

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 22 February 2012
(7:00 - 8:45 pm)

PRESENT

Councillor N S S Gill (Chair)
Councillor E Kangethe (Deputy Chair)

Councillor S Alasia	Councillor J L Alexander
Councillor S Ashraf	Councillor A Gafoor Aziz
Councillor R Baldwin	Councillor G Barratt
Councillor P Burgon	Councillor L Butt
Councillor E Carpenter	Councillor J Channer
Councillor J Clee	Councillor H J Collins
Councillor J Davis	Councillor R Douglas
Councillor C Geddes	Councillor M Hussain
Councillor A S Jamu	Councillor I S Jamu
Councillor E Keller	Councillor G Letchford
Councillor J E McDermott	Councillor M McKenzie MBE
Councillor D S Miles	Councillor M Mullane
Councillor E O Obasohan	Councillor J Ogungbose
Councillor T Perry	Councillor H S Rai
Councillor A K Ramsay	Councillor L A Reason
Councillor C Rice	Councillor L Rice
Councillor D Rodwell	Councillor A Salam
Councillor S Tarry	Councillor D Twomey
Councillor G M Vincent	Councillor J Wade
Councillor P T Waker	Councillor J R White
Councillor M M Worby	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor L Couling	Councillor R Gill
Councillor D Hunt	Councillor M A McCarthy
Councillor B Poulton	Councillor T Saeed
Councillor L A Smith	Councillor L R Waker

51. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

52. Minutes (7 December 2011)

The minutes of the Assembly meeting held on 7 December 2011 were confirmed as correct, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Perry as being present at that meeting.

53. Appointments - Housing Forum Membership

Assembly received and noted a report presented by Councillor P Waker, the

Cabinet Member for Housing.

Assembly **agreed** to appoint all Councillors to their respective Forum and nominated those listed in the tables below as the Council's formal Board Members with voting rights:

Barking

Cllr Laila Butt	Abbey
Cllr Rob Douglas	Becontree
Cllr Jim McDermott	Eastbury
Cllr Chris Rice	Parsloes
Cllr Nirmal Gill	Longbridge
Cllr Dee Hunt	Mayesbrook
Cllr Barry Poulton	Thames
Cllr Emmanuel Obasohan	Valence
Cllr Dominic Twomey	Gascoigne

Dagenham

Cllr John Davis	Alibon
Cllr Jeff Wade	Chadwell Heath
Cllr Tony Ramsay	Eastbrook
Cllr Graham Letchford	Goresbrook
Cllr Dave Miles	Heath
Cllr Eileen Keller	River
Cllr Margaret Mullane	Village
Cllr Tony Perry	Whalebone

54. Councillor Louise Couling

The Chair informed Assembly that this item had been withdrawn as Councillor Couling had tendered her resignation as a councillor due to her continued ill-health. Assembly's best wishes for the future to Councillor Couling were duly noted.

55. Annual Report of the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum 2011/12

The Chair welcomed the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum Representatives – Jade Ramsey, Paul Cox, Adam Kaspar and Alexander Lau.

Assembly received and noted the annual report of the Barking & Dagenham Youth Forum (the Forum) introduced by Councillor Reason, Cabinet Member for Children and Adult Services, who summarised the excellent work that the Forum had undertaken in the past year.

On behalf of the Corporate Director of Children's Services, Erik Stein, Group Manager of Integrated Youth Service introduced the Forum representatives and thanked Assembly for having invited the Forum to give its presentation.

The Forum representatives each spoke in turn about the work of the Forum.

The Crime sub-group focused their campaign on bullying after a survey of their peers and school councils concluded that bullying was an issue for many young people.

