

# MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 27 January 2021  
(6:00 - 8:11 pm)

## PRESENT

Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe (Chair)  
Cllr Faruk Choudhury (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Sanchia Alasia
Cllr Saima Ashraf	Cllr Abdul Aziz	Cllr Toni Bankole
Cllr Simon Bremner	Cllr Princess Bright	Cllr Sade Bright
Cllr Laila M. Butt	Cllr Evelyn Carpenter	Cllr Peter Chand
Cllr Josie Channer	Cllr John Dulwich	Cllr Edna Fergus
Cllr Irma Freeborn	Cllr Cameron Geddes	Cllr Syed Ghani
Cllr Rocky Gill	Cllr Kashif Haroon	Cllr Amardeep Singh Jamu
Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Eileen Keller	Cllr Mohammed Khan
Cllr Donna Lumsden	Cllr Olawale Martins	Cllr Mick McCarthy
Cllr Giasuddin Miah	Cllr Margaret Mullane	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole
Cllr Glenda Paddle	Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Moin Quadri
Cllr Foyzur Rahman	Cllr Tony Ramsay	Cllr Chris Rice
Cllr Lynda Rice	Cllr Ingrid Robinson	Cllr Paul Robinson
Cllr Darren Rodwell	Cllr Emily Rodwell	Cllr Muhammad Saleem
Cllr Faraaz Shaukat	Cllr Dominic Twomey	Cllr Lee Waker
Cllr Phil Waker	Cllr Maureen Worby	

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Dave Miles                      Cllr Bill Turner

### 42. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

### 43. Minutes (25 November 2020)

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2020 were confirmed as correct.

### 44. Death of Dr Donald Hoskins, MBE and Freeman of the Borough

The Assembly noted with deep regret that following a long illness Dr Donald Hoskins, the former Head of the Music Centre at the University of East London (UEL) passed away in hospital on 30 November aged 88. His burial took place on 14 December near his birthplace of Six Bells, Abertillery in South Wales.

Councillors Carpenter and Ramsay spoke warmly of their memories of concerts performed by Dr Hoskins in Barking, while the Leader of the Council paid tribute to Dr Hoskins legacy.

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

#### 45. Leader's Statement

The Leader of the Council presented a verbal statement updating the Assembly on a range of matters since the last meeting, beginning by wishing all colleagues and residents a happy new year. 2020 was a difficult year and the Leader was encouraged to see the community spirit in the Borough was still strong.

Issues raised in the Leader's Statement included:

**The road to recovery from COVID-19:** There were many roads to recovery in the Borough, highlights included a film studio training offer, continuing to lobby Government to fund new industries coming into the Borough, the recent opening of the NTT Data Centre, continuing to build new and affordable homes and continuing efforts to secure support for a cut and cover tunnel over the A13;

**Support for Key Workers:** The Key Worker car parking permit scheme would be continuing to help those working on the front line;

**Finance:** In noting the financial struggles of the Council and the high deprivation in the Borough, the Leader reminded residents to contact the Council if they were struggling. The Leader thanked Councillor Jones and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their hard work in scrutinising the forthcoming budget;

**Commission for Samuel Garside House:** Sir Steve Bullock and Diarmaid Ward were independently commissioned to conduct a review of the fire at Samuel Garside House in June 2019. The Samuel Garside House report was received by Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and the council was now in the process of calling on the Government to implement these recommendations;

**Community Champion of the Year Award:** The Leader congratulated Councillor Ashraf, who was awarded Community Champion for the Year at the end of 2020 from the LGIU;

**Legal Team:** The Leader gave special thanks to the Legal Team, who was awarded Best Contribution by an In-house Team at the LawWorks Awards 2020 for pro bono work with victims of domestic abuse in the borough; and

**Young Mayor's Challenge:** The Leader had been invited by the Young Mayor to take part in an 80's dance challenge online. Funding raised by the challenge would be going to the Young Mayor's chosen charity, Refuge.

The Leader invited the Cabinet Member for Health Integration and Social Care to address the Assembly on the current COVID-19 situation. The Assembly were advised the Cabinet Member that:

- Currently, there 500 people with COVID-19 using the local hospitals at any one time. This was placing extreme pressure on all services and those who were seriously ill had to be moved elsewhere. Staff had shown amazing commitment and humanity throughout the pandemic, however the Cabinet Member confirmed that 370 people had lost their lives in the borough since

- the pandemic started; and
- The Broadway Theatre would shortly become the first large vaccination centre in the Borough. There were still vaccinations taking place at Parsloes Surgery and Barking Hospital. Over 8000 people in the Borough had been vaccinated with 86% of care home residents having now had their first vaccine.

#### 46. Appointments

There were none.

