

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING Full Council HELD ON Monday, 3rd March, 2025, 19.30 – 21.15pm**

### **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Gina Adamou , Peray Ahmet, Ibrahim Ali, Kaushika Amin, Emily Arkell, Nicola Bartlett, John Bevan, Barbara Blake, Mark Blake, Zena Brabazon, Cathy Brennan, Lester Buxton, Dana Carlin, Liam Carroll, Luke Cawley-Harrison, Seema Chandwani, Lotte Collett, Pippa Connor, Nick da Costa, Lucia das Neves, Isidoros Diakides, Erdal Dogan, George Dunstall, Scott Emery, Ruth Gordon, Mark Grosskopf, Makbule Gunes, Mike Hakata, Emine Ibrahim, Marsha Isilar-Gosling, Thayahlan Iyngkaran, Sue Jameson, Cressida Johnson, Anna Lawton, Ahmed Mahbub, Mary Mason, Khaled Moyeed, Sean O'Donovan, Ajda Ovat, Sheila Peacock, Reg Rice, Alessandra Rossetti, Adam Small, Joy Wallace, Elin Weston, Matt White, Sarah Williams and Alexandra Worrell**

### **43. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

The Mayor referred to the notice of filming at meetings and attendees noted this information.

### **44. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

The following apologies for absence were noted:

Cllr Elliott

Cllr Culverwell

Cllr Barnes

Cllr Harrison – Mullane

Cllr Simmons – Safo

Cllr Abela

Cllr Stennett

Cllr Opoku

Apologies for lateness from Cllr Gordon (arrived at 7.35pm)

Cllr Amin arrived at 7.57pm

**45. TO ASK THE MAYOR TO CONSIDER THE ADMISSION OF ANY LATE ITEMS OF BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 100B OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

The meeting noted that there was one item of business, which could not be available earlier, and which will need to be dealt with at this meeting.

Item 13 - Budget amendments - Council Standing Order 15.8b allowed amendments to recommendations to be put forward by 10am on the day of the meeting.

The Mayor accepted the budget amendments from the Liberal Democrat group as late business.

**46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr Ibrahim declared a personal interest as a council employee of another London Borough and full time Unison trade union representative of employees.

**47. TO ASK MEMBERS WHETHER THEY NEED TO MAKE A DECLARATION IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 106 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1992 IN RELATION TO UNPAID COMMUNITY CHARGE OR COUNCIL TAX LIABILITY WHICH IS TWO MONTHS OR MORE OUTSTANDING**

No declarations were made.

**48. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2024**

**RESOLVED**

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2024.

**49. TO RECEIVE SUCH COMMUNICATIONS AS THE MAYOR MAY LAY BEFORE THE COUNCIL**

The Mayor had emailed a list of the events that she had attended and highlighted her work in seeking to help organisations to consider match funding opportunities. This was as follows:

- The Dinner Project donating £10,000 to Ark Resettlement services. It was noted that Ark worked to house ex-offenders and help them settle into a happy, full, law-abiding life.
- Mind in Haringey had met the Council's Honorary Recorder, Judge Dodd, at Wood Green Crown Court and the Judges at the court had agreed to donate seized monies regularly to Mind In Haringey.
- Introduced small charities such as Bright Stars to The Haringey Community Collaborative and the Community Fund.

The Mayor continued to speak about the Whittington Walk and thanked all those who had made a donation to her Just Giving page.

The Mayor highlighted that her community fundraiser would take place on Thursday March 27th, 2025, to raise money for Mind in Haringey. This promised to be an entertaining evening, and the Mayor hoped that many Councillors could attend. The Mayor thanked the Alevi Centre and the Turkish and Kurdish community for their help with this event.

Haringey had also enjoyed a visit from the King to Tottenham Stadium.

The Mayor invited Cllr Peacock to say a few words in memory of Irene Robertson, a Labour Councillor for Bruce Grove between 1998 to 2006 and also Nigel Knowles a Labour Councillor for Noel Park Ward between 1982 and 1987. Both these former Councillors had sadly recently passed away.

Cllr Peacock paid tribute to former Councillor Irene Robertson who she described as a deeply committed ward Councillor for Bruce Grove. It was noted that Irene developed good relationships with officers and would push hard to get what constituents needed. In her first term, as a Councillor, she became the first Chair of Scrutiny, working closely with some excellent officers to establish the function, some of their groundbreaking work got national attention. Cllr Peacock described her work as deputy lead for Environment and chair of her neighbourhood forum. She highlighted her skill in managing meetings, but more thoroughly her follow up of things that needed to be addressed. She had supported former Mayor, Herbie Brown, and had valued the civic role of the Council and loved her work for Bruce Grove.