The Crime sub group:

- applied for and received O₂ funding which they used to pay for training by Kidscape in how to deliver anti-bullying workshops to young people
- planned and developed an interactive anti-bullying workshop that they delivered to five secondary schools (Jo Richardson, Eastbury, Barking Abbey, Sydney Russell and All Saints) and Progress Project youth group (a forum for young people with disabilities)
- reviewed the anti-bullying policies for all secondary schools in the borough and wrote recommendations for each of them
- designed an anti-bullying questionnaire for pupils, the results of which would be sent to the schools together with the policy recommendations

The Education sub-group considered that there continued to be an issue around teenage pregnancy in the borough due to poor sexual health education in schools and focused their campaign on the delivery of a sexual health workshop:

- sub-group members took part in sexual health training from the Terrence Higgins Trust
- the workshop was planned to ensure its message would engage with young people
- the workshop was delivered to five youth groups in the borough
- feedback has shown that young people enjoyed that the workshop was delivered by other young people and that 80% of those attending learned something new

The Leisure sub-group's project focused on the need of young people to be able to easily access information on youth club provision in the borough:

- sub-group members researched on line what information was available
- visits to a range of facilities/clubs were arranged and criteria was written, based on what the sub-group members felt young people would want to know
- sub-group members practised interview techniques on each other
- youth clubs that were reviewed:
 - Volunteer Police Cadets
 - Youth League UK
 - Ab Phab Project
 - Young Carers Project
 - Kickz
 - The Hub
 - Alibon Youth Centre
 - Sydney Russell Streetbase Youth Club

as well as a generic session at the Vibe Youth Centre.

The Consultation Sub-Group participated in:

- Local children's workforce development consultation
- an Ofsted consultation on volunteering
- Tenant participation consultation
- LBBB Safeguarding Children Board website consultation – developing ideas and making suggestions about its appeal to young people
- B&D Skills centre consultation with Alan Lazell, Head of Skills & Learning

Two other Forum representatives, Azaan Akbar and Shekhar Seebaluck were elected in February 2011 to the UK Youth Parliament. They have attended regional meetings and Azaan attended an annual debate in the House of Commons in November 2011.

Other events that the Forum members had taken part in were:

- a visit to the BMX track in Dagenham
- Peer Outreach Event at City Hall
- discussions with police following the August 2011 disturbances
- a visit to the O₂ to take part in training to secure funds for the Crime sub-group
- Barking and Dagenham Partnership Conference
- Save the Children London Young Ambassador Summit
- National Takeover Day 2011
- The Forum Chair attended the Children's Services Select Committee meetings

Full Forum meetings had taken place in January 2011 when topics to focus on in 2011 were discussed; in April 2011 when a question time session was held; and in June 2011 when various presentations had been given.

Following questions from Members, who all congratulated the representatives on their excellent presentation, the Forum representatives advised that:

- they were honoured and inspired to have been invited to give their presentation in the Council Chamber;
- regarding the anti-bullying project
 - (a) though initially daunting, their confidence had grown with each presentation and some schools had invited them back to re-present;
 - (b) they felt that the schools in the borough had taken into account that bullying could happen through mobile phone and social media means;
 - (c) they felt that the Forum's recommendations would be listened to and would provide those recommendations to Members;
 - (d) because of the age range of the Forum (13-19) they had not taken the anti-bullying project to primary schools as they felt the Forum would be more in touch with secondary schools students and

opinions.

- two representatives of the Forum – Azaan Akbar and Shekhar Seebaluck - had been elected to the Youth Parliament as a Member and Deputy Member respectively.

The Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor McKenzie, stood to speak as a mark of respect for the young people of the borough. He referred to the work that he and former Councillor Thomas had done in establishing the Barking and Dagenham Youth Forum and thanked the Forum representatives for their delivery of an excellent presentation, stating that he considered our future was safe in their hands.

56. Response to Petition - Markyate Library

The Assembly received and noted the response to the petition introduced by Paul Hogan, Divisional Director, Culture and Sport. He advised that in reaching the decision, the following factors had been taken into account:

- the cost of the facility
- the footfall
- the number of borrowers
- the number of books loaned
- the number of libraries in the borough that are close together
- the overall number of libraries in the borough

He further advised that:

- the concerns of the Lead Petitioner had been considered;
- Councillor Collins, the Cabinet Member for Culture and Sport had attended consultation meetings with residents; and
- work was ongoing to ensure the continued use of the site by the Parent and Toddler Group.

