

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 27 February 2019
(7:02 - 8:40 pm)

PRESENT

Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe (Chair)

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Saima Ashraf
Cllr Abdul Aziz	Cllr Toni Bankole	Cllr Princess Bright
Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Laila M. Butt	Cllr Evelyn Carpenter
Cllr Peter Chand	Cllr Josie Channer	Cllr John Dulwich
Cllr Edna Fergus	Cllr Irma Freeborn	Cllr Cameron Geddes
Cllr Syed Ghani	Cllr Kashif Haroon	Cllr Amardeep Singh Jamu
Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Eileen Keller	Cllr Mohammed Khan
Cllr Donna Lumsden	Cllr Mick McCarthy	Cllr Giasuddin Miah
Cllr Margaret Mullane	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole	Cllr Glenda Paddle
Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Moin Quadri	Cllr Foyzur Rahman
Cllr Tony Ramsay	Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Ingrid Robinson
Cllr Paul Robinson	Cllr Darren Rodwell	Cllr Muhammad Saleem
Cllr Faraaz Shaukat	Cllr Bill Turner	Cllr Dominic Twomey
Cllr Lee Waker	Cllr Maureen Worby	

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Simon Bremner	Cllr Rocky Gill	Cllr Olawale Martins
Cllr Dave Miles	Cllr Lynda Rice	Cllr Emily Rodwell
Cllr Phil Waker	Cllr Faruk Choudhury	

52. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

53. Minutes - To confirm as correct the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2019

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2019 were confirmed as correct.

54. Minutes of Sub-Committees - To note the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel held on 29 January 2019

The Assembly received and noted the minutes of the JNC Appointments, Salaries and Structures Panel, held on 29 January 2019.

55. Death of former Councillor Mabel Arnold

The Assembly noted with deep regret that former Councillor Mabel Arnold passed away in a residential home in Stourbridge, West Midlands on 10 February 2019.

Mabel served as a Councillor between 1974 and 1998, representing Manor, Parsloes and Cambell Wards. During her time on the Council, Mabel was on a wide range of committees and also served as Deputy Chair of the Social Services Committee between 1982 and 1998 and the Libraries Committee between 1990 and 1993.

Mabel represented the Council on numerous outside bodies, including the Fostering and Adoption Service, and was Chair of Governors for Barking College of Further Education and a Governor of Cambell, Godwin and Monteagle Schools. She was elected Mayor for the 1987/88 municipal year and was granted the Freedom of the Borough in 1995.

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

56. Leader's Statement

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

- **Violent crime and anti-social behaviour-** There had been a shooting and stabbing at Barking Station recently, and whilst the perpetrators and victims were not from the borough, it was important that with the increase in violent crime particularly in London, that the Council needed to keep lobbying for more police resources. The recent anti-social behaviour by young people outside 'Subway' in the Heathway reported to January's Assembly was the subject of further action, including reviewing CCTV to identify those who took part. This would be followed up with letters from the Tri-Borough Police Commander and the Leader, reminding parents of their responsibilities.
- **London's first Youth Zone-** The Youth Zone would be opening in less than 100 days and the Leader had joined students from Robert Clack Upper School and members of the Future Youth Zone team to start the countdown. It was noted that young people had been involved in the design of the Zone which will be a great asset to the borough at a cost of £6.5 million, the first of its kind in London with a wide range of activities and for only 50p per session. Members of the Zone would be between the ages of 8-19 and for those aged up to 25 with additional needs.
- **50m Swimming pool-** This has now opened at the Becontree Heath Leisure Centre.
- **Wall of Shame-** The latest episode of the 'Wall of Shame' was now available on the Council's website. This featured fly tipping hotspots in St Chad's Road in Chadwell Heath and Rowallen Parade, Dagenham. Any fly tippers identified on CCTV are liable to a fixed penalty notice and the Council encouraged residents to get in touch in confidence to report incidents.

57. Appointments

There were none.

58. Budget Framework 2019/20 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 - 2020/21

A video highlighting the Borough's key developments and initiatives during the year was shown before the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services introduced the Council's proposed budget framework for 2019/20 which incorporated the following:

- the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2019/20 to 2020/21;
- the General Fund budget for 2019/20;
- the level of Council Tax for 2019/20;
- the draft Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2022/23;
- an update on the Dedicated Schools Grant and Local Funding Formula for Schools; and
- the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy to support the Council's transformation agenda.