#### 47. BAD Youth Forum Annual Report 2020

The Assembly received the Barking and Dagenham (BAD) Youth Forum and Young Mayor's Annual report, introduced by the Head of Participation, Opportunity and Wellbeing, who was accompanied by representatives of the Youth Forum.

This report detailed the achievements of the BAD Youth Forum during the past 12 months outlining the work of each of the sub-groups, their aims and the impact of the work completed.

The BAD Youth Forum was in its 19<sup>th</sup> year. Its purpose was to provide young people with a formal platform to express their views and be ambassadors for young people locally. In February 2020, the Forum held its annual election, followed by a full Forum meeting and team building session.

Despite the restrictions and difficulties presented to the Forum by the pandemic, the Forum continued to work together in 2020 and updated the Assembly on their achievements:

**Community Action Sub-Group:** As the first lockdown began, the Community Action Sub-Group was discussing its focus for the year. The Sub-Group decided to focus on domestic abuse, raising awareness amongst young people, highlighting what domestic abuse was, the different types and where to get support. The Sub-Group were consultees for the Barking and Dagenham Domestic Abuse Commission.

**Young Mayors Sub-Group:** The Young Mayor had picked Refuge for their chosen charity for 2020. The Young Mayor attended many different events and spoke at the Women's Empowerment Month Launch. The Young Mayor held regular monthly meetings with the Leader of the Council to discuss issues for young people. Despite the difficulties faced, the Young Mayor's Fundraising activities continued to go ahead with items such as walking up Mount Everest in their own homes. One of the forum members was a victim of a serious car accident in 2019 and it took him a long time to learn how to walk again. As a personal challenge the forum member challenged himself to walk as far as he could to raise money for Refuge. To date the forum had raised £1006 in 2020.

**Young Inspectors Sub-Group:** Young Inspector training began in March 2020 however due to the first lockdown, it was cancelled along with any planned inspections. Instead, the Sub-Group worked with Youth Councils in Havering and Redbridge to prepare a survey asking young people about their experiences in

lockdown. A second survey was undertaken during the second lockdown in November 2020. The results indicated that there had been a significant impact on young people's mental health- more than 1 in 4 young people said they were not feeling good and young people expressed concern about pressures in education, which was the biggest concern of all. The Sub-Group wanted to discuss the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement and met with Barking and Dagenham BLM group who were very inspiring and also attended a workshop they hosted.

The Forum took part in other events during the year, including eight consultations, held two Youth Independent Advisory Group meetings and was represented by two members on the London Youth Assembly.

The Chair of the Forum attended different events during the year including

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings;
- Safer Neighbourhood Board meeting; and
- Chaired the Youth Independent Advisory Group meetings.

The presentation concluded with Forum member expressing how vital the Forum has been during difficult times and because of this, the Forum Members decided to 'leave the door open' to any new members this coming year.

Following the presentation a number of Members congratulated the Forum on their excellent work and inspirational projects during such difficult times. The Chair thanked the Forum Members for their presentation.

#### **48. Local Government Boundary Review - Council Preferred Warding Pattern**

Further to a report considered by Assembly in July 2020 (minute 16 refers) on the Council Size proposal of 51 councillors, the Director of Law and Governance presented a further report on Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) Ward Boundary Review 2020.

The LGBCE being 'minded to' support the Council's submission, undertook a public consultation exercise, seeking a wide range of local views with reasons as to the Borough's ward boundary pattern, including the number and names of proposed wards, together with the number of councillors per ward. The consultation exercise ran for seven weeks and concluded on 11 January 2021. The Council, as a statutory consultee, was invited to make a submission.

A prospective ward boundary map was drawn up with supporting information, proposing the creation of nineteen wards, made up of a combination of 2 and 3 Member wards, and which given the 11 January 2021 deadline to respond, was presented to the LGBCE as the Authority's in principle view as to its favoured ward pattern arrangements, subject to approval by the Assembly at this meeting.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree the proposed ward pattern for the Borough of nineteen (19) wards made up of a combination of 2 and 3 Member wards based on the configuration detailed in ward boundary map set out in Appendix 3 with additional information as set out in Appendix 4 (location of schools), Appendix 5 (location of places of worship) and Appendix 6 (supporting

information for each of the 19 proposed wards), and which includes reference to the creation of two new wards named Creekmouth and Roding, and

- (ii) That the decision be reaffirmed with the LGBCE.

#### **49. Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report on the proposal to retain the existing Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme and a £50,000 discretionary hardship fund, in order to continue to support local residents who found themselves in exceptional hardship.

Members noted that the Council's CTS scheme required minor administrative changes to improve its clarity and general administration and assist in reaching those that are entitled to support. The scheme requires updating so it is aligned better, is more compatible and has greater clarity in its interactions with Universal Credit as this caseload continues to increase, replacing existing legacy welfare benefits.

