

# MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 7 December 2011  
(7:00 - 8:15 pm)

## PRESENT

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

Councillor S Alasia	Councillor J L Alexander
Councillor A Gafoor Aziz	Councillor R Baldwin
Councillor G Barratt	Councillor E Carpenter
Councillor J Channer	Councillor J Clee
Councillor J Davis	Councillor R Douglas
Councillor C Geddes	Councillor R Gill
Councillor D Hunt	Councillor M Hussain
Councillor A S Jamu	Councillor I S Jamu
Councillor E Keller	Councillor G Letchford
Councillor M A McCarthy	Councillor J E McDermott
Councillor D S Miles	Councillor M Mullane
Councillor E O Obasohan	Councillor J Ogungbose
Councillor B Poulton	Councillor H S Rai
Councillor A K Ramsay	Councillor L A Reason
Councillor L Rice	Councillor T Saeed
Councillor A Salam	Councillor S Tarry
Councillor G M Vincent	Councillor J Wade
Councillor L R Waker	Councillor P T Waker
Councillor J R White	Councillor M M Worby

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor S Ashraf	Councillor P Burgon
Councillor L Butt	Councillor H J Collins
Councillor L Couling	Councillor M McKenzie MBE
Councillor T Perry	Councillor C Rice
Councillor D Rodwell	Councillor L A Smith
Councillor D Twomey	

### **41. Declaration of Members' Interests**

There were no declarations of interest

### **42. Minutes (14 September 2011)**

The minutes of the Assembly meeting held on 14 September 2011 were confirmed as correct.

### **43. Death of former Councillors George Brooker OBE and Sidney Kallar MBE**

Members paid tribute to former Councillor George Brooker OBE who passed away

on 21 September 2011 and to former Councillor Sidney Kallar MBE who passed away on 31 October 2011.

Members noted Mr Brooker's ability to put coherent political arguments and to use that ability not to make those arguments personal. He was remembered as a great servant of the Labour Party; a great man, who had faced many hardships as a young person, and who, as a Councillor, had been prepared to make unpopular decisions but always in the belief that what he did was in the best interests of the residents of the Borough.

Members noted Mr Kallar's tireless work on the regeneration of the Borough, particularly Barking Town Centre and the creation of the Dagenham Business Centre, which it was noted had opened on the day that he had passed away. He was remembered for his open mindedness and foresight, and his work on improving the employment prospects of the residents of the Borough.

Members acknowledged the contributions of both Mr Brooker and Mr Kallar to the Borough, particularly with regard to the whole concept of Barking Riverside and noted that both gentlemen would be greatly and sadly missed.

The Assembly stood and observed a minute's silence in their memory.

#### **44. Revised Schedule of Cabinet Portfolios**

Assembly received and noted a report presented by the Chief Executive in the absence of the Leader of the Council, which set out details of Cabinet Members and their revised portfolios.

#### **45. Appointments**

Assembly **noted** the appointment by **Councillor P Waker, Cabinet Member for Housing** of **Councillors McDermott and Carpenter** to the Registered Provider Forum.

Assembly **agreed** the appointment of:

**Councillor L Waker** to the **Living and Working Select Committee** and

**Councillor J Davis** to the **Safer and Stronger Select Committee**.

As a result of portfolio changes reported under the previous agenda item, Assembly noted that **Councillor Geddes** had by virtue of his position as portfolio holder for Regeneration, become a member of the Development Control Board but that as a Thames Ward Councillor he would be unable to act in a dual capacity as **Councillor Poulton** was the appointed Thames Ward representative on the Board.

In order for **Councillor Poulton** to remain as a member of the Board, **Councillor Carpenter** moved (seconded by **Council IS Jamu**) that the Council Constitution (Article 6A – The Development Control Board) be amended in the following terms:

Paragraph 3.1 – 17 members (one per ward) ~~including~~ **plus** the

Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

Assembly **agreed** the amendment as moved.

