MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 24 February 2016
(7:00 - 9:48 pm)

PRESENT

Cllr Tony Ramsay (Chair)
Cllr Syed Ghani (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Syed Ahammad	Cllr Sanchia Alasia	Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Abdul Aziz	Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Laila Butt
Cllr Evelyn Carpenter	Cllr Peter Chand	Cllr Josephine Channer
Cllr Faruk Choudhury	Cllr Edna Fergus	Cllr Irma Freeborn
Cllr Cameron Geddes	Cllr Rocky Gill	Cllr Kashif Haroon
Cllr Chris Hughes	Cllr Amardeep Singh Jamu	Cllr Jane Jones
Cllr Eileen Keller	Cllr Mick McCarthy	Cllr Giasuddin Miah
Cllr Dave Miles	Cllr Margaret Mullane	Cllr James Ogungbose
Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole	Cllr Moin Quadri	Cllr Hardial Singh Rai
Cllr Linda Reason	Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Lynda Rice
Cllr Darren Rodwell	Cllr Danielle Smith	Cllr Liam Smith
Cllr Sam Tarry	Cllr Bill Turner	Cllr Dominic Twomey
Cllr Jeff Wade	Cllr Lee Waker	Cllr Phil Waker
Cllr Maureen Worby	Cllr Dan Young	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Jeanne Alexander	Cllr Melanie Bartlett	Cllr Simon Bremner
Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat	Cllr John White

40. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

41. Minutes (2 December 2015)

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2015 were confirmed as correct.

42. Minutes of Sub-Committees

The Assembly received and noted the minutes of the JNC Appointments Panel held on 15 December 2015.

43. Death of Honorary Alderman Fred Jones MBE

The Assembly noted with deep regret that Honorary Alderman Fred Jones had passed away on 19 January 2016.

Mr Jones had served as a Borough Councillor for 43 years until his retirement in May 2006 and was the Borough Mayor during the 1990/91 municipal year. Mr

Jones had held several senior positions during his time as a Councillor and had been bestowed the Borough's highest award when becoming an Honorary Alderman in 2006.

Mr Jones was awarded the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2012 for his services to the community in the Borough.

A number of members paid tribute to Mr Jones' commitment to the Borough, through his work as an elected representative and through his presidency of Barking Music and Drama for 23 years.

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

44. Leader's Statement

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

- The publication of the independent Growth Commission, an independent report. The report, titled "No-one left behind: in pursuit of growth for the benefit of everyone" was a landmark report for the Borough. All Members would be given an opportunity to examine its proposals over the coming weeks.

- Sadiq Khan MP and Labour Candidate for the Mayor of London, had visited the Borough with a keen interest in high quality housing for rent, the A13 Tunnel Campaign, the opportunity for growth in the Borough and the Shared Ownership Scheme, the first of its kind in the Country.

- Shared Ownership Scheme, of which a public consultation was due to be launched shortly. This was in response to cuts by Central Government, including the Housing and Planning Bill. The proposals would come before Cabinet in March.

- Lisa Nandy MP, had visited the Borough to discuss plans for a Council-run energy services company.

- The Borough was being recognised as a key area within London, for example the Leader had been asked to lead a review of the role of London Councils in supporting the Labour Party and was the Chair of an Area review of Further Education colleges for nine Boroughs. Senior treasury officials had also visited the Borough and were excited at the agenda the Borough was setting.

- Finally, the Leader emphasised how proud he was of the Gender Equality Charter, which was due to be launched next month.

45. Appointments

The Assembly resolved to appoint Councillor White to the Pensions Panel.

46. BAD Youth Forum Annual Report 2015

The Assembly received the BAD Youth Forum's 14th Annual report, introduced by Erik Stein, Group Manager for Youth Services who was accompanied by Rao Khan, Pelumi Oyewo, Mariya Zhecheva, Vaisaly Gnanapandithan, Memoona Fatima, Sumayyah Rahman and Elise Kapferer from the Forum.

