regulator and Housing Ombudsman while rolling out the Improvement Plan and had positive feedback from them in 2024, confirming that the service is moving in the right direction. It was stressed that the service needed to keep up this momentum in the coming year, particularly around improving the repairs service, resolving and damp and mould issues and learning from complaints, where performance remains below average.

In response to comments and questions from Cllr Cawley-Harrison, the following information was shared:

- Officers explained that the Council was exceeding the 95% target of leasehold charges collection.
- Complaints handling, and whether there will be a change in approach to handle complaints. The Cabinet Member explained that there had been an Increased numbers of complaints which had increased the number of complaints which had not been resolved, however, it was stressed that the number of complaints that had been resolved had also increased. However, it was explained that, in order to increase satisfaction, the Council would need to increase capacity.
- Officers explained that the costs on supervision on management included supervision and tenancy management and supported living services, which were people management services received by tenants.

## **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Noted and approved the Housing Annual Report 2023-24, so that it can be made available to tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders on the council's website.

## **Reasons for decision**

The Council had committed to improve its housing services. It was essential that it was transparent about what it delivers: the landlord services it provided to tenants and leaseholders; the work it was doing to maintain and improve homes; the ways it supported the communities it manages; how it was spending the money it receives from rents and charges; and how it listens and learns from residents.

## **Alternative options considered**

Not applicable

### **139. RESULTS OF THE PRE-PUBLICATION CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF TIVERTON PRIMARY SCHOOL AND PUBLICATION OF STATUTORY NOTICE**

The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families introduced the report. It was explained that there was a need to ensure that every child and young person, wherever they live in the borough, deserved an excellent education and that the Council were committed to supporting our schools to continue to deliver high-quality teaching, learning and support across Haringey. In recent years, as widely reported, Haringey, like many other London local authority (LA) areas, had been experiencing a significant decrease in pupil numbers, which caused some schools to face serious and irreversible financial and sustainability pressures. It was stressed that the critical London wide factors of lower birth rates; the cap on rent benefits; families leaving the capital as a result of the housing crisis; Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a reduction in demand for primary school places in the borough which was no fault of the Council or our schools. It was noted that school leaders and the Council were working to mitigate the risks from falling rolls where schools fall into financial deficit. Haringey officers were working with schools locally to progress a number of approaches, with a focus on preventing the escalation of risk to those in scope for potential closure or amalgamation. The approaches used included measures to reduce costs; such as restructuring school staffing levels, reducing the amount of available support staff, limiting extracurricular activity such as school trips, 'vertical grouping' by combining different year groups in some schools, formally reducing and capping reception and in-year classes, and for some schools the need to agree financial deficit recovery plans with the local authority.

It was explained that the Council had a statutory duty to ensure there were sufficient high quality school places for our children, and that places were planned effectively. This financial pressure had a significant impact on schools and threatens the stability and quality of our education system. It was stressed that the Council must continue to ensure that every single child had access to an excellent education that allowed them to fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions.

The Cabinet Member explained that significant concerns were raised about the school's long-term sustainability, risks to the school's financial viability and its ability to attract to new pupils. The latter is, in large part, due to a declining birth rate and the recent inspection outcome. It was explained that, having undertaken a full pre-publication consultation to identify a best solution, the Cabinet Member recommended to Cabinet that the Council now proceeds to publishing the relevant statutory notice on the proposal to close Tiverton Primary School. It was explained that, if the final decision was to progress with closure, that the Council would ensure that all families of displaced pupils were well-supported via the in-year admissions process to

transition to an alternative school. It was explained that there were children on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) register attending Tiverton Primary that would need to be well supported, including 12 pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). It was explained that the Council had undertaken a focussed meeting attended by SEND colleagues for these families and by the time a final decision is made, all parent/carers of pupils with an EHCP will have undergone a review meeting to evaluate their child's progress at the school and to plan next steps, including the possibility of an alternative provision.

The Cabinet Member stressed that the school's staff's wellbeing and future security is very important, noting that the Council would ensure that all staff receive individualised support and be subject to the normal redeployment procedures.