The Cabinet Member confirmed his support for the Parent and Toddler Group's continued use of the site.

Assembly **agreed** for the reasons set out in the report that it was unable to support the petition.

57. Appointment of Monitoring Officer

Assembly received and noted this report introduced by the Chief Executive and **agreed** the appointment of Tasnim Shawkat as the Council's Monitoring Officer.

58. Statement of Priorities 2012/13

Assembly received and noted this report introduced by Councillor P Waker, Cabinet Member for Housing, on behalf of the Leader of the Council.

The Cabinet Member advised that the draft Statement of Priorities for 2012/13 summarised the main actions and activities to be taken by the Council during the

coming year, based on its Policy House and set in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

He outlined some of the key achievements to date in respect of the key priorities of 'Raising Household Incomes', 'Raising Standards in School and Post-16 Education' and 'Housing and Estate Renewal' and he referred to the plans set out within the draft Statement of Priorities document to further deliver on those aspects.

Members raised the following points on the draft Statement of Priorities:

- On the basis that 23% of our residents had no qualifications, could targets for improving the basic skills of adults at the Adult College and Further Education College be included?
- Could our twin town, Witten, be encouraged to share good practice?
- Could new ways be looked at for raising funds for education and encouraging people to spend locally, particularly during the Olympics period, by setting up a 'store club' type card on which rewards could be built?

The Cabinet Member concluded that Members' comments would be noted.

Assembly **agreed** to approve the draft Statement of Priorities 2012/13 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

59. Budget Framework 2012/13

Assembly received and noted the report of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Education, introduced by the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources on the proposed budget framework for 2012/13 which incorporated the following:

- The Medium Term Financial Strategy
- The level of savings already approved over the period 2012/13 - 2014/15
- The detailed annual revised estimates for 2011/12 and 2012/13
- The financial outlook for 2013/14 onwards
- The proposed level of Council Tax for 2012/13
- The Capital Programme
- The Prudential Indicators

The Corporate Director gave a short presentation. She advised that the General Fund revised net budget for 2011/12 was £183.381m and the proposed net budget for 2012/13 was £177.379m. The budget for 2012/13 incorporated a c£6m reduction in Central Government funding as well as other statutory, economic and demographic pressures but was mitigated by the budget savings agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 14 December 2011 and other financial adjustments.

The Corporate Director commented that difficult decisions had again had to be made by Members to ensure that the Council maintained a robust and balanced budget going forward which protected front line services as far as possible and provided value for money to residents. The approach taken had also meant that it was possible for the Council to keep its Council Tax at the same level for a fourth consecutive year while at the same time implementing initiatives such as the

London Living Wage which would benefit the Council's lowest paid workers.

The proposed Capital Programme for 2012/13 to 2015/16 was c£459 and reflected the Council's major programmes to expand school place provision and the regeneration of housing estates, which included the building of new Council homes.

In the absence of the Cabinet Member for Finance and Education, the Cabinet Member for Regeneration advised that whilst the Council had faced budget cuts of £20m, we were spending less on support services, especially IT and continued to work jointly with other local authorities to reduce cuts which would limit the impact on services for the public.

Referring to cuts in back office staff, the Cabinet Member placed on record his gratitude to the people who had lost their jobs despite the good work that they had put into this community.

He further thanked:

- the Trades Unions for the work that they had done for their members,
- the Councillors who had taken part in the consultation process; and
- the members of the public who had attended meetings held by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council.

Despite the severe cuts, the Cabinet Member said that the Council's key priorities were being maintained:

- a good education, as exemplified by improving attendance at schools and local examination results
- a good household income, as shown by the Council's continued commitment to the opening of the Technical Skills Academy later this year
- a good home, as shown by the continued regeneration in the borough

He noted that the priority for raising household incomes in this economic climate was difficult, but that to drop that priority would be to let down the aspirations of our residents.

