

CROYDON COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting held on Monday 26th January 2015 at 6.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber

THE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR MANJU SHAHUL-HAMEED - PRESIDING.

Councillors Audsley, Ali, Avis, Bains, Bashford, Bee, Benn, Bennett, Bird, Bonner, Brew, Butler, Buttinger, Canning, Chatterjee, Clancy, Clouder, Collins, Creatura, Cummings, Fisher, Fitzsimons, Gatland, Godfrey, Hale, Hall, Henson, Hollands, Hopley, Jewitt, Kabir, 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 P, Scott, Selva, Speakman, Stranack, Thomas, Thompson, Watson, Wentworth, Winborn, Woodley, Wright

ABSENT: Councillors Chowdhury, Flemming, Hay-Justice and B Khan

The Mayor announced the sad news that Councillor Gerry Ryan had passed away on Sunday 18 January.

Councillor Newman described Councillor Gerry Ryan as one of Croydon's finest and one of the Councils most dedicated servants who was driven by a sense of public duty, by fighting injustices of the world and driven to defeating the Conservatives. Cllr Gerry Ryan had earned respect across the political divide. He went on to say that Cllr Ryan's other passion had been Crystal Palace Football Club and he thanked the Chief Executive of the club for his phone call expressing the clubs condolences.

Councillor Pollard concurred with the thoughts expressed by the Leader. He said that Cllr Ryan was rare in that what you saw is what you got. He was a decent and genuine man, a good opponent and always fought fairly and hard. He was never afraid to tell the opposite side, and indeed sometimes his own side, when they were wrong. He said that Cllr Ryan would be missed by everyone in the Chamber and sent condolences to the family.

The Council stood and observed a minutes silence in memory of Councillor Gerry Ryan.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Sherwan Chowdhury, Alisa Flemming, Patricia Hay-Justice and Bernadette Khan. The Mayor advised the Chamber that Cllr Hay-Justice was absent due to a sudden family bereavement.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Ordinary Council meeting held 1st December 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 congratulated Croydon residents who had been awarded received honours in the New Year's Honours list

- Councillor Margaret Mead – MBE for Civic and Community services in Croydon
- Ann Carter, Head of Exhibitions at the Imperial War Museum – MBE for services to museums.
- Celia Romain – MBE for services to public administration.
- Stephen Guyon OBE – for services to rough sleepers.

The Mayor advised Council that her next charity events would be the Valentine Eve Concert on 13th February at Royal Russell School, and a fish and chip lunch at McDermott's on 13th March. The Mayor said she was grateful to Members for their continued support at her charity events.

Councillor Newman, as Chair of the Mayoralty and Honorary Freedom Selection Sub-Committee, made an oral recommendation to the Council that Councillor Patricia Hay-Justice be invited to allow her name to be submitted to the Annual Council meeting on 21 May 2015 for election to the office of Mayor for the Council Year 2015/16.

6. SPECIAL INQUIRY REPORT

Council noted the action taken by the Leader as detailed in the Special Inquiry Report.

7. 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.

Oral Supplementary questions were asked by:

PQ001-15 – Dr Ginn
PQ002-14 – Mr Whittick
PQ005-15 - Mrs Thompson
PQ006-15 – Mrs Marsden
PQ009-15 – Mr Barber
PQ014-15 - Mr Samuel
PQ016-15 – Mr Hunter
PQ018-15 – Mr Cartwright
PQ020-15 – Miss Kiss

[Note the written Public Questions and written replies can be found at www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/council-questions]

8. PUBLIC PETITION

A petition with in excess of 5000 signatures had been presented to Council regarding the proposed closure of Purley Pool. The petition was worded as follows:

PETITION TO CROYDON COUNCIL SAVE PURLEY POOL 2015

SAVE PURLEY POOL - Please sign this petition to keep Purley Pool open or lose it forever.

The Council have decided to close Purley Swimming Pool on the 1st April 2015. This is after giving us their support over the years and after giving us a promises to keep the Pool open prior to the recent election. The pool is essential to the wellbeing of the community in so many ways. It is used by a vast number of people from young to old and the disabled. The local schools use the pool and young children learn to swim there. People from Sanderstead, Selsdon, Kenley, Coulsdon and Purley will not be able to swim in the South of the borough. Once this Pool has closed we are unlikely to ever have another Pool in the South of the borough. Give your support by signing below. Thank you.

The Chief Executive explained the process for debate as this was the first time a public petition had been presented to the Full Council directly by residents.

The Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer made a statement clarifying that there would be no vote at the end of the debate.

The Lead Petitioner Mr Fred Wallis presented the petition.

The following Councillors spoke in the debate.

