

# MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 22 November 2023  
(7:00 - 7:52 pm)

## PRESENT

Cllr Irma Freeborn (Chair)  
Cllr Tony Ramsay (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Princess Bright	Cllr Josie Channer	Cllr Faruk Choudhury
Cllr Muhib Chowdhury	Cllr Alison Cormack	Cllr John Dulwich
Cllr Edna Fergus	Cllr Cameron Geddes	Cllr Syed Ghani
Cllr Rocky Gill	Cllr Kashif Haroon	Cllr Victoria Hornby
Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe	Cllr Mohammed Khan
Cllr Donna Lumsden	Cllr Giasuddin Miah	Cllr Margaret Mullane
Cllr Fatuma Nalule	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole	Cllr Glenda Paddle
Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Michel Pongo	Cllr Moin Quadri
Cllr Regina Rahman	Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Lynda Rice
Cllr Ingrid Robinson	Cllr Paul Robinson	Cllr Darren Rodwell
Cllr Emily Rodwell	Cllr Muhammad Saleem	Cllr Muazzam Sandhu
Cllr Faraaz Shaukat	Cllr Jack Shaw	Cllr Summya Sohaib
Cllr Harriet Spoor	Cllr Dominic Twomey	Cllr Lee Waker
Cllr Phil Waker	Cllr Maureen Worbey	Cllr Mukhtar Yusuf

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Manzoor Hussain	Cllr Hardial Singh Rai
------------------	----------------------	------------------------

### 38. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

### 39. Minutes (27 September 2023)

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2023 were confirmed as correct.

### 40. Minutes of Sub-Committees - To note the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel meetings held on 23 and 24 October 2023

The Assembly received and noted the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel meetings held on 23 and 24 October 2023.

### 41. Leader's Statement

The Leader presented a verbal statement updating the Assembly on a range of matters since the last meeting, including:

**Trouble and Violence in the Middle East:** The Leader reflected on the trouble and violence in the Middle East and acknowledged the long road ahead for lasting peace. The loss of lives was truly heartbreaking, and the Leader called for more safe routes to be opened for humanitarian support, with a pause in fighting to allow for safe corridors out of Gaza for citizens and to allow humanitarian aiders to work in Gaza. The Leader praised fellow Councillors who had led by example as community leaders and were supporting their residents.

**Autumn Statement:** The Leader referred to the Autumn Statement, which had been released earlier in the day and the recent Government reshuffle, with the Prime Minister bringing back David Cameron into Government. The Autumn Statement included the unfreezing of the local housing allowance which was much needed; however this fell short of the support that Councils needed to help their residents through the winter months. The Leader advised that the unfreezing would not come in until the new financial year, and therefore would not help residents this year, despite the ongoing cost of living crisis. The Leader commented that London Councils alone were facing a £600m shortfall this year, resulting in a need for Council Tax to be increased once again.

**Seoul Digital Foundation, Thames Freeport and Connected Places Catapult Agreement:** In November, the Council agreed to a groundbreaking partnership with the Seoul Digital Foundation, Thames Freeport and Connected Places Catapult to launch a Smart Homes Innovation Hub in Barking and Dagenham. The agreement was seen as the start of a long-term relationship to collaboratively develop smart city and smart home technology, promoting sustainable living, connectivity and urban development.

**Interfaith week and Trans day of Remembrance:** In support of local communities, the Council celebrated Interfaith Week and reflected on Trans Day of Remembrance to support all residents in the borough. As part of the celebrations, the Council raised both flags outside of the Town Hall. The Leader was proud that LBBB celebrates all in the community.

**Weavers Quarter:** The Leader commented on the recent events at Weavers Quarter, Barking, where a balcony façade fell from the first floor. Thankfully no one was hurt and it had not affected the building infrastructure directly. LBBB owned the freehold and the land and since the incident Reside had investigated the incident and erected scaffolding and secured the balconies on site. Bouygues Construction advised that they had urgently carried out checks and conducted remedial work required as part of their 12-year contract with L&Q. The Leader assured residents that Bouygues and L&Q would be held to account.

The Leader thanked Ward Councillors for their support to their residents during this time. Councillor Cormack, Ward Councillor for Gascoigne Ward, made a short statement on Weavers Quarter, addressing the concerns of residents who felt let down by Reside, L&Q, Bouygues and the Council. It was acknowledged that there were outstanding issues across Weavers Quarter and there was an urgent need to make sure that all outstanding issues with balconies were resolved. Concluding his statement, the Leader expressed his gratitude to all Councillors of LBBB for their support of residents in the current climate and their continuing commitment to the borough.

## 42. Appointments

The Assembly **resolved** to appoint Councillor Sohaib to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee.

## 43. Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022/23

Councillor Worby presented the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) Annual Report for 2022/23.

