

# MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 25 November 2020  
(6:00 - 8:36 pm)

## PRESENT

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

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Abdul Aziz	Cllr Simon Bremner	Cllr Princess Bright
Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Laila M. Butt	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 Dave Miles	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 Muhammad Saleem	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat
Cllr Bill Turner	Cllr Dominic Twomey	Cllr Lee Waker
Cllr Phil Waker	Cllr Maureen Worby	

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Sanchia Alasia	Cllr Evelyn Carpenter	Cllr Emily Rodwell
---------------------	-----------------------	--------------------

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

There were no declarations of interest.

### **30. Minutes (30 September 2020)**

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 September 2020 were confirmed as correct.

### **31. Minutes of Sub-Committees - To note the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel held on 7 October and 16 October 2020**

The Assembly received and noted the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel held on 7 October 2020 and 16 October 2020.

### **32. London Boroughs Charter for Councillor Development Award**

On 9<sup>th</sup> September the Council was successfully re-assessed for the London Boroughs Charter for Councillor Development at the Charter Plus standard. The Councillor Development Charter was a nationally recognised framework which

assesses the processes, impact and effectiveness of councillor development.

The Cabinet Member thanked Council colleagues for their enthusiasm and support for the Councillor Development Programme and also made special mention of the Councillors on the Member Development Group and also to the lead Director, Fiona Taylor, and the Member Development Officer, Fiona Jamieson.

The Cabinet Member then introduced Councillor Kaya Comer-Schwartz, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families and Deputy Leader, London Borough of Islington, who on behalf of London Councils formally presented the award to the Assembly.

Members noted that Fiona Jamieson had recently retired from the Council after 11 years. Members thanked Fiona for her support and wished her a long and happy retirement.

The Assembly **resolved** to note the report and accept the Councillor Development Charter Plus Award.

### **33. Leader's Statement**

The Leader of the Council presented a verbal statement updating the Assembly on a range of matters since the last meeting, focussing on the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) which had been announced earlier that day.

The CSR announcement did not include support for local authorities to continue running their services and would in fact mean leaving the Council with no choice but to increase in Council Tax, which would penalise the poorest in our communities by asking them to pay more. This came at a time when residents were struggling with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Leader urged residents to stay at home this Christmas and avoid meeting with family members to help reduce the infection rates in the Borough and reduce the number of deaths from the horrible disease. The Leader asked that all residents and workers in only go out if they need to, and if they needed to go out to take appropriate measures such as social distancing and wearing a mask.

Other issues covered in the Leader's statement included:

**White Ribbon Day:** White Ribbon Day on Friday 20<sup>th</sup> November was an important time to show that the Council continued to stand against any type of abuse. It was important to acknowledge that there would be a disproportionate amount of women suffering domestic abuse in the Borough during the current pandemic and Members were reminded of the strong support networks in the Council and partners for those suffering from domestic abuse.

**Film Studios:** The agreement for the film studios was signed on 3<sup>rd</sup> November with Hackman Capital Partners and HBS. Hackman Capital Partners would be putting £1m into a training pot for local people, which would be topped up with every blockbuster film made at the studios.

**United States of America Presidential Election:** The Leader congratulated Joe Biden and Kamala Harris on their success in the recent Presidential Election particularly with Kamala Harris becoming the first woman to hold the office of Vice President of the United States and the first Black and Asian woman.

**Drive-in Christmas Carol Service:** The prospect of a drive-in Christmas Carol service was being explored and it was hoped that this would include streaming of the service to residents.

**Free Parking Permits for NHS staff and Key Workers:** The Council would be extending the free parking permits for nearly 1,850 people, with over 1,350 for NHS Workers until the end of January.

**A13 Tunnel:** There had been no update in the CSR regarding the tunnel along the A13, despite the benefits this would bring for the environment, housing and job opportunities in the Borough.

**Finance:** The Leader gave thanks to the Cabinet, with particular reference to the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services, for balancing the budget despite the difficult times and the enormous pressure that the Council was under.

**Wall of Shame:** The 50<sup>th</sup> edition of the Wall of Shame had been published online and the Leader made reference to correspondence that he had received from an ex local resident who advised that they had moved out of the Borough since a family members was featured on an episode of the Wall of Shame.

**Christmas Cheer Campaign:** In previous years, the Mayor had always taken part in donating gifts to children. This year it would be extended to support vulnerable families with a Christmas hamper and providing a call from a volunteer to those who may be isolated.

#### **34. Appointments**

There were none to report.

#### **35. Treasury Management 2020/21 Mid-Year Review**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report on the Treasury Management 2020/21 Mid-Year Review.

The mid-year review report provided details of the mid-year position for treasury activities and highlighted compliance with the Council's policies previously approved by the Assembly on 17 February 2020 as part of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2020/21.

The Cabinet Member advised that through the hard work of Members and Officers, the Council was in a robust and resilient position moving forward. The Council was in a position that, despite the recent hardships and associated financial pressures from the COVID 19 pandemic, will still be delivering a strong budget return.

The Assembly **resolved** to note:

- (i) The Treasury Management Strategy Statement Mid-Year Review 2020/21;
- (ii) That the value of the treasury investments as at 30 September 2020 totalled £241.1m;
- (iii) That the treasury investment strategy outperformed its peer group, with a return of 1.50% against an average of 0.48% for London Local Authorities and 0.34% for the total comparable population of 211 Local Authorities;
- (iv) That the value of the commercial and residential loans lent by the Council as at 31 March 2020 totalled £171.0m;
- (v) That the value of long term borrowing as at 30 September 2020 totalled £945.8m, of which £275.9m related to the Housing Revenue Account and £669.9m to the General Fund;
- (vi) That the value of short term borrowing as at 30 September 2020 totalled £99.5m;
- (vii) That interest would be capitalised on long term developments of over £10m, effective from 1 April 2019; and
- (viii) That in the first half of the 2020/21 financial year, the Council complied with all 2020/21 treasury management indicators.

