

# MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 19 July 2017  
(7:11 - 8:24 pm)

## PRESENT

Cllr Syed Ghani (Chair)

Cllr Syed Ahammad	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 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 Elizabeth Kangethe
Cllr Eileen Keller	Cllr Mick McCarthy	Cllr Giasuddin Miah
Cllr Dave Miles	Cllr James Ogungbose	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole
Cllr Moin Quadri	Cllr Linda Reason	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat
Cllr Danielle Smith	Cllr Bill Turner	Cllr Dominic Twomey
Cllr Jeff Wade	Cllr Lee Waker	Cllr Phil Waker
Cllr Maureen Worby	Cllr Linda Zanitchkhah	

## APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Sanchia Alasia	Cllr Jeanne Alexander	Cllr Abdul Aziz
Cllr Faruk Choudhury	Cllr Danielle Lawrence	Cllr Margaret Mullane
Cllr Hardial Singh Rai	Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Lynda Rice
Cllr Darren Rodwell	Cllr Sam Tarry	Cllr John White

### 9. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

### 10. Minutes (17 May 2017)

The minutes of the Assembly held on 17 May 2017 were confirmed as correct.

### 11. Minutes of Sub-Committees

The Assembly received and noted the minutes of the:

Joint JNC Salaries & Conditions and Appointments Panel held on 10 May 2017;  
JNC Appointments Panel held on 23 May 2017; and  
JNC Appointments Panel held on 22 June 2017

### 12. Leader's Statement

At the request of the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment, the Chair asked the Assembly to stand for a minute's silence for

number of tragic events that had taken place since the last meeting of the Assembly, namely the Manchester Arena bombing, the knife attack at London Bridge and Borough Market, the appalling tragedy at Grenfell Tower in Kensington and the terrible events outside Finsbury Park Mosque.

The Assembly stood for a minute's silence.

The Leader then presented a verbal statement updating the Assembly on a range of matters since the last meeting, including:

- The Councils response to the Grenfell Tower Fire. The Council had undertaken a huge amount of work locally to check that the Councils blocks were safe and to reassure borough residents whether they lived in Council, Housing Association or private rented accommodation;
- The Councils response to the news that two of the London Bridge attacked perpetrators resided in the Borough. The Council had re-doubled efforts on community cohesion and put in place a number of initiatives including a book of condolence, one minute's silence and supporting community events; and
- The results of the General Election, both locally and nationally, which took place on 8 June 2017. The Deputy Leader took the opportunity to welcome back the two local MP's, Jon Cruddas and Margaret Hodge, who were both returned with the highest number of votes they had ever received.

### **13. Appointments**

There were no appointments.

### **14. Corporate Plan 2017/18**

The Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement introduced a report to the Assembly on the Corporate Plan 2017-18.

The Corporate Plan set out the Council's vision and priorities for the next 12 months together with details of key achievements over the past three years, the Council's transformation programme and the performance monitoring regime for 2017/18.

The Assembly applauded the ambitious programme of the Corporate Plan against the backdrop of austerity measures coming from the Government and noted that, in comparison to other London Boroughs, the Council found itself toward the bottom of the league tables for 2016. The Chief Executive explained, however, that the direction of travel was positive and, through the Borough Manifesto, the Council was aiming to progress in all areas in the coming years.

The Assembly **resolved** to approve the Corporate Plan 2017/18 as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

### **15. Treasury Management Annual Report 2016/17**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment introduced a report on

the Treasury Management Annual Report 2016/17 which set out the key areas of performance during the year.

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment drew the Assembly's attention to the following key points:

- Investment income for the year was £4.6m (2015/16: £3.7m) compared to a budget of £2.1m;
- The Council's average interest return of 1.42% for 2016/17 was 0.83% higher than the average London Peer Group return and 0.73% higher than the Local Authority average return;
- The value of investments as at 31 March 2017 totalled £232.9m;
- The value of long-term borrowing as at 31 March 2017 totalled £457.3m;
- The value of short-term borrowing as at 31 March 2017 totalled £85.0m;
- The Council did not breach its 2016/17 authorised borrowing limit of £855m or its Operational Boundary limit of £745m; and
- The Council complied with all other set treasury and prudential limits.

The Assembly were pleased to note the role of scrutiny was recognised within the report and noted that the Treasury Management Strategy was a living document that had to be planned and flexible for the future.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2016/17;
- (ii) Note that the Council complied with all 2016/17 treasury management indicators;
- (iii) Approve the actual Prudential and Treasury Indicators for 2016/17;
- (iv) Note that the Council borrowed £60m from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) in June 2016 to fund capital expenditure;
- (v) Note that on 31 March 2017 a number of Loan Facility agreements were agreed between the Council and a number of Council owned Special Purpose Vehicles; and
- (vi) Maintain the delegated authority to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment, to continue to proportionally amend the counterparty lending limits agreed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement to consider the additional cash holdings resulting from borrowing from the European Investment Bank and the PWLB.

## 16. Motions

The Chair announced that, in accordance with the rules relating to Motions set out in Part 2, Chapter 4, Paragraph 10.6 of the Council, Constitution, as Councillor Rodwell was not present at the meeting his motion titled “Theresa May and the Democratic Unionist Party” was withdrawn.

