

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 10 October 2012
(7:00 - 8:31 pm)

PRESENT

Councillor N S S Gill (Chair)
Councillor J Davis (Deputy Chair)

Councillor J L Alexander
Councillor A Gafoor Aziz
Councillor G Barratt
Councillor P Burgon
Councillor J Channer
Councillor H J Collins
Councillor C Geddes
Councillor M Hussain
Councillor I S Jamu
Councillor E Keller
Councillor M A McCarthy
Councillor M McKenzie MBE
Councillor T Perry
Councillor H S Rai
Councillor L A Reason
Councillor D Rodwell
Councillor A Salam
Councillor S Tarry
Councillor G M Vincent
Councillor P T Waker
Councillor M M Worby

Councillor S Ashraf
Councillor R Baldwin
Councillor S J Bremner
Councillor E Carpenter
Councillor J Clee
Councillor R Douglas
Councillor R Gill
Councillor A S Jamu
Councillor E Kangethe
Councillor G Letchford
Councillor J E McDermott
Councillor M Mullane
Councillor B Poulton
Councillor A K Ramsay
Councillor L Rice
Councillor T Saeed
Councillor L A Smith
Councillor D Twomey
Councillor L R Waker
Councillor J R White

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor S Alasia
Councillor D Hunt
Councillor E O Obasohan
Councillor C Rice

Councillor L Butt
Councillor D S Miles
Councillor J Ogungbose
Councillor J Wade

31. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

32. Minutes (11 July 2012)

The minutes of the meeting on 11 July 2012 were confirmed as correct.

33. Member Development Charter Presentation

Assembly noted this report introduced by the Chief Executive, Graham Farrant.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Reason reported to Assembly that the London Charter for Elected Member Development had first been awarded to the Council in 2009. She went on to say that an external team had re-assessed the Council in July 2012 and one of the members of that team, Councillor Catherine West, Leader of Islington Council, was in the Chamber to present the Charter Certificate.

Councillor Reason thanked the Members and officers who had been interviewed during the assessment and those officers who had maintained the Member handbooks, development programmes, reports and Member learning strategy, all of which had been rigorously examined by the Assessors.

Councillor Reason went on to say that:

- the Council is committed to Member Development,
- we had been the first council in London to be awarded the Charter and were the first to be re-assessed,
- training and briefings were provided to Members on a vast range of subjects to equip them to be effective councillors,
- Members were supported to meet subject experts and colleagues from other authorities,
- the 32 new Members elected to the Council in May 2010 were testament to the value of the Member Development Programme as by putting their training into practice they have become effective community leaders and great contributors to the Council,
- Members lead Member Development in identifying the required training and how it is delivered,
- the training is evaluated to ensure continuous improvement.

Councillor Reason further thanked the Member Development Group – Councillors N Gill, Keller, Rai, Letchford, Ogungbose, IS Jamu and Carpetner – for their hard work and input.

Through the Chair, Councillor Reason welcomed Councillor Catherine West to formally present the Charter Certificate.

Councillor West stated that she was pleased and privileged to have been invited to present Barking and Dagenham with the Certificate in recognition of having been re-awarded the Charter for Member Development. She and her co-assessors had spent the 25 July at the council and had enjoyed meeting Members and officers. She particularly noted the strength of the Democratic Services team.

She went on to say that in a period of time where Councillor Development has never been so important it was enlightening to see that Barking and Dagenham Council had become the first council in London to be successfully re-accredited against the Charter standard. Across England 206 (62%) councils had made the commitment, or achieved the Charter, and Barking and Dagenham Council continued to be part of this growing number.

Councillor West said that the Charter recognised the investment and value that the Council places in member development. The authority recognised that development of all Councillors was critical to the successful achievement and

delivery of strategic priorities on behalf of the people represented and served in the community. The development and support that Barking and Dagenham Council provided for all Councillors would become even more important in order to respond to the challenges and opportunities of the Localism Agenda.