The Forum was made up of 60 young people who were elected from schools and youth groups in the Borough in January 2015. Amongst the initiatives undertaken by the Forum during the year were the election of the first ever Young Mayor, Angelica Olawepo, and the creation of sub-groups to consider the following issues:

Anti-bullying Sub Group – The sub group chose to focus on bullying as 95% of the Forum as experienced bullying at some point in their lives and they wanted to raise awareness. Members of the Sub Group became anti-bullying ambassadors following training which was run by Kidscape, an anti-bullying charity. Members attended an anti-bullying event where they learnt news skills and went on to develop a workshop for young people. The workshop, was delivered to four of the 10 Secondary Schools in the Borough, with over 70 young people participating. The Sub Group also helped out at a local homeless shelter to demonstrate their commitment to the whole community.

Healthy Living Sub Group – The Sub Group was commissioned by public health to create a project that raises awareness of rising levels of obesity amongst young people. The Sub Group undertook a work shop on healthy eating with information about how to eat healthily on a budget and all participants were provided with a healthy meal from a menu developed by the sub group. The Sub Group also carried out inspections on different health facilities within the Borough and developed a report following each visit. The reports were largely positive however some barriers to young people were identified, particularly in relation to affordable, quality sport facilities.

Other key aspects highlighted during the presentation included:

Young Inspectors – The Young Inspectors undertook 58 pharmacy inspections across 17 pharmacies, the largest amount undertaken in one year. It was noted that since the work of the Young Inspectors had started, teenage pregnancy rates in the Borough had dropped. The Young Inspectors also undertook inspections at leisure centres and undertook test purchases with Trading Standards.

Consultations – The Forum participated in nine consultations during the year and assisted the Police in developing a questionnaire aimed at young people. The questionnaire received over 1900 responses.

Young Mayor – The first Young Mayor had attended several events during the year and held a charity fun day which raised hundreds of pounds for charity.

A new Forum had been elected in January, with five more members. A new Young Mayor had also been elected for 2016, Pelumi Oyewo, who spoke to the Assembly setting out her aspirations for the year.

A number of Councillors paid tribute to the hard work of the Forum during the year,

particularly for their work in addressing bullying in schools. In response to questions, the Forum advised that:

- Whilst they were working hard to address obesity in the Borough, during the year Forum members had noted that chips could be purchased for £1 and a salad for £1.70, making unhealthy food more attractive.

- The take up of the anti-bullying workshop in secondary schools was a little disappointing, however the Forum would be working with the Cabinet Member for Education and Schools and the Children's Services Select Committee to try to introduce the workshop to the other six secondary schools in the Borough.

- They would like to understand how the European Referendum may have an impact on young people and would relish the opportunity to talk to MEP's and Councillors.

47. Budget Framework 2016/17

Assembly received this report presented by Councillor Twomey, Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services, which set out the:

- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2016/17 to 2020/21;
- Proposed General Fund budget for 2016/17;
- Proposed level of Council Tax for 2016/17;
- Funding reductions to 2019/20
- Financial outlook for 2017/18 onwards;
- Draft capital investment programme 2016/17 to 20/21

The Cabinet Member announced that the key messages from this budget included:

- The budget had been developed against a backdrop of significant pressures on the Councils budget on top of the savings which had already been made.

- There were still many challenges ahead however through lobbying and innovation, the Council would prevail.

- The Government had responded to a request from local authorities asking for a four year settlement figure, which gave the Council a buffer.

At the invitation of the Chair to speak, the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) stated that the budget presented had been subject to significant review at both Member and Officer level. Balances remained at the minimum recommended level of £15m. Therefore overall, the CFO stated that he was comfortable that the proposed budget was sufficiently robust and sustainable to be recommended to Members.

Following questions from Members, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services advised that:

- In relation to care costs, particularly for residents who had moved from a private residence which was being offset against cost, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and health would provide a detailed response.

- The provision of Lollipop persons with in the Borough was a deferred saving for 2016/17. As part of the savings proposal, the Council would speak to schools and local businesses to obtain sponsorship to continue funding the service. Talks were currently ongoing. In response to this, Councillor McCarthy asked that it be noted he was waiting for a full reply on the matter from Councillor Twomey.

- The budget for the Growth Commission had been agreed at £0.5m, however the entire budget had not been used.

- The East London Waste Authority levy was not providing the best deal for the Council, however the contact was very strict.

