

# MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 5 October 2016  
(7:01 - 8:03 pm)

## PRESENT

Cllr Syed Ghani (Chair)  
Cllr Edna Fergus (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Syed Ahammad	Cllr Sanchia Alasia	Cllr Jeanne Alexander
Cllr Saima Ashraf	Cllr Melanie Bartlett	Cllr Simon Bremner
Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Laila M. Butt	Cllr Evelyn Carpenter
Cllr Peter Chand	Cllr Josephine Channer	Cllr Faruk Choudhury
Cllr Irma Freeborn	Cllr Cameron Geddes	Cllr Rocky Gill
Cllr Kashif Haroon	Cllr Chris Hughes	Cllr Amardeep Singh Jamu
Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe	Cllr Eileen Keller
Cllr Danielle Lawrence	Cllr Mick McCarthy	Cllr Giasuddin Miah
Cllr Margaret Mullane	Cllr James Ogungbose	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole
Cllr Moin Quadri	Cllr Hardial Singh Rai	Cllr Tony Ramsay
Cllr Linda Reason	Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Lynda Rice
Cllr Darren Rodwell	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat	Cllr Danielle Smith
Cllr Sam Tarry	Cllr Bill Turner	Cllr Dominic Twomey
Cllr Lee Waker	Cllr Phil Waker	Cllr John White
Cllr Maureen Worby	Cllr Dan Young	

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Abdul Aziz                      Cllr Dave Miles                      Cllr Jeff Wade

### 25. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

### 26. Minutes (13 July 2016)

The minutes of the Assembly held on 13 July 2016 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 27. Leader's Statement

The Leader of the Council presented a verbal statement updating the Assembly on a range of matters since the last meeting which included:

- Barking Riverside being referred to as 'Barcelona on Thames' in a national newspaper. The a three page story was featured in the Evening Standard on the potential transformation of Barking Riverside with thousands of new homes and jobs, as well as restaurants, bars, a marina and a ferry service.
- The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, would be visiting the Borough on 6

October following the approval of the Masterplan for Barking Riverside. As many as 50% of homes at the site would be affordable, an increase of 22% from the previous Mayor of London.

- Plans for the redevelopment of the Vicarage Field Shopping Centre in Barking Town Centre had been submitted. The plans included a comprehensive redevelopment of the existing shopping centre and adjoining buildings to provide shops, restaurants and leisure facilities with more choice and variety; as well as up to 850 high quality homes, a three-form entry primary school, a six to eight screen cinema and a 300-capacity music venue. The plans also included a 150-room hotel; flexible enterprise space for start-up businesses; healthcare facilities and extensive public realm and green space.
- The Borough Manifesto was currently out for public consultation, of which more than 800 people had responded. The consultation was open until Monday 31 October.
- The Borough's success at both A level and GCSE bucked the national trend with results at local schools rising even as they dipped across the country as a whole. A level results improved for the fifth year running and had now reached 77.8% A\* - C grade. There was a 4% rise in marks at A\* to C on average for GCSE English and Maths.
- The third annual Youth Parade took place on Sunday 18 September 2016. Celebrating the achievements and positive contributions of the Borough's young people.

## 28. Appointments

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- Appoint Councillor Quadri to the Standards Committee to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Councillor Freeborn from the Committee; and
- Appoint Councillor White to the Personnel Board to fill the vacancy created by the resignation of Councillor Quadri from the Board.

## 29. Corporate Plan 2016/17

The Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement introduced a report outlining the detail of the Corporate Plan 2016/17, which would enable the Council to monitor progress of the delivery of its vision and priorities.

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to highlight some of the several achievements made from 2014 to 2016, which included:

- The launch of the Gender Equality Charter;
- The launch of the shared ownership scheme for tenants; and
- Dagenham Library voted library of the year nationally.

Moving forward, the Cabinet Member explained that although the Council had already achieved a great deal, there was still work to be undertaken which would be guided through the Borough Manifesto. The Borough Manifesto, currently

under consultation, set out the long term vision for the Borough.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the Key Performance Indicators for 2016/17 which were contained within Appendix 1, attached to the report.

In considering the Corporate Plan 2016/17 and in a response to a question, the Assembly noted that the Council were building relationships with neighbouring authorities, particularly in relation to planning.

Assembly **resolved** to adopt the Corporate Plan 2016/17 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

### **30. Council Constitution - Updates**

The Director of Law and Governance presented a report on amendments to the Council Constitution.

The amendment requiring the Assembly's approval related to the primary location of Council meetings. In view of the new webcasting facilities at the Town Hall, Barking which were due to be fully functional from Autumn 2016 and accessibility issues at the Civic Centre, Dagenham from October 2016 relating to the lease to the University of Coventry, it was proposed that the Town Hall be designated as the primary location for all Council meetings. Provision would remain for other venues such as the Civic Centre and Barking Learning Centre to be used in certain circumstances where meetings were not webcast or where there were availability issues at the Town Hall. The Chief Executive would be responsible for agreeing those arrangements. The full revised wording was set out within Appendix 1 of the report.