The Cabinet Member advised that a revised Appendix C for the statutory budget determinations setting out the amount of Council Tax, had been tabled to the Assembly, which was a slight adjustment on "rounding" but which made no difference to the Council Tax valuation bands.

With regard to revenue funding, the Cabinet Member outlined the grant funding available to the Council. He explained that the abolition of the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) system meant that the Council's main source of revenue funding now came from business rates, which will see the Council no worse off than previous with an estimated £79.16m coming from new pooling arrangements, representing a small increase of £0.5m, albeit this is dependent on business rates growth in London which in the current economic climate is not guaranteed. As a consequence, it was proposed to increase Council Tax by 2.99%. This included 1.99% for general Council services raising an additional £1.2m, plus an additional 1% specifically ring-fenced for Social Care and Support services, raising an additional £0.6m.

The Cabinet Member commented on the 2019/20 budget consultation that had taken place between November 2018 and January 2019, which included several face-to-face events with the local community, and the key projects, issues and risks associated with Council services in the years ahead. He added that the Council sought to keep the Council Tax as low as possible and the higher amount raised would be ring-fenced for social care and disabilities.

The Cabinet Member referred to the unprecedented financial challenges faced by local authorities as a result of the year-on-year funding cuts by Central Government, which had coincided with increasing demand for services and a growing population. The Council had chosen in 2014 to take a bold and ambitious approach in response to those challenges, focussing on investing in services, maximising economic growth and transforming the way the Council was run by pursuing new and innovative transformation solutions to the delivery of services and as an alternative to outsourcing, ensuring that no one was left behind. He outlined examples of this innovative approach including Community Solutions, (the Service set up to work with people and families in need of early help and support to get back on track), Be First (the Council's Regeneration Company), Reside

(Council owned Affordable Landlord) and Beam (Council Energy Supplier). The Cabinet Member also referred to the proposed Capital Programme for the next four years which would see over £740m of investment in the Borough.

The Cabinet Member advised that the Council's budget had been under sustained pressure since 2010 and local authorities overall had lost 40% of their budgets since that time, which equated to the Council saving £153m since that time. However, owing to the Council's Transformation Programme, no new specific savings would be required in 2019/20.

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 Achilleos, Akwaboah, Ashraf, Aziz, Bankole, Princess Bright, Sade Bright, Butt, Carpenter, Chand, Channer, Dulwich, Fergus, Freeborn, Geddes, Ghani, Haroon, Jamu, Jones, Kangethe, Keller, Khan, Lumsden, McCarthy, Miah, Mullane, Oluwole, Paddle, Perry, Quadri, Rahman, Ramsay, Chris Rice, Ingrid Robinson, Paul Robinson, Darren Rodwell, Saleem, Shaukat, Turner, Twomey, Lee Waker and Worby (42)

Against: None (0)

Abstain: None (0)

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Approve a base revenue budget for 2019/20 of £148.820m, as detailed in Appendix A to the report;
- (ii) Approve the adjusted Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) position for 2019/20 to 2020/21 allowing for other known pressures and risks at the current time, as detailed in Appendix B to the report, including the additional cost of borrowing to accommodate the capital costs associated with the implementation of the MTFS;
- (iii) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services, to finalise any contribution required to or from reserves in respect of the 2019/20 budget, pending confirmation of levies and further changes to Government grants prior to 1 April 2019;
- (iv) Approve the Statutory Budget Determination for 2019/20 as set out in the revised Appendix C to the report as tabled at the meeting, reflecting an increase of 2.99% on the amount of Council Tax levied by the Council and the final Council Tax proposed by the Greater London Assembly (8.9% increase), as detailed in Appendix D to the report;
- (v) Note the update on the current projects, issues and risks in relation to Council services, as detailed in section 4 of the report.
- (vi) Approve the Council's draft Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2022/23 totalling £744.323m of which £498.473m was General Fund schemes, as

detailed in Appendix E to the report;

- (vii) Approve the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy as set out in Appendix F to the report;
- (viii) Note the briefing on the potential implications of Brexit for the Council as set out in Appendix G to the report;
- (ix) Note the Chief Finance Officer's statutory finance report as set out in section 10 of the report, which included a recommended minimum level of reserves of £12m; and
- (x) Approve the updated Dedicated Schools Budget for 2019/20 including the hourly rate payable to Early Years providers (3-4 year olds) as set out in Section 11 and Appendix A to the report.

