

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 5 December 2012
(7:05 - 8:42 pm)

PRESENT

Councillor N S S Gill (Chair)

Councillor S Alasia
Councillor G Barratt
Councillor P Burgon
Councillor E Carpenter
Councillor J Clee
Councillor C Geddes
Councillor D Hunt
Councillor A S Jamu
Councillor E Kangethe
Councillor G Letchford
Councillor M Mullane
Councillor J Ogungbose
Councillor B Poulton
Councillor A K Ramsay
Councillor C Rice
Councillor T Saeed
Councillor S Tarry
Councillor L R Waker
Councillor J R White

Councillor J L Alexander
Councillor S J Bremner
Councillor L Butt
Councillor J Channer
Councillor R Douglas
Councillor R Gill
Councillor M Hussain
Councillor I S Jamu
Councillor E Keller
Councillor D S Miles
Councillor E O Obasohan
Councillor T Perry
Councillor H S Rai
Councillor L A Reason
Councillor D Rodwell
Councillor A Salam
Councillor G M Vincent
Councillor P T Waker
Councillor M M Worby

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor S Ashraf
Councillor R Baldwin
Councillor J Davis
Councillor J E McDermott
Councillor L Rice
Councillor D Twomey

Councillor A Gafoor Aziz
Councillor H J Collins
Councillor M A McCarthy
Councillor M McKenzie MBE
Councillor L A Smith
Councillor J Wade

47. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest

48. Minutes (10 October 2012)

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2012 were confirmed as correct.

49. Appointments

Assembly **agreed** that the Council's representation on the Admissions Forum be changed from "5 Councillors – 4 year appointments" to "The Cabinet Member for

Children's Services plus 4 Councillors – 4 years appointments" and that as a consequence of this, Councillor White would replace Councillor R Gill on the Admissions Forum with immediate effect.

50. Sutton Road CPZ - Update

Assembly **noted** this report presented by the Divisional Director of Environmental Services regarding:

1. the arrangements put in place to suspend the CPZ in Sutton Road and
2. the consultation on a CPZ for Sutton Road and the surrounding roads not currently in the Traffic Management Order.

51. Response to Petition regarding Scrattons Sports and Social Club

Assembly received and noted the terms of a petition presented by Ms Ellis on behalf of Ms S Cooper, the lead petitioner.

Ms Ellis thanked Assembly for their time and made the following points:

- Transport to and from Scrattons Farm Estate is very poor.
- Many residents are elderly, have limited mobility and their main social interaction took place in the club. Since the club's demise, the residents feel more isolated.
- Petitioners feel that the Council has ignored them and not given sufficient time to discuss their needs.
- There is a good community spirit with Christmas parties and trips for senior citizens being arranged.
- They are proposing to revamp the building, which would be open to all.
- They have prepared a business plan which set out arrangements for charging for the use of the hall and the grounds.
- They were seeking the insurance monies from the Council in order to rebuild the premises and proposed the use of their own builder.

In conclusion Ms Ellis stated that the petitioners wanted to provide a modern, vibrant facility for everyone.

Assembly received the response to the petition presented by the Corporate Director for Adult and Community Services (CDACS) who advised that:

- Officers had been working with the residents to progress this matter.
- A Community Association (CA) had been formed with effect from 1 December 2012.
- The Barking & Dagenham Council for Voluntary Services could be asked to provide advice to the CA with regard to Charitable Status as some reluctance to applying for it had been voiced by the CA, because it was unclear as to what it might achieve from it.
- Officers would discuss the use of the petitioners' own builders with them outside this meeting.
- The final insurance claim settlement was awaited and should there be a shortfall, this could be identified from other budgets.

Members were encouraged by the strength of feeling of the community and reassured that officers were working with the CA.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities, Councillor Alexander, stated that:

- ❖ the Council recognised the value of community facilities;
- ❖ she was pleased to note the formation of the CA as at 1 December;
- ❖ this was a fantastic outcome and a great opportunity for the community;
- ❖ she would welcome an update on progress from the Ward Members.

Assembly:

- (i) **noted** that the petition from local residents to save the Scratton's Sports and Social Club had received a positive response,
- (ii) **noted** the steps that had been taken to ensure that the community would continue to be able to use the building for social purposes,
- (iii) **supported** the option for the local community to take formal responsibility for the building through a lease agreement subject to funding being identified to meet the building costs.

52. Response to Petition re exemption from CPZ for teachers of Ripple Primary School

Assembly received and noted the terms of a petition presented by Mr Terence Harding, the lead petitioner.

