

ASSEMBLY

30 September 2020

Title: Death of Roger Luxton, OBE and Freeman of the Borough	
Report of: Acting Chief Executive	
Open	For Information
Wards Affected: None	Key Decision: No
Report Author: John Dawe, Senior Governance Officer	Contact Details: E-mail: john.dawe@lbbd.gov.uk
Accountable Divisional Director: Fiona Taylor Director of Law and Governance and Acting Deputy Chief Executive	
Accountable Director: Claire Symonds, Acting Chief Executive	
Summary: <p>The Assembly is asked to note with deep regret that Roger Luxton, the former Director of Children’s Services passed away on 12 September having been admitted to hospital some weeks ago. The funeral will take place on 1 October at 2pm at Harwood Park Crematorium, Stevenage. Given the public health situation attendance is limited although Jane Hargreaves, Commissioning Director, Education has been invited to attend and speak. The proceedings will be webcast and the recording retained for 7days should any Members/officers wish to view it.</p> <p>Roger held a number of roles during his long service with Barking and Dagenham Council, including Chief Inspector of Schools, Director of Education, Arts and Libraries and from 2006, the Council’s first Director of Children’s Services.</p> <p>It is fitting to record a tribute to Roger to recognise the significant and lasting contribution he made to education in Barking & Dagenham.</p> <p>Roger worked for the Council for over 23 years. He joined the Education Department on 1 September in 1986 after 17 years of teaching experience. He was appointed to lead the Borough’s Technical and Vocational Initiative which sought to increase the quality of practical, technological, art and design and vocational subjects in the Borough’s secondary schools and which had a significant impact.</p> <p>In the early 1990s Barking & Dagenham was at the bottom of nearly all of the education league tables. The Council decided that it wanted to make a decisive change and Roger was appointed to lead it. He will be particularly remembered for his pioneering work in transforming primary teaching and learning in this Borough, challenging some traditional practices of teaching in England which were not serving the children of Barking and Dagenham. He coined the phrase ‘<i>the long tail of underachievement</i>’ – soon widely used within education – and researched international practices, particularly in Zurich which were much more successful in reaching common high standards.</p> <p>In addition, in 2003 the Council was awarded Beacon Status for its work in transforming secondary education, reflecting another of Roger’s priorities – improving the standing and quality of vocational education. Under Roger’s stewardship, Trinity School was created, bringing together three former special schools and setting the foundations for the outstanding provision which Trinity provides today.</p>	

Roger was intensely interested in the detail of school design, illustrated particularly in the development of the Jo Richardson Community School. Designed to maximise space for teaching and learning, it attracted considerable interest and has influenced many school designs since.

Roger's standing in the field of education was immense. His work in mathematics, particularly numeracy, with the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, directly influenced the later National Strategy. In 1999 he was recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours and was awarded the OBE for 'Services to Education Standards'.

Following his retirement in August 2009, the Council in 2010 bestowed upon him the Freeman of the Borough.

Roger believed absolutely and fundamentally that a strong and enduring partnership between the Council and schools was and continues to be the best way to support opportunity, ambition and achievement for all the children and young people who live and go to school here. His legacy is that Barking & Dagenham has continued its commitment to that partnership and achievement.

Roger will be fondly remembered for his wit and warmth of personality and powers of public speaking. He leaves a wife Pauline, a son Simon and two daughters, Julia and Sarah.

Recommendation

The Assembly is asked to mark his passing with a minute's silence in his memory.