

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 28 September 2022
(7:00 - 8:02 pm)

PRESENT

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

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Princess Bright	Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Josie Channer
Cllr Nashitha Choudhury	Cllr Muhib Chowdhury	Cllr John Dulwich
Cllr Edna Fergus	Cllr Cameron Geddes	Cllr Syed Ghani
Cllr Rocky Gill	Cllr Kashif Haroon	Cllr Manzoor Hussain
Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe	Cllr Mohammed Khan
Cllr Donna Lumsden	Cllr Olawale Martins	Cllr Giasuddin Miah
Cllr Fatuma Nalule	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole	Cllr Glenda Paddle
Cllr Michel Pongo	Cllr Moin Quadri	Cllr Regina Rahman
Cllr Hardial Singh Rai	Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Lynda Rice
Cllr Ingrid Robinson	Cllr Paul Robinson	Cllr Darren Rodwell
Cllr Muhammad Saleem	Cllr Muazzam Sandhu	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat
Cllr Jack Shaw	Cllr Dominic Twomey	Cllr Maureen Worby
Cllr Mukhtar Yusuf	Cllr Sabbir Zamee	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Faruk Choudhury	Cllr Alison Cormack	Cllr Victoria Hornby
Cllr Margaret Mullane	Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Emily Rodwell
Cllr Lee Waker	Cllr Phil Waker	

23. Tribute to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

Following the recent death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, who sadly passed away on 8 September 2022 at the age of 96, the Leader of the Council paid tribute to Her Majesty recalling fond memories of her visit to the Borough in 2015 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the creation of the London boroughs.

The Assembly were then invited to share their personal memories and many recalled their encounters with Her Majesty over the years, including her impact across the world.

The Assembly and officers then stood to hold a minute's silence in recognition of the service Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II gave to the Commonwealth.

24. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Minutes (27 July 2022)

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2022 were confirmed as correct.

26. Leader's Statement

The Leader of the Council presented a verbal statement, which focussed on the 'mini budget' announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer the previous week.

The Leader commented that the Government's announcement had caused the Pound to collapse and led to the International Monetary Fund calling on the Government to present a plan on how it would fund the mini budget. The tax cuts that had been announced were set to only benefit the rich while the most vulnerable in the community, including those in Barking and Dagenham, would suffer. Against that backdrop, the Leader was pleased to report that the Council had attracted £4bn of investment into the Borough in recent years which would help support its residents and new investment opportunities would continue to be pursued as part of the Council's vision to ensure that 'no-one was left behind'.

27. Appointments

Assembly **agreed** the following appointments to fill vacancies on Council committees and other internal and external bodies:

- JNC Appointments, Structures and Salaries Panel - Cllrs Miah and Nalule;
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Cllr Yusuf;
- Personnel Board - Cllr Shaw;
- Barking and Dagenham Adoption and Permanence Panel - Cllr Lumsden;
- Barking and Ilford United Charities - Cllrs Lumsden and M Chowdhury;
- Chadwell Heath Community Trust Board - Cllr Yusuf;
- Citizens Advice Barking and Dagenham - Cllr S Bright;
- Dagenham United Charity - Cllrs Mullane and L Waker.

28. Strategy for the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts 2022/23

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services presented a report on the Council's proposed Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2022/23.

The Cabinet Member explained that a delay in the issuing of updated guidance by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had meant that it had not been possible to present a full strategy as part of the annual Budget Framework report that was approved by the Assembly in March 2022.

The updated guidance recently issued by DLUHC meant that only two projects, the Adult Services Direct Payment Review and the Adult Services Financial Assessment Review, continued to be eligible under the new rules, with several other transformation schemes previously eligible now needing to be funded elsewhere within the General Fund.

Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree the Council's Strategy for the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts

2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to the report; and

- (ii) Note that as a consequence of the new statutory guidance, only two transformation schemes were deemed to meet the revised criteria and that ongoing schemes no longer meeting the criteria shall be funded from alternative sources within the General Fund.

29. Motions

Cost-of-Living Crisis

Moved by Councillor Ashraf and seconded by Councillor Twomey.

“The United Kingdom is in the grips of a cost-of-living crisis. Inflation is at 9.9%, the highest level for a generation, while wages today are broadly the same as they were in 2008. Fuel costs, supply chain issues, labour shortages and the Russian invasion of Ukraine have all pushed up prices for families. Even with the Government's proposed two-year cap on average energy costs from October 2022, households will still be paying double what they were in October 2021.

The number of Barking and Dagenham residents attending foodbanks, Community Food Clubs and the Homes and Money Hubs has been increasing throughout the year. We expect more people to require assistance from the Council and its community partners through the winter and beyond. The Government provided some funding in May 2022 for local authorities to provide discretionary payments to help households with the rising cost of living and energy costs. However, more funding is urgently required to continue these schemes and also to provide additional help to our community partners who are doing crucial work on the frontline throughout this cost-of-living crisis.

The community and faith groups who are running schemes and initiatives that are helping people when they need support the most are also facing rising costs and are affected by energy price rises. The Government needs to provide local authorities with extra funding to help these groups to continue their important work in the community.

Last year, bonuses paid out to bankers in the City reached their highest levels since 2007, before the financial crash, and this trend is set to continue.

In light of the City's banking sector enjoying booming bonuses while families struggle to make ends meet, and our community partners struggle to meet both rising demand and rising costs, this Assembly calls on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to introduce a tax on bankers' bonuses. This Assembly asks that income raised from this Bonus Tax is ringfenced for local authorities to spend on discretionary payments to hard-pressed residents and hard-working community partners.”

Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion, citing the desperate choices residents were having to make during the current cost-of-living crisis.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

30. Questions With Notice

There were none.

31. Resolution to Extend Six Month Attendance Rule for Councillor Lee Waker - 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 Acting 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 25 May 2022 due to ill health.

The Assembly resolved:

- (i) To approve Councillor Lee Waker's absence from meetings due to ill health, 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.

32. National Anthem

In recognition of King Charles III accession to the Throne, the Assembly stood and sang the new National Anthem "God Save the King".