

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 15 May 2024
(7:00 - 8:06 pm)

PRESENT

Cllr Irma Freeborn (Chair)

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Princess Bright	Cllr Josie Channer	Cllr Muhib Chowdhury
Cllr Alison Cormack	Cllr Cameron Geddes	Cllr Syed Ghani
Cllr Rocky Gill	Cllr Kashif Haroon	Cllr Victoria Hornby
Cllr Manzoor Hussain	Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe
Cllr Mohammed Khan	Cllr Giasuddin Miah	Cllr Fatuma Nalule
Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole	Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Michel Pongo
Cllr Moin Quadri	Cllr Regina Rahman	Cllr Tony Ramsay
Cllr Hardial Singh Rai	Cllr Lynda Rice	Cllr Ingrid Robinson
Cllr Paul Robinson	Cllr Muhammad Saleem	Cllr Muazzam Sandhu
Cllr Faraaz Shaukat	Cllr Summya Sohaib	Cllr Harriet Spoor
Cllr Dominic Twomey	Cllr Phil Waker	Cllr Maureen Worby
Cllr Mukhtar Yusuf	Cllr Sabbir Zamee	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Faruk Choudhury	Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr John Dulwich
Cllr Edna Fergus	Cllr Donna Lumsden	Cllr Margaret Mullane
Cllr Glenda Paddle	Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Darren Rodwell
Cllr Emily Rodwell	Cllr Jack Shaw	Cllr Lee Waker

1. Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair

The Chief Executive opened the meeting and invited nominations for the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Assembly for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The Assembly **resolved** to appoint Councillor Freeborn and Councillor Faruk Choudhury as the Chair and Deputy Chair respectively.

2. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes (28 February 2024)

The minutes of the Assembly meeting held on 28 February 2024 were confirmed as correct.

4. **Death of Former Councillor Jeff Wade**

The Assembly noted with deep regret the passing of former councillor Jeff Wade on 5 March 2024, aged 79.

The Chief Executive introduced a tribute report that reflected on Mr Wade's tenure as a Chadwell Heath ward councillor between May 2010 - May 2018. Several Members paid their own personal tributes to Mr Wade, remarking on his commitment to social justice and his relentless enthusiasm and hard work on behalf of the Labour Party and the Chadwell Heath residents, who he continued to support even after stepping down from the Council.

The Assembly marked the passing of Mr Wade with a minute's silence in his memory.

5. **Leader's Statement**

Councillor Twomey, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services, presented the Leader's Statement to the Assembly.

The Leader's Statement covered a range of matters, including:

Serious Incident in Whalebone Lane South: The distressing events that occurred on Thursday 2 May where a young man was attacked in broad daylight by a group of individuals, leaving him in a critical condition in hospital.

Elections on 2 May 2024: The London Mayor and Greater London Assembly elections and other elections held across the country had delivered remarkable results for the national Labour Party who took overall control of an additional eight local councils and won all but one of the 10 metro-Mayoral contests, including Sadiq Khan retaining the seat of London Mayor. Congratulations were also extended to Mr Unmesh Desai on his re-election as Greater London Assembly Member for the City & East constituency.

B&D Jobs and Skills Fair: The latest event hosted by the Barking & Dagenham Employment and Skills service took place on 9 May 2024 and attracted a wide range of employers, recruiters and training providers who were on hand to speak to attendees on new job, apprenticeship and training opportunities in the local area.

Launch of B&D Opportunities: The Council had also recently launched the new B&D Opportunities portal which provided access to a range of training, jobs and business opportunities via the single source.

Care Experienced History Month (CEHM): A flag-raising ceremony marked the launch of CEHM, held in April, and the Council was very proud to participate for the first time and hear from Barking and Dagenham's Mayor, Councillor Donna Lumsden, at the launch event on her own personal experiences as a foster carer.

International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia: The Council was very proud to be participating in the event that was taking place on 17

May 2024 and stood firm in its belief that hatred and bigotry had no place in a modern society.

New Deputy Cabinet Member Position: Councillor Simon Perry was shortly to be appointed by the Leader as Deputy Cabinet Member for Co-Production, supporting the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration's portfolio.

British Muslim Awards 2024: The Council's congratulations were extended to Councillor Saima Ashraf, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement, who was awarded 'Highly Commended' status in the Muslim Woman of the Year Award category at the ceremony held on 10 May 2024.

6. Appointments to the Political Structure and Other Bodies 2024/25

The Chief Executive introduced a report on appointments to the Political Structure and Other Bodies for the 2024/25 municipal year.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the appointments to various Council committees and other internal and external bodies, as set out in Appendix 1; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve the appointment of councillors to fill any vacant positions prior to the next meeting of the Assembly.

7. Appointment of Church Representative (Church of England) Co-optee to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Chief Executive introduced a report on the proposed appointment of a new Church of England representative on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chief Executive advised that in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and the Local Government Act 2000, the membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should include Parent Governor and Church representatives who have co-optee status to scrutinise and vote on education-related matters.