Councillor Worby referred to the role of the SAB, its close relationship with the three statutory partners of the Council - the NHS North East London Integrated Care Board (NEL ICB) and the Police - and the key achievements of the SAB and its three committees during 2022/23. The SAB had established the following six main priorities for 2022/23, which were each supported by a range of actions:

- 1) Support for Hoarding and Self Neglect;
- 2) Implement a Learning and Development Committee to deliver joint multi agency learning;
- 3) Preparing for CQC regulation;
- 4) Joining up with children's social care on key cross cutting themes;
- 5) Develop governances, safeguarding and quality interfaces with NEL ICB;
- 6) Develop a community safeguarding offer and preventative offer for adults.

The Annual Report included data on enquiries under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014 relating to individuals experiencing, or at risk of, abuse and neglect. The data showed that Barking and Dagenham received 1,511 adult safeguarding concerns in 2022/23, 252 of which (17%) led to a Section 42 enquiry. Councillor Worby welcomed the relatively low level of referrals that resulted in a Section 42 enquiry, which also compared favourably with the overall national rate of 30%. However, she did express a slight concern at the low level of referrals from agencies such as the Police and also remarked upon a disproportionate level of white adults being referred in comparison to other ethnic groups, which suggested that more targeted information was needed to raise awareness amongst minority ethnic groups. A further observation was made relating to the low level (3%) of domestic abuse-related referrals.

The Assembly **resolved** to note the Local Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2022/23 at Appendix 1 to the report.

## 44. Treasury Management and Investment and Acquisition Strategy 2023/24 Mid-Year Review

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services introduced a report on the mid-year review of the Council's treasury management activities and Investment and Acquisition Strategy (IAS) for 2023/24.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the main factors that had impacted on the Council's treasury management and IAS position, such as the current economic situation, interest rate rises and the Council's borrowing position, and advised that the current projection showed a deficit of circa £6m on the overall forecast for 2023/24. Other factors affecting the overall position included lost income from

delayed property lettings and performance issues amongst some of the Council's commercial entities, although the Cabinet Member was confident that the remedial measures being implemented would resolve those issues.

The Cabinet Member commented that successful treasury management and investment and acquisition activities underpinned much of the Borough-wide regeneration aspirations as well as everyday service provision. He stressed, however, that the Council's diligent and prudent approach to investments had never been more important due to the current economic situation and it may be that projects previously assessed as viable may need to be put on hold or even abandoned, to avoid placing even more pressures on the Council's finances.

The Assembly **resolved** to note:

The Assembly is recommended to note:

- (i) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement Mid-Year Review 2023/24;
- (ii) The economic update covering the increase in inflation and the Bank of England Base Rate increases;
- (iii) The pressures currently impacting Treasury and Investment and Acquisition Strategy (IAS) returns, including:
  - Significantly increased interest rates impacting on the Council's borrowing requirements to support cashflow and capital programme;
  - Delays to renting of Private Rental units and Disposal of Shared Ownership units developed by the Council for Reside Group of companies impacting on revenue income via lease payments;
  - Loss of income from commercial holdings due to delays in renting the assets and further increased borrowing costs due to debt used to deliver the commercial assets being held for longer than projected.
  - Loss of interest income from wholly owned companies including Be First and BDTP as they are unable to meet interest payments; and
  - Reporting and administrative delays from Reside to accurately forecast rental income back to the Council.
- (iv) That the value of the treasury investments and cash balances at 30 September 2023 totalled £38.2m at a rate of 4.2%;
- (v) That the value of the residential loans lent by the Council to Reside at 30 September 2023 totalled £190.3m at an average rate of 2.6%;
- (vi) That the total value of borrowing incurred for Private Rented Schemes, planned to be transferred to Reside, at 30 September 2023 was £105.7m;
- (vii) That the total of other loans which included loans to LEUK, Energy Loans and Working Capital Loans total £50.4m;
- (viii) That IAS borrowing at 30 September 2023 totalled £844.3m, with an additional £295.9m of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing and a further £135.4m of General Fund (GF) borrowing taking total borrowing

- position for the Council of £1.275.6bn;
- (ix) That HRA interest payable was forecast to be £11.033m against a budget of £10.742m, which represented an overspend of £0.291m;
  - (x) That IAS and GF borrowing was forecasting a gross interest payable amount of £21.33m, to be covered by capitalised interest of £10.231m and allocation of commercial rent to pay for interest costs of £6.141m, leaving a net interest payable charge of £5m against a budget of £10.139m which represented a surplus of £5.182m;
  - (xi) That interest receivable from loans, IAS and treasury activity was forecast to be £10.9m, split into £4.046m (non-IAS Council loans and GF investments) and £6.848m (Reside Loans, treasury investments and IAS treasury investments), against a budget of £6.5m, representing a surplus of £4.4m;
  - (xii) That IAS operational income was forecast to be £1.057m against a budget of £6.861m, representing a deficit of £5.8m;
  - (xiii) That the net surplus from the IAS was £207k and the net surplus from the GF treasury strategy was forecast to be £454k for a combined surplus of £661k, which would be added to the IAS reserve, increasing it to £31.6m by the year-end; and
  - (xiv) That in the first half of the 2023/24 financial year, the Council complied with all 2023/24 treasury management indicators.

#### **45. Motions**

There were no motions.

#### **46. Questions With Notice**

There were no questions with notice.