In response to comments and questions from Cllr Cawley-Harrison, the following information was shared:

- The Cabinet Member explained that the Council had put forward a warning notice to the previous Board of Governors the Board of Governors of the school had resigned due to significant deficit at the school. The Council had since appointed an interim board to administrate the school following their departure.
- Officers explained that the Seven Sisters Primary School, which was benchmarked in the report, had been relaunched at South Grove and it's the finances were significantly more stabilised. It was stressed that the number of pupils were still falling and that the status of the school was stable at present.
- Officers explained that it was the decision of families which school children attended and that the School Admissions Team were working with families to get their children into schools that they desired wherever possible. It was explained that some pupils had moved as friendship groups. It was additionally noted that children with additional needs were worked with by the School Admissions Team to ensure that their needs were met.

## **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Considered the feedback received from the pre-statutory consultation on options for the future of Tiverton Primary School.
2. Noted the reasons for not favouring any of the other options consulted on.
3. Agreed to the publication of a statutory notice to close Tiverton Primary School from September 2025. If agreed, there follows a four-week period of statutory consultation, which will be the final opportunity for people and organisations to express their views about the proposal.

## **Reasons for decision**

Following years of growth, the number of primary-aged children joining Haringey primary schools had been in steady decline since 2014, a trend observed across London. Primary pupil rolls in Haringey had reduced by over 2,000 in just 5 years: 21,300 in 2019 to 19,100 in 2024 (January school census data), and pupil numbers were forecast to continue falling until at least 2028.

Tiverton Primary School was a substantive two-form entry (FE) community school maintained by the local authority and located at Pulford Road, N15 6SP. Since 2019, there had been a gradual decline in pupils on roll at the school. Due to this sustained fall in rolls over the last several years, there was concern from the local authority that the school was at risk of becoming financially unviable and vulnerable in the context of a Requires Improvement Ofsted judgement.

School funding was primarily determined by the number of children on roll, and falling rolls equated to reduced funding. This had meant that more and more schools were facing serious financial pressures after year-on-year declines in their rolls, resulting in smaller one-form entry schools such as Tiverton Primary School falling into financial deficit. This had not just been felt by Haringey schools—many primary schools across London and England ended 2023-24 in financial deficit.

The Council had a duty of care to ensure children in its schools were able to receive a good education and access the full curriculum. A school with a declining roll would have been challenged to do this effectively because of inevitable financial pressures from reduced funding. Reduced funding could have impacted the efficient running of schools, financial stability, and education standards.

It was a principle of the Council to protect Haringey's high quality of education, and this might have been compromised where the cost of teaching staff, equipment, and enrichment activities became unaffordable. The link between pupil numbers and school funding meant that it was not always feasible to keep a school operating to guarantee the standard of education families and pupils deserved.

## **Alternative options considered and not favoured**

The following options had been considered and presented to stakeholders as part of the pre-publication consultation carried out in November and December 2024:

- No change, i.e., continuation of the current strategy for school improvement without any further action to address falling local rolls
- Federation
- Amalgamation, resulting in the closure of Tiverton Primary School with the displaced pupils being accommodated by another community school
- Whether South Grove Primary, as the nearest community school with the same type and characteristics as Tiverton Primary, could have been the best option for an amalgamation/merger
- Closure

## **No change and continuation of current strategy**

This had been a highly cost-inefficient option and not sustainable. The school had a deficit budget, and there was a significant risk that the deficit balance would have increased at a greater rate due to falling rolls. The Council had a responsibility to ensure the efficient use of public money.

A school with falling rolls would have had significantly less funding, and this directly affected staffing numbers (both teaching and support staff), resources, equipment, expenditure, maintenance work, and extracurricular activities for children. In time, a school affected by income loss would almost inevitably have seen performance and standards fall. It had been the duty of the Council to ensure that the quality of education for children and stability for teaching and support staff took priority. The operational challenges affecting schools with falling rolls would have continued to increase, with a negative impact on pupils and no systemic solution.

This option was not preferred as it did not provide a long-term sustainable solution to falling local demand and further left other local schools vulnerable because of the current and projected surplus of places across PA3. Furthermore, taking no action to address the issues affecting a school with falling rolls was not an acceptable option available to the Council.

## **Federation**

In considering federation, there had to be clear benefits that such an arrangement would bring for children, including, but not limited to, raising standards, improving the breadth and depth of education delivery, and increasing opportunities for outstanding outcomes. Federated schools operated in collaboration with each other, sharing senior staff and possibly governing bodies, which allowed them to maximize good educational practice while achieving economies of scale.