- No redundancies of Council staff had been made. The Council had recently announced a voluntary redundancy scheme for staff. The transfer of the one of collection fund surplus of £2.5m to the corporate redundancy reserve would be sufficient.

Councillor Twomey was then invited by the Chair to sum up and in doing so, Councillor Twomey moved the vote, which was seconded by Councillor Rodwell.

In accordance with paragraph 10.3.2 of part 2, Chapter 3 of the Council Constitution, the budget was put to a recorded vote and was **agreed** as follows:

For: Councillors Ahammad, Alasia, Ashraf, Aziz, Bright, Butt, Carpenter, Chand, Channer, Choudhury, Fergus, Freeborn, Geddes, Ghani, Gill, Haroon, Hughes, Jamu, Jones, Keller, McCarthy, Miah, Miles, Mullane, Oluwole, Quadri, Rai, Ramsay, C Rice, L Rice, Rodwell, D Smith, L Smith, Tarry, Turner, Twomey, Wade, L Waker, P Waker, Worby and Young. (41)

Against: None (0)

Abstain: None (0)

Councillor Ogungbose had left the chamber and was not present during the vote on this item.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

(i) Approve a base revenue budget for 2016/17 of £150.314m, as detailed in Appendix A to the report;

(ii) Approve the adjusted Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) position for 2016/17 to 2020/21 allowing for other known pressures and risks at this time, as detailed in Appendix B to the report;

(iii) Delegate authority to the Strategic Director of Finance and Investment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to finalise any contribution required from reserves in respect of the 2016/17 budget, pending confirmation of levies and further changes to Government grants

prior to 1 April 2016;

(iv) Approve the Statutory Budget Determination for 2016/17 as set out at Appendix C to the report, which reflects an increase of 1.99% on the amount of Council Tax levied by the Council, plus a further 2% increase in relation to the Social Care Precept and the final Council Tax proposed by the Greater London Assembly (6.4%% reduction), as detailed in Appendix D to the report;

(v) Approve the Council's draft Capital Programme for 2016/17 to 2020/21 as detailed in Appendix E to the report; and

(vi) Approve the transfer of the one off collection fund surplus of £3.5m to the corporate redundancy reserve, as set out in section 2.11 of the report.

48. Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2016/17

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services introduced a report setting out the Council's Treasury Management Annual Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2016/2017.

Assembly noted that the overall TMSS included details of the proposed borrowing limit for the year and a range of other aspects aimed at ensuring the Council had prudent and robust arrangements in place to meet all of its financial commitments and responsibilities, in line with the requirements of Section 15(1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services drew Assembly's attention to the proposed strategy changes from the 2015/16 document which included duration of risk, counterparty risk, short term borrowing and Lloyds Banking Group.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services advised that there was uncertainty ahead of all Councils following the announcement of the referendum on the United Kingdom's membership in the European Union.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

(i) Note the current treasury position for 2016/17 and prospects for interest rates, as referred to in section 6 of the report;

(ii) Approve the Council's Borrowing Strategy, Debt Rescheduling Strategy and Policy on borrowing in advance of need for 2016/17 as referred to in section 9 of the report;

(iii) Approve the Annual Investment Strategy and Creditworthiness Policy for 2016/17 outlining the investments that the Council may use for the prudent management of its investment balances, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report;

(iv) Approve the Authorised Borrowing Limit of £800m for 2016/17, representing

the statutory limit determined by the Council pursuant to section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003, as set out in Appendix 4 of the report;

(v) Approve the Treasury Management Indicators and Prudential Indicators for 2016/17, as set out in Appendix 4;

(vi) Approve the Minimum Revenue Policy Statement for 2016/17, representing the Council's policy on repayment of debt, as set out in Appendix 5 of the report;

(vii) Maintain the authority delegated to the Strategic Director of Finance and Investment, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, to proportionally amend the counterparty lending limits agreed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement to take into account the increase in cash from the European Investment Bank but also the subsequent decrease in cash balances as payments are made to the Special Purpose Vehicle; and

(viii) Next review the delegated responsibility in (vii) above as part of the 2015/16 Treasury Management Outturn Report to the Assembly.

49. Pay Policy Statement 2016/17

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services introduced a report to Assembly on the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17.

