

# MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 29 January 2020  
(7:00 - 9:00 pm)

## PRESENT

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

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Sanchia Alasia
Cllr Saima Ashraf	Cllr Abdul Aziz	Cllr Toni Bankole
Cllr Simon Bremner	Cllr Princess Bright	Cllr Laila M. Butt
Cllr Evelyn Carpenter	Cllr Josie Channer	Cllr John Dulwich
Cllr Edna Fergus	Cllr Irma Freeborn	Cllr Cameron Geddes
Cllr Syed Ghani	Cllr Rocky Gill	Cllr Kashif Haroon
Cllr Amardeep Singh Jamu	Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Eileen Keller
Cllr Mohammed Khan	Cllr Donna Lumsden	Cllr Olawale Martins
Cllr Mick McCarthy	Cllr Giasuddin Miah	Cllr Dave Miles
Cllr Margaret Mullane	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole	Cllr Glenda Paddle
Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Foyzur Rahman	Cllr Tony Ramsay
Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Lynda Rice	Cllr Ingrid Robinson
Cllr Paul Robinson	Cllr Darren Rodwell	Cllr Emily Rodwell
Cllr Muhammad Saleem	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat	Cllr Dominic Twomey
Cllr Lee Waker	Cllr Phil Waker	Cllr Maureen Worby

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Peter Chand	Cllr Moin Quadri
Cllr Bill Turner		

### 40. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

### 41. Minutes (20 November 2019)

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 November 2019 were confirmed as correct.

### 42. Leader's Statement

The Leader of the Council presented a verbal statement updating the Assembly on a range of matters since the last meeting as follows:

*Reflection on the outcome of the General Election-* Congratulated both Margaret Hodge and Jon Cruddas on their re-election as constituency MP's for Barking and Dagenham and Rainham respectively.

*Fair Funding Formula- what it could mean for us* – Criticism of the Government's plans to rebalance regional funding through its review of local government

finances in what is known as the Fair Funding Review. An analysis by the LGA has shown that £320m a year could be diverted from some of the most deprived areas including Barking and Dagenham to Tory-controlled shire councils mainly in the South-East in 2021/22, which flies in the face of the Prime Minister's post election promise to level up poor areas. Reference was made to recent research about the amount of funding which would be lost to the regions as a consequence of leaving the EU and the significant financial gap this would leave for this Council to make up.

Despite this, the Council was doing everything the public sector considered best practice as reflected in the many awards in recent years, including Council of the Year.

*Budget 2020/21* - Update on the public consultation exercise led by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance & Core Services.

*Work of backbench Members* – Paid compliment to the work of backbench Members over the past year including the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny, the two appointed Member Champions for Quality in Care and Mental Health, as well as the members on the Policy Task Group.

*Redevelopment of the Gascoigne Estate and Affordable Housing start-ups* – Update on (i) the next phase of housing development at the western end of the estate where it is planned to build over the next two years more than 200 homes including 60% affordable rented properties, and (ii) confirmation from the GLA that working with the Council and Be First they were committed to providing grant funding to deliver a significant number of affordable homes in the Borough under the Mayor's 'Building Council Homes for Londoners' Programme.

*Local Plan* – The launch this month of a public consultation exercise for the Council's new Local Plan, the biggest and most ambitious ever Local Plan which will set out the future of planning in the Borough and will include targets for the number of homes and jobs to be delivered over the next 15 years.

*Serious Crime Summit* – The fourth and final Serious Violence Summit led by the Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety was being held at London East on 12 February 2020. Keynote speakers include the Deputy Mayor of London for Crime and Policing and the BCU Police Commander.

*City of London Public Consultation* – Three public consultation events taking place in the borough between 29 January and 1 February in connection with the proposals to re-locate the three iconic markets of Billingsgate, New Spitalfields and Smithfield to Dagenham Dock.

*Domestic Abuse Commission* – The Commission, the first of its kind in this Country, being launched on 4 February at City Hall. The Commission will bring together a Panel of national and local experts to look at the attitudes to domestic violence in the borough which has one of the highest recorded incidents of domestic abuse in the Country.

#### 43. Appointments

There were none.

#### 44. BAD Youth Forum and Young Mayor Annual Report 2019

The Assembly received the Barking and Dagenham (BAD) Youth Forum and Young Mayor's Annual report, introduced by the Head of Engagement, Opportunity and Wellbeing, who was accompanied by representatives of the Youth Forum.

