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COUNCIL

13 SEPTEMBER 2023

(8.27 pm - 10.57 pm)

PRESENT

(in the Chair), Councillor Gill Manly,
Councillor Martin Whelton, Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina,
Councillor Stephen Alambritis, Councillor Laxmi Attawar,
Councillor Thomas Barlow, Councillor Hina Bokhari,
Councillor Michael Brunt, Councillor Billy Christie,
Councillor Caroline Cooper-Marbiah,
Councillor Anthony Fairclough, Councillor Edward Foley,
Councillor Brenda Fraser, Councillor Jenifer Gould,
Councillor Joan Henry, Councillor Daniel Holden,
Councillor Andrew Howard, Councillor Sally Kenny,
Councillor Linda Kirby, Councillor Paul Kohler,
Councillor Edith Macauley, Councillor Peter McCabe,
Councillor Simon McGrath, Councillor Nick McLean,
Councillor Aidan Mundy, Councillor Dennis Pearce,
Councillor Marsie Skeete, Councillor Eleanor Stringer,
Councillor Helena Dollimore, Councillor James Williscroft,
Councillor Sheri-Ann Bhim, Councillor John Braithwaite,
Councillor Michael Butcher, Councillor Caroline Charles,
Councillor Eleanor Cox, Councillor Klaar Dresselaers,
Councillor Chessie Flack, Councillor Kirsten Galea,
Councillor Ross Garrod, Councillor Jil Hall,
Councillor Billy Hayes, Councillor Susie Hicks,
Councillor Dan Johnston, Councillor Andrew Judge,
Councillor Usaama Kaweesa, Councillor Samantha MacArthur,
Councillor Stephen Mercer, Councillor Stuart Neaverson,
Councillor John Oliver, Councillor Robert Page,
Councillor Michael Paterson, Councillor Tony Reiss,
Councillor Slawek Szczepanski, Councillor Matthew Willis,
Councillor Max Austin and Councillor Victoria Wilson

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Irons.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2023 are agreed as an accurate record.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE MAYOR, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Agenda Item 4)

The Leader spoke and provided updates on World Suicide Prevention Day, the Galpins Road incident, the response to the Study School incident, the anniversary of the death of Queen Elizabeth 2nd, recent GCSE and A Level exam results across the Borough, renovation of sports courts, the upcoming Merton Sports Day, the Kids Swim Free initiative, Cost of Living events, the local scrappage scheme and informed those present of an upcoming Cost of Living Event and a Leaders' advice surgery.

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

The Mayor provided a brief update on her recent and upcoming events and activities.

5 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS (Agenda Item 5)

The responses to the written public questions were circulated prior to the meeting. There were no supplementary questions.

6 COUNCILLORS' ORDINARY PRIORITY QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS (Agenda Item 6)

The responses to the written member ordinary priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of the members in turn to ask (if they wished) a further question to the Cabinet Member. A copy of the supplementary questions and responses will be included in the 'member ordinary priority questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

7a STRATEGIC THEME: MAIN REPORT (Agenda Item 7a)

The Strategic Theme report on Nurturing Civic Pride was moved by Councillor Stringer and seconded by Councillor Christie.

Councillors Bokhari, Austin, Mercer, Johnston, Dresselaers, Kohler and Fairclough also spoke on the item.

The Conservative Amendment 1 to the report was moved by Councillor Holden and seconded by Councillor McLean.

The Conservative Amendment 2 was moved by Councillor Barlow and seconded by Councillor Cox.

The Liberal Democrat Amendment 1 was moved by Councillor MacArthur and seconded by Councillor Galea.

The Liberal Democrat Amendment 2 was moved by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Fairclough.

The Conservative Amendment 1 was put to the vote and fell: Votes For – 26, Against – 29, Absentions – 1.

The Conservative Amendment 2 was put to the vote and fell: Votes For – 26, Against – 29, Absentions – 1.

The Liberal Democrat Amendment 1 was put to the vote and fell: Votes For – 26, Against – 29, Absentions – 1.

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Theme report is agreed.

7b STRATEGIC THEME: COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS (Agenda Item 7b)

The responses to the written member strategic theme priority questions were circulated prior to the meeting. The Mayor then invited each of the members in turn to ask (if they wished) a further question to the Cabinet Member. A copy of the supplementary questions and responses will be included in the 'member strategic theme priority questions to Cabinet Members' published document.

It was also noted that a copy of the remaining Member questions and responses will be published after the meeting, in line with Constitutional requirements.

7c STRATEGIC THEME: MOTIONS (Agenda Item 7c)

There were no Strategic Theme motions submitted to the meeting.

8 REPORTS FROM COMMUNITY FORUM - RAYNES PARK, 28 JUNE 2023 (Agenda Item 8)

Councillor Oliver presented the report which was received by the Council.

