

MINUTES OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, 25 January 2023
(7:00 - 8:46 pm)

PRESENT

Cllr Irma Freeborn (Chair)
Cllr Tony Ramsay (Deputy Chair)

Cllr Andrew Achilleos	Cllr Dorothy Akwaboah	Cllr Princess Bright
Cllr Sade Bright	Cllr Josie Channer	Cllr Nashitha Choudhury
Cllr Muhib Chowdhury	Cllr Alison Cormack	Cllr John Dulwich
Cllr Cameron Geddes	Cllr Syed Ghani	Cllr Rocky Gill
Cllr Kashif Haroon	Cllr Victoria Hornby	Cllr Manzoor Hussain
Cllr Jane Jones	Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe	Cllr Mohammed Khan
Cllr Donna Lumsden	Cllr Giasuddin Miah	Cllr Margaret Mullane
Cllr Fatuma Nalule	Cllr Adegboyega Oluwole	Cllr Glenda Paddle
Cllr Michel Pongo	Cllr Regina Rahman	Cllr Hardial Singh Rai
Cllr Chris Rice	Cllr Lynda Rice	Cllr Ingrid Robinson
Cllr Paul Robinson	Cllr Emily Rodwell	Cllr Muhammad Saleem
Cllr Muazzam Sandhu	Cllr Faraaz Shaukat	Cllr Jack Shaw
Cllr Dominic Twomey	Cllr Lee Waker	Cllr Phil Waker
Cllr Maureen Worby	Cllr Mukhtar Yusuf	Cllr Sabbir Zamee

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Saima Ashraf	Cllr Faruk Choudhury	Cllr Edna Fergus
Cllr Simon Perry	Cllr Moin Quadri	Cllr Darren Rodwell

43. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

44. Minutes (23 November 2022)

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022 were confirmed as correct.

45. Death of Rita Giles MBE and Freewoman of the Borough

The Assembly paid tribute to Rita Giles MBE, who sadly passed away on Friday 18 November 2022, aged 87.

Rita moved to Dagenham at the age of five and was an active member of the scouting movement in the Borough for over 40 years, starting as a member of the 7 th Dagenham Scouts at the age of 14 and rising to the position of secretary of Dagenham Scouts. Rita was also a member of the Barking & Dagenham Youth Organisation and secretary of the Witten Twinning Committee.

In 1982, Rita was invited to become a Justice of the Peace, a position she held for

over 20 years until her retirement in 2005 aged 70. Many at the Council also remembered Rita's tireless commitment to the Ibscott Close Tenants' and Residents' Association and the wider Community Housing Partnership and Dagenham Housing Forum.

Rita was conferred the title of Honorary Freewoman of the Borough by the Council in February 2011 in recognition of her outstanding voluntary service to the local community. Those efforts were also recognised by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with the award of an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours in 2012

A number of Members paid tribute to Rita, remembering her contributions and dedication to the borough.

46. Death of Councillor Olawale Martins

The Assembly noted with deep regret that Councillor Olawale Martins passed away on Monday 28 November 2022, aged 63, following a period of illness.

Councillor Martins was first elected to the Council in 2018 to represent Heath Ward and was re-elected in May 2022. He served on a number of Council committees throughout his time on the Council and was the Deputy Chair of the Pensions Committee at the time of his passing.

A number of Councillors spoke in tribute to Councillor Martins, recalling his hard-working attitude, compassion and humbleness.

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

47. Leader's Statement

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services, presented a verbal statement updating the Assembly on a range of matters since the last meeting including:

Levelling up – A 'levelling up' bid for the Heathway, Dagenham, was successful and the Council was awarded a £10.9m grant to push ahead with a ground-breaking scheme to reinvigorate the Heathway. This would replace tired housing and create 5000 square metres of new commercial space and 316 new affordable homes, creating a new centre for Dagenham. The scheme would also focus on new and improved pedestrian and cycle paths to assist the Council's green agenda.

Budget Consultation – The budget consultation had begun with residents via the website. A Facebook session would be held shortly with the Leader and Deputy Leader (Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services) to answer residents' questions and concerns. The proposed budget would support residents through the cost-of-living crisis; however, this would be squeezing an already stressed budget, against the background of 12 years of austerity from the Government.

Cost-of-Living Crisis – The Council was looking at early intervention to help residents through the cost-of-living crisis and would be bringing together

community organisations for the third Cost-of-Living Summit shortly. The Council had partnered with community organisations to create a cost-of-living allowance and was providing financial help with energy costs and food.

Women's Empowerment Awards – March would see the return of the Women's Empowerment Awards and nominations for 2023 had now opened. This year a new award category for the 'Educator of the Year' had been introduced.

Holocaust Memorial Day – The Council would be marking Holocaust Memorial Day on Friday 27 January by holding prayers and lighting candles for the six million Jewish lives lost. There would also be reflection on the genocides that followed in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur.

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration addressed the Assembly in support of the NHS staff, in particular nurses and paramedics, who were currently undertaking strike action due to long working hours in unsafe conditions, without enough pay.