The Assembly **resolved** to agree the appointment of Reverend Mark Adams as the Church Representative (Church of England) co-optee on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

8. OFSTED Inspection of Children's Services Improvement Plan and the Children's Care and Support Self-Evaluation 2023/24

Further to Minute 10 (17 May 2023), the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Disabilities presented a report on the outcome of the Ofsted inspection of the Council's Children's Care and Support service.

The Cabinet Member advised that a full inspection of the Children's Care and Support service was carried out by Ofsted in July last year and its report was published on 4 September 2023. The service was assessed as 'Requires Improvement to be Good', with a judgement of 'Good' in respect of the

experiences and progress of care leavers, and Ofsted made eight specific recommendations covering the following areas:

- Timeliness of strategy meetings;
- The capacity, quality, consistence and impact of supervision and management oversight;
- Assessment and decision-making for children experiencing neglect;
- Timeliness of pre-proceedings pathways;
- Consistency of response to 16- and 17-year-olds who present as homeless;
- Oversight of children's placements in unregistered children's homes
- Application of threshold in early help; and
- Life-story work and permanence planning

In response to Ofsted's findings, the Council developed an Improvement Plan which was reflected in its Children's Care and Support Self-Evaluation for 2023/24. The self-evaluation was shared with Ofsted, in line with its Inspection of Local Authority Children's Service (ILACS) framework, and an engagement meeting was held on 17 April 2024 where progress was discussed in detail.

The Cabinet Member was pleased to report that the Council had received a positive response from Ofsted on the progress made since its previous full inspection in 2019 and with the Improvement Plan. That progress had been achieved during a particularly challenging period and the Cabinet Member referenced the Covid-19 pandemic, high population growth, increased levels of deprivation and increasing complexity of need as factors which required new approaches and ways of working. The point was also made that the inadequate funding of social care services by the Government was not taken into account by Ofsted.

On the issue of funding, Members called on the Government to overhaul the social care funding system so that all local authorities, and especially those with high levels of deprivation such as Barking and Dagenham, received adequate funding to meet demand. It was acknowledged that without proper funding, the pace at which the Council would be able to implement its Improvement Plan and its ambition to invest in new prevention services would be hampered.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the Children's Care and Support Ofsted Improvement Plan at Appendix A to the report; and
- (ii) Note the progress made and areas requiring further improvement throughout the duration of the Improvement Plan.

9. Health Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/23

The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Paul Robinson, presented the Committee's annual report for 2022/23, outlining the statutory role of the Committee and its key objectives which were centred around ensuring that the needs and experiences of residents were considered as part of the commissioning and delivery of health services in the Borough.

Councillor Robinson advised on the Committee's work programme for 2022/23 and referred to its key achievements, which included:

- Helping to shape the refresh for the Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2023-28;
- Making recommendations to the Early Pregnancy Assessment Unit relating to implementing additional support for fathers and other vulnerable individuals who experienced miscarriage and/or pregnancy loss;
- Making recommendations to improve health inequalities and promoting better access to healthcare for minority groups; and
- Promoting greater collaboration between health and voluntary sectors to improve effective care to residents, especially over the winter period and during the cost-of-living crisis.

Councillor Robinson alluded to other issues that the Committee had looked into during 2022/23 relating to the new integrated care system arrangements, Place-Based partnerships and the potential effects of extreme weather conditions. The Committee had also concluded its scrutiny review on the potential of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) to further contribute to reducing health inequalities within the Borough the potential opportunities for the VCS and residents to have a meaningful role in shaping future strategy / service delivery. Councillor Robinson advised that the Committee's recommendations and the impact of their implementation would be included in a future report.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration placed on record her appreciation to the Committee for its contribution to improving health provision and services in the Borough.

The Assembly **resolved** to note the Health Scrutiny Committee Annual Report 2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to the report.

10. Annual Report of the Director of Public Health 2022/23

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration presented the LBBB Director of Public Health's Annual Report for 2022/23, which informed local people about the health of their community as well as providing necessary information for decision-makers in local health services and authorities on health gaps and priorities that needed addressing.

The Cabinet Member encouraged her colleagues to read the Director of Public Health's report in detail as it gave an excellent synopsis of the public health challenges faced in Barking and Dagenham. The Annual Report covered the legacy period of Covid-19 and highlighted its lasting impacts in aspects such as life expectancy and healthy life expectancy determinants for Barking and Dagenham residents. Other key messages within the Annual Report included:

- That only 20% of a person's health care affected / improved their health, with the other 80% determined by factors such as housing, employment and their local environment;
- The need to exploit the opportunities within the Place-based Partnership and locality working to improve healthy life expectancy;
- The need to deliver lifestyle services in a more outcome-based way;

- Local residents were three times more likely to suffer an avoidable death than the 10 least deprived areas in England;
- Plans to enhance the diagnosis of long-term health conditions, as 1 in 3 local residents had at least one long-term condition;
- 24% of Reception-age children were measured as being overweight.
- Breaking down barriers that were causing health inequalities, especially amongst those groups who were considered to be 'hard to reach';
- Understanding who and why people were presenting themselves and having better pathways for referral, to support the prevention and early intervention aims; and
- The disparity between Public Health Grant funding received within Barking and Dagenham compared to other local authorities with similar levels of deprivation and need.