This report detailed the achievements of the BAD Youth Forum during the past 12 months outlining the work of each of the sub-groups, their aims and the impact of the work completed.

The BAD Youth Forum was in its 18<sup>th</sup> year. Its purpose was to provide young people with a formal platform to express their views and be ambassadors for young people locally. The Forum elected 70 young people in 2019 through a democratic election process in those participating schools, coordinated by the Youth Service with support from Democratic Services. These elections included Goresbrook and Greatfields schools for the first time. Trinity Special School elected new representatives, via an internal election process suitable to the needs of students.

The Forum split into three sub-groups focussing on different campaigns, the representatives on each of which highlighted the key areas and achievements of their work during the year, including:

**Community Action Sub-Group:** Young people focussed on drugs and alcohol, teen parents, Personal, Social, Health and Economic education including the Adverse Childhood Experiences Programme, Domestic abuse Commission Ambassadors, a community event at Dagenham & Redbridge Football Club and volunteering at Barking Food Bank.

**Young Mayor Sub-Group:** Worked closely with Joshua Singh-Hill, Young Mayor to support his efforts to raise funds for SANE Mental Health Charity through a range of different events which raised £4017.53 as well as raising awareness of both the Charity and mental health in young people in general.

**Young Inspectors Sub-Group:** Young Inspectors continued to quality assure the Come Correct Condom Distribution scheme (C- card scheme) in Barking and Dagenham. They also inspected the School Nurse service and the Outpatients East Sexual Health Service.

Other areas in which Forum Members took an active role included:

- Youth Independent Advisory Group
- Eight separate consultation exercises covering a range of topics
- London Youth Assembly
- Stubbers Activity Centre
- Youth Parade
- Visit of Prince Harry for the official opening of the Youth Zone
- Visit to Houses of Parliament

- Attendance at meetings of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Finally, reference was made to the outcome of the recent elections of the 2020 Forum.

Following the presentation, a number of Members paid tribute to the excellent work and projects of the Forum and the impact it had on shaping the future of the Borough and how inspirational they were both to this Council and young people in general. The Leader of the Council remarked that as leaders themselves the Forum represented the 'voice' of young people in this Borough and as such he wanted to see them interacting more with the Council Cabinet meetings.

In summing up, the Chair said that every one of the Forum was a credit to both themselves, their families and the Borough and she thanked the representatives for their excellent presentation which the Assembly noted.

#### **45. Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report on the proposal to retain the existing Council Tax Support Scheme and a £50,000 discretionary hardship fund, in order to continue to support local residents who found themselves in exceptional hardship.

Following comments, the Cabinet Member explained that the fund would be monitored and reviewed quarterly and that given that it was fully expended in the current financial year, it could be increased in the future on the basis it represented an invest to save proposal as it potentially supported people not to fall into arrears.

The Assembly **resolved** that the Council Tax Support Scheme implemented for 2019/20 be retained for 2020/21.

#### **46. Exemption of Care Leavers from Council Tax**

The Cabinet at its meeting on 16 July 2019 received a report on an updated Care Leavers' Local Offer which included a recommendation to the Assembly seeking an exemption for LBBd Care Leavers resident in the Borough up to the age of 25 from paying council tax.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration presented a report outlining the background to this proposal which was in keeping with the Council's vision of leaving no one behind and embedding the principle of asking as Corporate Parents, 'would this be good enough for my child?'. She stressed that members had a collective duty to provide the best possible support for the Borough's looked after young people.

Members welcomed and expressed their support for the proposal, and

**Agreed** that LBBd Care Leavers resident in the Borough be exempted from council tax up to the age of 25, effective from April 2020.

## 47. Annual Report of Member Champions

In February 2018 the Assembly agreed new governance arrangements which included provision for Member Champions whose role was to support the work of Cabinet Members as appropriate.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration introduced the first Annual Report of the Member Champions', in this instance being Councillors Freeborn and Chris Rice in their capacities as Member Champions for Quality in Care and for Mental Health respectively.

Both Members provided an insight into the work they undertook in respect of these roles including a detailed summary of their activities over the past year.

The Assembly welcomed and noted the Annual Report.

## 48. Motions

### **Motion 1 – Adopt the All Parliamentary Party Group on British Muslims working definition of Islamophobia**

Moved by Councillor Ashraf and seconded by Councillor Paddle.