She went on to say that the role of the Councillor was right at the heart of that agenda and required us all to work differently and with new skills as we engage, empower, and lead our local communities. It had therefore never been more important to ensure that all Councillors were provided with the skills and support to carry out that evolving role.

Councillor West felt it important to mention that Barking and Dagenham Council had been fully supported on their journey to reassessment against the award by both London Councils and South East Employers.

She said that all members and many officers had been instrumental in the success in achieving the standard and particularly acknowledged the commitment and contribution from:

- Cllr Rocky Gill for the leadership commitment to member development
- Cllr Linda Reason in her capacity as Chair of the Member Development Group for championing member development and ensuring a member led approach and;
- Fiona Jamieson (Member Development Officer) for enthusiastically supporting members to achieve the award.

She said that the Assessment Team had seen many examples of excellent practice in respect of how member development was supporting community leadership, collaborative working and supporting the key priorities of the council. This 'best' practice included:

- Pre-Assembly briefings that informed and ensured all councillors were aware of local and national initiatives and policy that impacted on the council and the community
- Members taking a lead in their own development through the completion of Personal Development Plans
- The Member Development Group evaluating the impact of member development to ensure VFM and relevance to members; and
- Promoting the role of the councillor through the hosting of a pre-election event to support candidates and potential councillors.

Councillor West advised the Assembly that London Councils and South East Employers looked forward to Barking and Dagenham Council continuing its commitment to member development and sharing its success with other Boroughs and congratulated the Council on the successful achievement of the Charter standard.

In accepting the Charter Certificate on behalf of the Council, Councillor Reason thanked Councillor West for attending and for her kind words.

34. Response to Petition - Controlled Parking Zone - Ripple and Harrow Roads, Barking

Assembly received and noted the terms of a petition presented by the Lead Petitioner, Mr John Far, requesting that the Council stop proposals to implement controlled parking zones (CPZs) within Ripple Road and Harrow Road.

Mr Far thanked Assembly and said that the residents of Ripple and Harrow Roads were against the CPZ that was proposed to be implemented in that area. He went on to say that following receipt of a letter from the Council advising that the consensus had been to implement a CPZ, he had been round to a great majority of the residents and only one in Ripple Road and two in Harrow Road had said they were in favour of a CPZ. He concluded from this that the Council had misrepresented the facts that residents had requested the CPZ.

He further stated that the implementation of a CPZ would:

- deter customers from coming to shops and businesses in the area;
- cause difficulties for residents attending the medical centre;
- cause hardship for residents if they had to pay to park outside their houses.

At the invitation of the Chair, Mr Kashif Syed spoke in support of the petition, saying that there had been no problems at any time regarding parking. He also raised concerns as to the cost of permits, explaining that residents had originally been advised that the cost would be about £25 but that now a charge would be imposed depending on the car engine size. He said he had personally spoken to residents in Ripple Road and that they did not want the CPZ to be implemented.

Assembly received the response to the petition introduced by the Divisional Director of Environmental Services (DDES), Robin Payne, who explained the consultation process and stated that two consultations had been carried out – one in Ripple Road and one in Harrow and adjacent roads.

The DDES referred the Assembly to the consultation tables set out in the report and in particular that 68.29% of the responses from Ripple Road and 60% of the responses from Harrow Road had voted in favour of a CPZ.

Following the commencement in June 2012 of the formal Traffic Management Order stage, and following concerns raised that Ripple and Harrow Roads would be included in it, the decision was taken not to seal the Order but to conduct further consultation.

In debating the matter Members questioned:

- ❖ the suggestion by the petitioners that there had been no traffic issues in Ripple Road, given how long that road is, and
- ❖ the proposed change to the cost of a parking permit.

Mr Far, the Lead Petitioner, responded to the first point stating that Ripple Road was almost all business orientated.

As to the second point, the DDES advised that when this matter went out for

consultation in 2011 a permit would have cost in the region of £22.50. However, the Fees and Charges Report of February 2012 had introduced a new charging scheme based on engine size, under which a permit could cost up to £70.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities, Councillor Alexander, stated that she had intended to be brief as there was to be a re-consultation.