Cllr Peacock paid tribute to former Councillor Nigel Knowles who came onto the Council in 1982 and left in 1987 to stand for Parliament in Kidderminster. Unfortunately, he failed to get elected there but was later elected to the Council and later on became their mayor. Whilst he was a Councillor at Haringey, he became the chair of what was then known as The Public Works Committee. He was fondly remembered by all Councillors that knew him.

The Council stood in a one-minute silence to remember former Councillors, Irene Robertson and Nigel Knowles.

**50. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

There were no matters to consider.

**51. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER AND HEAD OF LEGAL SERVICES**

There were no matters to consider.

**52. APPROVAL OF THE COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2025/26**

The Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services introduced the report which set out details of the review of Haringey's current Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) 2024/25 and recommended that it continued unchanged for 2025/26, save for minor updates mandated by legislation made by the Government.

It was noted that the Council would need to approve the final scheme by 11<sup>th</sup> March 2025, even where the scheme remained unchanged, ready for implementation on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2025.

The Cabinet Member expressed that since the decision by the previous Government to abolish Council Tax Benefit in 2013, the Council recognised that there had been a significant financial burden on many of the lowest income households in Haringey.

Haringey had designed a CTRS (Council Tax Reduction Scheme) which increased the maximum protection to disabled claimants and working age claimants with children to that already given to pensioners.

Continuing the protection of these groups by maintaining the current scheme allowed the Council to provide essential financial support to some of the most vulnerable residents in the borough and contribute to the stated ambition of making Haringey a fairer borough for all to live in.

The Cabinet Member for Tackling Inequality and Resident Services MOVED the report and recommendations, and it was,

**RESOLVED**

1.To agree to adopt the Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2025/26 as contained in Appendix 1 and therefore retains the same Scheme agreed for 2024/25. This means that from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2025 there is a means-tested scheme which provides:

- i. That pensioners continue to receive support for the payment of Council Tax up to 100%.
- ii. That working-age claimants in receipt of certain disability benefits continue to receive support for the payment of Council Tax up to 100%.
- iii. That working-age claimants with children continue to receive support for the payment of Council Tax up to 100%.
- iv. That all other working-age claimants continue to receive support for the payment of Council Tax up to 80.2%.

2. To agree that Authority to be given to the Director of Finance, the Director of Environment & Resident Experience and Assistant Director with responsibility for the Benefits Service to take all appropriate steps to implement and administer the Scheme.

### **Reasons for decision**

The Council is obliged to consider whether to revise or replace its CTRS each year. However, it is not obliged to revise or replace it. If any revision or replacement is to be made, the Council must follow the consultation process set out in the legislation and the decision must be made by Full Council.

The CTRS is a way the Council can redistribute the financial burden on Council Taxpayers and provide additional support to those in financial need.

The recommendation to retain the current scheme, would help to ensure that already protected claimants will not be further disadvantaged and pay due regard to the challenging financial climate, recognising the continuing cost of living pressures on residents. The reduction in Council resources and service pressures have required the Council to implement significant annual expenditure reductions over several years. These are forecast to continue for 2025/26 and future years. The affordability to the Council of the CTRS scheme therefore continues to be an important consideration.

### **Alternative options considered**

#### **Change the administration of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

Consideration was given to revising the current scheme but to delay and re-visit this for 2026/27 to maintain support for financially vulnerable residents during 2025/26.

## **53. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE FOLLOWING BODIES**

The Mayor highlighted that there were 3 reports to consider as part of this item, a report from Cabinet, a report from the General Purposes Committee and a report from the Audit Committee.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Deputy Leader introduced the report on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) which covered income and expenditure relating to the Council's own housing stock. It was an account that was ring-fenced from the Council's general fund as required by the Local Government Act 1989.

The report provided an update on the aims and ambitions across the medium and long term and proposals for the 2025/26 budget. It provided details of the assumptions for forecast income and therefore planned expenditure for next year as well as an update on the future financial outlook for the HRA. It additionally noted the Cabinet discussion on 11 February 2025 relating to the Housing Revenue Account 2025/26 - 2029/30.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Deputy Leader MOVED the report, and it was

**RESOLVED**

To consider the associated recommendations with the Budget at item 13 later in the agenda.