In presenting the report, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services drew the Assembly's attention to the following areas:

- If approved, the Local Living Wage rate would be increased to £9.40 per hour (from £9.20) with effect from 1 January 2016.
- Appendix A to the report contained details of the new structure in place at the Council.
- The recently announced voluntary redundancy scheme would remain open until 30 May 2016 to ensure fairness and transparency.
- With regard to pay ratios, the Chief Executive's median salary rate was attributable to the retention of in-house services such as catering and cleaning.
- Through the pay policy, the Council would be protecting its services and frontline staff.

The Assembly **resolved** to approve the Pay Policy Statement for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham for 2016/17 as set out at Appendix A to the report, for publication on the Council's website with effect from 1 April 2016.

50. Council Constitution - Amendments to the Contract Rules to Comply with Legislation and Other Minor Changes

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services presented a report on amendments to the Council Constitution.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Contract Rules governed and controlled the procurement of goods, services and works by the Council and sat alongside the Financial Rules. Changes were required due to changes in Public Procurement law and therefore required the Constitution to be updated in order to comply with current legislation.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services drew Assembly's attention to other key updates which included:

- the revision of the Officer Scheme of Delegation to reflect the new senior management structure;
- the inclusion of provisions and rules for webcasting of Council meetings, which was due to begin later this year;
- proposed revisions to the deadline for Questions With Notice and the tightening of arrangements for the submission of Questions With Notice and Motions With Notice;
- the inclusion of wording to reflect the requirements of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 in respect of the publication of executive decisions taken by officers under delegated authority; and
- the inclusion of new requirements relating to Members' Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Councillor Mullane requested that it be noted in the minutes that she had raised issues regarding contracts and blacklisting of contractors and had further questions on which she required further clarification.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

(i) Note and approve the proposed revisions to the Contract Rules, as detailed in Appendix A to this report;

(ii) Approve the delegation of responsibility for appointing Parent Governor representatives from the Assembly to the Corporate Director of Children's Services and note the other changes to the Officer Scheme of Delegation which reflect the current senior management structure, as detailed in Appendix C to the report;

(iii) Approve the changes to the Protocol on Filming, Webcasting, Photography and the Use of Social Media at Council Meetings, as detailed in Appendix D to the report;

(iv) Agree that the deadline for the submission of Questions With Notice be brought forward from midday Friday to midday Wednesday of the week before an Assembly meeting;

(v) Agree that the processes for submitting Questions With Notice and Motions With Notice at the Assembly be amended and that, in future, any questions and/or motions are submitted either directly by the proposing Councillor or via the Group Secretary;

(vi) Note the wording inserted in Part 2, Chapter 16 which reflects the Council's adherence to The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 in respect of the publication of details of all executive decisions taken by officers;

(vii) Agree that Councillors be required to be subject to a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in accordance with the provisions of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and note the inclusion of wording to that effect in the Councillors' Code of Conduct; and

(viii) Note that the Monitoring Officer shall make all necessary procedural and/or incidental amendments to the Contract Rules and the Constitution in order to bring the revised Contract Rules into effect and ensure that they dovetail with the rest of the Constitution.

51. Motions

Motion 1 - Daesh

Moved by Councillor Ashraf and Seconded by Councillor Alasia:

"This Council notes that:

- The 'Prevent' Duty', which is part of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 states that we and other local authorities have a duty to support people who are vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism or supporting extremism.

- The group which operates in Syria and Iraq refers to itself as 'the Islamic State', and is also known as ISIS and ISIL in the UK.

- In the Middle East and in several countries including Canada, France, Australia and increasingly in the UK, the Arabic term 'Daesh' is used instead.

- The term Daesh has negative connotations, meaning one who crushes something underfoot or one who sows discord.

This Council believes that:

- The organisation that refers to itself as 'the Islamic State' is not Islamic, nor is it a state.

- Referring to this group as 'the Islamic State' helps to legitimise its poisonous propaganda campaign which is enticing vulnerable people to travel to Syria to join their group.

- This is contrary to the Prevent duty and the work undertaken by this Council in the development and implementation of a Prevent Strategy.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- Refer to this evil organisation as Daesh instead of Islamic State or ISIS / ISIL in all Prevent literature; and calls on other local authorities to officially use the term Daesh."