Nevertheless, she said that she is a Ward Member in this area and that twelve residents had visited her surgery requesting a CPZ.

Referring to access to the Medical Centre, she stated that disabled or very unwell residents are able to apply for a Blue Badge for their cars. She further referred to one of the residents in Harrow Road who has a disabled bay at her home but is unable to park in it because of the selfishness of people who park in Harrow Road.

The Cabinet Member was concerned to note that the Lead Petitioner had referred to Ripple Road as a business area, particularly as Ripple Road residents were constantly suffering the effects of people parking there and then using the underground station in Upney Lane.

In conclusion she said that:

- the Lead Petitioner could not speak for everyone in Ripple and Harrow Road as he had only consulted a small number of people;
- the Council had acted on the consultation responses that had come back to it
- the Council is doing what has been requested in that a re-consultation will take place.

Assembly **agreed** for the reasons set out in the report:

1. that it is unable to support the petition to abandon plans for a Controlled Park Zone in Ripple Road and Harrow Road; and
2. that it supports proposals for a re-consultation of Controlled Parking in the Ripple and Harrow Road area.

35. Response to Petition - Controlled Parking Zone - Sutton Road, Barking

Assembly received and noted the terms of a petition presented by Mr Kamram Malik on behalf of the Lead Petitioner, Mrs L Bowden, regarding the charges applied to resident and visitor permits and the decision to implement a scheme in Sutton Road.

Mr Malik advised the Assembly that he was speaking on behalf of all the people who had signed the petition opposing the charges and stated that they were totally opposed to and objected to the implementation of a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ).

He went on to say that the Council had a duty to consider this statement and requested that the charges and CPZ be cancelled.

Referring to the consultation table set out in the report, Mr Malik said that he believed it to be incorrect and inconsistent.

Mr Malik concluded that he would fully support the Lead Petitioner should she refer this matter to the High Court.

Assembly received the response to the petition introduced by the Divisional Director of Environmental Services (DDES), Robin Payne, who referred to the explanation he had provided in the earlier report to Assembly as to the consultation process.

The DDES referred to the consultation table set out in the report stating that an overall response rate of 45% had been received but that the results had been mixed. He went on to say that all results had been mapped, showing the density and preferences of received responses and that they had been taken to a Ward Members' meeting on 4 May 2012, following which the decision to proceed had been taken based on concerns that Sutton Road would be affected by displaced parking.

During the formal Traffic Management Order (TMO) stage questions had been received regarding the consultation results and the operating times but the petition had not been received until after the TMO had been sealed.

Assembly noted that the CPZ was implemented on 1 August 2012 and remains live.

Councillor Twomey – Gascoigne Ward Member – confirmed to Assembly that the Ward Members had met with the DDES and made a decision based on the fact that they had not wanted Sutton Road to become a parking area for the rest of the estate. He stated, however, that in hindsight and having considered the petition carefully, he could not support the recommendations in the report. He supported the residents and asked Assembly to support the recommendation that the TMO cease, and that there be a re-consultation.

Councillor Ashraf – Gascoigne Ward Member – confirmed her support for Councillor Twomey's recommendation.

At the invitation of the Chair, the DDES responded that should Assembly recommend suspension of the TMO and re-consultation, other roads may be affected and consideration would need to be given to stopping the parking permits and also as to the value on the unexpired part of the permit.

Assembly **agreed** to:

1. support the petition;
2. support the suspension of the TMO; and
3. support proposals for a re-consultation of Controlled Parking in Sutton Road and surrounding roads.

36. Response to Petition - Thamesview Community Safety

Assembly received and noted the terms of a petition presented by Mrs Nadira Begum, requesting the Council to arrange further warden patrols and security cameras on the streets of the Thamesview Estate.

Mrs Begum informed Assembly that she represented the residents of the Thamesview Estate and that:

- over the last few months they had had concerns as to the safety in their homes
- they were on constant alert, fearing to leave their homes unattended
- homes had been broken into at times when parents leave their homes to collect their children from school.

