MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 18 July 2018
(7:04 - 8:52 pm)

PRESENT

Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe (Chair)
Cllr Faruk Choudhury (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah  Cllr Sanchia Alasia  Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Toni Bankole  Cllr Simon Bremner  Cllr Princess Bright
Cllr Sade Bright  Cllr Laila M. Butt  Cllr Evelyn Carpenter
Cllr Peter Chand  Cllr Josie Channer  Cllr John Dulwich
Cllr Edna Fergus  Cllr Irma Freeborn  Cllr Cameron Geddes
Cllr Syed Ghani  Cllr Kashif Haroon  Cllr Amardeep Singh Jamu
Cllr Jane Jones  Cllr Mohammed Khan  Cllr Donna Lumsden
Cllr Olawale Martins  Cllr Giasuddin Miah  Cllr Margaret Mullane
Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole  Cllr Moin Quadri  Cllr Foyzur Rahman
Cllr Chris Rice  Cllr Ingrid Robinson  Cllr Paul Robinson
Cllr Darren Rodwell  Cllr Muhammad Saleem  Cllr Faraaz Shaukat
Cllr Bill Turner  Cllr Dominic Twomey  Cllr Maureen Worby

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Andrew Achilleos  Cllr Abdul Aziz  Cllr Rocky Gill
Cllr Eileen Keller  Cllr Mick McCarthy  Cllr Glenda Paddle
Cllr Simon Perry  Cllr Tony Ramsay  Cllr Lynda Rice
Cllr Emily Rodwell  Cllr Lee Waker  Cllr Phil Waker

15. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

16. Minutes (23 May 2018)

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2018 were confirmed as correct.

17. Developing the Corporate Plan 2018-2022


The report provided all members of the Assembly with the opportunity to comment on and contribute to the development of the Council’s strategic imperatives for the coming four years, work that would subsequently culminate in a new Corporate Plan in the Autumn.

The new Corporate Plan would build on the work undertaken during 2014 – 2018, which put the Borough on the map and helped to get the Council known for its
ambition, aspiration and fairness;

Each portfolio holder spoke in depth on their ambitions and highlighted key areas of their portfolios, which included:

- New strategies which would be put in place to build on improvements made in Children’s Care;
- Refreshing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Setting an objective to get 100% of Council owned housing up to the Decent Homes Standard;
- Working with Be First to identify further opportunities and enter the next stages for both the Film Studios and Vicarage Fields;
- Revisiting the Job Shop to make sure it works better for residents;
- Develop a new homelessness strategy;
- Develop new opportunities to provide support for the Third Sector;
- Continue to celebrate the Borough’s heritage;
- Working with the Community Safety Partnership to focus on serious youth violence;
- Develop a new SEND/Inclusion Strategy;
- Develop a new Education and Partnership Strategy; and
- Replace the Council’s exhausted vehicle fleet within the Public Realm directorate.

Members noted and congratulated the Cabinet on the progress made in the last four years. Members also welcomed the opportunity to inform the development of the new Corporate Plan.

The Assembly resolved to note the context, approach and themes for the future development of the Corporate Plan for 2018 – 2022 as detailed in the report.

18. Treasury Management Annual Report 2017/18

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced the Treasury Management Annual Report 2017/18 which set out the key areas for performance during the following year.

Investment income for the year was £4.1m compared to the budget of £2.6m, while the Council’s average interest return of 1.22% was 0.51% higher than the average London Peer Group return and 0.61% higher than the Local Authority average return. The Cabinet Member also referred to the investment priorities and borrowing strategy that supported the Council’s Investment and Acquisition Strategy. The point was made that the £89m loan secured from the European Investment Bank in January 2015 at just 2.2% over the 30-year term had funded the Weaver’s Quarter development as part of the regeneration of the Gascoigne Estate. The revenue from the new development was now fully covering the interest payments on the loan while providing genuinely affordable new homes for the local community, including those on the London Living Wage.

The Assembly resolved to:

(i) Note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2017/18;
(ii) Note that the Council complied with all 2017/18 treasury management indicators;

(iii) Approve the actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2017/18;

(iv) Note that the Council borrowed £119.6m from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) in 2017/18 to fund the Council’s regeneration strategy and borrowed a further £15m from other Local Authorities to fund the Council’s land acquisition strategy; and

(v) Maintain the delegated authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services, to continue to proportionally amend the counterparty lending limits agreed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement to reflect the additional cash holdings resulting from borrowing from the European Investment Bank and the PWLB.

19. Revised Members' Allowances Scheme 2018/19

The Director of Law and Governance introduced a report to the Assembly on the revised Members’ Allowances Scheme 2018/19.

By Minute 10 (23 May 2018), the Assembly agreed a Scheme for 2018/19 which kept the vast majority of allowances at the same level that they had been since 2008/9. It was also agreed that a further review of allowances would be undertaken during the year to assess the impact of Members’ new responsibilities arising from the new governance and committee structure arrangements agreed by the Assembly on 28 February 2018 (Minute 56 refers).

That review had been concluded and had also taken into account the London Councils’ Independent Remuneration Panel (LCIRP) Report 2018 and benchmarking information for all London Boroughs.

Arising from the review, the report proposed that the Council should increase the majority of its Members’ allowances, although not to the levels recommended by the LCIRP in its 2018 report. It was also noted that the proposed rates were generally equivalent to, or lower than, the averages across all other London Boroughs.

The Assembly resolved to:

(i) Agree the proposed increases to Members’ basic and special responsibility allowances for the 2018/19 municipal year as set out in the report; and

(ii) Adopt the revised Members’ Allowances Scheme 2018/19 as attached at Appendix A to the report, to come into effect from 19 July 2018.

20. Motions

Moved by Councillor P Robinson and seconded by Councillor Worby

“Barking & Dagenham Council welcomes and celebrates the 70th anniversary of
the creation of the National Health Service.

In July 1948, universal healthcare services free at the point of use were rolled out across the country and Labour’s proudest achievement was born. Since then, the NHS has transformed the wellbeing of our nation, eradicated diseases, pioneered new treatments and ensured that we can all expect to live longer lives.

This Council notes that none of this would be possible without the skill, dedication and compassion of our past and present NHS staff. All Members would like to place on record their thanks to those working in our borough’s health and social care services, many of whom often work in very difficult circumstances.

This Council is also alarmed by the current crisis in the NHS that has been caused by years of Tory underfunding. This Council believes that our NHS and social care system should be fully funded, and that the extra £20bn committed by the Government is not enough to tackle the immediate crisis.

Barking and Dagenham Council resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and the Prime Minister urging them to:

- Fully fund our NHS and social care system
- Properly integrate health and social care services
- Halt the plans to close the A&E at King George Hospital
- Guarantee hospital treatment within 18 weeks
- Ensure the 4-hour A&E waiting time target is met
- Prioritise children’s health services
- Expand mental health services
- Invest in modern equipment and facilities for the future"

Councillor Robinson asked that the third bullet point in relation to the wording “halt the plans to close A&E at King George Hospital” be deleted from the motion.

Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion and celebrated the work of the NHS. Members expressed concerns, however, that the Government was decimating a much-needed service and that reform of the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) was needed to help ensure the future of the NHS.

The motion as amended was carried unanimously.