Members spoke in support of the motion and expressed their concerns that young and vulnerable people were being targeted by the organisation. The change was welcomed by Members and it was hoped the media would follow the Councils lead.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a show of hands and **carried.**

Standing orders were suspended at this juncture to allow the meeting to continue beyond 9.00pm.

Motion 2 - Trade Union Bill
Moved by Councillor Ogungbose and Seconded by Councillor McCarthy

"This Council is alarmed at the way in which the Conservative Government's Trade Union Bill seeks to tear up the collaboration between employers and trade union members, and the potential impact this will have on the Council, as well as many other workplaces across our borough.

In its current form, the Bill is nothing short of an ideologically driven attack on the fundamental rights and freedoms of workers. It is also deliberately designed to dramatically reduce the funding to the main Party in opposition to the Government.

This Council recognises the positive contribution that trade unions and trade union members make in our workplace. We value their commitment to the delivery of good quality public services in Barking and Dagenham, especially in these challenging economic times for local authorities.

The Bill proposes a number of divisive measures that threaten workplace democracy. These include: very high thresholds for industrial ballots and even higher thresholds in certain public services; permitting the use of agency labour to substitute for striking workers; reductions in trade union facility time; a requirement for union members to 'opt in' to their union's political fund every 5 years and the withdrawal of 'check off' union contributions in the public sector.

This Council therefore calls on the Government to scrap the Trade Union Bill and all associated regulation/secondary legislation and resolves to:

- Continue to offer the check-off service to all members of staff in Barking and Dagenham, in spite of Government attempts to stop it. If this is not legally possible, to come up with a local plan to enable alternative methods of payment.

- Support the continuation of trade union facility time and seek to continue, as far as possible, its own locally agreed industrial relations strategy.

- Support the Leader of the Council in writing to the Secretary of State making it clear that local Government will not be dictated to by Whitehall, particularly with regards to check-off and facility time.

- Clearly reaffirm Barking and Dagenham's proud history of trade unionism and to allow employees' representation to flourish in hard times – not to demonise workers as this Government is currently choosing to do."

Members spoke in support of the motion, recognising the positive contribution that trade unions made to work places. The Council had in place check-off arrangements that were easy to administer and an important part of the service. The Council would commit to doing everything it could to continue the service if the Bill was approved.

The motion was put to the vote by way of a show of hands and **carried.**

Motion 3 – Right to Buy

The Chair advised Assembly that the motion had been withdrawn.

Motion 4 – Tax Avoidance

The Chair advised Assembly that the motion as detailed within the agenda could have significant financial and/or contractual issues for the Council. In accordance with paragraphs 10.11 and 10.12, Part 2, Chapter 4 of the Council's Constitution the motion must be accompanied by a report setting out the financial and legal implications.

The motion was therefore adjourned without debate until the next available meeting of the Assembly.

52. Questions With Notice

Question 1

From Councillor Mullane
"Can the Cabinet Member for Environment update me on the action being undertaken in regard to the former Bull Pub site in Village Ward? We are aware as Ward Councillors that site visits have been undertaken by the Enforcement team with us and actions are ongoing. We wish to go on public record to thank Jonathan Tye for his help so far. The Licensed Landlord scheme has an action outstanding and the illegal car wash is being dealt with along with the issue of dumped rubbish. As Ward Councillors, we have found this to be a prominent concern in our ward and indeed Dagenham as a whole."

Response

Councillor Butt, Cabinet Member for Crime and Enforcement, advised that it was a very complicated case where the council had undertaken investigations into who had the liability for the different activities on site. Enforcement action had been taken against the Freeholder by the Council.

Question 2

From Councillor Mullane
*"*Will the Cabinet members for housing and regeneration share the Village Ward Councillors concerns about communal letter boxes in our flatted estates?

On three blocks constituents have had their ID stolen. Furthermore the boxes are so small, if they go away, the post stacks and then it's obvious to potential criminals their flats are empty. On the Leys Estate because of a GLA grant needed for the development, the Ward Councillors are not satisfied that the Council are proceeding with communal boxes provided by Secure by design, which we are told is the choice of the Mayor and that the GLA insist on them."