Following the presentation, points were raised regarding healthy eating and the lower nutritional value of many products due to 'forced growing', the financial and other support offered by the Council which had helped reduce residents' anxiety and some of the other stark statistics within the report regarding deprivation and health levels amongst the local community. The benefits of building new family homes with gardens, the need for new legislation to promote healthy eating and new active travel infrastructure and public realm improvements to encourage local residents to cycle and walk more were also highlighted as positive steps that would contribute to a healthier local community.

The Assembly **resolved** to note the Director of Public Health's Annual Report for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to the report.

The Chair conveyed her appreciation to the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Disabilities, the Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration for their presentations to this evening's meeting and their hard work and efforts.

11. **Members' Allowances Scheme 2024/25**

The Chief Executive presented a report on the proposed Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25, which included the Basic Allowance payable to all councillors and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) for those councillors appointed to specific positions.

It was noted that in approving the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2023/24 (Minute 13, 17 May 2023), the Assembly also agreed that the previous year's percentage increase to allowances as part of the Local Government Services Pay Agreement should be applied to future years' Members' Allowances Schemes, as a way of ensuring that councillors' remuneration kept in line with increases received by staff, albeit a year in arrears. It was further agreed at that meeting that the Dependants' Carers' Allowance be increased in line with the effective date of any uplift to the London Living Wage (LLW). The Chief Executive confirmed that the proposed changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme for 2024/25 merely reflected those previous decisions.

The Assembly **resolved** to adopt the Members' Allowances Scheme 2024/25 at Appendix A to the report, to be effective from 16 May 2024.

12. Appointment of Statutory Scrutiny Officer

Further to Minute 34 (27 September 2023), the Chief Executive presented a report on the proposed appointment of the Council's Director of Strategy, Sal Asghar, as the Council's statutory Scrutiny Officer, in accordance with section 9FB of the Local Government Act 2000 (amended by the Localism Act 2011).

The Assembly **resolved** to designate Sal Asghar, Director of Strategy, as the Council's statutory Scrutiny Officer with effect from 16 May 2024.

13. Motions

There were no motions.

14. Questions With Notice

There were no questions with notice.

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Main Council Committees Appointments – May 2024

(Appointments are for one year unless otherwise stated)

Committee	Appointments
Assembly	Cllr Freeborn (Chair) and Cllr F Choudhury (Deputy Chair)
Audit and Standards Committee	Cllr P Bright (Chair), Cllr Khan (Deputy Chair), Cllrs Akwaboah, Channer, Gill, Oluwole, Yusuf and Zamee
Health Scrutiny Committee	Cllr P Robinson (Chair), Cllr Pongo (Deputy Chair), Cllrs M Chowdhury, Freeborn, Lumsden and Nalule
JNC Appointments, Structures and Salaries Panel	Cllrs Lumsden, Oluwole, Saleem, Shaukat, P Waker and Yusuf (to form a pool)
Licensing & Regulatory Committee	Cllr Oluwole (Chair), Cllr Zamee (Deputy Chair), Cllrs Cormack, Hornby, Mullane, Rai, L Rice, Sandhu, Sohaib and Spoor
Overview & Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Paddle (Chair), Cllr Akwaboah (Deputy Chair), Cllrs Achilleos, Hussain, Lumsden, Rahman, P Robinson, Sandhu, P Waker and Yusuf
Pensions Committee	Cllr Hussain (Chair), Cllr Gill (Deputy Chair), Cllrs Lumsden, Miah, Ramsay, Sohaib, Yusuf (two-year appointment to May 2026)
Personnel Board	Cllr E Rodwell (Chair), Cllr Nalule (Deputy Chair), Cllr F Choudhury, Dulwich, Hornby, Perry, Rahman, Sandhu and P Waker (to form a pool)
Planning Committee	Cllr Saleem (Chair), Cllr Shaw (Deputy Chair), Cllrs F Choudhury, Cormack, Fergus, Geddes, Miah, Sohaib, Twomey and Zamee

Other Internal / Outside Body Appointments - May 2024
 (Appointments are for one year unless otherwise stated)

Body / Committee	Appointments
East London Waste Authority	Cllrs Akwaboah and Haroon
Employee Joint Consultative Committee	Cllrs Ghani, Hornby, Lumsden, Saleem, Twomey and Yusuf
London Road Safety Council	Cllrs Oluwole and Sandhu (two-year appointment to May 2026)
Member Development Group	Cllr S Bright (Chair), Cllrs P Bright, M Chowdhury, Hornby, Khan, Lumsden, Nalule, Oluwole, Rahman, Rai, I Robinson, Saleem and Zamee
OFSTED Report Panel	Cllr Kangethe (Chair), Cllrs Akwaboah, Fergus, Lumsden, Oluwole, Paddle, Rahman, I Robinson, Sandhu and P Waker