Mrs Begum confirmed that she had been working with officers from the Council, particularly, Katherine Gilcreest the Anti-Social Behaviour Team Manager, and asked Assembly to help the residents increase safety in their homes by increasing patrols and fitting CCTV.

Assembly received the response to the petition presented by the Corporate Director for Adult and Community Services, Anne Bristow (CDACS), who confirmed the concerns raised and that Mrs Begum had kindly worked with the Council to address them.

The CDACS went on to say that the police had identified a pattern to the burglaries in July this year and that an action plan had been put in place across the partnership.

As a result of a Crime Prevention Road Show (CPRS) in Abbey Ward in July 2012, officers had been put in touch with Mrs Begum, following which a CPRS was arranged for the Thamesview Estate in August 2012, which approximately 100 residents attended. A further CPRS is planned for the end of October 2012.

The CDACS advised that burglaries had decreased but that officer recommendation is not to proceed with additional CCTV as there are five around Bastable Avenue and it was felt that this was not deemed to be an appropriate response to burglaries. Additional police patrols and the action plan focus on prevention and these measures are currently delivering the reduction in burglaries.

Councillor Channer – Thames Ward Member – was pleased to note the positive response to the Road Shows in getting information out to residents. She commended Katherine Gilcreest for her pro-active approach and thanked Mrs Begum for her efforts in bringing the petition to the Assembly.

The CDACS added her thanks to Mrs Begum and concluded that working together with residents and the police makes the community powerful.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities, Councillor Alexander, advised Assembly that she had had a positive meeting with the Lead Petitioner and that a further meeting had been planned. She too commended the team work of the Council, the residents and the police.

Assembly:

- (i) **noted** the action taken to respond to the concerns raised in the petition and the substantial decrease in burglary offences resulting from this work; and
- (ii) **agreed** that all reasonable steps to respond to this petition are being taken.

37. Revised Schedule of Cabinet Portfolios

Assembly received and noted this report presented by the Leader of the Council, Councillor Smith, which set out details of Cabinet Members and their revised portfolios.

38. Appointments

Assembly **agreed** the following appointments:

Councillor Saeed to the Personnel Board; and

Councillor Kangethe as the Deputy Chair of the Standards Committee.

39. Joint Appointments Committee

Assembly received this report introduced by the Chief Executive, Graham Farrant.

Assembly **agreed** subject to the concurrent approval of Thurrock Council, that:

- (i) a Joint Appointments Committee be established for the purpose of interviewing and making appointments of all relevant staff at Chief Officer and Deputy Chief Officer level in respect of those posts serving both authorities jointly under any shared service or other arrangement,
- (ii) the terms of reference and membership of the Joint Committee be approved as set out in Appendix A to the report,
- (iii) a further report would be presented to a future meeting addressing the differing arrangements currently in place in both authorities for appointing the Chief Executive (Head of Service), as well as the structures for dealing with issues of JNC disciplinary, appeals, gradings and conditions;
- (iv) the venue and Chair of the Joint Committee alternate between the two authorities, with the Leader of the Council being appointed to this position by Barking and Dagenham,
- (v) meetings of the Joint Appointments Committee be conducted in accordance with the constitutional provisions of both authorities, and
- (vi) the Monitoring Officer be authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Council's Constitution as are necessary.

40. Appointment of Monitoring Officer

Assembly received this report introduced by the Chief Executive, Graham Farrant.

Assembly agreed that Fiona Taylor, the Head of Legal & Democratic Services, be appointed as the officer designated to be the Monitoring Officer, in accordance with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 with effect from 10 October 2012.

41. Appointment of Section 151 Officer

Assembly received this report introduced by the Chief Executive, Graham Farrant.

