

CROYDON COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday 15th July 2014 at 6.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber

THE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR MANJU SHAHUL-HAMEED - PRESIDING.

Councillors Ali, Audsley, Avis, Bains, Bashford, Bee, Benn, Bennett, Bird, Bonner, Butler, Buttinger, Canning, Chatterjee, Chowdhury, Clancy, Clouder, Collins, Creatura, Cummings, Fisher, Fitzsimons, Flemming, Gatland, Godfrey, Hale, Hall, Hay-Justice, Henson, Hollands, Jewitt, Kabir, Khan B, Khan S, King, Kyeremeh, Lawlor, Letts, Lewis, Mann, Mansell, Mead D, Mead M, Mohan, Neal, Newman, O'Connell, Pelling, Perry, Pollard H, Pollard T, Prince, Quadir, Rendle, Ryan G, Ryan P, Scott, Selva, Shahul-Hameed, Speakman, Stranack, Thomas, Thompson, Watson, Wentworth, Winborn, Woodley, Wright

ABSENT: Councillors Simon Brew, Bernadette Khan, Wayne Lawlor, Dudley Mead, Margaret Mead, Jason Perry and Sue Winborn.

The Council observed a minutes silence in respect of the death of Rio Andrew following the illegal rave in Croydon in June.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologises were received from Councillors Simon Brew, Bernadette Khan, Wayne Lawlor, Dudley Mead, Margaret Mead, Jason Perry and Sue Winborn.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on 3rd June 2014 be signed as a correct record.

3. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

All Members of the Council confirmed that their interests as listed in their Declaration of Interests Forms were accurate and up-to-date.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

None

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that two members of staff had received the MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours. She presented a citation to each of them worded as follows:

- a. That the Council tender their grateful thanks to Mr. Steven Christopher Iles, Head of Highways and Parking Services, for his service to the Borough of Croydon during the 2014 Flooding and
- b. That the Council record their sincere appreciation of the outstanding work which Mr. Iles carried out throughout the whole time of the emergency and congratulates him on being awarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) medal and
- c. That this resolution be engrossed and sealed and presented to the Mr Iles at the Council Meeting in a suitable form.

- a. That the Council tender their grateful thanks to Mrs. Susan Beaman Headteacher of Red Gates Special Educational Needs School, for her services to Special Needs Education in the Borough of Croydon.
- b. That the Council record their sincere appreciation of the outstanding work which Mrs. Beaman has given to Special Needs Education in Croydon and congratulates her on being awarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) medal and
- c. That this resolution be engrossed and sealed and presented to Mrs. Beaman at the Council Meeting in a suitable form

Councillor Tony Newman added his congratulations to both members of staff for their awards.

Councillor Newman announced that during the summer holiday free swimming would be available to all children across the borough. He also announced that the Pension Committee had agreed that tobacco investment would be removed from the Council Pension Fund and that the borough was moving towards having accredited London Living Wage status.

The Mayor announced that her website www.thecroydonmayor2014.co.uk was now up and running.

She also announced that a dinner would be held on 19th August at the Khyber Restaurant in aid of her charities.

The Mayor also announced that she had used her discretion to alter the order of business and that a revised agenda had been circulated prior to the meeting.

She also announced that the Council would adjourn for a short time at approximately 9.15 to allow Members observing Ramadan to break their fast.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME – questions from the people of Croydon

Under the provisions of the Council Procedure Rules (Croydon Constitution, Part

4A), written questions had been submitted and written replies were given by the relevant Cabinet Member. These were placed in the Chamber and Public Gallery, oral supplementary questions were asked by members of the public. Oral replies were provided by the relevant Cabinet Members.