9 NOTICES OF MOTION (Agenda Item 9)

There were no motions submitted to the meeting.

10 MEMBERS ALLOWANCES SCHEME (Agenda Item 10)

The report was moved by Councillor Christie and seconded by Councillor Hayes.

Councillors Bhim, Mercer and McLean also spoke on the item.

The Liberal Democrat Amendment to the report was moved by Councillor Willis and seconded by Councillor Oliver.

The Liberal Democrat Amendment was put to a vote and fell: Votes for – 18, Against – 36, Abstentions – 2.

As six members of the Council requested that a recorded vote be taken on the vote on the substantive motion, a roll call was taken and the votes were as follows:

Votes in Favour (30): Councillors Akyigyina, Alambritis, Attawar, Bhim, Brunt, Butcher, Charles, Christie, Cooper-Marbiah, Dollimore, Fraser, Garrod, Hayes, Henry, Johnston, Judge, Kaweesa, Kenny, Kirby, Macauley, McCabe, Mundy, Neaverson, Pearce, Skeete, Stringer, Szczepanski, Williscroft, Deputy Mayor Councillor Whelton and the Mayor Councillor Manly.

Votes Against (25): Councillors Austin, Barlow, Bokhari, Braithwaite, Cox, Dresselaers, Fairclough, Flack, Galea, Gould, Hall, Hicks, Holden, Howard, Kohler, MacArthur, McGrath, McLean, Mercer, Oliver, Page, Paterson, Reiss, Willis and Wilson.

Abstentions (1): Councillor Foley

RESOLVED:

A. That the Council approved the recommendations of the Standards and General Purposes Committee set out in the report:

(i) that the basic allowance should be increased to £12,014 in line with the recommendation of the 2022 Independent Remuneration Panel;

(ii) to agree to award the Special Responsibility Allowances set out in appendix A;

(iii) that Council reaffirms the linking of future allowances to the annual staff pay award, such increases to be applied automatically and that in future the Scheme be approved as part of the annual budget;

(iv) that the Licensing Committee chair should also be the chair of the Licensing Sub committee meetings convened for the purpose of determining individual licensing applications

(iv) that the new allowances should apply with immediate effect (as of 13 September 2023), but will not be backdated to 1 April 2023

11 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 (Agenda Item 11)

The report was moved by Councillor Foley and seconded by Councillor Brunt.

Councillors Kohler, Oliver and McLean also spoke on the item.

The report was put to the vote and carried: Votes for – 38, Against – 17, Abstentions – 1.

RESOLVED :

That Council received the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report

12 STANDARDS AND GENERAL PURPOSES ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda Item 12)

The report was moved by Councillor Whelton and formally seconded by Councillor Oliver.

Councillor Page also spoke on the item.

RESOLVED:

A That Council noted the Annual Report and agreed to its for publication and distribution to relevant stakeholders.

B That Council noted the appointment of an independent person and to co-opt such a person onto the S&GP Committee for the purposes of providing advice on the audit functions of the S&GP Committee; and

C That Council agreed the amended terms of reference for S&GP Committee in accordance with Appendix C

13 APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME AMENDMENTS REQUIRING COUNCIL APPROVAL (Agenda Item 13)

The report was moved by Councillor Christie and seconded by Councillor Kenny.

RESOLVED:

A. That Council approved Ricards Lodge Sixth Form Expansion scheme of £3,600,000 as detailed in the table below:

Scheme	Budget 2023-24	Budget 2024-25	Narrative
Ricards Lodge – 6 th Form Expansion	50,000	3,550,000	DfE Post 16 Capacity Funding £3,235,706 and School Contribution £364,294 match funding

B. That the School Capital Maintenance Budget is treated as one budget for financial management, reducing substantially the level of formal approval required for budget virement sign off to provide valuable historic information whilst allowing for effective budget management.

14 CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND RELATED MATTERS (Agenda Item 14)

The report was formally moved by Councillor Bhim and formally seconded by Councillor Stringer.

RESOLVED:

That the Council:

1. Noted the changes to the membership of Committees that were approved under delegated authority since the last meeting of the Council.

15 PETITIONS (Agenda Item 15)

The report was formally moved by Councillor Garrod and formally seconded by Councillor Stringer.

RESOLVED

That Council

1. Notes the update on the petition received at the last meeting,
2. Accepts receipt of a petition presented by Councillors Dresselaers, Braithwaite and Brunt entitled Stop Rat Running through Abbey Road Neighbourhood.

16 BUSINESS FOR THE NEXT ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL
(Agenda Item 16)

That the Strategic Theme for the next ordinary meeting of the Council, being held on 15 November 2023, shall be Borough of Sport.