

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 24 July 2019
(7:00 - 8:54 pm)

PRESENT

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

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Abdul Aziz	Cllr Simon Bremner	Cllr Princess Bright
Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Evelyn Carpenter	Cllr Peter Chand
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 Adegboyega Oluwole	Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Moin Quadri
Cllr Foyzur Rahman	Cllr Tony Ramsay	Cllr Chris Rice
Cllr Lynda Rice	Cllr Ingrid Robinson	Cllr Paul Robinson
Cllr Darren Rodwell	Cllr Muhammad Saleem	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat
Cllr Dominic Twomey	Cllr Phil Waker	Cllr Maureen Worby

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Sanchia Alasia	Cllr Toni Bankole	Cllr Laila M. Butt
Cllr Josie Channer	Cllr Dave Miles	Cllr Margaret Mullane
Cllr Glenda Paddle	Cllr Emily Rodwell	Cllr Bill Turner
Cllr Lee Waker		

12. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

13. Minutes of meeting of Assembly held on 15 May 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2019 were confirmed as correct.

14. Minutes of Sub-Committees - To note the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel held on 18 June 2019

The Assembly received and noted the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel held on 18 June 2019.

15. Leader's Statement

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

- Samuel Garside fire – The fire on Barking Riverside on 9 June had dominated the Council’s attention. The Leader paid tribute to the community, the Emergency Services and Council officers for their actions in response in the hours and days that followed the fire and the continuing actions to support affected residents.
- Stephen Port – Independent Office for Police Conduct. The decision of the IOPC not to pursue disciplinary action against police officers involved in the murder enquiry was very disappointing, given that the IOPC had identified “systemic failings” within the Metropolitan Police and does little to re-establish trust in the Police within the LGBT+ community.
- Pride London – The Council celebrated the Pride Event in London by being one of only three London Boroughs with a float. This followed the raising of the flag for International Day against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia on 17 May and the Borough’s first ever pre-Pride party on 2 July in the Broadway Theatre.
- Windrush- The Council commemorated the anniversary of the history and legacy of the Windrush generation by raising a flag on 22 June.
- Domestic Abuse Charter and Construction Charter – Barking & Dagenham Council was the first in London to sign up to both charters promoted by the GMB and Unite Unions respectively.
- Reside -The appointment of a new Board aimed to take the Council’s Housing Company to the next level which would see the delivery of a further 3,000 affordable homes over the next five years with priority given to local people in work.
- Landlord Licensing Scheme – Since its launch five years ago this scheme has now been approved by the government, the first in the country. Since the scheme has been operating the Council had secured 70 prosecutions and served 570 enforcement notices.
- Street Crime – Earlier in July a new Council funded Crime & Enforcement Taskforce policing team was unveiled made up of nine police officers and a police sergeant. They would be responsible for patrolling housing estates to tackle drug dealing, anti-social behaviour, as well as violence and criminal damage.
- Wall of Shame – Since the launch of this initiative in 2018 a total of 22 fines had been issued to people caught on camera littering or fly-tipping, including £700 of fixed penalty notices from the last episode alone.
- Good Neighbour Guide- This had been issued to all borough households, and
- Summer of Festivals – Updated the Assembly on the success of the One Borough and Roundhouse music festivals held in Parsloes Park over the weekend and noted the annual Youth Parade taking place on Sunday 22 September in Barking.

16. Appointments

There were none to report.

17. Treasury Management Annual Report 2018/19 and Strategy 2019/20

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2018/19 setting out the key areas of performance during the year as well as presenting the Strategy for 2019/20.

He explained the context for presenting the report to the Assembly for approval, this being the third of three treasury management reports presented over the course of the year. This document detailed the progress made and outcomes achieved against the Strategy proposed at the beginning of the financial year. The report represented the check and balances to ensure the Council worked within the defined parameters set by Government and the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA).

The Cabinet Member was pleased to report that investment income for the year was £8.9m compared to the budget of £4.3m, while the Council's average interest return of 1.50% was 0.57% higher than the average London Peer Group return and 0.58% higher than the Local Authority average return. The Council had borrowed an additional £140m of long-term funding via the General Fund during 2018/19, bringing the total long-term General Fund borrowing to £475.7m. He confirmed that borrowing would continue to rise in the years ahead as the Council progressed its Investment and Acquisition Strategy, with returns being used to support the provision of improved services to the local community.