Mr Harding thanked Assembly for their time and made the following points on behalf of parents of children at Ripple Primary School:

- The intake of children is increasing and more staff would have to be employed.
- The school staff are being penalised by having to pay to park.
- There is sufficient parking space in Surrey Road and parking wardens have personally agreed with Mr Harding.
- There are concerns regarding cars that park under Ripple flyover. Children and parents have to walk in the road because cars are parked on the pavement.
- More than 400 people walk back and forth, morning and afternoon.

The Chair invited Mr Roger Mitchell, Head Teacher of Ripple Primary School, to speak.

Mr Mitchell made the following points:

- ❖ He became Head of Ripple Junior in 2005 and became Head of Ripple Primary when the Junior and Infants schools merged.
- ❖ For the first 2/3 years that had been no difficulties with parking.
- ❖ The CPZ in the area prevents people from parking and walking to the station.
- ❖ At the time of day that staff park their cars, the streets are empty.
- ❖ Many staff travel a long way and cannot do that without their cars.
- ❖ The school will be expanding over the course of the next two years.

- ❖ There are only 38 parking spaces across the school's two sites.
- ❖ In support of the Green Policy, the school has provided bicycles to enable staff to travel between the two sites.
- ❖ The school is recognised by Ofsted as "good" with qualities of "outstanding" and to sustain this, he needs to be able to employ the highest calibre of staff.
- ❖ He is concerned that parking restrictions will be a barrier against employing the best staff, which he sees as a tragedy for a school that is doing so well.

Assembly received the response to the petition presented by the Divisional Director of Environmental Services (DDES) who stated that the CPZ in the area was working well and had been supported by 59% of the residents.

Members were pleased to note the progress that had been made by Ripple School.

In response to Members' questions, the DDES stated that permits were issued to doctors and voluntary workers to park in the borough but that permits were not provided to them to park at their place of work.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities, Councillor Alexander, stated that:

- She is on the Governing Board of Ripple Primary School and is also an Eastbury Ward Member.
- She did not think that the residents who are having to pay for their permits would be happy if a parking permit was provided to the teachers.
- If a permit were to be provided to the teachers at Ripple, a similar one would have to be provided to all the schools.
- Council staff have to pay to park.
- There are many bus routes from Barking Station.
- Ripple Primary is a good school with a good Head Teacher and Governing Body – it will always attract good staff.

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

53. Response to Petition - Voluntary Sector Cuts

Assembly received and noted the terms of a petition presented by Mr Ted Parker, Chair of the Barking & Dagenham Council for Voluntary Services, on behalf of Carl Blackburn, the lead petitioner.

Mr Parker thanked Assembly for their time and referred to the valuable contributions made to the community by:

- Harmony House
- Lifeline Community Projects
- The Volunteer Bureau
- The Disablement Association of Barking & Dagenham
- Shpresa

He stated that the power of volunteering had been demonstrated at the London

2012 Olympics and that there were over 500 community organisations in the borough, 106 of which had been showcased at the last Voluntary Sector Open day held in Vicarage Fields.

Speaking of the scale of the cuts, Mr Parker referred to a letter that had been received from the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services (CDACS) dated 17 January 2011 which said:

"...I am happy to reiterate that funding returning to the borough arising from the London Councils grants review will be kept within the voluntary sector grants programmes, so that every pound saved from London Councils is a pound we don't have to save through local cuts."

In conclusion, Mr Parker stated that he felt the Council could balance the budget without making the proposed cut to the Voluntary Sector.

Assembly received the response to the petition presented by the CDACS who stated that when she sent the letter of 17 January 2011, it was genuinely believed that this could be achieved and that safeguarding the voluntary sector had been sought. She referred to the debate that had taken place at the Safer & Stronger Community Select Committee on 31 October 2012 and confirmed that Cabinet would be reviewing these issues on 19 December 2012.

In response to questions from Members:

- Mr Parker advised that £665,000 funding had been received from the Big Lottery.
- Mr Blackburn confirmed that in terms of their own money the ratio was 4:1 and that he could provide audited accounts if required.
- The CDACS advised that she was very aware that there were no savings that would not impact on residents but that officers were looking at what would have the least effect. However, there were no easy options and the budget must be balanced.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities, Councillor Alexander, confirmed that she worked closely with Carl Blackburn and she valued the work of the Voluntary Sector. However, these were challenging financial times and the cuts had been imposed on this Council by the Coalition Government.