[Note: at 18:40 Councillor Newman moved that Part 4A 3.13 be removed for this meeting to allow members of the public to ask two supplementary questions]

Oral Supplementary questions were asked by:

PQ034-14 - Mr S Kuttappan

PQ036-14 – Mr M Samuel

PQ037-14 – Mr P Collier

PQ045-14 – Mr G Streeter

PQ046-14 – Ms A Pollard

PQ047-14 – Pastor Thomas

PQ049-14 – Mr J Cartwright

[Note the written Public Questions and written replies can be found at www.croydon.gov.uk/agenda]

7. PETITIONS PRESENTED BY COUNCILLORS ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF CROYDON

Petitions were presented formally by Councillors as follows in accordance with Council Procedure Rules:

- 1) A petition presented by **Councillor Pat Ryan** on behalf of Waddington Way Residents Association
- 2) A petition presented by **Councillor Pat Ryan** on behalf of residents of Hermitage Road and the adjacent roads.

These petitions were referred to the relevant Cabinet Member. In accordance with the Council's Constitution the reply to this petition will be included in the agenda for the next Council meeting.

8. RESPONSES TO PETITIONS PRESENTED TO COUNCIL ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF CROYDON

In accordance with the Council procedure rules, the printed responses were open to questions from Councillors.

In relation to the petition presented on behalf of residents of Handcroft Road estate Councillor Collins advised that a meeting was to be arranged with the Mayor, Cllr Watson and housing officers to view the possibility of installing CCTV.

9. BUSINESS REPORT OF THE LEADER AND CABINET AND COUNCILLORS' WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS

The Leader presented the Business Report summarising the proceedings of the Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council, including matters considered by Cabinet Committees.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, written questions had been submitted in advance by Council Members and written replies had been given by the relevant Cabinet Members. The questions and answers had been placed in the Chamber. Supplementary questions were asked by Members of the Council and replies were given by the relevant Cabinet Members.

Each Cabinet Member was asked in turn if they had anything to add to their report. Questions were then invited from the Chamber for each Cabinet Member who replied orally to the questions on specific paragraphs or submitted questions.

The following Members asked questions on the Business Report

Cabinet Member

Leader: Councillors Fisher, Thomas, O'Connell, Chowdhury and Creatura.

Councillor Butler: Councillors Hale, Audsley, Wright, Chowdhury and Neal.

Councillor Collins: Councillors Thomas, Wentworth and Pollard;

Councillor Hall: Councillors O'Connell and Hopley.

Councillor Woodley: Councillors Mohan, Hale and Fitzsimons

Councillor Bee: Councillors H Pollard, Mohan, Mann and P Ryan.

Councillor Flemming: Councillors Gatland, Canning, Fisher, Hale and Neal.

Councillor Letts: Councillors Audsley, Thompson and Mansell.

Councillor Watson: Councillors Cummings, Quadir, Neal and Chatterjee.

Councillor Godfrey: Councillors Bashford, Jewitt, Pollard and Henson.

The Following Cabinet Members made announcements

Councillor Hall – regarding the cost of BWH to Croydon Tax payers

Councillor Letts regarding amendments to replies in CQ327 & CQ344

Councillor Godfrey – regarding the recent success in the London Youth Games

The recommendations contained in the business report were put and it was **RESOLVED** to agree the:

- Community Safety Strategy for Croydon 2014-17

10. MOTIONS FOR DEBATE

Two motions were submitted for debate in accordance with Council Procedure Rules as follows:

- 1) Proposed by Councillor Tony Newman
Seconded by Councillor Toni Letts

This Council calls on the current Government to immediately withdraw its permitted development powers, that are imposing top down decisions from Whitehall on how Croydon's office space is used. This Council believes that in the interest of regenerating our local economy and achieving best outcomes for Croydon residents that the LB Croydon and its planning committee is best

placed to decide whether our vacant offices are best used to create new jobs or residential accommodation.

Councillor Newman opened the debate saying that permitted development would damage the prospects in Croydon of providing quality housing. He went on to say that converting office space to residential was not what the town centre and district centres needed. Office stock was needed to attract business to Croydon.

Councillor Tim Pollard opened by saying that he supported that planning decision should be kept at local level. He went on to say that there were parts of the borough where offices could be converted to other purposes but not in the town centre.

