

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 17 May 2023
(7:00 - 8:45 pm)

PRESENT

Cllr Irma Freeborn (Chair)
Cllr Tony Ramsay (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Princess Bright	Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Josie Channer
Cllr Faruk Choudhury	Cllr Nashitha Choudhury	Cllr Muhib Chowdhury
Cllr Alison Cormack	Cllr John Dulwich	Cllr Edna Fergus
Cllr Cameron Geddes	Cllr Syed Ghani	Cllr Kashif Haroon
Cllr Victoria Hornby	Cllr Manzoor Hussain	Cllr Jane Jones
Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe	Cllr Mohammed Khan	Cllr Donna Lumsden
Cllr Giasuddin Miah	Cllr Margaret Mullane	Cllr Fatuma Nalule
Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole	Cllr Glenda Paddle	Cllr Simon Perry
Cllr Michel Pongo	Cllr Moin Quadri	Cllr Regina Rahman
Cllr Hardial Singh Rai	Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Lynda Rice
Cllr Ingrid Robinson	Cllr Paul Robinson	Cllr Emily Rodwell
Cllr Muhammad Saleem	Cllr Muazzam Sandhu	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat
Cllr Jack Shaw	Cllr Harriet Spoor	Cllr Lee Waker
Cllr Maureen Worby	Cllr Mukhtar Yusuf	Cllr Sabbir Zamee

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Rocky Gill	Cllr Darren Rodwell	Cllr Dominic Twomey
Cllr Phil Waker		

1. Appointment of Chair and Deputy Chair

The Acting Chief Executive opened the meeting and the Monitoring Officer invited nominations for the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair of the Assembly for the 2023/24 municipal year.

The Assembly **resolved** to appoint Councillors Freeborn and Ramsay as the Chair and Deputy Chair respectively.

2. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes (1 March 2023)

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 2023 were confirmed as correct.

4. Minutes of Sub-Committees

The Assembly received and noted the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel meetings held on 20 March, 27 March and 24 April 2023.

5. Appointment of Chief Executive

(The Acting Chief Executive left the Chamber for the duration of the item and returned following the resolution made by the Assembly).

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership & Engagement presented the report on the appointment of Chief Executive.

The external recruitment exercise for a permanent Chief Executive started in February 2023 and the Deputy Leader advised on the rigorous process had been followed. Applicants were subject to technical panel assessment interviews and two candidates were shortlisted to attend informal meetings with key stakeholders and Cabinet Members, as well as undertaking psychometric testing, prior to final interviews on 24 April 2023.

After a very thorough evaluation and interview process, the JNC Panel unanimously agreed to recommend the appointment of Fiona Taylor, the current Acting Chief Executive and Strategic Director of Law and Governance, to the position of Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service).

The Deputy Leader spoke positively of her work with Ms Taylor as the Acting Chief Executive over the last twelve months and welcomed her ambition and drive to achieve the very best for the local community and for the well-being of the Council's employees.

The Assembly **resolved** to agree the appointment of Fiona Taylor to the post of Chief Executive (and Head of Paid Service) at the designated Chief Executive spot salary of £184,557.

Upon returning to the Chamber, Ms Taylor thanked the Assembly for its support.

6. Appointment of Strategic Director, My Place

(The Interim Strategic Director, My Place, left the Chamber for the duration of the item and returned following the resolution made by the Assembly).

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership & Engagement presented the report on the appointment of Strategic Director, My Place.

The Deputy Leader advised that during the former Strategic Director's career break period and subsequent to her resignation, Leona Menville, Director of Homes and Assets within My Place, undertook the role of Interim Strategic Director of My Place. On the previous incumbent's resignation, the recruitment for a permanent replacement to the role was commenced. As part of the Council's 'grow our own' succession and talent management approach it was agreed to consider internal applicants in the first instance.

Following that process and after an officer assessment panel of the sole candidate's application, it was recommended that Leona Menville be interviewed by the JNC Panel, which initially met on 23 January 2023. A further meeting took place on 20 March 2023, at which the JNC Panel received additional information and evidence as to the candidate's suitability for the permanent position. Following a very thorough evaluation process, the Panel agreed to recommend the appointment of Leona Menville, the current Interim Strategic Director, My Place to the role on a permanent basis.

The Assembly **resolved** to agree the appointment of Leona Menville to the post of Strategic Director, My Place at grade CO5 (£134,750).

Upon returning to the Chamber, Ms Menville thanked the Assembly for its support.

7. **Leader's Statement**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Community Leadership & Engagement presented a verbal statement updating the Assembly on a range of matters since the last meeting including:

Coronation Weekend: Many community events were held across the Borough to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III, including a large screen for residents to watch the event at Valence Park. The One Borough Festival took place the following day and was attended by over 10,000 local residents and their families.