Assembly:

- (i) **agreed** to the appointment of Jonathan Bunt, Divisional Director of Finance, as the Council's Statutory Section 151 Officer until further notice;
- (ii) **noted** that a further report will be presented to Assembly to confirm the position of the Section 151 Officer in the light of proposals under any future shared management arrangements with Thurrock, and
- (iii) **agreed** that pending the outcome of (ii) above the Chief Executive be authorised to review and amend the Council Constitution, in particular the Scheme of Delegation.

42. Appointment of Independent Persons to the Standards Committee

Assembly received this report introduced by the Monitoring Officer, Fiona Taylor.

Assembly **agreed**:

1. the appointment of Mr Michael Carpenter and Mr Brian Little as Independent Persons in accordance with Section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 with immediate effect until the Assembly meeting following the next municipal elections in 2014;
2. the payment of an allowance of £500 per annum to each of the Independent Persons, together with reasonable expenses for travel and subsistence; and
3. that the Members' Allowance Scheme set out in Part F of the Council Constitution be amended accordingly.

43. Amendment to the Governance Arrangements for the Elevate East London LLP Board

Assembly received this report introduced by the Chief Executive, Graham Farrant.

Assembly **agreed**:

- (i) the appointment of the Chief Executive and the Corporate Director of Adult and Community Services, in addition to the Portfolio Holder for Customer Services as the three Council Board Representatives on the Elevate East London LLP Board, and

- (ii) that the Council Board Representatives be authorised to appoint alternate representatives as and when required, to ensure full Council representation at Board meetings, in accordance with the Elevate Partnership deed.

44. Motions

Motion – The improvement of facilities at Barking Station for elderly and disabled people.

Moved by Councillor Rai and seconded by Councillor Geddes:

“There are insufficient facilities for elderly and disabled people at Barking Station. Although there is one lift leading to one platform, to access the other platforms is a very long and uphill struggle for passengers with luggage. Barking & Dagenham Council is asked to start a dialogue with Transport for London and British Rail to install escalators at all platforms at the Barking Station as soon as possible.”

In seconding the motion Councillor Geddes stated that it was very poor indeed for such a busy station to be neglected for as long as it has. It is not step free and suffers from congestion. He noted that there was a problem with a delay to the C2C contract but hoped Assembly would support the motion.

In accordance with the provisions of the Council Constitution, the Chair exercised his discretion in allowing Councillor Tarry to move the following amendment, which was seconded by Councillor Hussain:

“Barking Station is the busiest transport hub in our Borough, served by C2C, London Overground, and two tube line services. Despite this, there are significant accessibility issues for older and disabled people – particularly wheelchair users, and families with pushchairs at Barking Station. Although there is one lift leading to one platform, to access the other platforms is a very long and uphill struggle for these passengers.

Barking and Dagenham Council is asked to start a dialogue with C2C (National Express), and Transport for London to install step-free access at all platforms at Barking Station as soon as possible. This is in the context of year-on-year fares rises (again, in January 2012 these will average 6.2%), which hit the passengers of Barking and Dagenham hard financially.

The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham Council is, therefore, called upon to work with key community stakeholders including every-day commuters, disabled travel rights campaigners Transport for All, London Assembly Members, MPs, and community transport campaigners Together for Transport, to mount a sustained campaign to install more step-free access at Barking Station and to oppose the planned Government and TfL fares increases.”

In moving the amendment Councillor Tarry stated that he supported Councillor Rai's motion but felt that this amendment tightened the motion.

Members spoke in support of both the motion and the amendment.

Councillor McCarthy noted Councillor Rai's membership of the Public Transport Liaison Group. He referred to the visit in the recent past of the then Transport Secretary to Barking Station and advised Assembly that a master plan was in place. However, it had been delayed because of the West Coast Line issues and the Coalition Government's transport policy. He stated that C2C was responsible for the station but considered that its franchise should have been removed, and whoever took over the franchise must put in the capital required.

Councillor McCarthy, as Ward Member for Eastbrook where Dagenham East Station is situated, said that as well as concentrating on Barking Station we must also address access issues for all the stations in the borough.