48. Appointments

The Labour Group Secretary announced that Councillor Saleem had been appointed to the Member Development Group.

49. BAD Youth Forum Annual Report 2022

The Assembly received the Barking and Dagenham (BAD) Youth Forum and Young Mayor's Annual Report, introduced by the Head of Participation, Opportunity and Wellbeing, who then handed over to representatives of the Youth Forum.

The report detailed the achievements of the BAD Youth Forum during the past 12 months outlining the work of each of the sub-groups, their aims and the impact of the work completed.

In February 2022, nominations and election for Members was held online due to increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases. 17 new members joined the forum.

The Forum then gave the following updates on Sub-Group activity.

Community Action Sub-Group: The Group undertook several activities including:

- A litter pick;
- Looking at health (specifically vaping);
- Trading Standards Test Purchasing;
- Looking at childhood obesity;
- Using Tik-Tok (to share key messages); and
- Tackling Child Exploitation;

Young Mayor Sub-Group:

- Zubin Burley was elected as the 8th Young Mayor of Barking and Dagenham;
- The Sub-Group selected the Ben Kinsella Trust to fundraise for and to work

- towards raising awareness of knife crime amongst young people;
- Due to the cost-of-living crisis, fundraising had been hard; however, the Sub-Group used different ways to fundraise including non-uniform days, Dagenham and Redbridge Football Club bucket shake, summer fete, a quiz night in partnership with the Mayor, attending the Christmas event and holding a Young Mayors Challenge with the Leader.
- The Young Mayor attended several events including a Ceremonial Council meeting in Barking Town Hall, the Civic Parade and a Citizenship Ceremony, amongst many other events; and
- To date, the Sub-Group had raised £2042 for charity.

Young Inspectors Sub-Group: The Young Inspectors group inspected local pharmacies that offer the free condom distribution scheme in Barking and Dagenham- Come Correct. Ten young people regularly carried out inspections during 2022.

During the year, the Forum undertook further activities which included:

- Visiting the Ben Kinsella Trust workshop;
- Youth Independent Advisory Group meetings;
- Helping to shape a disordered eating digital resource;
- A trip to the Houses of Parliament;
- Creating a promotional BAD Youth Forum video;
- A trip to Stubbers Adventure Centre;
- Six consultations; and
- Being part of the London Youth Assembly.

The Assembly thanked the Forum for their presentation and hard work during 2022.

The Assembly **resolved** to note the BAD Youth Forum Annual Report for 2022, as set out at Appendix A to the report

50. Senior Leadership Appointment - Strategic Director, My Place

The report was withdrawn from the Agenda.

51. Local Safeguarding Adults' Board Annual Report 2021/22

The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration presented a report on the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board Annual Report 2021/22.

The Annual Report described the work and priorities of the Barking and Dagenham Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) from April 2021 to March 2022. It set out the key achievements, work of the partners, information around the priorities and how the SAB had worked to improve the protection of adults across Barking and Dagenham.

The Annual Report was agreed by the Safeguarding Adults Board at its meeting on 12 October 2022 and was presented and discussed at the Health & Wellbeing

Board on 18 January 2023.

The Assembly **resolved** to note the contents of the Annual Report of the Safeguarding Adults Board for 2021/22.

52. Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24

The Cabinet Member Finance, Growth and Core Services introduced a report on the Council Tax Support (CTS) Scheme 2023/24 and reported on the positive outcome of a public consultation on the proposed introduction of a revised Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme for 2023/24.

The Cabinet Member advised that the proposal would reduce the minimum payment applied within the CTS scheme from 25% to 15% of the individual Council Tax bill, as a way of supporting low-income residents during the cost-of-living crisis. The net effect of such a change would mean that households entitled to the full level of CTS would be over £150 better off under the Council's revised scheme.

The Cabinet Member also referred to the recent grant allocation from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) aimed at providing additional support to low-income households in receipt of CTS with their Council Tax payments. It was noted that the funding would enable the Council to award a rebate of up to £25 to approximately 15,000 low-income households in receipt of CTS in the Borough

The Assembly **resolved** to:

- (i) Note that the Cabinet agreed to implement an additional one-off reduction of up to £25.00 for households in receipt of Council Tax Support and to delegate authority to the Director of Support and Collections, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Growth and Core Services, to determine and implement a scheme for its delivery in line with the guidance issued by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities;
- (ii) Agree, in light of the positive response to the public consultation, to adopt Model 2, as detailed in the report, as the CTS Scheme for 2023/24, which would reduce the minimum payment from 25% to 15% of the individual Council Tax bill, as a way of supporting low-income residents during the cost-of-living crisis; and
- (iii) Note that a fundamental review of the CTS scheme shall be undertaken in preparation for the determination of the CTS scheme for 2024/25, with a view to providing a more transparent and simple approach, with predictable levels of support, via a new banded scheme.

53. Motions

There were no motions.

54. Questions With Notice

There were no questions with notice.