The Council was required to produce an Annual Pay Policy Statement to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. This report from the General Purposes Committee meeting in January 2025 recommended that Full Council approved the Pay Policy Statement 2024/25 (attached) for publication in April 2025. The Chair of General Purposes Committee MOVED the report and recommendations, and it was,

**RESOLVED**

To approve the Pay Policy Statement 2025/26, attached at Appendix A.

The Chair of Audit Committee presented the updated Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2025/26, contained as an appendix at item 13, following its scrutiny at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presentation at the Audit Committee and in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services.

The Chair of Audit Committee MOVED the report and the recommendation on the Treasury Management Strategy which was considered under budget item 13.

**54. TO CONSIDER REQUESTS TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS AND/OR PETITIONS AND, IF APPROVED, TO RECEIVE THEM**

The Mayor advised the meeting that a deputation had been received from Mr Paul Burnham in relation to item 13 on the Budget. This was in accordance with Council Standing Order 2vi.

Mr Burnham was joined by Florence Allaway.

Mr Burham addressed the meeting to speak against the proposed rent and services charges in the budget report. In his written deputation request he had called for all unaffordable rents to be abolished and for rents to be set by the social rent formula. The deputation continued to outline the following information to support opposition to the proposed rent and service charge increases for tenants.

- Acknowledged that the Council, alongside 100 other councils, took part in an appeal to the government lobbying for rent convergence, which could mean annual rent increases of CPI inflation plus 1% + £4 a week, plus whatever service charges there may be. The deputation further took account that the direction of national rent policy was open at the present time and in considering these activities urged the Council to not agree these two excessive charges.

- Referring to page 582, there was firstly a 21% increase for cleaning the communal areas of blocks and this followed a 46% increase for the same thing last year. This affected 7000 tenants and in effect 4000 leaseholders as well.
- Secondly, there was a 29% increase for cleaning the hallways in converted Street properties. This affected 700 tenants, and this had gone up by 92% last year. Some residents had advised the deputation that they were dissatisfied with the work standards, unsure about whether or not the service was needed at all, and very angry about the continual increases.
- In breach of the government's rent statements, which says that Councils should endeavour to keep service charges down to CPI plus 1% each year. This meant that the Council was not complying with this.

The deputation concluded by calling for Councillors to not accept the excess service charges and use a scrutiny review process if necessary. The deputation further called for the Council to work alongside residents and lobby the government for direct housing investment. The deputation highlighted that this partnership working had happened in the past leading to the construction of homes. The deputation contended that the investment should be without rent, or service charge increases and with debt write off and with grants for this fire safety for major works. The deputation referred to current world and national context and looked forward to working with the Council on the above points and thanked the Council for listening.

There were no questions from Councillors to the deputation.

The Mayor called on the Cabinet Member for Housing, Planning and Deputy Leader to respond, and the following information was shared:

- The HRA budget for 2025/26 did not propose any changes in rent-setting policy from previous years.
- The Council set rents in accordance with the rent standard. This meant that for 2025/2026, existing rents would rise by CPI+1%. Rents on new tenancies were set in accordance with the rent formula, with the exception of certain newly built Council homes where rents are set at London Affordable Rent, as agreed by Cabinet and Full Council. Council tenants' rents enable the Council as their landlord to ensure that their homes are managed and maintained. In addition, the HRA had to balance the way out with the in from the rent.
- The Council had been increasing service charges in line with inflation for several years, but as known by the deputation, the Council moved from that because CPI plus 1% created a diversion between the cost to the Council providing services to tenants and the amount it charged tenants for those services. It was further noted that if the cost of providing services is not met then that meant that the HRA would be covering the shortfall which would then further result in tenants who do not receive services subsidising those who do, which was fundamentally unfair.

- In response to the choice of two examples of percentage increases to service charges highlighted by the deputation, the Cabinet Member contended that only highlighting a specific two was misleading and reference had not been made to the 15% decrease in communal lighting costs or the 9% reduction in grounds maintenance or the approximately 30% saving on heating costs across six housing estates.
- There was a need to note that overall service charges had only increased by 0.22% for 2025/26 and the Council needed to manage its properties effectively to provide safe and comfortable homes, which was key to the fairer housing pledge and to do this, the Council set all its service charges to fully recover costs.