Tragic Murder of Jordan Kukabu: The Deputy Leader reflected on the tragic murder of teenager Jordan Kukabu at Dagenham Heathway the previous weekend, sending a message of thoughts and prayers to the bereaved families. Four men had since been charged with murder, attempted murder and use of an offensive weapon. The Leader had already written to Sir Mark Rowley, Met Police Commission to express the Council's extreme disappointment with Police resource issues within the Borough.

New Community Hub: The 10th Community Hub in the borough had been opened with a family fun day at Chadwell Heath Community Centre in Whalebone Ward. another home in whalebone at Chadwell heath community centre; and

Local Election Results: The Deputy Leader congratulated Labour colleagues across the country for their success in the recent local elections. Labour was now the largest party across local government, which the Deputy Leader felt sent a message to the Conservative Government that enough was enough. The Deputy Leader also commented on the need for Members to continue building on that success locally, supporting Councillor Darren Rodwell and Councillor Margaret Mullane in their campaigns for Parliament at the next General Election.

8. **Appointments to the Political Structure and Other Bodies 2023/24**

The Chief Executive introduced a report on appointments to the Political Structure and Other Bodies for the 2023/24 municipal year.

The nominations schedule was tabled at the meeting.

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 on 26 July 2023.

9. Corporate Plan 2023-2026

The Deputy Leader introduced the draft Corporate Plan for 2023-2026 which set out the Council's key priorities, aims and objectives for the next three years and the activities that would help achieve them.

The Deputy Leader referred to the strong links between the Corporate Plan and the Borough Manifesto agreed in 2019, as well as the political manifesto that the Labour Group stood on at last year's Local Elections. The new Corporate Plan had been developed over many months in collaboration with local partners and the wider community and would maintain the Council's long-standing vision of "One Borough: One Community: No-One Left Behind".

The new Corporate Plan set out the Council's seven main priorities for the years ahead, namely:

- Residents are supported during the current Cost-of-Living Crisis;
- Residents are safe, protected and supported at their most vulnerable;
- Residents live healthier, happier, independent lives for longer;
- Residents prosper from good education, skills development, and secure employment;
- Residents benefit from inclusive growth and regeneration;
- Residents live in, and play their part in creating, safer, cleaner, and greener neighbourhoods;
- Residents live in good housing and avoid becoming homeless.

Cabinet Members gave their unanimous support for the new Corporate Plan and referred to a range of issues within the document and aspects relating to their respective portfolios.

Members also spoke on the magnitude of delivering on the priorities and ambitions within the Corporate Plan, particularly bearing in mind the significant underfunding of local services by the Government.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the Corporate Plan 2023-2026 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (ii) Delegate authority to the Director of Strategy, in consultation with the Leader, Deputy Leaders and Deputy Cabinet Member for Performance and Data Insight, to develop and implement an Outcomes Framework relating to

the new Corporate Plan.

10. Children's Care and Support Self-Evaluation and OFSTED Inspection Readiness

The Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Disabilities introduced the report on the Children's Care and Support Self-Evaluation and OFSTED Inspection Readiness.

Children's Care and Support (Children's Social Care) was last the subject of a full OFSTED Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) inspection in February and March of 2019. The resultant OFSTED judgement from that inspection was one of 'Requires Improvement', which followed the previous inspection in 2014 that determined the same judgement. OFSTED uses classifications for its judgements. 'Inadequate'; 'Requires Improvement'; 'Good' and 'Outstanding'.

Since 2019 work to deliver improvements in the service have been continuous, and progress throughout has been the subject of various briefings to elected Members, including updates provided to Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC).

The Cabinet Member advised that the next inspection was due to take place in 2023 and there had been many challenges since the last inspection, in particular the COVID-19 pandemic which produced significant strains on safeguarding services for children while removing protecting factors such as school services. The Borough had also grown rapidly since 2019, with the fastest rate of child growth in the country whilst being one of the most deprived boroughs in the county, of which brought many different challenges.

The service was improving; however, the pace and consistency of improvements needed to go further if the Council were to meet 'Good' by the next inspection.

Members of the Assembly gave thanks to staff that continued to work for the borough in difficult times and were pleased to note that improvements to the service would continue, despite budget limitations.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the preparations for the expected OFSTED Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services inspection, as detailed in the report; and
- (ii) Note the Children's Care and Support OFSTED Self-Evaluation 2022 at Appendix A to the report.

11. Adoption and Corporate Parenting Annual Reports 2021/22

The Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care and Disabilities introduced the Adoption and Corporate Parenting Annual Reports 2021/22.

The Adoption and Corporate Parenting annual report were presented to Assembly each year to ensure Members have sight of the work being undertaken with the children and young people they are responsible for and/or whose plan is adoption.

The Adopt London East Adoption Annual Report 2021-22, appended to the report, summarised the activity and performance of the East London Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) during this reporting year. ALE was jointly commissioned by Havering, LBBD, Tower Hamlets and Newham and was hosted by Havering. The report summaries all of the adoption work undertaken by ALE for all four boroughs which included the recruitment of adopters, family finding for children awaiting adoption and all post-adoption support for children and adopted adults.