#### **46. Response to Petition - The Broadway**

(The Chair agreed that this 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.)

Assembly received and noted the terms of a petition presented by the Lead Petitioner, Ms Karena Johnson, requesting that the Council reconsider proposals to end its grant to the Broadway Theatre Trust as one of the savings options being considered as part of the 2012/13 budget round.

Ms Johnson stated that cutting the entire grant to The Broadway from 1 April 2012 would be a tragedy for the Borough as it was a growing organisation that delivered well against the Council's regeneration ambitions. It had brought into the Borough approximately an additional £500,000 in earned and grant income and she considered the saving of £65,000 in 2012/13 as extremely short sighted of the Council.

Ms Johnson referred to the Broadway having maintained quality of work during the past year in the face of the 2011/12 £100,000 grant cut and had been expecting a grant cut in 2012/13 of £65,000. By cutting the grant completely, she said that the ground work that had been laid with key funders such as Arts Council England and Heritage Lottery would be undone, as would the growing reputation of the Broadway with audiences from both inside and outside of the Borough. Ms Johnson went on to say that there was now insufficient time to explore different funding sources, and further noted that:

- 45,000 people visited the Broadway last year, more than in any previous years, and more than had visited many of the Borough's libraries;
- the Broadway was award winning;
- it had been included as a national portfolio organisation by Arts Council England in recognition of new audiences it had been reaching and for giving access to arts as participants;
- the Broadway was a success story; the only desirable night time activity in Barking Town Centre and was highlighted as an attraction in the Council's campaign for greater business investment in the area;
- closure would remove local employment and volunteering opportunities;
- £3 could buy a performance that could inspire and educate and enable social time for some of the Borough's most isolated residents.

Ms Johnson urged the Council to reconsider the proposal and recognise the true cost of what would be lost.

The Chair invited Mr Mike Mulvey, Chair of the Broadway Trust, to speak.

On behalf of the Trust, Mr Mulvey urged the Council to reconsider the proposal. He stated that professional performances had increased by 25% and that the number of people who had come to see those performances had increased. He

accepted that the budget had to be reduced by £65,000 but felt that the Trust was still the best organisation to run the Theatre as it had the confidence of the Arts Council England and the Heritage Lottery, as well as Barking & Dagenham College who were provided with a professional theatre environment.

Assembly then received the response to the petition introduced by Anne Bristow, Corporate Director for Adult and Community Services (CDACS).

The CDACS advised that as well as the petition, a number of letters had been received from individuals and that responses would be sent to those who had provided addresses.

She stated that as part of last year's budget setting, savings for the current financial year and the financial year 2012/13 had been agreed and that it would not be possible for those agreed savings to be reconsidered. She further stated that the Theatre Trust had indicated that the confirmed savings for 2012/13 would put them in a position where they would not be able to run the Theatre.

The CDACS said that the hard work of the Theatre Trust was recognised but that residents had indicated that as well as the ticket costs, the programme was not what they would like to see. She referred to the Safer and Stronger Select Committee meeting of 9 November 2011 at which Committee Members had accepted the principle of the savings proposal but had recommended that Cabinet consider options for retaining performing arts at the venue. Members of the Select Committee had further indicated that for many residents in their wards, the prices charged by the Broadway were beyond their reach.

The CDACS advised that arts organisations across the country were facing particularly difficult times but that it was important that the Borough continued to provide opportunities for our young people in these austere times.

It was noted that the Council is in discussion with all partners to consider other business models for delivering a performance and participatory arts programme at the venue should Cabinet agree to the proposed saving.