This would be the fourth consecutive year that Council Tax had not been increased as the Council sought to help households across the borough who struggled to balance their budgets on a daily and weekly basis.

In finalising the report, the Cabinet Member thanked the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and her staff for their support during the budget preparation process, concluding that this budget would provide value for the future and that it gave hope to the residents of Barking and Dagenham.

The Chair invited Members to comment on the budget proposals.

Members noted their concerns that the budget savings had had a massive human cost, not only with regard to residents but also in staff job losses.

Councillor Inder Singh Jamu seconded the budget proposals, which were put to a

vote by a show of hands.

Assembly agreed:

- (i) A revised revenue budget for 2011/12 of £183.381m as detailed in Appendix B to the report;
- (ii) A base revenue budget for 2012/13 of £177.379m as detailed in Appendix C;
- (iii) That the current surplus arising from additional specific grant income be held in the Contingency budget, pending the announcement of the top-slice requirement and to mitigate future risks;
- (iv) The adjusted Medium Term Financial Strategy position for 2011/12 to 2014/15 allowing for other known pressures and risks at this time as detailed in Appendix E;
- (v) The Statutory Budget Determination for 2012/13 at Appendix D, which reflected a freeze, for the fourth consecutive year, on the amount of Council Tax levied by the Council, with a 1% reduction in the Greater London Authority precept approved by the London Assembly on 9 February 2012, as detailed in Appendix F;
- (vi) The Council's five-year Capital Programme as detailed in Appendix G.

60. Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2012/13

Assembly received a presentation from the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources on the Council's draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2012/13 which set out the proposed borrowing limit for the year and a range of other aspects aimed at ensuring that the Council had prudent and robust arrangements in place to meet all of its financial commitments and responsibilities, in line with the requirements of Section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The Corporate Director commented on the Investment Strategy and Borrowing Strategy which were the key elements of the overall Strategy and advised that the particular changes proposed in these respects would be kept under constant review in the light of the considerable uncertainty at the present time in the global economy.

In response to Members' questions, the Corporate Director advised that consideration was given to investing ethically and that maximising investments securely was the priority.

Assembly **approved** the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2012/13 at Appendix 1 to the report and, in doing so **agreed**:

- (i) The current treasury position for 2011/12 and prospects for interest rates;
- (ii) The revised Authorised Borrowing Limit (General Fund and HRA) of £465m for 2011/12, which included £265m for the HRA self-financing debt settlement and £55m estimated borrowing to finance the 2011/12 Capital Programme;
- (iii) The Borrowing Strategy, Debt Rescheduling Strategy and Policy on Borrowing in Advance of Need for 2012/13, including the Housing Reform

and effects on treasury management of Housing Revenue Account reform;

- (iv) The Minimum Revenue Policy Statement for 2012/13 setting out the Council's policy on repayment of debt;
- (v) The Authorised Borrowing Limit (General Fund and HRA) of £528m for 2012/13 as the statutory limit determined by the Council pursuant to section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003;
- (vi) The Treasury Management Indicators and Prudential Indicators for 2012/13; and
- (vii) The Annual Investment Strategy and creditworthiness policy for 2012/13, which outlined the investments that the Council may use for the prudent management of its investment balances.

61. Adoption of Joint Waste Plan and Local Development Framework Proposals Map

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration presented a report to the Assembly on a Joint Waste Plan Development Plan Document (DPD) that had been produced by the Council and the neighbouring Councils of Havering, Newham and Redbridge, who made up the four boroughs within the auspices of the East London Waste Authority (ELWA).

Assembly noted that the main purpose of the Joint Waste Plan DPD was to establish a 10-year planning strategy for sustainable waste management which enabled the adequate provision of waste management facilities in appropriate locations across the ELWA area. The sites within the Joint Waste Plan DPD were included in the Proposals Map for the overall Local Development Framework, which was available at the meeting.

Assembly **agreed** to adopt the Joint Waste Plan Development Plan Document and revised Proposals Map, as part of the Barking and Dagenham Local Development Framework.