Her concerns were for the residents of the borough, but she was unable to support the petition.

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

54. The Council's Petition Scheme

Assembly received and noted this report presented by the Monitoring Officer and **agreed** the amended Petition Scheme as set out in **Appendix B** to the report.

55. Joint Management

Assembly received and noted the report regarding joint management presented by the Chief Executive and **agreed:**

1. the continued shared legal services structure and the joint role of Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer between this Council and Thurrock Council;
2. that officers should continue to develop options for both joint management and shared services between this Council and Thurrock Council to save at least £1m across both Councils;
3. that officers should continue to explore options for shared services with other councils as is most appropriate for each service; and
4. that the Governance Guarantee set out in Appendix 1 to the report be adopted for all joint management and shared services agreements.

56. Adoption of Regulatory Provisions to Enforce the Unauthorised Crossing of Kerbed Footways and Verges

Assembly received this report introduced by the Divisional Director of Environmental Services (DDES).

Following questions from Members, the DDES advised that:

- The cost of the majority of dropped kerbs fell below £500 but where there are grass verges, this could be in excess of £1,000.
- The cost should be affordable for most residents and the value of the property would be increased.
- Cabinet would be presented with proposals for affordable payment arrangements.
- To stop people parking across dropped kerbs, where a TMO is in place, a yellow line or double yellow line could be painted. However, a double yellow line would also prevent the householder from parking over their own dropped kerb. At the time the dropped kerb is put in, the householder could be asked for their preference.
- Officers will revisit the Council's policy on dropped kerbs to ensure that it is a fit for purpose document.

Assembly **resolved** that:

- (i) the Council adopts the powers available under Section 16 of the London Local Authorities and Transport for London Act 2003 in respect of the enforcement of unauthorised crossing by vehicles over kerbed footways or verges; and
- (ii) 17 March 2013 is the 'appointed day' on which these powers will come into effect.

57. Treasury Management Strategy Statement Mid-year Review Report 2012/13

Assembly received and noted this report introduced by the Divisional Director of Finance (DDF).

In response to a question from Councillor Carpenter in relation to the use of revenue resources to fund the capital programme, the DDF confirmed that he

would write to her separately on this.

Assembly:

- (i) **Noted** the report, the treasury activity, the prudential indicators and risk study results; and
- (ii) **Agreed** to the following changes to the Council's Investment Strategy, as detailed in section 6 of the report:
 - 1. Increase the limit on investment with Lloyds TSB from £30m to a maximum of 40% of the average monthly cash available to invest; and
 - 2. Set a fixed investment limit of £40m to be invested with Lloyds TSB after which all additional investment need to be invested in the Lloyds TSB call account.

58. Review of the Council's Financial Regulations and Rules

Assembly received and noted this report introduced by the Divisional Director of Finance (DDF).

Assembly:

- a) **approved** the new Financial Regulations and Rules for full adoption across the Council as set out in Appendix A
- b) **approved** the internal financial scheme of delegation as set out in Appendix B,
- c) **authorised** the Chief Financial Officer to vary the revised corporate limits set out in Appendix B where this is considered to improve the efficiency of the Council's financial operations without unacceptably increasing risk, and

authorised the Monitoring Officer to make the necessary amendments to the Council Constitution

59. Motions

None.

60. Leader's Question Time

None.

61. General Question Time

General Question from Councillor Channer:

"Does the Deputy Leader agree that as a Labour Council, providing Education Maintenance Allowance to our poorest students in the borough will support and encourage our young people to continue in further education and, if so, what can we do about it?"

Councillor R Gill, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for

Finance responded that:

- It is scandalous that EMA has been cut and it does impact on this borough
- The number of students has begun to increase this year and we have also opened the Skills Academy
- A dedicated schools grant would be very difficult and could damage another core area in Children's Services
- Some national funding is still available for the most vulnerable
- There are free school meals
- In Barking and Dagenham, the schools manage 16-19 support
- We have the Colin Pont Trust Fund that could provide bursaries for anyone over the age of 16 in the borough considering further education and who needs financial help

In conclusion Council R Gill confirmed that he would be happy to examine this issue further and discuss a scheme, which as a Labour Councillor he approved in principle, but that such a scheme would have to be sustainable, rather than say, the Tower Hamlets' scheme, which appeared to be funded by reserves.

Councillor Gill advised Assembly that he would be happy to bring a paper back to Members for further discussion.

The Chair wished everyone a merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year and declared the meeting closed at 8.42 pm.