Following questions from Members, Ms Johnson advised that:

- Ticket prices ranged from £3 to £19.50, averaging £8.13 across that range;
- Audiences increased by 25% last year;
- The shows were targeted to audiences and work was continuing on increasing the ticket yield;
- The theatre had been working with the Young Vic, Birmingham Rep and young artists in the Borough;
- The theatre was aware of the need to ensure that ticket prices were accessible;
- If the grant was reduced in the sum that had been expected, this would give the theatre a period of time to investigate alternative funding;
- On average 5,000 young people had used the theatre, through the theatre's contact with all the Borough's schools, a nurseries and under fives programme and the students of Barking & Dagenham College.
- Tonight was the opening night of the pantomime and two of the Barking & Dagenham College students were working on the crew.

In the absence of Councillor Collins, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport, Councillor R Gill, Deputy Leader of the Council, responded to the petition.

Councillor Gill thanked the Petitioners for the manner in which they had presented their case and stated that the Council recognised the benefits the theatre provided. He referred to government cuts whereby the Council's budget had been reduced by 28%, which had resulted in many difficult decisions having to be made, but stated that frontline services had to be protected. He acknowledged that a number of local people felt strongly about the future of the theatre and confirmed that all individual letters would be responded to where addresses had been provided.

Councillor Gill advised that:

- ❖ funds had been set aside to ensure that the theatre remained open, to enable it to continue to be used by the performing arts students of Barking & Dagenham College for their rehearsals and performances;
- ❖ the Council was committed to ensuring that key elements of the current programme such as the youth theatre and the annual pantomime would continue;
- ❖ the Council wanted to see a programme of participatory arts activities and use of the theatre by schools, community and amateur dramatic groups;
- ❖ the decision with regard to funding would be considered at the Cabinet meeting on 14 December.

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

#### **47. Extension of term of an Independent Member of the Standards Committee**

Assembly received a report presented by the Monitoring Officer seeking an extension to the term of an Independent Member of the Standards Committee.

Assembly **agreed**:

1. to waive paragraph 11.5 of Article 7 of the Council Constitution; and
2. to an extension to the term of office of Mr Frank Dignan, Independent Member of the Standards Committee to 30 June 2012 or until such time as the Standards regime was implemented, whichever was the sooner.

#### **48. Motions**

None.

#### **49. Leader's Question Time**

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

#### **50. General Question Time**

**General Question<sup>1</sup> from Councillor Wade:**

"A new campaign to raise awareness of the early signs and symptoms of dementia has been launched by the Department of Health. The £2 million campaign will feature TV, radio and print ads.

The campaign aims to encourage more people to seek an early diagnosis of dementia. It targets the family and friends of people at risk of dementia, who are likely to be the first to see the signs and can encourage their loved one to see their GP.

- What measures will the Council and its partners have in place to respond to the possible increased take-up of services as a result of the campaign?
- How else are dementia services currently being improved for Barking and Dagenham residents?"

### **Response from Councillor Worby, Cabinet Member for Health:**

"Thank you for asking this question.

Colleagues may know that this national campaign was launched on 7 November by the Department of Health and the Alzheimer's Society and the ads have been appearing regularly on TV.

It is a campaign that we, the Council, and our Health partners very much welcome.

We know from our Joint Strategic Needs Assessment that there is hidden need in our community at the moment, where people have the onset of dementia but do not always get the diagnosis or the help that they need. We hope that this campaign will help family members and friends recognise the signs and make sure that their loved ones take the first steps to get the services they need.

We are confident that our services can manage any increased demand as a result of the campaign.

We have been working closely with GPs, the health sector and the voluntary sector to provide effective services for people with dementia.

In Barking and Dagenham, if you are diagnosed with dementia, your GP can refer you to the Memory Clinic which NELFT run. The Memory Clinic provides expert assessments by doctors and other specialists. They will recommend treatment which aims to help the person with dementia remain independent in the community, and also organise other services if needed, including support for carers.

If you have dementia you may also receive support from Admiral Nurses who are mental health nurses specialising in dementia. They work with other professions to improve the quality of life of people with dementia and also that of their carers.