In respect to the report and presentation members raised a number of questions and received responses from the Cabinet Member in relation to the split of interest payable between the General Fund and the HRA, as well as the total interest payable as of 29 March 2019, details of the investment strategy underpinning the additional £140m of borrowing including explanations about a number of short term loans, as well as future borrowing plans.

It was noted that the report was presented to the Cabinet on 18 June 2019 who supported the recommendations contained therein. Consequently,

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2018/19;
- (ii) Note that the Council complied with all 2018/19 treasury management indicators;
- (iii) Approve the actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2018/19; and
- (iv) Note that the Council borrowed £140m from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) in 2018/19.

18. Adoption of Gambling Licensing Policy 2019 - 2022

The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing presented a report on the Adoption of the Gambling Policy 2019- 2022. The Council, as the local licensing authority for gaming and betting, was required to have in place a statement of the principles (a 'policy') which must be reviewed in accordance with a statutory three-year cycle. The Council first published a gambling licensing policy in 2007 and a further review was now due in order to keep the Council's policy in line with the statutory review cycle. Given that the Council's Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy was the subject of a full detailed mid-term review in 2017, only minimal changes were proposed in the report, which were considered necessary in order to reflect the latest developments in gambling licensing law and guidance.

The proposed changes to the Policy included the maximum stake permissible in category B2 machines being reduced from £100 to £2 and the number of these machines being restricted to a maximum of four per shop, both of which came into effect from April 2019. Other changes were being proposed to reflect best practice, as recommended by the Gambling Commission, related to the level of detail in plans submitted with new applications, and the need for premises to include their staff when completing risk assessments that accompanied applications.

Responding to the report members spoke about the harmful and damaging impact that gambling had particularly on young people, recognising the need for policies to protect them, seeking to strike a balance between allowing legitimate gambling and protecting the most vulnerable in society, although online gambling remained a problem and was less regulated.

The Leader referred to the Council's role in supporting Newham Council in lobbying the government to introduce the maximum £2 stake in category B2 machines. Whilst the change was welcomed questions were raised as to the impact of "clustering" of bookmakers to negate the effect of the change in the maximum stake. It was acknowledged by the Cabinet Member that at this early stage it was difficult to assess the longer-term impact. It was suggested therefore that the Policy and Strategy may need tweaking in future in the light of the changes.

The Cabinet considered this report at their meeting on 16 July and consequently,

The Assembly **resolved** to adopt the revised Statement of Gambling Licensing Policy 2019-2022, as set out in Appendix A of the report.

19. Annual Scrutiny Report 2018/19

The Assembly received and noted a report and accompanying presentation from the Chairs of Overview & Scrutiny and Health Scrutiny Committees outlining the work programmes of both Committees in the past year and how both have sought to achieve the four principles of good public scrutiny as described by the Centre for Public Scrutiny, namely:

1. Providing a "critical friend" challenge;
2. Reflecting the voice and concerns of the public;
3. Taking the lead and owning the scrutiny process; and
4. Making an impact on the delivery of public services.

In response to the Health Scrutiny report it was noted that whilst the Barking, Havering and Redbridge (BHR) NHS Trust had been the only one in London to achieve the 62-day target for cancer care, it was regarded as a meaningless target and an indictment of this government's inept approach to the NHS and lack of funding provision.

The Leader congratulated both Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees together with their respective deputies on the work they have achieved in the past year since the Council revised the Overview and Scrutiny structure. These comments were endorsed by other Members.

20. Motions

Motion – Single Use Plastics

Moved by Councillor Achilleos and seconded by Councillor Worby

“This local authority believes that single use plastics (referred to as SUP's from here onwards) are one of the biggest threats to environmental sustainability globally. This includes their widespread availability and their improper disposal which is leading to an increase in landfill and waste incineration, the two most environmentally damaging forms of waste disposal.

It is difficult to quantify the damaging impact SUP's have on our local area, but we need look no further than the litter on our streets and in our green spaces which poses a threat to wildlife and biodiversity. Our waterways and ponds are frequent victims of SUPs, and our air quality is inadvertently affected by the mass disposal of such plastics.

This is a global issue, but it is one that requires action. This Council recognises it's responsibility to address this problem and aims to lead by example, seeking to phase out the use of SUP's across all services provided by the local authority where practical and economically viable. In some areas this may not be possible due to the financial constraints placed on us by central government, but we believe it is our duty to explore all options.

This Council aims to begin the process in-house by limiting the availability of SUP's in all our buildings and by staff leading to reducing the use of SUP's to zero as soon as practicable. Specifically, this Council recognises SUP's as plastic bags, disposable utensils, beverage containers, plastic drinks bottles, food wrappers, straws, stirrers and plastic lids. We aim to investigate launching a public 'Plastic Free LBBDD' campaign in order to extend the reduction of use from staff and commissioned services, contractors, suppliers and local authority schools where feasible.