The Cabinet Member thanked the deputation for attending and speaking.

## **55. 2025/26 BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2025/30**

The Mayor invited the Monitoring Officer to outline the requirement for votes.

It was noted that the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, and the Council's Standing Orders required the Council to record in the minutes how each Councillor voted, including any abstentions, when determining the Council's Budget and the level of Council Tax to be levied.

The only requirement was to record in the minutes of the meeting how each member voted and given that there were four amendments and a substantive motion to be voted on, and it could be recorded in the minutes of the meeting how each member voted, including any who had abstained.

Members NOTED this advice.

The Mayor then called on Councillor Carlin, Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services to introduce the budget and move the 2025-26 budget and 2025-2030 Medium Term Financial Strategy and the recommendations (a) – (n) at page 278 of the agenda pack. Councillor Ahmet, Leader of the Council formally seconded the motion.

The Mayor then invited Councillor Cawley – Harrison to move the Liberal Democrat group's four amendments, as set out in the tabled papers. Councillor Connor formally seconded the amendments and spoke in favour of their adoption.

Cllr Collett, Leader of the Independent Socialists group, was invited to respond to the budget presentation in accordance with CSO 15.6 c (ii).

The Mayor then opened the debate, in which Councillors: Small, Isilar –Gosling, Grosskopf, da Costa, Dunstall, Rossetti, Brennan, Emery, Carroll, Mason, Iyngkaran, Ibrahim, and Bartlett contributed to the discussion. Councillor Cawley- Harrison and then Councillor Carlin responded to the debate.



(Cllr Adamou left the meeting at 9.08pm)

The Mayor then called for a vote on Budget Amendment 1, as set out in the tabled papers. There being 6 Members in favour ( Cawley- Harrison, Connor, da Costa, Emery, Isilar- Gosling Rossetti) and 37 Against (Ahmet, Ali, Amin, Arkell, Bartlett, Bevan, B Blake, Brabazon, Brennan, Buxton, Carlin, Carroll , Chandwani, das Neves, Diakides, Dogan, Dunstall, Gordon, Gunes, Grosskopf, Hakata, Ibrahim, Iyngkaran, Jameson, Johnson, Lawton, Mahbub, Moyeed, O'Donovan, Ovat, Peacock, Rice, Small, Weston, White, Williams, Worrell )

4 Abstentions – (Cllr M Blake, Cllr Collett, Cllr Mason, Cllr Wallace)

Amendment 1 was declared lost.

The Mayor then called for a vote on Budget Amendment 2, as set out in the tabled papers. There being 6 Members in favour (Cawley- Harrison, Connor, da Costa, Emery, Isilar- Gosling Rossetti) and 37 Against (Ahmet, Ali, Amin, Arkell, Bartlett, Bevan, B Blake, Brabazon, Brennan, Buxton, Carlin, Carroll , Chandwani, das Neves, Diakides, Dogan, Dunstall, Gordon, Gunes, Grosskopf, Hakata, Ibrahim, Iyngkaran, Jameson, Johnson, Lawton, Mahbub, Moyeed, O'Donovan, Ovat, Peacock, Rice, Small, Weston, White, Williams, Worrell )

4 Abstentions – (Cllr M Blake, Cllr Collett, Cllr Mason, Cllr Wallace)

Amendment 2 was declared lost.

The Mayor then called for a vote on Budget Amendment 3, as set out in the tabled papers. There being 6 Members in favour (Cawley- Harrison, Connor, da Costa, Emery, Isilar- Gosling Rossetti) and 37 Against (Ahmet, Ali, Amin, Arkell, Bartlett, Bevan, B Blake, Brabazon, Brennan, Buxton, Carlin, Carroll , Chandwani, das Neves, Diakides, Dogan, Dunstall, Gordon, Gunes, Grosskopf, Hakata, Ibrahim, Iyngkaran, Jameson, Johnson, Lawton, Mahbub, Moyeed, O'Donovan, Ovat, Peacock, Rice, Small, Weston, White, Williams, Worrell )

4 Abstentions – (Cllr M Blake, Cllr Collett, Cllr Mason, Cllr Wallace)

Amendment 3 was declared lost.