Family carers do a tremendous amount to support their loved ones during the course of this distressing illness, so it is particularly important we offer them good support, information and timely breaks from caring. The Council funds a whole

range of services that are delivered by Carers of Barking and Dagenham on our behalf. For example, carers can be supported by the full time Dementia Adviser based at Carers of Barking and Dagenham. The Dementia Adviser can visit you at home, or you can contact Carers of Barking and Dagenham by phone or just drop in.

We know that people use this service and, in fact, Carers of Barking and Dagenham have reported an increase in contact from carers of people with dementia following the launch of this dementia campaign. Carers of Barking and Dagenham have managed the increase in demand for the service effectively.

The Council have also commissioned Carers of Barking and Dagenham to run Memory Lane Resource Centre which offers a wide range of activities during the day for residents with dementia. They also run a support group and monthly events for carers.

We recognise that people with dementia are amongst the most vulnerable of our residents. So we have 12 specially trained Council carers who support residents with dementia in their own homes. We also make sure that the home care agencies we use have carers who are trained in working with people with dementia.

We have a dementia specific Extra Care scheme called Fred Tibble Court and, of course, Kallar Lodge, our excellent residential care home for people with dementia.

I would like to thank Councillors Phil Waker and Linda Reason for the work they have done in helping to create new housing for people with dementia. On 1 March 2012 we will begin work on Fews Lodge (which is right next door to Kallar Lodge) to adapt the building to provide 13 new homes which will be ready next autumn for residents with dementia.

NHS ONEL has also commissioned a Collaborative Care team for Barking and Dagenham residents. This team works closely with our local hospitals to identify older residents who are admitted for treatment, but may also have dementia. They will also work closely with the Older Adult Mental Health team to make sure that older residents get all the help they need when they leave hospital.

In conclusion, we can be proud of the services we have but we should not be complacent as there is always more we can do to support those who suffer from this very distressing condition and their families."

### **General Question 2 from Councillor Alasia:**

"In the current economic context, you might have thought that enrolments at the Council's Adult College would have fallen this autumn. There are fewer free courses and, with increasing unemployment, residents have less money to pay for adult education.

- How do enrolments at the Adult College of Barking and Dagenham

compare to this time last year?

- Are there any significant shifts in enrolments compared to this time last year and what are the reasons for any changes?
- Are there any particular success stories at the Adult College this autumn?"

**Response from Councillor Geddes, Cabinet Member for Regeneration:**

"Thank you for this question.

Learner numbers are up 12% compared to the same time last year, with the current number of learners at nearly 3,000 against just over 2,500 at this point last year.

Furthermore, this year learners are enrolling for slightly more courses than before – with more learners opting to study two or three courses instead of just one.

As such the college has added more courses, notably in Business Studies, IT, ESOL and Health and Social Care.

There are small, but significant changes in learner demographics. There's been a slight move away from the gender imbalance with more males becoming learners. More noticeable is that the learners are tending to be younger and almost all learners are in the 'core' working age years with significant increases in the under 55 age range.

It is speculation at present as to what's behind these changes, but my interpretation of the facts that there are more learners, that they are studying more courses, especially courses which help employment skills and that the learners are increasingly of working age, suggests that the people of Barking and Dagenham are responding to the international economic problems and the admission last week that our domestic Government's economic policies have failed, by working even harder to make themselves resilient to the economic downturn and maximize their chances of finding or maintaining jobs.

The most recent exam results featured some particular successes, most notably in Customer Services, Counselling and Health and Social Care.

I am delighted to report one particular learner's success story, though I am sorry to say I do not have a note of the student's name. This was from Entry Level (below GCSE grades D-G) to A level (Level 3).

Due to her outstanding coursework and exam results from ESOL status to level three she has been selected to receive the Dermalogica Student Partnership programme Student of the Year Award, a prestigious national award in the beauty business. She is currently on Level 3 Beauty Therapy, which she is due to complete in July 2012.

The college has demonstrated that it has a great past and a great present and it is important that we do what we can to ensure it has a great future.