The Assembly **resolved** to agree that the Council Tax Support Scheme implemented for 2020/21 be retained for 2021/22, subject to the administrative changes detailed in section 2 of the report which improve clarity, align with other welfare benefits, primarily Universal Credit, and enhance access for those eligible for entitlement.

#### **50. Scrutiny Annual Reports 2019/20**

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) presented an Annual Report highlighting the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 2019/20.

The Chair of (OSC) advised that the year had 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 2019/20 ranging from the Council's 2019 Air Quality Action Plan through to how the Council was developing its Local Offer for care leavers. The Committee undertook two in-depth Scrutiny reviews, 'Improving Household Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing' and 'Ambition 2020 and its Early Impact'. During the year, the Committee also undertook pre-decision scrutiny on issues such as the Voids Improvement Plan and the draft Housing Allocations Policy, as well as worked to provide extra value, such as through providing a forum for Borough representatives to talk to the Police on crime and disorder.

The programme for 2020/21 included updates into the recommendations arising from the 'Improving Household Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing', and 'Ambition 2020 and its Early Impact' scrutiny reviews, reviewing the Barking and Dagenham response to Covid-19 alongside a full and engaging work programme.

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

The Chair of the Health Scrutiny Committee (HSC) in 2019/20 then presented an annual report highlighting the work of the Committee in 2019/20.

The Member took the opportunity to remind all Members of the importance of health scrutiny, recognising and acknowledging the enormous strain that the NHS, local authorities and local residents were under at this unprecedented time.

The Member highlighted Barking, Havering and Redbridge NHS Trust's (BHRUT) deficit in 2019-2020, £65 million, and the forecasted deficit for 2020/2021, £100 million, which was of grave concern to the Committee. The forecasted deficit was before Covid-19.

HSC looked at the Trust's response to research by Health Education England and the General Medical Council that found widespread discontent among junior doctors within the Trust. Of the nine recommendations they made, four had been implemented. The Trust assured HSC that the remaining five would be progressed to ensure the concerns of junior doctors would be addressed.

It was also reported to the Assembly that the health commissioning model would move to a single North East London Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), which will come into force on 5 April 2021 – the Committee sought assurance from BHR CCGs, that the governance of this model would ensure that local needs would be addressed via locally focused boards and that the Committee's representations would be fed into their design.

The Assembly were also updated on the recommendations following the reviewing into Childhood Obesity, which was undertaken in 2018/19.

Moving forward, the Health Scrutiny Committee faced many challenges including Covid-19 and the move to a single CCG for North East London.

The Member thanked Masuma Ahmed, Matthew Cole and the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration for their support.

The Leader thanked Councillor Keller and the other members of the HSC for the work of HSC during the current difficult times caused by the pandemic.

## **51. Motions**

### **Motion 1 – Responsible Use of Fireworks**

#### **Proposed by Councillor Princess Bright and Seconded by Councillor Chand**

“Fireworks are used throughout the year to mark different events. This council welcomes the use of fireworks to celebrate cultural and community events, whilst also recognising the need for regulation in order to support vulnerable people and animals.

The unpredictable, loud and high intensity noises that many fireworks make can cause fear. For example, studies have found fireworks to be the most common cause for fear responses in dogs , and it is estimated that 45 percent of dogs show

signs of fear when they hear fireworks . A New Zealand survey recorded 79 percent of horses as either anxious or very anxious around fireworks or over the Guy Fawkes Day period.

Debris produced by fireworks, if found on the ground, can also pose a hazard to animals, such as horses and farm livestock. Although there is limited direct evidence, it is also likely that fireworks and their debris will cause disturbance to wildlife, and are likely to cause suffering or distress, depending on the distance from the explosive and the noise level.

This Council resolves:

- to require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people
- to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks
- to write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays
- to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock ‘quieter’ fireworks for public display.”

A number of Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

## **Motion 2 – Union Learning Fund**

Proposed by Councillor Mullane and Seconded by Councillor Paddle

“This council notes:

1. On Tuesday 6 October, the TUC received a letter from the Department for Education saying that ministers have decided to end the Union Learning Fund from March 2021.
2. The Union Learning Fund (ULF) was set up in 1998 to support trade unions to widen access to learning and training in workplaces for both union members and non-members. The fund supports workplace projects across England, and is coordinated by the TUC.
3. Each year around 200,000 workers are supported into learning or training with union support through the ULF and the TUC. These learners undertake all sorts of job-relevant learning and training, including basic literacy and numeracy, ICT skills, apprenticeships and traineeships, vocational training, continuing professional development and many other informal and formal courses.
4. In 2019–20, the ULF was worth £12m. If upheld this decision will effectively end union-brokered skills training, and will undermine key government skills and retraining priorities at a crucial moment for our economy.