The Mayor then called for a vote on Budget Amendment 4, as set out in the tabled papers. There being 6 Members in favour (Cawley- Harrison, Connor, da Costa, Emery, Isilar- Gosling Rossetti) and 37 Against (Ahmet, Ali, Amin, Arkell, Bartlett, Bevan, B Blake, Brabazon, Brennan, Buxton, Carlin, Carroll , Chandwani, das Neves, Diakides, Dogan, Dunstall, Gordon, Gunes, Grosskopf, Hakata, Ibrahim, Iyngkaran, Jameson, Johnson, Lawton, Mahbub, Moyeed, O'Donovan, Ovat, Peacock, Rice, Small, Weston, White, Williams, Worrell )

4 Abstentions – (Cllr M Blake, Cllr Collett, Cllr Mason, Cllr Wallace)

Amendment 4 was declared lost.

The Mayor then called for a vote on recommendations (a) to (n) contained at page 278 paragraph 3.1 of the agenda pack.

There being 10 Members against (M Blake, Cawley- Harrison, Collett, Connor, da Costa, Emery, Isilar- Gosling, Mason, Rossetti and Wallace)

37 in Favour (Ahmet, Ali, Amin, Arkell, Bartlett, Bevan, B Blake, Brabazon, Brennan, Buxton, Carlin, Carroll, Chandwani, das Neves, Diakides, Dogan, Dunstall, Gordon, Gunes, Grosskopf, Hakata, Ibrahim, Iyngkaran, Jameson, Johnson, Lawton, Mahbub, Moyeed, O'Donovan, Ovat, Peacock, Rice, Small, Weston, White, Williams, Worrell)

(Abstentions – none)

The Recommendations were AGREED as follows

- (a) To approve the proposed 2025/26 Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (2025/30) agreed by Cabinet on 11th February 2025 as set out in Annex 1.
- (b) To approve the increase of 2.99% in Haringey's element of the Council tax and an additional 2% for the Adult Social Care Precept and subsequent band rates as set out in Annex 6.
- (c) To approve the General Fund budget requirement for 2025/26 of £314.383m, net of Dedicated Schools Budget, and the Directorate cash limits for 2025/26 as set out in Annex 2 of this report.
- (d) To approve the 2025/30 General Fund Capital Programme set out in Appendix 8 of Annex 1 to this report.
- (e) To approve the strategy on the flexible use of capital receipts as set out in Appendix 8 of Annex 1 to this report and the further update on planned use in 2025/26 as set out in Section 7.21 of this report.
- (f) To approve the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget 2025/30 as set out in Table 6 of Annex 3 to this report.
- (g) To approve the 2025/30 HRA Capital Programme set out in Table 7 of Annex 3 to this report.
- (h) To note the Greater London Authority (GLA) precept (para. 7.20).
- (i) To approve the budgeted level of non-earmarked General Fund balance and the specific and other reserves as set out in Section 9 of Annex 1.
- (j) To approve the reserves policy including the Chief Finance Officer's (CFO) assessment of risk and the assessment of the adequacy of reserves, as set out in Annex 1 sections 9 and 13.

- (k) To note the report of the Chief Finance Officer under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of proposed reserves set out in Annex 1 Section 13.
- (l) To approve the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2025/26 set out in Annex 4; and
- (m) To pass the budget resolution including the level of Council Tax, in the specified format, and to determine that the Council's relevant basic amount of Council Tax for the year is not excessive as set out in Annex 6.
- (n) To note the results of the budget consultation as set out in Appendix 5 of Annex 1.

### **Reasons for decision**

The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget by 11 March each year.

The report and recommendations from the Cabinet meeting on 11th February 2025, were agreed in full and are attached as Annex 1.

The Budget now proposed has been updated to reflect the final funding allocations announced in the Final Local Government Finance Settlement and the outcome of the Council's application for Exceptional Financial Support. Taking all relevant factors into account, this report sets out Cabinet's 2025/26 Budget and 2025/30 MTFs proposals, including the level of Council tax for 2025/26, for the Council to consider and approve.

### **Alternative options considered**

The Council has a statutory duty to set a balanced budget for 2025/26 by 11 March 2025, accordingly, no other options have been considered.

Therefore, in accordance with legislation and the Council's constitution, this report recommends that the Council should approve the proposed 2025/26 Budget and 2025/30 Medium Term Financial Strategy agreed by Cabinet on 11th February 2025, including the outcomes from the budget consultation exercise, budget scrutiny and equalities review, which is attached as Annex 1 and approve the Council tax for 2025/26.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....