The following motion was moved by Councillor Carpenter and Seconded by Councillor P Waker:

“This Council is appalled by the Government’s decision to take education spending to an historic low by cutting £8.9bn in real terms from the national schools’ budget.

Research by the National Union of Teachers and the Association of Teachers and Lecturers, building on analysis carried out by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, shows that over the next 5 years schools in Barking and Dagenham are set to lose an average of £312,198. Every primary school and all but one secondary school in the Borough is projected to lose funding, in what equates to an average cut of £461 per pupil by 2021/22.

This Council is particularly concerned about the Government’s decision to cut the Education Services Grant (ESG) by £600m, which will see Barking and Dagenham lose £1.8m of education funding in 2017/18 alone.

The ESG is used to fund school improvement and essential services in our local schools, such as support for children with special educational needs who require occupational therapy. It will be reduced from £3.4m in 2016/17 to £1.6m in 2017/18, and we believe that this cut amounts to nothing more than a cost shunt from Central Government on to Local Authorities.

This Council believes that these cuts will result in unavoidable impacts on teaching and learning, putting at risk the improvements to outcomes for children that we have made in recent years.

This Council therefore calls on the Government to commit to maintaining per-pupil funding, reverse the £600m cut to the ESG and think again on its proposals for education funding.”

The Assembly voiced its support of the motion and expressed concern over the immense pressure schools were facing due to reducing budgets and an increasing population.

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

## 17. Questions With Notice

### Question 1

**From Councillor Freeborn**

Will the relevant Cabinet Member update the Assembly on what action the

Council has taken in response to the Grenfell Tower tragedy in north Kensington?”

### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Investment gave a detailed response outlining the work that had been undertaken which included:

- The Council had responded to requests from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea for mutual aid;
- All fire risk assessments for Council-owned high rise residential buildings of eight stories or more had been reviewed;
- A review of all Council-owned high rise residential buildings with cladding had been undertaken;
- The Council had been liaising with owners/leaseholders who had responsibility for high rise residential buildings of more than five stories to ensure that any buildings with cladding were safe; and
- Home safety visits had been undertaken on all Council-owned residential blocks of more than five stories.

### **Question 2**

#### **From Councillor Haroon**

Can the Leader explain what impact the result of last month’s General Election will have on the Council and local residents?

### **Response**

The Deputy Leader, Councillor Twomey advised that there were both positive and negative outcomes for the Council and local residents following the General Election on 8 June 2017.

Councillor Twomey suggested that the election result was a vindication of Labour’s anti-austerity message, adding that since 2010 the Council had to save over £135m just to balance the budget, which could not continue going forward and the election result was the message sent to Theresa May.

The Council would welcome any let up in austerity measures however, in referencing the £1bn deal that Government had recently entered into with the Democratic Unionist Party, the Cabinet Member expressed concerns that the current Government could not be trusted.

### **Question 3**

#### **From Councillor Ahammad**

Members will no doubt be as shocked and saddened as I was to learn that two of the perpetrators of the London Bridge terror attack lived in our Borough. Can the relevant Cabinet Member outline what the Council is doing to promote community cohesion in response to last month’s terrible events?

## **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Equalities and Cohesion reiterated the proactive steps taken by the Council which the Deputy Leader had referred to earlier in the meeting.

The Cabinet Member commented that community cohesion was one of the targets in the Borough Manifesto and building on this, the Council were in the process of developing a Cohesion Strategy.

Several activities would be taking place in the borough through the coming months, including the summer events programme which would provide an opportunity for residents to come together and the “We Stand Together” conference due to take place in October 2017.

## **Question 4**

### **From Councillor Miah**

Will the relevant Cabinet Member update the Assembly on what progress is being made to stop illegal ‘road racing’ events from taking place in the borough?

## **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Enforcement and Community Safety advised that the first Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) came into effect on 30 June 2017 which allowed the Council and police to ban activities such as:

- Speeding;
- Driving in convoy;
- Racing;
- Performance Stunts;
- Sounding horns (if public nuisance was caused);
- Revving engines; and
- Wheel Spins.

## **Question 5**

### **From Councillor Chand**

Following recent reports in the media that the Department for Work and Pensions is planning to close Dagenham Job Centre, does the Cabinet Member for Economic and Social Development share my concerns that this is yet another example of the Government withdrawing support for those who need it most?

## **Response**

In response, the Cabinet Member for Economic and Social Development agreed this was a reduction in support to the vulnerable residents in the

Borough and was disappointed that he had not received a response from the Department for Work and Pensions to his written request in February to explore opportunities to co-locate the Job Centre with Council staff.

### **Supplementary Question**

Councillor Chand enquired as to whether the Cabinet Member would join Jon Cruddas MP's campaign to save the Job Centre.

The Cabinet Member confirmed he would.

### **Question 6**

#### **From Councillor Quadri**

Will the Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement provide a progress update on the Council's plans to develop a Good Neighbour Guide?

#### **Response**

The Cabinet Member for Community Leadership and Engagement advised that the Good Neighbour Guide was being developed over the summer to create a shared understanding of what it meant to be a resident in the borough and to encourage neighbours to come together.

Councillor Ashraf advised that residents were being asked to vote for their top five actions and were invited to add their own comments. The consultation was online and residents were being approached at the various festivals taking place over the summer.

The Cabinet Member confirmed the closing date for responses was 14 August 2017.