The Assembly noted a schedule detailing the full list of updates, which had been implemented by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Constitution review / revision arrangements, was set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Clarification was sought regarding the start time of the Corporate Parenting Group and the location of Personnel Board. The Director of Law and Governance confirmed requests would be considered in relation to the time and location of individual meetings, dependent on circumstances.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve the amendment to paragraph 2.2 of the Council's Meeting Rules (Chapter 3, Part 2 of the Constitution) regarding the designation of the Town Hall, Barking as the primary location of Council meetings; and
- (ii) Note the schedule of amendments to the Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 to the report.

### **31. Health and Wellbeing Board Membership**

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration introduced a report advising on a proposed change to the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board (HWBB) to include an additional Cabinet Member appointment, following

the deletion of the post of Corporate Director of Children's Services and the transfer of the statutory functions attached to that post to an existing Board Member, which reduced the Council's representation on the HWBB.

The report also proposed a further change to the Articles of the HWBB (Chapter 7, Part 2 of the Council Constitution) to reflect the role of the independent Chairs of the Local Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children Boards.

Having considered the proposal, the Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Agree that the membership of the Health and Wellbeing Board be amended to include a further Cabinet Member position while the statutory Director of Children's Services position on the Board is being fulfilled by an existing statutory Board member;
- (ii) Note the Leader's appointment of Councillor Bill Turner, Cabinet Member for Corporate Performance and Delivery, to fill the new position;
- (iii) Note that the Leader had appointed Councillor Sade Bright, Cabinet Member for Equalities and Cohesion, to the Board following a review of Cabinet portfolio responsibilities in April 2016; and
- (iv) Agree that the Articles of the Health and Wellbeing Board (Chapter 7, Part 2 of the Council Constitution) be amended to reflect the above arrangements and also the standing invited guest status of the independent Chairs of the Local Safeguarding Children and Adults Board on the Board, as detailed in paragraph 2.2 of the report.

Following comments from Councillor Reason, the Cabinet Member agreed to look into the basis of why the existing wording of the Constitution precludes non Cabinet members sitting on the HWBB and to report back to the Member.

### **32. Councillor Membership on Housing Forums**

The Director of Law and Governance introduced a report on proposed changes to Councillor membership on Housing Forums.

The new arrangement would involve all ward councillors receiving formal invitations and papers for their respective Forum (Barking Forum – Abbey, Becontree, Eastbury, Gascoigne, Goresbrook, Longbridge, Mayesbrook and Thames; Dagenham Forum – Alibon, Chadwell Heath, Eastbrook, Heath, Parsloes, River, Valence, Village and Whalebone). To accord with the current voting arrangements under the Forum's Constitution, one councillor per ward would be entitled to vote.

The Assembly **resolved** that all ward councillors be invited to their respective Housing Forum and that, for the purposes of voting and to accord with the Forum's Constitution, there shall be one voting right per ward.

### **33. Motions**

None had been received.

## **34. Questions With Notice**

### **Question 1**

#### **From Councillor Mullane**

“The Brexit vote for Barking and Dagenham was at 62.8% to leave the EU. Aside from the borrowing that has been undertaken to fund the Gascoigne Estate renewal, what opportunities and discussions has the Leader undertaken to exploit any opportunities this historic vote will give us?”

#### **Response**

The Leader corrected the statement insofar as the turnout of the referendum was 63.8% of the proportion of those eligible to vote. Those who actively voted to leave was 39.8%.

The Leader explained that there were no restrictions on opportunities for the Borough and he actively promoted the Borough to countries around the world, not just within Europe.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Councillor Mullane asked if the Leader could give some examples of the opportunities within the Borough.

The Leader explained that there were several projects which had global investment, including:

- Ford Stamping Plant redevelopment
- Bean Park development of 3000 homes
- London East development

Future investments included the redevelopment of Barking Town Centre and Vicarage Field Shopping Centre.

### **Question 2**

#### **From Councillor Mullane**

“I have been asked by Village constituents to clarify with you is it true that the housing service only has the use of one occupational Therapist as I have been told there are currently backlogs for adaptations?”

#### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration advised that there were six occupational therapists that were based in adult social care and assessed all residents who may need an adaptation. All six would deal with housing cases. There was one designated post within the service which was currently vacant however this had no affect on the backlog.

### **Question 3**

#### **From Councillor McCarthy**

“Can the relevant Cabinet Member detail what actions the Council will take to London City Airport who have concentrated their flight paths causing misery for many thousands of Barking and Dagenham residents. The issue is likely to worsen with bigger planes and flights increasing from 70,000 to 110,000 per annum agreed by Government. They are currently breaking the times when they can fly by constantly having flights departing before 5:30 am when they should not be any activity before 6:30am. There is to be a review in 2017 and i am hoping this council will be leading a campaign to improve the lives of those thousands of residents impacted worse by the noise pollution emanating from London City Airport.”

#### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment advised that the Council would write to City Airport and the London Borough of Newham highlighting concerns regarding the early morning flights and requesting answers to these concerns. The Council would also request access to their noise monitoring data.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Councillor McCarthy enquired as to whether specialist noise equipment could be provided to assist with solving the issue.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Council would enquire about their specialist aircraft noise monitoring trailers and if these were available whether one can be sited within the borough on a temporary basis.

### **Question 4**

#### **From Councillor McCarthy**

“Can the relevant Cabinet Member let me know how the Council is progressing to reforming a friends of chase group and attaining green flag status at the Eastbrookend Country Park”

#### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement advised that the Ranger Service were currently speaking to volunteers and community groups to acquire feedback on the appetite for a new friends group.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Councillor McCarthy enquired as to whether the park would be awarded green flag status.

The Cabinet Member advised that this would require a management plan and consistency within the park area. An update on progress would be reported to Councillor McCarthy in due course.

## **Question 5**

### **From Councillor Gill**

“Can the relevant Cabinet Member please advise what actions are being taken to ensure the safety of residents following the recent murders & violent attacks in Dagenham?”

### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety took the opportunity to offer her condolences to the Hayden family.

The Cabinet Member explained that Barking and Dagenham remained as one of the safest London Boroughs, being in line with the London average for total crime rates. Public confidence figures in the local Police were now at 72%. Further work had been undertaken between the Council and the Police including:

- Maintaining investment in CCTV where others haven't.
- Joint tasking of our enforcement resources with the Police.
- Council funding of 8 police officers which forms part of the 18 strong Estates Police Team.
- Doubling the number of Designated Ward Officers and this has already started in seven wards.
- Adding extra five schools officers.
- Tackling the root causes of crime through our Council and partnership programmes.

### **Supplementary Question**

Councillor Gill asked what the Police were doing to improve residents confidence and reassure them in the light of the recent attacks.

In her response, the Cabinet Member referred to the positive activities that the Boroughs young people were involved in such as the Youth Parade and commented that one young person involved in youth violence was one too many.

## **Question 6**

### **From Councillor Gill**

“Does the relevant Cabinet Member believe that residents should pay an additional charge for a green waste collection whilst paying an extra 4% in Council Tax per year?”

## **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment took the opportunity to clarify that the increase in Council Tax was in fact 1.67% seeing that 2% related to the specific surcharge to support adult social care costs along with the cut in the GLA precept

In responding to the question, the Cabinet Member referred to the current pressures on the budget, of which had already been cut by £90m. Adult and children's social care were facing the brunt of the cuts made by this Tory government which meant the Council was forced to make difficult choices whilst still protecting the most vulnerable. Furthermore, the Cabinet Member reminded Assembly that it was agreed that the collection of green garden waste would deliver savings of £220,000 over two years.

## **Supplementary Question**

Councillor Gill advised that residents were asking him why they had to pay, following the receipt of consultation cards through their doors and sought clarification.

The Cabinet Member advised that consultation on the changes to the green waste service was not statutory, however the Council wished to consult with residents to understand if there was an appetite for the service to be continued as a paid service of up to £1 a week.

## **Question 7**

### **From Councillor Young**

"Can the relevant Cabinet Member please explain what actions are being taken to deal with the £18.9million overpayment of housing benefit?"

## **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment thanked Councillor Young for bringing the issues to the attention of Assembly.

The Cabinet Member advised that the issue had been raised at the last Public Accounts and Audit Select Committee where a robust and challenging discussion took place. The £18.9m stated was the cumulative figure for all years raised and not the amount overpaid in a single year.

The Council was taking several steps to deal with the overpayment which included monitoring of the debt, follow up contact if no payments were made and ensuring repayment were affordable for the claimant.

## **Supplementary Question**

Councillor Young enquired as to where the mistake was made.



The Cabinet Member reiterated that the debt was cumulative and had built up due to a number of reasons, one of which was the government's welfare reforms.

## **Question 8**

### **From Councillor Young**

"Does the Cabinet Member for Health still agree with her previous comments that BHR Trust is wrong to have added consultants to A&E in order to assess and redirect residents?"

### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration advised that she was still concerned about the pilot and in recognising the pressures of Accident and Emergency departments, was concerned that the problem was being shifted to another area of the NHS. Approximately a third of people who attended Accident and Emergency did so as they could not get an appointment with their GP. When referred back to their GP, they did not follow it up.

### **Supplementary Question**

Councillor Young asked if the NHS had now made contact with the Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration on the pilot.

The Cabinet Member for Social Care and Health Integration confirmed contact had been made and discussions on the pilot were ongoing.