

# MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 29 September 2021  
(7:00 - 8:50 pm)

## PRESENT

Cllr Toni Bankole (Chair)  
Cllr Faruk Choudhury (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Saima Ashraf	Cllr Abdul Aziz	Cllr Princess Bright
Cllr Laila M. Butt	Cllr Evelyn Carpenter	Cllr Josie Channer
Cllr John Dulwich	Cllr Syed Ghani	Cllr Rocky Gill
Cllr Amardeep Singh Jamu	Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe
Cllr Mohammed Khan	Cllr Olawale Martins	Cllr Dave Miles
Cllr Margaret Mullane	Cllr Fatuma Nalule	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole
Cllr Glenda Paddle	Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Foyzur Rahman
Cllr Tony Ramsay	Cllr Paul Robinson	Cllr Darren Rodwell
Cllr Emily Rodwell	Cllr Muhammad Saleem	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat
Cllr Dominic Twomey	Cllr Maureen Worby	

### 23. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were recorded for Councillors Achilleos, Akwaboah, Alasia, Bremner, S Bright, Chand, Fergus, Freeborn, Geddes, Haroon, Keller, Lumsden, McCarthy, Miah, Quadri, C Rice, L Rice, I Robinson, L Waker and P Waker, who were unable to attend the meeting due to the social distancing arrangements within the Council Chamber.

### 24. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

### 25. Minutes (21 July 2021)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2021 were confirmed as correct.

### 26. Death of Former Councillor Inder Singh Jamu, Freeman and Alderman of the Borough

The Assembly noted with deep regret that former Councillor, Freeman and Alderman of the Borough, Inder Singh Jamu, passed away on Sunday 29 August at the age of 83.

Tributes were led by Inder Singh's son, Councillor Amardeep Jamu. A number of Councillors also spoke in tribute to Inder Singh, recalling his passion, humour and desire for equality and fairness for all.

The Assembly held a minute's applause as a mark of respect.

## 27. **Death of Neal Crowley, Freeman of the Borough**

The Assembly noted with deep regret that Freeman of the Borough, Neal Crowley, passed away on Sunday 5 September at the age of 38.

Neal was awarded the Freedom of the Borough in May 2019, becoming the youngest ever recipient of the Borough's highest award, in recognition of his tireless work on behalf of the local community and for disabled people in general.

Members paid tribute to Neal, who would be sorely missed by all those who knew him.

The Assembly held a minute's applause as a mark of respect.

## 28. **Minutes of Sub-Committees**

The Assembly received and noted the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel meeting held on 2 August 2021.

## 29. **Senior Leadership Appointment - Strategic Director, Inclusive Growth**

The Strategic Director, Law and Governance introduced a report on the recommendation of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel which, on 9 September 2021, had interviewed candidates for the post of Director, Inclusive Growth.

The Assembly **resolved** to approve that Abi Onaboye be appointed as the Director, Inclusive Growth, subject to suitable references, employment checks and usual terms and conditions.

## 30. **Leader's Statement**

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

**A13 Tunnel:** The Leader would be attending the Conservative Party Conference for one day to lobby government ministers for a tunnel over the A13.

**Thames Freeport:** The Thames Freeport had been launched and would create an economic zone connecting Ford Dagenham to the global ports at London Gateway and Tilbury. The Freeport had the potential to transform the borough's economy and create new jobs for local people.

**Thames Clipper:** The Thames Clipper service had been secured from Barking Riverside, offering a new way of getting to Canary Wharf in just 35 minutes. It would also link Barking Riverside to Greenwich in 20 minutes and Woolwich in six minutes. The pier was planned to open in Spring 2022.

**New Wellbeing Hub:** A new Wellbeing Hub was the latest addition to the multi-million pound development of the Barking Riverside area. It would boast a gym and fitness studios as well as an indoor waterpark, an events venue, and a community garden. It would also provide a range of services for the community

including a GP practice, social workers, advisors from the council's Home and Money Hub, and community activities.

**Becontree 100 weekend:** The Becontree 100 weekend event took place in August marking the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the estate. Over 20,000 enjoyed the events put on by the Council.

**Youth Parade:** The 7<sup>h</sup> Annual Youth Parade took place on 19 September 2021 and was well received by residents.

**Black History Month:** Black History Month would be taking place in October and there was a jam-packed schedule of events to celebrate the history, achievements and culture of Black African and Caribbean people. There would be a number of fantastic events including poetry, workshops, performances and talks which would take place throughout the month.

**Councillor Peter Chand:** The Leader congratulated Councillor Peter Chand who, during his tenure as Mayor, raised £35,000 which was split between two charities, the Independent Living Agency and Dagenham United Charity.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration then gave an update on the current COVID-19 situation.

The Cabinet Member advised that there were 50 new cases a day in the borough. As well as COVID-19, there was also the forthcoming flu season, which would hit the community hard and in this respect the Cabinet Member encouraged all vulnerable residents to get their flu jabs as soon as possible. The Cabinet Member also encouraged families to allow 12-15 year olds to take up the offer of a COVID-19 vaccination, as the take up in the borough was very low.

### **31. Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Health Scrutiny Committee Annual Reports 2020/21**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) presented an Annual Report highlighting the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2020/21.

The Chair of OSC advised that the year had again begun by meeting with Cabinet Members, directors and officers to find out more about their thoughts around key issues, which also helped to guide the Committee in developing a meaningful work programme. The Chair of OSC took the opportunity to personally thank Cabinet Members for allowing OSC to work so closely with them.

OSC covered a wide range of items during 2020/21, ranging from various reports on the impact of COVID-19 across the Council's services, progress on previous scrutiny review recommendations such as the scrutiny review on Ambition 2020 and its early impact and the scrutiny review on Household Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing, corporate parenting, working with residents affected by capital works and budget change proposals.

For the forthcoming municipal year, OSC had another wide-ranging programme and would be looking at how the Council was incorporating the 'Black Lives Matter'

movement into our schools' education programmes.

The Chair of OSC thanked Masuma Ahmed, Claudia Wakefield, Mark Tyson and Fiona Taylor for their ongoing support.

The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC) then presented an annual report highlighting the work of the Committee in 2020/21.

Over the last year the work of the Committee had been predominately focused on the COVID-19 pandemic, with the support of the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration. However, the Committee did fit into its busy work programme other areas of key importance such as NELFT's Care Quality Commission Inspection.

Moving forward, the Health Scrutiny Committee would continue to oversee the Council's and health partners' response to Covid-19. There was a full and broad work programme for 2021/22, that among other items, would enable HSC to explore key topics such as how to manage the waiting lists for urgent and non-urgent health conditions, and priorities for the new Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

The Chair of HSC thanked Masuma Ahmed, Yusuf Olow, Claudia Wakefield, Matthew Cole and the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration for their support.

### **32. Appointments**

There were no appointments.

### **33. Motions**

There were no Motions.

### **34. Questions With Notice**

There were no questions with notice.

### **35. Resolution to Extend Six-Month Attendance Rule - Section 85 of Local Government Act 1972**

(The Chair agreed that the following item could be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency under the provisions of Section 100B(4)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.)

The Assembly received a report from the Chief Executive regarding the consideration of dispensation under the provisions of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of Councillor Lee Waker's non-attendance at qualifying Council meetings since 27 April 2021 due to COVID-19 health concerns.

The Assembly **resolved**:

- (i) To approve Councillor Lee Waker's absence from meetings due to COVID-19 health concerns, in accordance with the provisions of Section 85(1) of

the Local Government Act 1972; and

- (ii) That Councillor Lee Waker shall continue to be a Member of the Council.