Federation would have required full commitment from the schools involved and a shared vision for the development of the federation. For this option to have been feasible, Tiverton Primary School would have been required to work with the local authority to identify another school that would have seen the benefits in federation. With low numbers of pupils on roll and uncertainty regarding its future, it was highly unlikely that another school would have deemed it viable to federate with Tiverton Primary School. To date, there had been no interest expressed by any school to federate with Tiverton Primary School.

Although the Council had a role in supporting schools to explore federation, federation was ultimately a decision made independently by the governing bodies of schools. This option was rejected because under a federation, schools would have remained as separate organisations, and this would not have addressed the decline in numbers on roll at Tiverton Primary or the risk of financial unviability.

## **Amalgamation – closure of Tiverton Primary with displaced pupils being accommodated by another school such as South Grove Primary School**

An amalgamation could only have been achieved by closing one or more schools and providing spaces for displaced children in another 'host' school. This option would have involved the host school retaining its original DfE school number, as it was not technically considered a new school. However, following the amalgamation process, governors had the option to rename the school to create a new identity for the merged schools.

The report presented to Cabinet in October 2024 explored the option of an amalgamation with South Grove Primary (previously known as Seven Sisters) due to the similar type and characteristics of the two community schools located in close proximity to one another, minimizing travel disruption, but also due to both schools having a high surplus and high unused capacity in their buildings. It was important to note that only South Grove Primary had expressed an interest in an amalgamation; no other primary school had come forward.

An amalgamation between Tiverton Primary and South Grove on the South Grove site had initially been proposed based on pupil numbers at the time and the fabric of the building, which was in better condition. Seven Sisters appeared to have been able to accommodate all pupils from Tiverton Primary school.

The drop in pupil numbers experienced by both schools in recent years made this option feasible in terms of pupil numbers; however, this was no longer favoured due to the financial position of both schools. At that time, Tiverton Primary School and Seven Sisters had both budgeted for a deficit position at the close of 2024/25.

It was important to note that when a maintained school closed, any outstanding deficit fell to the Council to be written off. However, when two schools amalgamated, the newly formed school inherited the school deficit. Due to falling rolls in PA3, there was a risk that the school deficit balances could have increased at a greater rate for both schools, impacting school funding and causing greater pressure on in-year budgets up to the point of a merger and beyond. This would ultimately have resulted in increased financial liability for the Council as schools at risk moved toward or increased their deficit position.

An amalgamation was also not considered a viable option, as it was unlikely to have led to sufficiently stabilising numbers of pupils at the newly amalgamated school. Since June 2024, the vast majority of families leaving Tiverton Primary School had opted to transfer to other local schools near their home address. Records showed that most leavers (19 pupils) had transferred to Woodberry Down Community School in Hackney. A small number of families had expressed an interest in South Grove, and a significant number of pupils had successfully transferred to alternative Haringey schools.

Although the short distance (0.6 miles away from South Grove), which was a 13-minute walk between the two schools, had been one of the key reasons a merger was explored, based on the recent evidence of pupil movement, there had been no guarantee that families would opt to transfer their child(ren) to South Grove. The trend so far pointed to pupils transferring elsewhere, and there were sufficient places at other local schools to accommodate pupils.

The option of an amalgamation with South Grove was therefore rejected based on the reasons outlined above. To date, no other school had expressed an interest in an amalgamation with Tiverton Primary, and there were none located near enough with sufficient places to accommodate all displaced pupils.

### **Full and immediate closure**

This was the option favoured in this report. The local authority had a statutory duty to ensure the efficient use of resources. Maintaining a school with a declining roll could not have been considered efficient, given that there were surplus places in other local schools. The DfE advised that school closure decisions should be taken when there was no demand for the school in the medium to long term and there were sufficient places elsewhere to accommodate displaced children.

There were sufficient primary school places in the local area that could have provided a suitable alternative for displaced pupils. A high surplus of primary school places in the local area meant that other alternatives could have been offered for pupils at Tiverton who wished to go elsewhere.