### **36. Reviewed Corporate Plan 2020-22**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented a report to the Assembly on the reviewed Corporate Plan 2020-22.

The Assembly recalled that the new Corporate Plan and Single Performance Framework were agreed in April and May 2020. This was agreed on the understanding that their contents would need to be reviewed, later in the year, to take account for the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's plans for the next two years.

While the pandemic continued to evolve, the Council was now in a much better position to understand how Covid-19 was impacting on its resources, priorities and plans. Therefore, over the past few months, the Council's strategic framework, including the Corporate Plan and Single Performance Framework, have been reviewed.

The Cabinet Member explained that it was important to note that while the review of the strategic framework was vital to ensure that the Council's plans were up-to-date and reflected the reality of the context in which we work, the fundamental approach and strategic intentions of the Council, as set out in the Corporate Plan, were not changing.

The Assembly **resolved** to agree the reviewed Corporate Plan as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

### **37. The Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adult Board Annual Report 2019/20**

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care Integration presented a report on the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2019/20.

The Annual Report described the work and priorities of the Barking and Dagenham

Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) from April 2019 to March 2020. It set out how the Board had worked to improve the protection of vulnerable adults across Barking and Dagenham along with its achievements in 2018/19 and key priorities for the future.

The Cabinet Member advised that all Safeguarding Adult Boards were required to produce an Annual Report. This year however, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, SAB's were given flexibility over the production of the report and what information to include.

The Annual Report was agreed by the Safeguarding Adults Board at its meeting on 10th July 2020 and was presented and discussed at the Health & Wellbeing Board on the 15th September 2020.

The Assembly **resolved** to note the contents of the Annual Report of the Safeguarding Adults Board for 2019/20.

### **38. Adoption and Corporate Parenting Annual Reports - a new approach**

The Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care Integration presented a report on the Councils Adoption and Corporate Parenting Annual Reports.

The Council was required to produce annual reports on Corporate Parenting and Adoption. Compared with previous years the reports presented are distinct in their origin. The Corporate Parenting Annual Report was produced, as it always has been, by Council Officers. The Adoption Annual Report was the first produced since the Council joined the Regional Adoption Agency (Adopt London East) as mandated to so by government.

The appended Adoption Annual Report had, therefore, been produced by Adopt London East and covered the period of 1st October 2019 to end of March 2020. Whilst these reports were important documents, it should be noted that they were required to be produced as stand-alone documents, and do not necessarily reflect the Councils more considered approach to system-wide improvement for our children and young people, something which was more clearly reflected in our Annual Self-Evaluation that was presented to Cabinet at the start of each calendar year.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member advised that:

- The 15 children adopted children in the period of the report were local children who had been adopted either within or outside of the Borough;
- There were 402 young people that Members were the corporate parent for and it was important for Members, where possible, to step forward to be mentors for young people, with the Councils assistance;
- Skittles, a group of young people in care, attended the Corporate Parenting Group on a regular basis and once a year ran one of the meetings.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the contents of the two annual reports on adoption and corporate

parenting respectively; and

- (ii) Note developments in children's social care over the last 6 months and support their reflection in a more useful, timely and purposeful strategy.

### **39. Motions**

There were no motions.

### **40. Questions With Notice**

#### **Question 1**

##### **From Councillor Jamu**

"Can the Cabinet Member for Finance update the Assembly on what funds the Council has received to provide support to families previously receiving free school meals?"

##### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services advised that the £170 million COVID Winter Grant Scheme would be made available in early December 2020 and used until March 2021 to support those most in need across England with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials. The allocation of the Winter Grant Scheme for Barking and Dagenham was £870,077.

#### **Question 2**

##### **From Councillor P Robinson**

"Can the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health integration update the Assembly on what are we doing as a local authority to improve local contract tracing following the failures of the track and trace system to contact all positive cases? "

##### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration advised that there was a team of call handlers who were making calls to those people whose details have been provided by track and trace. The call handlers have been trained to use council data (such as council tax records) to see if the Council held information on the person. Where a telephone or email contact is not provided, the Council had a team of visiting officers who carry out a home visit.

#### **Question 3**

##### **From Councillor Princess Bright**

"Following the fantastic reveal of our Hollywood partners Hackman Capital, Can the Cabinet Member for Employment, Skills and Aspiration update the Assembly on the progress made on the Dagenham Film Studios and explain

how we're supporting local residents into training and job opportunities?"

### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Employment Skills and Aspiration advised that the Eastbrook studios offered a fantastic opportunity to the borough in these difficult times and would not only bring in over 1,200 jobs and opportunities for local people but was also set to inject £35m per year to the local economy.

The Cabinet Member also advised that the Council would proactively build partnerships with the film studios and local educational institutes to create clear employment and training pathways into the industry for young people and older workers in the borough. In addition, the Council would work to create a strong local supply chain around the film studios.

### **Question 4**

#### **From Councillor Freeborn**

"With Christmas looking remarkably different than previous years, can the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement update the Assembly on what we will be doing to spread some Christmas cheer and support the most vulnerable in these difficult times?"

### **Response**

The Cabinet Member of Community Leadership and Engagement advised that the Council were working with the Food Network run by BDCollective, and led by the people at Humdum, and together with partners at BD Group and our Community Food Clubs, to make sure we donations are turned into a food offer to help people put a festive meal on the table at Christmas.

The Council was again supporting TimeFM's campaign to collect gifts in for local children.