The Local Authority was currently still measured on individual performance by the DfE requirements of A10 and A2 which were outlined at the end of the report in Appendix 1. This performance was a combined responsibility of the Local Authority and ALE as the LA was responsible for the children when they are Looked After awaiting court consent to the adoption plan and ALE was responsible for identifying suitable matches for children who had an adoption plan. Any delay in either of these areas impacted on these performance measures. The Local Authority retained all responsibilities for the children as Looked After until the adoption order was granted.

The Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021-22, appended to the report, summarised the activity and performance of the Council with regards to its corporate parenting responsibilities during that reporting year. It outlined key achievements and how the Council was delivering on promises to children in care and care leavers.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the Adopt London East Report 2021/22, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report; and
- (ii) Note the Corporate Parenting Annual Report 2021/22, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

12. Community Safety Partnership Plan 2023-2026

The Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety presented a report on the new overarching Community Safety Partnership Plan (CSPP) for 2023-2026.

The Cabinet Member explained that the CSPP had been developed by the Borough's Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Board and represented a significant commitment by partners, including the Council, Police, Fire, Probation and Health authorities as well as local voluntary groups, to working together to improve the lives of the Borough's residents. A Crime and Disorder Strategic Assessment (CDSA) was undertaken last year to understand trends and patterns in crime and disorder locally and to support priority setting. The CDSA identified that burglary, robbery, theft and vehicle offences during 2021/22 were below pre-Covid 19 levels although in comparison to 2020/21, total offences were up by 10.4% to 20,560.

The previous three-year CSPP had established five key priorities and the public consultation on the 2023-2026 plan supported the retention of those five priorities,

namely:

- Priority 1 - Keeping children and young people safe.
- Priority 2 - Tackling safety in the neighbourhood & community.
- Priority 3 - Reducing offending.
- Priority 4 - Standing up to hate, intolerance and extremism.
- Priority 5 - Tackling violence against women and girls.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration advised the Assembly that as part of the consultation process, a question-and-answer session was hosted with women and girls in the borough. Following on from this session, a Women's Safety Forum was launched which would be meeting on a regular basis.

The Cabinet Member for Educational Attainment and School Improvement advised the issues of gang culture and knife crime was being discussed openly in schools and children were being offered the opportunity to talk about or report issues they were scared of anonymously. There was also a regular Police presence after school in many secondary schools in the borough.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety advised that:

- The Council had invested in a new Community Safety Enforcement Team and were undertaking partnership working by working closely with the Borough Superintendent;
- Residents were being asked to report to the Council crime hotspots in the borough that they were aware of; and
- The Council and the Police were working collaboratively to tackle gang culture and knife crime in the borough, including looking into and stopping 'County Lines' drug dealing.

The Assembly **resolved** to approve the Community Safety Partnership Plan 2023-26, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

13. Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24

The Monitoring Officer presented a report on the Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24.

Further to changes to the Members Allowance Scheme in 2022, the 2022 London Councils Independent Remuneration Panel (LCIRP) report recommended that Basic Allowances and SRAs should be linked to the local government staff pay award each year, as a way of ensuring that councillors received annual increases in line with those received by staff. Although that proposal did not form part of the recommendations to the Assembly last year, it was now proposed that the staff pay award for the preceding year be applied to the Basic Allowance and SRAs going forward (ie. the average local government staff pay award of 6.6% for the 2022/23 financial year be applied to the 2023/24 Members' Allowances Scheme).

The report also proposed the standardisation of an annual uplift to the Dependants' Carers' Allowance in line with the effective date of the London Living

Wage.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the Basic Allowance paid to all councillors and Special Responsibility Allowances be increased annually in line with the average local government staff pay award for the preceding year;
- (ii) Agree that the Dependants' Carers' Allowance be increased in line with the effective date of any uplift to the London Living Wage; and
- (iii) Adopt the Members' Allowances Scheme 2023/24 at Appendix A to the report, to be effective from 18 May 2023

14. Motions

There were no motions.

15. Questions With Notice

There were no questions with notice.

Main Council Committee Appointments – May 2023
(Appointments are for one year unless otherwise stated)

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

Other Internal / Outside Bodies Appointments – May 2023
 (Appointments are for one year unless otherwise stated)

Body / Committee	Appointments
Chadwell Heath Community Trust Board	Cllrs Perry, Pongo and Yusuf
East London Waste Authority	Cllrs Akwaboah and Haroon
Employee Joint Consultative Committee	Cllrs Ghani, Saleem, Twomey and Worby (two vacancies)
Member Development Group	Cllr S Bright (Chair), Cllrs Chowdhury, Khan, Lumsden, Nalule, Oluwole, I Robinson, Saleem, Rahman, Zamee (three vacancies)
OFSTED Report Panel	Cllr Kangethe (Chair), Cllrs Akwaboah, Fergus, Lumsden, Oluwole, Paddle, Rahman, I Robinson and P Waker (one vacancy)