This may affect the products we buy and use such as bottles, cutlery, food packaging, stationary and the use of straws. As the second biggest employer locally, it is our belief that by raising awareness in this way will help inform our residents on the matter, collectively reducing SUP's across the borough and bringing us one step closer to becoming the Green Capital of London.

We aim to work alongside the Chamber of Commerce, schools, voluntary organisations, businesses, and our community to help make ensure that the eradication of SUP's is high on the agenda. We believe that the local authority has an obligation to protect the environment for future generations. It is because of this obligation that we show leadership in this issue today”.

Councillor Achilleos urged the Assembly to support the motion which, if agreed, would help create a more environmentally responsible ethos across sectors and throughout the borough. He stated that as Labour politicians a lot is spoke about the need to build more social housing, protecting the NHS, eradicating poverty and creating a more fair and equal society. These are noble causes but ultimately will count for nothing if the environment that sustains us is destroyed.

Barking and Dagenham has a proud history of leading the way for other councils across the country on a range of issues. By taking the lead on environmental responsibility, the Council can pave the way for others to do the same. Supporting this motion would make Barking and Dagenham one of the first boroughs in London to outline such a commitment.

The impact of SUP's can be seen all around, not least in the litter found across the country parks, open spaces, streets, front gardens, and waterways, and plastics will take over 400 years to biodegrade. They were quite literally poisoning the environment and contributing to a decline in biodiversity. Phasing out SUP's and replacing products with more responsible alternatives where feasible would be groundbreaking.

Councillor Achilleos concluded that by leading on this today, he was confident that the Council could deliver a greener tomorrow for Barking and Dagenham for future generations.

Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion proposing that representations need to be made to the new Environment Secretary.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

Motion – Public Health Funding

Moved by Councillor P. Robinson and seconded by Councillor Keller

“The public health grant funds vital services and functions that prevent ill health and contribute to the future sustainability of the NHS. Local authorities are responsible for delivering most of these services, but their ability to do so is compromised by public health grant reductions and the broader funding climate.

In 2018/19 and 2019/20 every local authority will have less to spend on public health than the year before. Taking funds away from prevention is a false economy. Without proper investment in public health people suffer, demand on local health services increases and the economy suffers. Poor public health costs local businesses heavily through sick days and lost productivity. Unless we restore public health funding, our health and care system will remain locked in a 'treatment' approach, which is neither economically viable nor protects the health of residents.

The Government is looking to phase out the Public Health Grant by 2020/21. Thereafter, they plan to fund public health via 75% business rates retention. Whatever the model, it is vital that local authorities have enough funding to deliver the functions and services they need to provide. Deprived areas often suffer the worst health outcomes, so it is also vital that areas with the greatest need receive sufficient funding to meet their local challenges. This Council notes that around four in ten cancers are preventable, largely through avoidable risk factors, such as stopping smoking, keeping a healthy weight and cutting back on alcohol. In addition, in Barking and Dagenham we have the highest rate of death from cancer considered preventable in London. Smoking accounts for 80,000 early deaths every year and remains the largest preventable cause of cancer in the world. Smoking-related ill health costs local authorities £760 million every year in social care costs. Additionally, obesity and alcohol account for 30,000 and 7,000 early deaths each year respectively. All three increase the risk of: cancer, diabetes, lung and heart conditions, poor mental health and create a subsequent burden on health and social care.

This Council believes that the impact of cuts to public health on our communities is becoming difficult to ignore. This case becomes more pressing given the Government's consideration of a 10-year plan for the NHS. For this reason, we support Cancer Research UK's call for increased and sustainable public health funding.

This Council calls on the Government to deliver increased investment in public health and to support a sustainable health and social care system by taking a 'prevention first' approach. In turn, Barking & Dagenham Council will continue to support and fund public health initiatives to the best of our abilities - to prevent ill-health, reduce inequalities and support a health and social care system that is fit for the future."

Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

21. Questions With Notice

Question 1

From Councillor Freeborn

Following the introduction of the first government approved Boroughwide Landlord Licensing Scheme, what is being done to protect residents living in private rented accommodation within our Borough?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing

First of all, can I congratulate Councillor Mullane as the responsible Cabinet Member and all those officers involved in helping us secure the very first borough-wide landlord licensing scheme which we will continue to develop and strengthen.

