

## ASSEMBLY

29 September 2021

<b>Title:</b> Death of Neal Crowley, Freeman of the Borough	
<b>Report of the Chief Executive</b>	
<b>Open Report</b>	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Wards Affected:</b> None	<b>Key Decision:</b> No
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<b>Accountable Strategic Leadership Director:</b> Chris Naylor, Chief Executive	
<b>Summary</b>	
<p>The Assembly is asked to note with deep regret that Freeman of the Borough, Neal Crowley, passed away on Sunday 5 September at the age of 38.</p> <p>Neal was awarded the Freedom of the Borough in May 2019, becoming the youngest ever recipient of the Borough's highest award, in recognition of his tireless work on behalf of the local community and for disabled people in general. As a person with cerebral palsy, Neal understood the challenges people with disabilities experienced and yet he faced down his own challenges to ensure that facilities across the Borough, and beyond, were inclusive and accessible. One of his more recent campaigns was the "<i>to bidet or not to bidet</i>" project which, alongside Changing Places, aimed to ensure that more 'accessible toilets' were truly accessible for those with the most complex needs.</p> <p>As well as raising thousands of pounds for charity, Neal was a volunteer with Trinity School, B&amp;D Access Group and Ab Phab Youth Club which supports disabled young people. In 2018, Neal completed a 10km cycling challenge, raising over £1,000 for the International Day of Disabled People (IDDP), which we went on to become Chair of the following year. The Cycle 4 All Club at the Jim Peters Stadium in Lodge Avenue was a product of Neal's vision and he was also a member of Transport for London's Sub-Regional Mobility Forum, becoming a much respected voice for the Borough on transport and accessibility issues.</p> <p>Neal was born and bred in Dagenham and sport was a major part of his life. He was a huge West Ham United fan as well as being a member of its Disabled Supporters Board. As an experienced Assistant Instructor, Neal also coached athletes from the Borough at the 2017 Special Olympics in Sheffield with much success.</p> <p>Neal's funeral will be held on Wednesday 22 September at Eastbrookend Cemetery, following a service at Dagenham &amp; Redbridge Football Club. The funeral cortege will pass in front of the former Civic Centre where the Mayor, Councillor Fergus, the Leader, Councillor Rodwell, and other Members and officers are to gather to pay their respects and lay flowers. The Borough flag at the Town Hall, Barking will be flown at half-mast throughout the day of the funeral.</p>	

**Recommendation(s)**

The Assembly is asked to mark the passing of Neal Crowley with a minute's applause in recognition of his contribution to the Borough.