59. Pay Policy Statement 2019/20

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented the Council's draft Pay Policy Statement for 2019/20 in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. The Cabinet had considered this report and endorsed it at the meeting on 18 February 2019.

The Statement included details of the pay ratios showing the Chief Executive's salary against the median salary figure for all employees and against the lowest paid employees, as well as comparative data compiled from a number of other London Boroughs. The Cabinet Member commented that Barking and Dagenham's favourable position in comparison to the benchmark was reflective of the prudent stance taken by the Council on senior officers' pay levels.

In line with the Council's long-standing commitment to pay its employees no less than the London Living Wage rate, the Cabinet Member referred to the proposed increase to the minimum rate of pay from £10.20 to £10.55 per hour with effect from 5 November 2018. The increase would also apply to a range of apprenticeship posts across the Council and Members were pleased to hear that the pay policy was encouraging apprentices to want to build a career at Barking and Dagenham.

Members welcomed the report and asked that the Council support and celebrate its pay policy. They also requested that the Council continue to lobby the Local Government Association, requesting that Members should be readmitted to the Local Government Pension Scheme which they are not permitted to join.

The Assembly **resolved** to:

Approve the Pay Policy Statement for the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham for 2019/20 as set out at Appendix A to the report, for publication on the Council's website with effect from April 2019.

60. Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2019/20

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services presented the draft Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2019/20 which set out the Council's borrowing, investment and funding plans for the year ahead. This report was considered and endorsed by the Cabinet at its meeting on 18 February 2019.

The Cabinet Member referred to the key issues within the TMSS, which included the new requirement for a Capital Strategy, details of borrowing and investments levels at 31 December 2018, cash balances at 31 March each year since 2015/16 and the medium-term capital finance budget. In respect of the latter, the Cabinet Member confirmed that the increasing amount of General Fund interest payable from 2018/19 to 2022/23 and beyond reflected the significant activity under the Council's Investment and Acquisition Strategy.

Reference was made to the importance of effective treasury management in supporting the Council's ambitious plans and the stretched targets for the Treasury section in respect of achieving interest on the Council's General Fund cash balances. In respect of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the announcement by the Prime Minister in October 2018 that the debt cap was to be abolished, the Cabinet Member advised that details were still awaited of when that change of policy would come into effect and the practical implications for local authorities.

Members were pleased that the authority was sustaining a prudent financial approach although were also concerned about the financial viability of the Council in the event of a no-deal Brexit.

The Leader recorded his thanks to the Cabinet Member for his hard work and for presenting this and the other financial and budgetary reports to Assembly at tonight's meeting.

The Assembly **resolved** to adopt the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2019/20 and, in doing so, to:

- (i) Note the current treasury position for 2019/20 and prospects for interest rates, as referred to in section 7.2 of the report;
- (ii) Approve the Annual Investment Strategy 2019/20 outlining the investments that the Council may use for the prudent management of its investment balances, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (iii) Approve the Council's Borrowing Strategy 2019/20 to 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report;
- (iv) Note the inclusion of the Capital Strategy 2019/20, incorporating the Investment and Acquisitions Strategy, as set out in Appendix 3 to the report;
- (v) Approve the Capital Prudential and Treasury Indicators 2019/20 – 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 4 to the report;

- (vi) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement for 2019/20, representing the Council's policy on repayment of debt, as set out in Appendix 5 to the report;
- (vii) Note that a review of the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement was to be carried out and any amendments reported back as part of the Treasury Outturn Report for 2018/19;
- (viii) Approve the Operational Boundary Limit of £1.002bn and the Authorised Borrowing Limit of £1.102bn for 2019/20, representing the statutory limit determined by the Council pursuant to section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003, as referred to in Appendix 4 to the report; and
- (ix) Delegate authority to the Chief Operating Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Performance and Core Services, to proportionally amend the counterparty lending limits agreed within the Treasury Management Strategy Statement.

61. Motions

There were none.

62. Questions With Notice

There were none.