This council understands that:

1. Union learning reaches people that other DfE programmes do not reach.
2. There is an independent evaluation of the Union Learning Fund every two years. It was most recently evaluated by the University of Exeter in 2018. They spoke to 2,459 learners, and found:
  - Over two-thirds (68 per cent) of learners with no previous qualifications got a qualification.
  - 47 per cent of those with entry level or level 1 qualifications got a qualification at a higher level.
  - Four in five (80 per cent) said they had developed skills that they could transfer to a new job.
  - Two in three (62 per cent) said their new skills made them more effective in their current job.
  - One in five (19 per cent) said they had been promoted or given increased responsibility and one in 10 (11 per cent) got a pay rise.
3. The 2018 independent evaluation found that union learning provided excellent value for money:
  - For every £1 spent on the Union Learning Fund, there is a return of £12.30: £7.60 to the worker, £4.70 to the employer.
  - The Union Learning Fund delivers an estimated net contribution to the economy of more than £1.4bn as a result of a boost to jobs, wages and productivity.
  - The return to the exchequer (through reduced spending on welfare benefits and other factors resulting from the boost to jobs and wages) is £3.57 for each £1 spent on the Union Learning Fund.
4. The £12m government funding levered in an additional £54m from employers, unions and training providers in 2019–20.  
 The government has said it will put reskilling workers at the heart of its economic recovery plans after the pandemic. In September 2020, the government announced a new fully funded entitlement to achieve a first level 3 qualification, delivered through the National Skills Fund. Union learning is ideally placed to support this aspiration, in three ways:
  - directly, through delivering relevant level 3 courses to workplace learners, which is already a core function of the Union Learning Fund and was assessed as highly effective by the 2018 independent evaluation
  - directly, through enabling those with basic skills to learn and develop, putting them in a position to progress to level 3 skills
5. Successive governments of all parties have valued this role – and have supported the Union Learning Fund. As government funding, it is paid as a contract and is subject to stringent monitoring requirements. Union Learning Fund money can only be spent on the direct costs of getting working people into learning and skills training, and the associated costs of delivering this programme.
6. ULF projects adapted quickly to delivering online learning and training for workers during the pandemic and have actually surpassed the number of outcomes expected by government since the beginning of April.

This council resolves to:

1. Express its public support for the continuation of the Union Learning Fund
2. Raise this issue with our local MPs and encourage them to call on the government to reverse its decision

A number of Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

### **Motion 3 – Ending the Cladding Scandal**

Proposed by Councillor Geddes and Seconded by Councillor Ashraf

“This Council notes:

- The tens of thousands of buildings around the country including those in Barking & Dagenham impacted by the cladding crisis, and millions of leaseholders unable to move and facing crippling bills for removal
- The grassroots campaign led primarily by residents affected by fire and building safety issues: including Grenfell United and the London Cladding Action group of affected leaseholders.
- The calls for urgent and nation-wide action from the Government to fix cladding issues which came to light following the Grenfell tower tragedy.
- The impact this has had on leaseholders across the country who now live in homes declared to be unsafe, due to unsafe cladding or other safety defects.
- That these costs mean that leaseholders are unable to sell their homes – leaving them effectively trapped.
  
- The campaign asks central Government to take responsibility and fund necessary works, reclaiming the costs from those responsible or by a levy on future developments.

This council also notes:

- The campaign has ten asks of Government, which can be summarised by the following actions:
  - Homes to be made safe as quickly as possible
  - Protection and support for those living in unsafe homes
  - Actions to unlock the market and allow people to move on with their lives

This council resolves to:

- Support the *End our Cladding Scandal* campaign and sign up to the 10-point plan to tackle the national cladding scandal which would mean:
  1. The government must lead an urgent national effort to remove all dangerous cladding from buildings by June 2022, including the prioritisation of blocks most at risk
  2. The Building Safety Fund must cover all buildings, regardless of height, and a range of internal and external fire safety defects, not just cladding
  3. The government should provide the money up front and then seek to recover it from any responsible parties or via a temporary levy on development

4. Social housing providers must have full and equal access to the fund
5. The government must compel building owners or managers to be honest with residents about fire safety defects
6. The government should cover the cost of interim safety measures
7. The government should act as an insurer of last resort and underwrite insurance where premiums have soared
8. A fairer, faster process is needed to replace EWS and funding is necessary to ensure all buildings that require a form are surveyed within 12 months
9. Mental health support must be offered to affected residents
10. Protecting residents from historic and future costs must be a key commitment of new building safety legislation

A number of Members of the Assembly spoke in support of the motion.

The motion was **carried** unanimously.

Standing Order 7.1 (Chapter 3, Part 2 of the Council Constitution) was suspended at this juncture to enable the meeting to continue beyond the 9pm threshold).

## **52. Questions With Notice**

There were none.