Response

Councillor Geddes, Cabinet Member for Regeneration agreed with Councillor Mullane that the letter boxes were poorly designed however the Leys Estate development was partly funded by grants from the GLA, and this came with some requirements one of which was that the Council must get a secure by design certification. The secure by design officer from the Metropolitan Police, insisted on the installation of 'through the wall' letter boxes and would not issue the certification if the Council deviated from this.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Mullane asked of the Cabinet Member for Regeneration would consider writing to the GLA to express the Councils concerns.

Councillor Geddes advised that he would make representation on the concerns raised by Councillor Mullane.

Question 3

From Councillor Chand
"Following the recent front page news in the Dagenham Post regarding the RingGo parking system, could the relevant portfolio holder agree with a growing number of residents that the system is not fit for purpose and that it is now a good time to grant a one hour free parking period to local parking schemes."

Response

Councillor Butt, Cabinet Member for Crime and Enforcement advised that RingGo was a successful system used across the country. The use of RingGo had increased month on month in the Borough while the use of cash had dropped. A new parking strategy was currently being developed and would look at options on whether to increase or decrease free parking within the Borough.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Chand disagreed with Councillor Butt's response and invited the

Cabinet Member to meet residents in River Ward. The Cabinet Member confirmed she would meet with residents.

Question 4

From Councillor P Waker
"It has emerged that we have at least one contractor working for the Council that not only pays well below the Council's Living Wage Policy (and near to the minimum wage) but also employs people on zero hours contracts as a matter of course. Would the relevant Cabinet Member assure the Assembly that the Council will check which contractors operate with such poor conditions of employment, discuss with them their work practices seeking improvements, and take a more critical view of such practices when the opportunity comes for contract renewal?"

Response

Councillor Twomey, Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services advised that the Council had agreed to pay London Living Wage for its own staff and the agency staff it procured through its current provider Addecco. Some of these staff were on Zero or fixed low hours work, however were paid London Living Wage. Although the council had agreed the London Living Wage for its own directly employed staff this was not the case for those staff employed by others.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Waker advised there was growing concern amongst residents with regard to contractors used by the Council.

Councillor Twomey advised he would look into the issue further.

Question 5

From Councillor L Waker
"Despite many attempts, I have been unable to get the grassed areas behind the Mall properly cleaned. Glass, leaves and litter in particularly are an ongoing problem all around the shrubbery on the grassed areas.

Would the relevant Cabinet Member assist me in getting the area properly cleaned up on a regular basis as it lets down the look of the whole area. While it is a shopping area which adds to the problem, many town centres demonstrate it can be done"

Response

Councillor Rice, Cabinet Member for Environment advised that she had attended the site mentioned before the Assembly meeting and found it to be clean and tidy. The area was cleaned on a daily basis by a static sweeper, visited weekly by the team and had a deep clean.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Waker asked that the area be treated as well as other shopping centres in the Country and was advised in response that it would be carefully monitored.

Question 6

From Councillor Young
"Building on from the Leaders positive policy of celebrating various countries independence days, can he confirm he will fly the Irish tricolour above the town hall on Easter Sunday to celebrate 100 years since the Irish people proclaimed their independence?"

Response

Councillor Rodwell, Leader of the Council, advised that all communities were welcome to supply a flag which would be flown by the Council as part of the flag flying days. However, flags would only be flown during office hours.

Question 7

From Councillor L Waker
"I would firstly like to thank the Council for restoring a cash pay parking machine to the Mall car park. This is much more popular with most residents than using the RingGo system. However, Village Ward Councillors have been asking for some time to give a section of the Mall car park, which has spare parking capacity, specifically for the use of nearby flats such as Church Elm Court, but with no resolution to this matter.

Would the relevant Cabinet Member assure the Assembly that this will be progressed as a matter of urgency as it will bring some revenue to the Council and assist residents with parking opportunities at the same time?"

Response

Councillor Butt, Cabinet Member for Crime and Enforcement, advised that Church Elm Lane Court was built as a car free development and therefore the Council had no obligation to provide parking for those residents. However, there had been discussions regarding issuing residents permits in the Heathway/Mall Car park for residents, which would be considered further following the results of a pilot at the London Road car park.