All children presently attending Tiverton Primary and all applicants to Reception for September 2025 could have been accommodated in alternative schools within a reasonable distance. An analysis of in-year vacancy information of schools in and immediately bordering PA3, where Tiverton was located, showed that there were more than sufficient vacant places across all year groups (Reception to Year 6) across 14 Haringey schools within 1 mile of the school.

There would also have been other schools in Hackney bordering PA3 which had vacancies within 1 mile of the school, and families might have wished to attend schools across a wider distance based on their home locations (i.e., local schools nearer to their home address). Pupils in Year 6 were not included as this cohort of pupils would have been transferring to secondary school and therefore not impacted by the proposals set out in this report.

It was expected that schools in the local area and beyond would still have been carrying a high number of vacancies at the end of the academic year 2024-25, meaning that an alternative local school could have been offered to any family that wanted one.

All Haringey schools in the local area were judged by Ofsted to be 'Good' or 'Outstanding.' Pupils joining other local schools from Tiverton Primary would have contributed towards the improved sustainability of the receiving schools, as it would have led to increased pupil numbers and, in turn, their financial income. A closure would therefore have helped support the sustainability and viability of other schools in PA3 by enabling neighbouring schools to increase their pupil numbers.

The Council was financially liable for any maintained school deficits and had to decide each year whether to continue funding a school in deficit. When a maintained school closed, the Council was responsible for the debt carried by the school at the point of closure. If the Council did not take action to reduce the number of primary school places to align with the current and projected demand, it knowingly took on increased

financial burden and responsibility at a time when it was required to find substantial savings.

**140. ST PETER IN CHAINS CATHOLIC INFANT AND ST GILDAS CATHOLIC JUNIOR SCHOOL**

The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families introduced the report. It was explained that there was a need to ensure that every child and young person, wherever they live in the borough, deserved an excellent education and that the Council were committed to supporting our schools to continue to deliver high-quality teaching, learning and support across Haringey. In recent years, as widely reported, Haringey, like many other London local authority (LA) areas, had been experiencing a significant decrease in pupil numbers, which caused some schools to face serious and irreversible financial and sustainability pressures. It was stressed that the critical London wide factors of lower birth rates; the cap on rent benefits; families leaving the capital as a result of the housing crisis; Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a reduction in demand for primary school places in the borough which was no fault of the Council or our schools. It was noted that school leaders and the Council were working to mitigate the risks from falling rolls where schools fall into financial deficit. Haringey officers were working with schools locally to progress a number of approaches, with a focus on preventing the escalation of risk to those in scope for potential closure or amalgamation. The approaches used included measures to reduce costs; such as restructuring school staffing levels, reducing the amount of available support staff, limiting extracurricular activity such as school trips, 'vertical grouping' by combining different year groups in some schools, formally reducing and capping reception and in-year classes, and for some schools the need to agree financial deficit recovery plans with the local authority.

It was explained by the Cabinet Member that data since 2012 showed an acute decline in demand for Catholic primary schools compared to non-faith schools in the borough. In 2012 the number of first place preferences for Catholic primary schools was 437. This dropped to 182 by 2024, thus 2024 demand for Catholic primary school places represented 42% of what it was in 2012. By contrast demand for non-Faith schools in Haringey in 2012 and 2024 was 2,313 and 2,142 respectively, 93% of the demand in 2012.

It was explained that the Council had a statutory duty to ensure there were sufficient high quality school places for our children, and that places were planned effectively. This financial pressure had a significant impact on schools and threatens the stability and quality of our education system. It was stressed that the Council must continue to ensure that every single child had access to an excellent education that allowed them to fulfil their potential and achieve their ambitions.

The Cabinet Member explained that there were significant concerns about the long-term sustainability in terms of the risks to the school's financial viability and its ability to attract pupils to the school. The latter is as a result of a declining birth rate and sharp falls in demand for Faith places across Haringey. The Cabinet Member explained that they would recommend to Cabinet that the Council consults on the options set out in this report.