Cllr Scott opened by saying that the planning system had been developed to create better places to live, work and play in. He went on to say that permitted development would strip away local planning authority and could lead to the slums of the future.

Cllr Bashford happy to agree with the motion as permitted development was not right. She went on to congratulate Cllr Dudley Mead on his achievements in building new homes in Croydon whilst in power. Local councils should have the authority not central government and that permitted development was not the best option for Croydon.

Cllr Fisher spoke saying that there was a risk that inappropriate offices could be converted which would not be in the best interest of the town centre. What was needed was quality homes not second rate substandard homes that permitted development can allow to happen.

Cllr Letts described permitted development as foolish and dogmatic

The motion was put and was carried unanimously.

At 21:15 - The meeting was adjourned for 15 minutes to allow Members observing Ramadan to break their fast.

- 2) Proposed by Councillor Lynne Hale
Seconded by Councillor Vidhi Mohan

This Council is concerned about the impacts on the most vulnerable tenants arising from the introduction of the proposed Landlord Licensing Scheme. The proposed charges would inevitably be passed on to tenants leading to rises in their rental levels. We ask the Council to carefully consider the impact on the most vulnerable and look again at the scheme and the proposed charging structure.

Councillor Hale opened the debate saying that the proposed Landlord Licensing Scheme or tenant tax raised a number of serious concerns. She went on to say that there were only a small number of 'rogue' landlords and

that scheme penalised private landlords and tenants across the borough. She said that the exclusion of housing associations made no sense as there were responsible for thousands of homes across the borough. In summing up she said that it was inevitable that landlords would pass the charges onto their tenants.

Councillor Butler speaking against the motion said that the motion should how out of touch the opposition were as the scheme was going out to consultation so why bring the motion? She went on to say that there were too many properties run by rogue landlords where families were living in squalor. Rents in the borough have increased, supply has fallen, standards have dropped and many properties are not meeting the decent homes standard. In summing she said that the Council had a responsibility to protect vulnerable tenants.

Councillor Creatura speaking to the motion said that everyone wanted to see decent homes for vulnerable residents. However this scheme has a high level of bureaucratic paperwork and that good landlords would be hit by this tax. It was unlikely to improve housing in the borough and would pass charges to struggling tenants.

Councillor Ali speaking against the motion opening by saying that private rents had doubled in London and there was concern at the lack of affordable housing. This scheme will protect vulnerable residents against the actions or inactions of poor landlords.

Councillor King speaking against the motion said that his constituents had much to gain from this scheme. He went on to say that landlords had more to gain than the opposition were prepared to acknowledge. In West Thornton, one in three properties are privately rented, this has resulted in a rise of problems that are being reported to the Council about the condition of properties. Too many landlords are indifferent to the attitude and behaviour of their tenants. This scheme will allow the council to improve the lives of many of our residents.

Councillor Mohan opened by congratulations the three newly elected councillors on their maiden speeches. In seconding the motion he said this was a Labour stealth tax and was not in the Labour manifesto and would be imposed on the most vulnerable in the borough. No evidence that the scheme would tackle the problem of rogue landlords, fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour etc.

The motion was put and was lost.

11. COUNCILLORS' OPEN SESSION ON WARD MATTERS

Councillor Stephen Mann spoke of his pride at being one of the first Labour Councillors voted into office for Ashburton Ward. He spoke of the diversity of the ward that had many issue. To help tackle these there would be two surgeries held monthly, details are on the Council website. This Labour administration will make Ashburton safer, cleaner & greener. We will forge 21st Century Croydon.

Councillor Helen Pollard spoke about Fairfield Ward and the community spirit, there are volunteer litter pickers and the Ward has its own special character which should be preserved. Within the Ward there is Fairfield Halls and she asked what the Labour Administration will do to invest in this building. Other developments are to take place in the town centre and she asked that residents are consulted.