62. Barking Station Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document

Assembly received and noted a report introduced by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration on the finalisation of the Barking Station Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document following an eight week public consultation on the draft Masterplan.

Assembly **agreed** to adopt the Barking Station Masterplan Supplementary Planning Document.

63. Adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents - Biodiversity, Trees and Development and Residential Extensions and Alterations

Assembly received and noted a report introduced by the Cabinet Member for Regeneration on the finalised Biodiversity Trees and Development and Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) following

public consultation on the draft SPDs.

Following questions from Members:

- the Cabinet Member would ascertain when the black poplar tree from Her Majesty the Queen would be presented to the borough.
- the Divisional Director, Regeneration and Economic Development advised Assembly that the Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document had strengthened the Council's policy on protecting existing trees and ensuring the quality of new trees in relation to new developments.

Assembly **agreed** to adopt the Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document, the Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document and the Residential Extensions and Alterations Supplementary Planning Document.

64. Confirmation of Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation

Assembly received and noted the Cabinet Member for Regeneration's report on the proposal for the Council to formally implement a direction under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 withdrawing permitted development rights for change of use of dwelling houses (Class C3) to houses in multiple occupation (Class C4).

The Cabinet Member referred to the particular circumstances within the Borough which led to a policy being adopted in 1995, as part of the Council's Unitary Development Plan, to control the number of family homes that were converted to houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and the Cabinet Member for Housing commented on the on-going concerns in that respect.

Assembly **confirmed** an Article 4 Direction, covering the whole borough, withdrawing permitted development rights for changes of use from use class C3 (dwelling house) to use class C4 (house in multiple occupation), to be effective from 14 May 2012.

65. Motions

Motion 1 – Raising Household Incomes and Helping to Combat Child Poverty

Moved by Councillor Carpenter and seconded by Councillor Twomey:

"Raising household incomes is one of our top priorities in Barking and Dagenham. We know that the poorest in our community will pay the most as a result of the tax and benefit reforms designed by the Coalition Government. We also know that the poorest will suffer the most as a result of the cuts in services forced on us by the Coalition Government. Nevertheless, this Council will do all in its power to raise household incomes in our Borough during these harsh times, and help combat child poverty."

In moving the motion, Councillor Carpenter reminded the Assembly of borough statistics:

- the second lowest average household income in London at about £24,000 pa (£23,954 in 2009) and almost a quarter of households had an annual income of less than £15,000.
- 36% of the children in the borough were in workless households in 2010.
- the borough's high unemployment rates were 20.5% in August 2011 and would have increased since then.
- the percentage of the borough's residents with no qualifications (23.2%) was almost twice the national rate.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Twomey confirmed his support of Councillor Carpenter in drawing attention to the actions of the coalition government.

A number of Members welcomed the motion as it focused on one of the Council's key aims of raising household incomes. They commented that the coalition government's policy was inflationary, that the economy could not grow as people did not have money to spend but that this Council had done many things to help its residents such as:

- implementing the London Living Wage
- the joint partnership with Agilisys that had created 40 jobs
- the apprenticeship scheme
- the Skills Centre

Councillors Baldwin and Barrett challenged the motion on the basis that it was not worded strongly enough.

In conclusion, Councillor Carpenter stated that we could be proud of our ambition and achievements to try to raise household incomes and that this gave our residents hope. She said that there were many examples of how we were doing this – through:

- increasing jobs locally and through our Job Shops encouraging residents to apply for Olympic jobs
- encouraging residents to spend their money locally by using local shops and businesses
- having an ambitious capital programme and requiring firms to employ local people as far as possible
- smartening up our shopping parades so that existing and new businesses thrive and residents want to shop there
- making sure that our residents get the benefits they are eligible for and do not fall foul of new technological hurdles
- last but not least, encouraging our residents to improve their basic skills and qualifications to help get them into the jobs that exist locally and in the London job market.