In response to comments and questions from Cllr Ovat, das Neves, Arkell, Cawley-Harrison, the following information was shared:

- Cabinet Members did note that it was worrying to see significant numbers of closures of schools in the borough. The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families explained that there was no other option available for the school except closure, due to the sustainability and unviability for the school, which was a position agreed by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Officers explained that they supported schools in ensuring and monitoring the viability of schools in the borough. It was explained that there was a risk matrix which had been developed to monitor a wide range of measures aimed to determine school viability and risk. It was explained that, where there were causes for concern, officers would work with schools to mitigate those risks. Officers additionally noted that the recommendation relating to St Peter In Chains Catholic Infant and St Gildas Catholic Junior School comes at the end of a long process of monitoring and work to assess viability.
- Officers explained options for the potential disposal of school land and that any disposal of this land would be difficult and that any proposal would require agreement from the DfE.
- The Cabinet Member noted that pupil intake in faith schools in general had reduced in numbers significantly, with this being particularly acute in Catholic schools, due to a wide range of issues.
- It was explained by officers that the maintenance of the land and grounds following any potential closure of the school would be the responsibility of Diocese, but that officers would work with the Diocese to ensure the continued maintenance of the site.

## **RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet:

1. Agreed to commence consultation on the closure of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools.

### **Reasons for the decision**

St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools were substantive two-form entry (fe) Voluntary Aided Catholic Schools. The schools were located at Oakington Way, London, N8 9EP and sat within Planning Area 2 (PA2), which incorporated the following wards: Crouch End, Highgate, Stroud Green, and 80% of Hornsey, including the following schools: Campsbourne Infants, Coleridge Primary, Highgate Primary, Rokesly Infants, St Aidan's, St Mary's CE Primary, St Michaels CE Primary N6, Stroud Green Primary, and Weston Park Primary.

Due to a continued fall in demand for school places in PA2 and the fall in demand for local faith places, St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools were both operating as 1 FE schools. From September 2019, after a noticeable decline in admissions, the schools reduced their PAN from 2fe to 1fe. From April 2024, some classes were merged, and the governing body moved the infant school to the federation's junior school site on Oakington Way in September 2024.

Over several years, the pupil roll at St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools had significantly fallen. The 2017 May census recorded the schools as having 396 pupils on roll (94% of 2fe 420), and the schools now had 61 children on roll (30% of 1fe 210) as of January 2025. This was the difference in pupil rolls between a sustainable 2fe primary school and an unsustainable 1fe primary school.

As previously mentioned, school funding was primarily determined by the number of children on roll, and falling rolls equated to reduced funding. It was extremely difficult for a school to remain financially viable when pupil numbers were falling as most school funding was pupil-based in line with the National Funding Formula. Unused or vacant school places created an immediate cost pressure for a school through a reduced budget, which in turn affected the overall sustainability and quality of education standards.

The purpose of this report was to seek agreement from Cabinet to consult on the closure of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools. We sought the views of the governing body as well as other local schools and also gathered feedback on the proposals from parents and staff and other stakeholders that might have been impacted by any of the options that might have been progressed. We did not consult on the options of federation or amalgamation as we did not deem these to be viable options.

In proposing the option of closure set out in this report, careful consideration and weight had been given to:

- a) the financial viability of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools if they were to remain open;
- b) the risk to the quality of provision if they were to remain open
- c) the lack of resilience for the schools and their ability to retain and recruit staff at all levels;
- d) the opportunity for another primary school to federate with St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools and whether this could have led to a sustainable solution;
- e) whether or not there would have been sufficient primary school places in the local area and in other Roman Catholic schools that could have provided a suitable alternative for displaced pupils.

Whilst the option of closure for the schools was being considered, the Council remained firmly committed to ensuring that all pupils on roll were receiving an excellent education that supported them in reaching their potential.

A consultation on the proposed closure of the schools had been triggered by a lack of demand for places at the school against a backdrop of falling demand in PA2, coupled with concerns about the long-term financial viability and resilience of the school.

### **Alternative options considered**

The following options had been considered:

- No change
- Conversion to academy
- Federation
- Amalgamation resulting in the closure of St Peter's in Chains Catholic Infant and St Gildas' Catholic Junior School, with the displaced pupils being accommodated by another Catholic primary school
- Closure

**No change and continuation of current strategy** – This was a highly cost-inefficient option and was not sustainable. The Infant school already had a deficit budget, and there was a significant risk that the deficit balance would increase at a greater rate due to falling rolls. The Infant school was predicting a deficit closing balance of £121,440 by the end of March 2025. The Junior school had a projected outturn at 31 March 25 of £45,324 compared to £87,096 in 31 March 2024, a percentage reduction of –48%. The Council had a responsibility to ensure the efficient use of public money. In April 2025, the budget would be further reduced as it would be based on the number of children on roll as of October 2024.