Councillor Timothy Godfrey congratulated Mr Wallis and his team for the work they have done in collecting the signatures for the petition. He went on to say that the pool had been on the Council hit list for the last 8 years. The current Labour administration had many difficult decisions to make due to the cuts imposed on local government by the Conservative led Government meaning that the Council has to make cuts of £100m for the next three years. Cllr Godfrey said that residents wanted to see a modern facility that would benefit the local area. He said that 18 months ago the Council's contractors that run the pool had offered to work with the Tories to improve the facility but the offer had not been taken forward. In summing up Cllr Godfrey said that he wanted to see more leisure facilities in the borough and was prepared to work with residents on this important issue. He thanked campaigners for the petition

Councillor Tim Pollard opened by saying that he welcomed the press release with the announcement that the closure of the pool would be delayed but warned that it was only a delay. The petition was a tribute to people power and he congratulated the organisers of the petition and Cllr O'Connell, Chris Phelps and Cllr Emily Benn for their work in bringing this to the Full Council for debate.

He said that there needed to be a plan to take Purley Pool forward,

- 1) The pool to stay until a replacement in the south of the borough is ready,
- 2) See some proper investments in the pool,
- 3) Get community involvement – he called on Cllr Newman to set up a local steering group with the campaigners and local councillors to ensure that the routine maintenance is carried out by the contractors,
- 4) Long term regeneration for Purley in general, not just the pool, is taken forward.

He expressed disappointment that there was no vote to be taken at the end of the debate.

Councillor Simon Hall said there had been chronic underinvestment in the pool for many years. In 2007 the Tories had threatened to close the pool and had left it to deteriorate since then. Cllr Hall said that no decision has been taken to close Purley pool and that the current administration would listen to feedback from local residents. Under the Tories there was a pattern of capital expenditure on buildings with no future, and the current administration would not spend over £1m on a building with no future. He spoke about the cuts from central government and the lack of regeneration in the area from the previous conservative administration.

Councillor Lynne Hale said she was delighted to support the petition and that the proposed closure was unjust and unfair. She went on to say that the pool could operate without significant expenditure for some time and only needed a programme of remedial maintenance and effective contract oversight to keep it going for some

time. Cllr Hale acknowledged that budgets were tight and asked that the administration revisit the latest survey report that showed there were no urgent items outstanding. She agreed that there were some issues that needed attention but these were long standing and could be costed and put into the ongoing maintenance programme. In summing up Cllr Hale said she was delighted that the closure decision had been reversed. Cllr Hale also asked for a vote at the end of the debate.

Councillor Emily Benn said that the debate was victory for local people. The current Labour administration had been elected on a promise to listen to local people and the decision to reconsider the closure was an example of that. She went on to pay tribute to Ken Whittick and Fred Wallis for their work in organising the Save Purley pool campaign and the petition. Cllr Benn said it was good to see 'people power' in the Chamber and that this was not the end of the road. She went on to say that there has to be an acknowledgement that the pool is run down and in need of investment and she was pleased that the Leader had agreed to a local steering group to consult with local resident. The regeneration of Purley must involve the views of local people.

At the end of the debate Councillor Newman indicated that he was happy to have an indicative vote and to thank the petitioners for bringing the historic petition to council.

The Chief Executive confirmed that a vote could take place but it would be a non-binding decision. He explained that this was because it would be a vote to reverse a decision that has not been taken and which would not happen until the February Cabinet meeting. He went on to say that if Members wanted to show their support for the petition they could do so by a show of hands.

All members voted in support of the petitioners.

9. 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 Sean Fitzsimons** on behalf of residents of Addiscombe Avenue.

The petition was 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.

10. 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. Councillor Hopley asked about the bus route and that local residents are kept apprised of the consultation outcome.

11. MOTIONS FOR DEBATE

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

1. Proposed by Councillor Phil Thomas
Seconded by Councillor Mike Fisher

"Croydon is one borough and this Council believes that it would be wrong to offer different access to services, or different service specifications, in different parts of the borough."

Councillor Thomas opening the debate said that before the election the Labour Group had said that all parts of the borough would be treated the same. We are now being told that different parts of the borough need different services. This shouldn't be the case as all residents are paying the same amount of Council Tax. He went on to say that streets in the Centre and South of the borough were not being cleaned as often as the north and fly tipping was increasing and not being cleared up. He also spoke about the Administration selling school playing fields, introducing tenants tax, cutting the tree planting budget, will cutting garden waste and charging for recycling. In summing up Cllr Thomas said that the administration were only interested in the North of the Borough.

Councillor Fisher seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Butler speaking against the motion read a quote from the Labour manifesto 'as public services are cut fairness matters more than ever..'. She went on to say that the 'one size fits all' does not work as the needs of residents across the borough are different. What works in one place may not work in another and gave a number of examples. In summing up Cllr Butler said she was proud to represent the Borough that is Croydon, made up of many different places and wonderfully diverse people. True equality is not in treating different things the same but treating different things differently.