She said it should not be forgotten that women were bearing the brunt of Britain's remorseless rise in unemployment and that many women in Barking and

Dagenham were the main or sole wage-earner. There were many single parent families in the Borough, which was why women needed the safe secure place for learning provided by the Adult College to gain basic skills, to improve their vocational qualifications and to help lift their families out of poverty.

She thanked Labour councillors for their debate on the motion and asked Assembly for their support.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a show of hands and **carried**.

66. Leader's Question Time

In the Leader's absence, no questions were presented.

67. General Question Time

General Question 1 from Councillor Alasia:

"The Metropolitan Police, though slow in their initial response, are to be congratulated on their hard work in achieving two convictions in the Stephen Lawrence case. The Council recognises the dignity and courage of Doreen and Neville Lawrence in their relentless fight for justice for their son, Stephen, and would urge the police to continue the good work so that the rest of his murderers are caught.

What is the incidence of hate crime in Barking and Dagenham currently, and how successful are our Barking and Dagenham Police in getting convictions?

What are the recent trends?"

Response from Councillor Alexander, Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities:

"I share the sentiment of Councillor Alasia and very much welcome the convictions of Gary Dobson and Davis Norris for the racially aggravated murder of Stephen Lawrence.

I am pleased to report that the partnership is working very hard in Barking and Dagenham to respond to the many different types of hate crime that people experience, whether they are racially motivated crimes like that against Stephen, or incidents of disability, harassment, homophobia or gender based crimes.

While the police sanctioned detection rate continues to increase in Barking and Dagenham, we are not complacent as we believe, as is the case across the country, that there is likely to be a high level of under-reporting. Therefore, we have taken a two pronged approach to increasing reporting levels: firstly by working to raise awareness of the different ways in which people can report these incidents and secondly by becoming more effective in our response by joining up with key stakeholders through a Hate Incident Panel. This Panel meets monthly to discuss cases and to ensure that our responses are well co-ordinated and, perhaps most importantly, they work. This ensures that each case receives the appropriate level of input from a specialist group of partner agencies."

General Question 2 from Councillor Butt:

"What powers has the Council to force landlords to dispose of household goods when a tenant has left the property? We have plenty of complaints from residents who take a pride in their neighbourhood, objecting to those landlords who leave beds, mattresses and other rubbish in their front gardens for weeks on end making the area look run down and filthy. Do you agree that the landlord should take the responsibility for making sure that front gardens are checked upon and kept clean, and how can we enforce this? Landlords take maximum advantage of the Council to get a free removal of their rubbish. This costs the Council thousands of pounds. The free removal of bulky household goods is for residents and not for the benefit of rogue landlords who mainly take advantage of this free service. What can we do to recover the costs from landlords of removing their rubbish?"

Response from Councillor Alexander, Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities, on behalf of Councillor McCarthy, Cabinet Member for Environment:

"The number of private landlords in the borough is increasing. In general most of these landlords behave very well. In fact, Councillor Phil Waker, the Cabinet Member for Housing, tells me that we have 220 landlords registered in the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme, which is the quality mark for good landlords, and many more have joined our landlords' forum.

But as we all know, we do have some landlords who don't seem to care.

The Council has a whole range of powers to take enforcement action against landlords who do not behave and, as Councillor Butt describes, clear out their properties and dump the waste in the garden.

If the waste is a public health threat such as rotting food or something like a mattress that could provide a home for rats and mice, then it can be shifted very quickly. If it is rubble or builders' mess, we can still move it but it takes a little longer.

In all cases, the Council does not pay for the removal. The Council's enforcement officers use legal notices and then send the landlord the bill and if they don't pay it, we then take them to court.

Councillor P Waker also tells me that following work done by Councillor Channer and the Living and Working Select Committee, we will be introducing compulsory licensing for private landlords. This will really help us to manage landlords better and because the licence will include things such as proper commercial waste facilities, I am confident this will put a stop to these profit making landlords taking advantage of our free service which is meant to be helping our more vulnerable residents."

The meeting closed at 8.45 pm.