A school with falling rolls had significantly less funding, and this directly affected staffing numbers (both teaching and support staff), resources, equipment, expenditure, maintenance work, and extracurricular activities for children. In time, a school affected by income loss would almost inevitably see performance and standards fall. It was the duty of the Council to ensure that the quality of education for children and stability for teaching and support staff took priority. The operational

challenges affecting schools with falling rolls would continue to increase with a negative impact on pupils and no systemic solution.

This option was not recommended as it did not provide a long-term sustainable solution to falling local and faith demand. Taking no action to the issues affecting a school with falling rolls was not an acceptable option available to the Council.

**Conversion to Academy** – The Governing Body consulted on the option of converting to an academy and joining a Multi-Academy Trust, but this application was withdrawn by the Diocese following discussion with the DfE about the school's ongoing viability.

**Federation** – Federated schools operated in collaboration with each other, sharing senior staff and possibly governing bodies, which allowed them to maximise good educational practice while achieving economies of scale. St Peter in Chains Infant School was already federated with St Gildas' Junior School. Both schools existed as separate organisations but had the same headteacher, deputy headteacher, and governing body.

The current federation model was not achieving its desired impact due to the significant drop in pupil numbers and worsening financial position. Federation was therefore no longer a viable option and not achieving any of the benefits that would normally have been associated with this partnership.

It was also possible for more than two maintained schools to operate under the governance of a single governing body; however, there had been no appetite expressed from any other school to be part of the St Peter in Chain's and St Gildas' federation. This would also not have addressed the decline in numbers on roll or the financial risk.

**Amalgamation** – An amalgamation could only have been achieved by closing one or more schools and providing spaces for displaced children in another 'host' school. This option would have involved the host school retaining its original DfE school number as it was not technically considered a new school. However, following the amalgamation process, governors had the option to rename the school to create a new identity for the merged schools.

This option was not recommended due to the current financial position of both schools and reduction in pupil numbers, which made this option very risky and unaffordable. Furthermore, opportunities for a potential amalgamation between St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools and another local Catholic primary school had not yielded any interest from partners.

**Closure** – The local authority had a statutory duty to ensure the efficient use of resources. Maintaining a school with a declining roll could not have been considered efficient given that there were surplus places in other local schools. The DfE advised

that school closure decisions should have been taken when there was no demand for the school in the medium to long term and there were sufficient places elsewhere to accommodate displaced children.

A school closure would have seen the school cease to exist as a statutory entity, with all displaced children taking places in other local schools. School closures could have taken the form of a full and immediate closure, whereby all children on roll were supported to find places in other local schools, or the closure could have been 'staggered'. A full and immediate closure of St Peter in Chains and St Gildas' Catholic Infant and Junior Schools was a viable option but would have required all pupils on roll to join the roll of another school. There were sufficient primary school places in the local area and in other Roman Catholic schools in the borough that could have provided a suitable alternative for displaced pupils.

A staggered closure option would have ceased the admission of children into reception each year until all remaining children had worked their way through to year 6, at which time the school would have closed. While this might have been a less disruptive option for some families, it significantly increased the financial burden and further damaged the quality of education at the school as pupils would not have benefited from the mixing of year groups they would usually have experienced. A staggered closure option was therefore not recommended in this case.

#### **141. MINUTES OF OTHER BODIES**

The minutes of other bodies were discussed.

##### **RESOLVED:**

1. The minutes of other bodies were noted

#### **142. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

#### **143. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as item 21 contains exempt information as defined under paragraphs 3 and 5, Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972: Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

#### **144. CONTRACT AWARD FOR THE NORTH CENTRAL LONDON (NCL)- INTEGRATED SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICE TO CENTRAL NORTH WEST LONDON NHS FOUNDATION TRUST (CNWL) - EXEMPT APPENDIX**

The exempt information relating to the item on the Contract award for the North Central London (NCL)- Integrated Sexual Health Service to Central North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) was discussed.

**RESOLVED:**

To discuss exempt information

**145. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS**

There was none.

CHAIR: Councillor Peray Ahmet

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....

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