“This Council expresses alarm at the rise of Islamophobia in recent years across the UK, and around the world. In Barking and Dagenham alone, we have seen an increase of 15% in reports of Islamophobic hate crime since July 2018.

This Council is committed to fighting Islamophobia in all its forms. We welcome the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on British Muslims' definition of Islamophobia, which has been backed by 750 Muslim organisations and institutions.

The APPG on British Muslims working definition of Islamophobia *includes the following examples in its' definition of Islamaphobia:*

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

Contemporary examples of Islamophobia in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in encounters between religions and non-religions in the public sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, instigating or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims in the name of a racist/fascist ideology, or an extremist view of religion;
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as such, or of Muslims as a collective group, such as, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslim entryism in politics, government or other societal institutions; the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism, and claims of a demographic 'threat' posed by Muslims or of a 'Muslim takeover';

- Accusing Muslims as a group of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person or group of Muslim individuals, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims;
- Accusing Muslims as a group, or Muslim majority states, of inventing or exaggerating Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing or genocide perpetrated against Muslims;
- Accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to the 'Ummah' (transnational Muslim community) or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than of the interests of their own nations;
- Denying Muslim populations the right to self-determination e.g., by claiming that the existence of an independent Palestine or Kashmir is a terrorist endeavour;
- Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims behaviours that are not expected or demanded of any other groups in society, e.g. loyalty tests; and
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic Islamophobia (e.g. Muhammed being a paedophile, claims of Muslims spreading Islam by the sword or subjugating minority groups under their rule) to characterize Muslims as being 'sex groomers', inherently violent or incapable of living harmoniously in plural societies.

This Council hereby adopts the above definition of Islamophobia as set out by the APPG on British Muslims and will continue to engage with local Muslim community groups and organisations to combat this hatred. This Council calls on the government to follow suit and adopt the APPG definition, sending a clear message that any and all forms of Islamophobia will not be tolerated in our communities”.

A number of Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

## **Motion 2 – Declare a ‘Climate Emergency’**

Moved by Councillor Freeborn and seconded by Councillor P. Robinson

This Council notes:

- That a changing climate will have severe and enduring social, economic and environmental implications, and that tackling climate change is an issue of inequality as the greatest impact will be on the most vulnerable and those least able to protect themselves.
- That the ‘Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C’, published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018, (a) describes the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise, and (b) confirms that limiting Global

Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society and the private sector.

- That strong policies to cut emissions also have associated health, wellbeing and economic benefits.

This Council further notes:

- Barking and Dagenham Council's existing work to tackle climate change, including committing to cutting our carbon footprint by 25% by 2025, launching Beam Energy to provide cheaper fuel tariffs with energy from 100% renewable sources and committing to ending single use plastic in the Council.

This Council resolves to:

1. Pledge to do everything within its power to make B&D carbon neutral by 2030.
  - Launch a review to report on delivering a Zero-Carbon B&D including publishing a new B&D Action Plan on Climate Change, with an interim draft to be presented for scrutiny by Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.
  - Setting specific and measurable targets to reduce carbon emissions for the Council and for the borough as a whole, including costed milestones to zero-carbon;
  - Consider systematically the climate change impact of each area of the Council's activities; and
  - Increase local resilience to climate impacts already in the system.
2. Task the Director for Inclusive Growth with responsibility for reducing carbon emissions resulting from the Council's activities as rapidly as possible, and ensuring a coordinated approach across housing, our corporate estate, transport, regeneration, planning and other services.
3. Continue to prioritise support for vulnerable residents through Beam Energy, working with partners at a community, borough wide and regional level to provide advice services and access to funding for heating, insulation and ventilation.
4. Accelerate existing programmes to deliver reductions in greenhouse gas emissions including delivery of heat networks in the borough, low carbon development and high-quality housing, an efficient and low carbon corporate estate and support for renewables and for community energy.
5. Work with partner bodies across the borough and across London to ensure the climate emergency is adequately reflected in the development and implementation of all borough wide strategies and plans.

6. Reaffirm B&Ds membership of UK100 and use our membership to work with other councils across the UK to meet climate change targets.
7. Draw up a communications strategy to support delivery of a Zero-Carbon B&D and enable our residents to make low carbon choices, and
8. Call on the UK Government to provide the powers and resources to make this possible.

A number of Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

#### **49. Questions with Notice**

There were none.