Councillor Emily Benn spoke of the privilege of being elected to serve the residents of West Thornton, where she was born. The Ward is the home of the largest mosque in the borough and is a huge source of pride for the diversity across. She spoke of the issue of cleaner streets and is proud of the work done by the Council since the election and by local people to stand up and fight for a better community.

Councillor Chris Wright speaking about Coulsdon East Ward where he was first elected 24 years ago. He went on to say that the character of the area had changed with new developments that would revitalise and reenergise local area, bringing in new jobs and opportunities. In summing he said that Coulsdon East had the best residents on the borough.

Councillor Oliver Lewis spoke of his pride and privilege to be elected to serve for the residents of New Addington a strong community with wonderful residents. The greatest concern for local residents is crime and anti-social behaviour and this administration are determined to work to improve these areas. The regeneration of central parade must address the wants and needs of local people.

12. BUSINESS REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY & STRATEGIC OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Councillor Fitzsimons, Chair of Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee, outlined the changes to the Scrutiny function describing it as a critical friend of the executive. The new administration will allow all councillors the chance to improve and influence the conduct of the Council and its policies. He advised Council that a new subcommittee would be created, (Street & Environment Scrutiny Sub Committee), that would look at street lighting and 'My App' at its first meeting.

Questions were asked by

Councillor Cummings regarding the make-up of the new subcommittee.

Councillor Pat Ryan regarding the proposed work of the subcommittee.

The Chair gave an oral reply.

Council **RESOLVED** that the report of the Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee be received.

13. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION AND RELATED CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

Council considered the Cabinet recommendations and **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Terms of Reference as set out in Appendices 1, 3 and 11 be approved;
2. In terms of representation on the Pensions Committee, that the number of Members on the Pensions Committee is increased to 8 Members plus 1 Staff Side and 2 Pensioner Side non-voting co-opted Members appointed on an annual basis following consultation with the Staff Side and Pensioners of the Pension Fund and furthermore that the 8 Council Members shall comprise 5 Majority Group Members and 3 Minority Group Members.
3. That the changes to the Planning and Planning sub-Committee Procedure rules at Part 4K of the Constitution as set out in Appendix 2 be approved;
4. Note the Leaders' Draft Scheme of Delegation at Appendix 4 and the Cabinet Member Portfolios at Appendix 5;
5. Note the order of Business for both the Ordinary meeting and the Council Tax meeting as are set out at Appendix 6 and 7 respectively;
6. That the provisions of the Constitution be updated to reflect the ability of members of the public to report on the meetings via social media;
7. That the revised Scrutiny arrangements set out at Appendix 8, 9 and 10 be approved;
8. That the Tenders and Contracts Regulations at Part 4.I of the Constitution be amended to reflect the changes to related decision making arrangements as set out in Appendix 13 attached;
9. That the Chief Financial Officer be given delegated authority to make amendments to the Financial Regulation and the Corporate Scheme of Financial Delegations and note that the Financial Regulations at Part 4.H of the Constitution are being updated to reflect the above changes.
10. That in the light of the recommendations of the Independent Panel on the Remuneration of Members in London ("The Independent Panel the Scheme of Members' Allowances as set out at Appendix 12 be approved; and
11. That a delegation to the Director of Democratic and Legal Services be given to make the agreed changes and any consequential amendments to the Constitution needed to effect the recommended changes within this report including changes to Part 4D – Executive Procedure Rules and elsewhere in the Constitution.

14. THE APPOINTMENT OF A PERMANENT CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

Council received a report and considered the recommendations of the Appointments Committee meeting held 1st July 2014 and **RESOLVED** to agree the appointment of Mr Nathan Elvery to the post of Chief Executive, Head of Paid Service and other statutory roles associated with that post.

15. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES DEFERRED FOR DEBATE

There was no business under this item

16. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 22:15

Full copies of the Council agenda, reports and appendices are available in the Members Library and on the Council website at

www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/minutes/committees