Under the scheme, all privately rented properties are audited for compliance through visits and regular checks. Through the scheme the Council audit occupancy numbers and ensure that private landlord properties are regulated and through the threat of enforcement that they are taking their responsibilities seriously and are carrying out works to meet required standards.

Home Fire Safety checks are carried out by the enforcement officers to ensure tenants are given fire safety advice. Although as we know from the recent fire in Barking Riverside, we would want more powers to go even further. The enforcement service is also working collaboratively with others and any number of issues can be addressed by our officers, such as fly tipped waste, over producing waste from private lets, parking etc.

We also have a dedicated tenancy sustainment officer who specifically supports tenants. They also investigate complaints of illegal evictions and harassment. Part of the role supports vulnerable tenants.

Question 2

From Councillor Quadri

Can the Leader of the Council update the Assembly on the outcomes of the first phase of the CPZ programme?

Response from the Leader of the Council

I pay tribute to the work of Councillor Mullane and officers. It has not been an easy journey and at times matters have become personal in public meetings and on social media.

The first four Controlled Parking Zones were fully implemented on 1st July 2019 and the uptake of permits in the zones has been very encouraging. Understandably there has been a mixed reaction to the introduction although antidotally the evidence is that many residents have welcomed the introduction of CPZ's with one resident saying at a recent ward meeting with their MP that they welcomed that fact that there was now places to park during the day. Other residents were also very positive once a few issues regarding visitors' permits had been addressed.

During the first three weeks of operation the enforcement team has taken a light approach, visiting the areas to show a presence and issuing warning notices where appropriate. However as of this week PCN's will be issued if necessary. It is important to remember that one of the principle reasons for introducing the CPZ's was to improve traffic safety for children and future generations.

Question 3

From Councillor Miah

As part of our ambition to be London's Green Capital, what action is being taken to protect the local environment in new developments?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Social Housing

The Council's adopted Local Plan, in combination with the National Planning Policy Framework (or NPPF) and the adopted London Plan, currently require developers to comply with protection and enhancement of the environment. This includes preventing air and water pollution, preventing noise nuisance, and protecting open spaces and nature.

The new Local Plan for 2019 to 2034 will update these policies and ensure the Council is in line with the latest version of the NPPF and the new London Plan. The new Local Plan will include a Strategic Policy setting out the ambition for Barking and Dagenham to become London's Green Capital, supplemented by development management policies on energy, air and noise pollution, decontamination of land, managing flood risk and managing and reducing waste.

The Council and Be First have commissioned a number of studies that are informing the development of the new Local Plan. These studies include the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, which identifies areas at greatest risk of flooding and measures needed to reduce and mitigate flood risk; a biodiversity survey of the borough which assessed existing Sites of Nature Conservation and makes recommendations for new ones; a Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity Strategy that will encourage active travel, mitigate for climate change and increase access to open spaces and nature; a Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

The latest Local Implementation Plan – LIP 3 – sets out the transport strategy for the borough and identifies projects that will reduce air pollution, create healthy streets and encourage walking and cycling.

Question 4

From Councillor Chand

As London City Airport launches public consultation into its expansion, what is the Council doing to engage residents in the process?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement

We are encouraging residents to get involved in the public consultation, by promoting it on the Council's social media channels. Posts are scheduled on both Twitter and Facebook from next week, continuing until the closing date of 20 September.

The consultation will also be promoted in the next fortnightly e-newsletter 'One Borough', which will go to over 14,000 residents on 2 August and then again on 13 September. A hard copy of the consultation plans, for anyone without internet access, are also available to view in Barking Town Hall reception area. The consultation will also be put on our new resident engagement platform 'Engagement HQ' early August.

While there appear to be no public consultations events taking place in our borough, we are encouraging residents to attend the following events taking place in neighbouring boroughs:

- **Wednesday 11 September**, from 12 noon - 7pm, The City Centre, 80 Basinghall St, London EC2V 5AR
- **Thursday 12 September**, from 3.30pm - 7.30pm, Southern Grove Community Centre, Southern Grove, Mile End, London, E3 4FX
- **Saturday 14 September**, from 10am - 4pm, Royal Docks Learning and Activity Centre, Albert Rd, Royal Docks, London E16 2JB.

In reply Councillor Chand stated that if the planned expansion proceeded it would have major environmental implications for this Borough and his concern was that it appeared that unlike the three adjoining Boroughs this Borough has not been directly consulted.

The Cabinet Member assured Members that the Council is taking all necessary steps to ensure our residents have their say.