Councillor Waker concurred with Councillor McCarthy in that disabled people were unable to access Dagenham East Station and that this Council should push for improvements at other stations too.

Councillor Carpenter noted the difficulty in struggling with a suitcase up the stairs at Barking Station.

Councillor Letchford stated that he had used Barking Station for his journey to and from work and had always been concerned at the congestion on the stairs.

Councillor Hussain as Ward Member for Abbey Ward confirmed his support for Councillor Tarry's amendment, adding how difficult it was for mothers carrying pushchairs and prams to access the station.

Councillor Saeed strongly supported the motion and concurred with Councillor McCarthy's comments.

Councillor R Gill supported everything that Members had said and commended the work that had been done by Councillor McCarthy. He referred to the wider issues of neglect around London as a whole and spoke of having West Ham United, a premier league football club, nearby and Dagenham and Redbridge FC in the borough but that there is no direct rail link to Stratford.

In response, Councillor Rai thanked the Chair and said that having seen the wording for the amendment to the motion and having listened to the debate, that he personally supported the proposed amendment as moved by Councillor Tarry as it added clarity to the original motion. He further thanked Members for their support.

The amendment was put to the vote and was unanimously **agreed**, thus becoming the substantive motion, which was then put to the vote and also **agreed**.

45. Leader's Question Time

None.

46. General Question Time

General Question 1 from Councillor Douglas:

"Please tell me if any housing development, now or in the future, will incorporate any dwellings for disabled people, and tenants with wheelchairs?"

Please let me know how many dwellings, if you can, and/or the proportion of housing to meet these needs in any housing development?"

Response from Councillor P Waker, Cabinet Member for Housing:

"Our Housing and Planning policies are very clear on this. All new homes in the borough are required to be built to lifetime standards. That means that the home has sufficient space standards, doorway widths and good accessibility so that if over time the mobility needs of the family change the home will remain suitable. In addition to this we require that 10% of all new homes are built to a standard to meet the mobility needs of people with physical disabilities.

It's also worth me saying that in addition to the 146 new Council homes we have completed we are on site with the 477 homes through our LEP (Barking and Dagenham Reside) and we have firm plans for another 400 Council new houses and flats with proposals to come forward for around another 1,000 over 10 years. All of these Council managed and let homes will be built to space standards that will at least meet lifetime homes or exceed that with 10% or more designed for people with disabilities.

We have recently learned that we are building more homes for affordable rent than in any other part of London. In fact, many Housing Associations are not building affordable homes. We are also providing a number of homes at slightly higher rents for working people.

The Cabinet is looking at ways to help disabled people in the borough, especially following the closure of the Remploy factory in this borough. We are doing our best to provide a real future for the disabled residents of this borough."

General Question 2 from Councillor Carpenter:

"Councillors receive daily updates on crime in Barking and Dagenham and it is worrying to see the high levels of domestic violence incidents compared to other types of crime.

For example, a recent daily bulletin (dated 4 October 2012) showed 18 incidents of domestic violence of which 11 were crimes. On the same report, there were 2 burglaries, 2 thefts from motor vehicles, and 2 thefts of motor vehicles. I know that we are not comparing like with like here, but this is a regular pattern in the daily crime incident reports that councillors receive.

Is there any evidence that the high levels of domestic violence in our Borough are decreasing, and if so, by how much?

Although it is encouraging that victims are seeking help, has the Council in place strategies to decrease the incidence of domestic violence? What are the most effective measures in place to do this and is there any evidence of this success?

Have the views of domestic violence victims been sought about the services they

find most helpful and, if so, what are the three services most valued by them?"

Response from Councillor Alexander, Cabinet Member for Crime, Justice and Communities:

"Thank you Chair – this raises more questions than I can give answers to. I will arrange a meeting with the Domestic Violence Team and Councillor Carpenter."

At the invitation of the Chair to speak, Councillor Carpenter said that she was disappointed that some of the questions could not be adequately answered.

Councillor Channer requested that the briefing by the Domestic Violence Team be opened up to all Members.