**General Question 3 from Councillor Carpenter:**

“What arrangements have Barking and Dagenham Council in place to help our elderly people and other vulnerable adults cope with a harsh winter?”

**Response from Councillor Reason, Cabinet Member for Children and Adult Services:**

Thank you for raising this question. As you know the Council has an excellent reputation for providing care and support to the most vulnerable.

As well as our usual services we will be providing extra help over the winter period and I will ask the Divisional Director of Adult Social Care to provide you with a full report, but I can report that:

1. Together with the NHS we will be increasing support for people at home, and to get people home from hospital. The NHS are increasing intensive therapy, which is aimed at preventing people being readmitted to hospital.
2. We have bid for extra funding from government to support voluntary organisations to do things like clear driveways, deliver food parcels and phone people to check they are okay. It will also provide help with insulating homes.
3. George Crouch Day Care Centre will be open between Christmas and New Year and Rush Green Active Age Centre will open on Friday 30 December 2011.
4. We will be providing a telephone ‘check up’ on the most vulnerable people to check they are safe and well. There are many isolated older people who don’t see family and friends over Christmas.
5. Some faith communities have opened up to offer Christmas lunch to vulnerable people in the community and the voluntary sector including Carers of Barking and Dagenham, Harmony House and the Volunteer Bureau are laying on extra support over the winter period.
6. We know that older and vulnerable people can be lonely and isolated and at risk of abuse over the winter. The Council will be raising awareness and encouraging the community to report any concerns so we can take action to protect people if necessary.

All of these actions that we are taking also apply to the Borough's looked after children and I am happy to provide any further information to you on this."

**General Question 4 from Councillor Tarry:**

"Could the Cabinet Member for Finance and Education please provide an update on demand for school places in Barking and Dagenham and capital funding?"

**Response from Councillor R Gill, Cabinet Member for Finance and Education:**

"This question has received considerable publicity over the last few months, so thank you for raising it here.

Demand for school places in the Borough continues to grow at amongst the fastest rate in the country. This year we created an additional 550 reception places and then accommodation for a further 180 children who made late applications or moved into the borough over the summer.

All evidence indicates this is set to continue and the demand will hit secondary schools in the next two years where we will need another 34 forms of entry over the next five years to cope with demand for children already in our primary schools.

We will also require additional sixth form and special school places – otherwise we will have to rely increasingly on very high cost out-borough provision.

The overall investment need is estimated at just over £50 million per year for the next five years to cover both demand for school places and keeping the estate in good repair. I can break the £50 million figure down even further, as to £40 million for basic needs and £10 million for condition.

This year we have received a total £42 million from the government to cover mainly basic need and a small amount of condition. As part of this we received the highest per capita allocation for the additional basic need funding announced in November of £23.9 million. The Chancellor has just announced a further £600 million basic need funding for areas in the greatest need and we will be campaigning intensely for a share of this funding.

In addition, we have been awarded £47 million for the rebuilding/ refurbishment of Dagenham Park Church of England School and Sydney Russell School as part of the former BSF programme.

The only funding we can expect with any confidence next year is the £14.3 million basic need plus a sum for condition (£3.8 million). Hence the need to continue to lobby for more funding than received this year.

We are exploring different options for funding and have three bids in for Pfl funding for Eastbrook, Eastbury and Barking Riverside secondary schools. The outcome of these bids is expected later this month or early in January 2012.

We have had to convert a number of office blocks - the Westbury Centre and St. George's Centre - to school accommodation.

I should like to thank Councillors McCarthy and Geddes for the fantastic work that is being done on the Skills Centre. All of this work shows the commitment of this

Labour Council to the young people of this Borough.

It is important to note that capital funding provides jobs for our local people. In the last twelve months we have had visits from Government Departments – the Department for Education and HM Treasury. People are interested in the work we are doing here. We have to provide school places for our young people and we have seen movements in the population with many people moving into Barking and Dagenham. As a Labour Council we are fully committed to lobbying for our residents in these tough and difficult times."