Question 8

From Councillor Gill
"Could the relevant Cabinet Member please explain why 85% some £915k of the available carriageway & footway resurfacing budget for the fiscal year 2015/16 was spent in just one ward as opposed to the investment being distributed across a number of wards in the borough?"

Response

Councillor Twomey, Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services advised that many developments in the Borough were built at around the same time resulting in the roads in certain areas being of a common age and condition. This meant in some years, focus would be in a particular ward. In comparison, Longbridge ward had the largest amount of spend on it over the past eight years, at £4.1m, with Gasgoine ward only having £90,000 spent on resurfacing. Works for 2016/17 would be prioritised against the backlog resurfacing pool and would be allocated against set criteria.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Gill questioned which wards had works undertaken in the past. In response, Councillor Twomey advised he had already answered that question.

Question 9

From Councillor Gill
"Many of the service road gates in the Leftley Estate have been damaged over the past year & Local Police have advised that these open access service roads have been linked with ASB, fly-tipping and burglaries in the area. Can the relevant Cabinet Member please advise when these service road alleygates will be repaired to provide the security required?"

Response

Councillor Butt, Cabinet Member for Crime and Enforcement advised that as the Council was facing significant budgetary pressure, the budget for alleygates no longer existed, however minor repairs were carried out through the street cleansing budget, which did carry an annual pressure.

Question 10

From Councillor Bright
"As the Member Champion for Women and Gender Equality, I am extremely proud that we are due to become the first Local Authority in the country to adopt a Gender Equality Charter. Does the Leader agree with me that this Council should place a strong emphasis on making sure that all genders have the same chance of success in our borough?"

Response

Councillor Rodwell, Leader of the Council agreed with Councillor Bright and advised that the charter would support everyone in achieving their full potential and have more influence over decisions affecting their lives. All members had been invited to attend the launch of the Gender Equality Charter on 10 March 2016.

Question 11

From Councillor Fergus
"Does the publication of the independent growth commission set a direction for both the Council and community?"

Response

Councillor Rodwell, Leader of the Council, advised that the Commission had concluded that the Council had the right vision; the Borough really was London's growth opportunity. The outcome of the Commission was that no-one should be left behind and through the work of the Council and the Community together, this would be achieved.

Question 12

From Councillor Freeborn
"I am sure the Cabinet member for Finance will share my concern at a recent report in the Guardian which showed that the vast majority of the Government's £300m 'relief fund' (aimed at alleviating the impact of austerity cuts) will be distributed to Conservative Councils in marginal constituencies. In fact, the report showed that 85% of the grant will go to Tory Councils, leaving Labour-run areas with just £17m despite suffering the deeper cuts since 2010 and having higher levels of deprivation

This would seem to be a blatant disregard for the hard pressed resident in our Borough and I would be interested to know from the Cabinet Member for Finance what steps the Council could take to address the inequality?"

Response

Councillor Twomey, Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services in responding, expressed his concerns at the new central government methodology for allocating funds to Councils in 2016/17. The Council had lobbied the Government both individually and collectively with other Councils to address the imbalance.

Question 13

From Councillor Freeborn
"Can the Leader outline what plans the Council has to mark Women's Empowerment Month 2016?"

Response

Councillor Rodwell, Leader of the Council, advised that there would be a range of events held to mark the second annual Women's Empowerment Month in March. During the month the Gender Equality Charter would be launched on 10 March and the month of celebration would culminate with the Women's Empowerment Awards on 30 March 2016.

Question 14

From Councillor Haroon
"Can the Cabinet Member for Finance clarify the role of the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme which has been launched across the Council?"

Response

Councillor Twomey, Cabinet Member for Finance and Central Services advised that the Council had been working to meet the financial challenges it was currently facing and it was known that the number of staff employed would need to reduce as the Council continued to find savings. As part of this, a voluntary redundancy scheme had been launched in early February. Applications were sought on a voluntary basis and each would be considered equally.

Question 15

From Councillor Miah
"Can the relevant Cabinet Member update the Assembly on the Council's recently launched 'dog poo DNA' scheme and outline what benefits it will bring to our community in Barking and Dagenham?"

Response

Councillor Butt, Cabinet Member for Crime and Enforcement, advised that the scheme, launched on 21 January, was being piloted in Mayesbrook Park, Barking Park and Abbey Gardens for three months. Weekly audits were being undertaken and early indications were showing that there as a reduction in the region of 59% of uncollected dog faeces.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Miah questioned the cost of the scheme so far and was advised by Councillor Butt that the Council had used existing resources to run the pilot.

Standing Orders were suspended at this juncture to allow the meeting to continue until 9.45pm.

Question 16

From Councillor Miah
"In light of the growth commission report what plans does the Leader have to ensure that no part of the borough is left behind?"

Response

Councillor Rodwell, Leader of the Council, agreed that no one should be left behind and emphasised the Councils vision for Barking and Dagenham, "One borough; one community; London's growth opportunity". The Council would continue to lead the Borough and empower the people of Barking and Dagenham to play a greater role in shaping the future of the Borough and public services.

Question 17

From Councillor Choudhury
"Can the Leader outline what feedback has been received in response to the recently launched 'One Borough' e-newsletter for residents?"

Response

Councillor Rodwell, Leader of the Council advised that the One Borough email newsletter, launched in October 2015, was sent out fortnightly to 69,000 recipients. No survey had been undertaken as yet, however emails had been received from residents and local community groups praising the newsletter.

Question 18

From Councillor Choudhury
"Can the Cabinet Member for Housing set out how the Council is reducing demand for Bed & Breakfast Accommodation in the borough?"

Response

Councillor Ashraf, Cabinet Member for Housing, advised that a fourth hostel was opened at Butler Court in January, providing an additional 78 temporary accommodation units. As at 17 January 2016, 92 households were occupying bed and breakfast accommodation.

Question 19

From Councillor Ghani
"Can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health provide an update on the Council's plans to form an 'Accountable Care Organisation' with neighbouring boroughs?"

Response

Councillor Worby, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health advised that a work programme to develop proposals around an Integrated Care Organisation had been work up by a team drawn from the eight organisations involved in the initiative. The programme was being steered by a Clinical and Democratic Oversight Group chaired by the Leader. It was anticipated that details of the proposals would be available in June.

Question 20

From Councillor Ghani
"Can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health set out what we are doing as a Council to attract funding to promote healthier and more independent lives as we get older?"

Response

Councillor Worby, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health advised that the Council had found Care City in partnership with NELFT to create an innovation centre for healthy ageing. The Council had also made a bid to be recognised as a Healthy New Town and was working with NHS colleagues on the Urgent and Emergency Care Vanguard programme. These initiatives would be bringing new money and funding into the Borough.

Supplementary Question

Councillor Ghani questioned the roles of Care City and Healthy New Town and was advised by Councillor Worby that they were two separate entities, with Healthy New Town providing a role more focused on expertise.

Question 21

From Councillor Hughes
"The Government's Housing and Planning Bill contains a number of damaging proposals such as 'pay to stay', the forced sale of high value Council homes and the abolition of secure, lifetime Council tenancies. Can the Cabinet Member for Housing confirmed that the Council will do everything it possibly can to protect residents and our existing housing stock from these measures?"

Response

Councillor Ashraf, Cabinet Member for Housing advised that the Council had undertaken research on the potential implications of the Bill and responded to several consultations. Through this work the Council had developed a new housing offer with a number of objectives to protect the Councils stock, tenants and households as much as possible.

Question 22

From Councillor Hughes
"A recent study commissioned by Somerset House's Big Bang Data exhibition has shown that Barking and Dagenham is the happiest London borough during the morning hours.

What does the Leader think about the results of this study?"

Response

Councillor Rodwell, Leader of the Council, thanked Councillor Hughes for bringing the question to Assembly, where it was noted that following a study of 1.5 million tweets, it had been revealed that residents in the Borough were the happiest in London between 6am and 12 noon, contrary to the claim made by RightMove's happiness index last year.

As per paragraph 9.10 Part 2, Chapter 4 of the Constitution, all other questions with notice listed within the agenda that were not dealt with by the end of the

meeting would be responded to in writing by the relevant Councillors.