Councillor Stranack speaking in support on the motion said there was a perception that Croydon had an affluent south and deprived north. The facts speak differently and the National Indices of Deprivation show that when it comes to access to services the South is far worse off than the North. He went on to say that the most deprived areas were New Addington and Fieldway in the East of the Borough. The majority of the Council housing estates were in the South, Council run sports and leisure facilities get more use in the South than the North of the Borough. Many residents feel that the Council do not take care for them. Cllr Stranack in summing said that poverty in the borough was not a geographical issue but should be tackled as one.

Councillor Collins, speaking against the motion said that the wording was typical of the previous administration and its 'one size fits all' for services. The funding cuts that had been made to local government finances meant that the Council had to be flexible in providing services where they were most needed and to those that needed them most. He spoke about previous administration cutting the free collection of bulky waste and that it had been a direct cause for an increase in fly-tipping. He went on to ask what was wrong with cleaning a street that had more use and therefore was dirtier than one that was not. The idea of the same programme throughout the borough would stop this happening. Cllr Collins said that the motion did not allow for any flexibility in the services, the cut to local funding meant that the administration had to look at how to provide the most effective service across the borough, looking at where the main issues were and protect the most vulnerable.

Councillor Ali, speaking against the motion said that Croydon was one borough, it has the largest population of the London boroughs and this brings a diversity of circumstance. Consequently there are different experiences and needs across the borough, including income, life expectancy, types of housing and education attainment. She went on to say that parts of the North of the borough were 6 times more densely populated than the other parts of the borough. Cllr Ali said that the current administration believes in an equality of value of the services that residents receive from the Council. Delivering an equality of outcome does not mean treating people the same way; good governance requires the council to understand the varying needs of residents to deliver the best services. Applying a blanket policy would put some people at a disadvantage. The motion ignores the concept of need and areas where funding is most needed.

Councillor Fisher seconding the motion said that before the May elections they had heard much from Labour that they would run the borough for the whole borough. He went on to say that the fact that Labour were opposing the motion meant that something had changed since the election. He asked members to compare the actions taken by the administration to close Purley Pool compared to the actions the Conservatives had taken with South Norwood pool in 2006. The previous Labour administration had not signed a contract to rebuild South Norwood pool, leaving the Conservative administration 4 options, to close the pool, spend funds to keep it going, spending £4m to upgrade and refurbish or spend £12m on new pool. This pool was in the North of the borough and the Conservatives delivered good services across the borough so an upgrade and refurbishment was undertaken. In summing up he said that the current administration were not giving the same service to all residents across the borough.

The motion was **put and lost**

2. Proposed by Councillor Tony Newman
Seconded by Councillor Oliver Lewis

"This Council condemns the over £100million of local government cuts imposed on the people of Croydon by the current government".

Councillor Newman in proposing the motion said that the global financial challenge had put public expenditure under pressure. He went on to say that the Tory led

government had failed the people of the UK, this city and Croydon. Living standards have fallen, zero contracts are at record levels and the NHS is in crisis. The government have targeted local government to take a disproportionate share of the cuts in funding. This is not just this council saying this but other leading conservative figures. He asked if the local Tories or MP opposed these cuts, the answer was, no. In summing up Cllr Newman said that the labour administration had inherited £100m black hole, but through prudent management of the council's budget; putting value for money first, they would deliver a balanced budget, a Council Tax freeze and set Croydon on course to be a London living wage borough.

Councillor Lewis seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Cummings speaking against asked 'what this motion is about'. Is it about change, no; about tackling the challenges facing Croydon; no. It is, he said, about failing to take responsibility. Labour are unaware of the concept of available resources. Cllr Cummings said that the previous administration dealt with £100m of funding cuts without having to close vital community facilities. He went on to ask who do people trust with national economy and quoted figures from a recent ITV poll showing that the current Conservative leader polled more than twice the percentage than both the Labour and UKIP leaders combined.

Councillor Henson supporting the motion spoke about the damage to the people because of government cuts. She asked where was the money to build new houses, and criticised cuts in arts funding, cuts to police presence on the streets and the reduction of lollipop person to help at crossings. In summing up she said that cuts don't affect people just for now but for generations to come and called on the government to stop penalising the people of Croydon.

Councillor Creatura speaking against said he was confused by the motion as members opposite had blamed the previous Conservative administration for the £100m black hole but the motion says it is all the fault of the government. He went on to say that it was easy to place all the blame at the governments' door. He went on say that the Motion goes against national Labour policy. Whatever happens in May government cuts will still be handed down to local government.

Councillor Bashford speaking against the motion said that this was electioneering bearing in mind the close proximity of the general election. She went on to say that whichever party was in power in the Town Hall the cuts would still have to be made but it was how they chose to make cuts that residents are interested in. She said that before the election the Labour administration had made promises that would cost money and subsequently gone back on them as they cost too much. In summing up Cllr Bashford said the budget reductions this Council and all those around the country have to make are no surprise, the Labour administration need to find the effective, initiative and positive ways to provide services to residents.

Councillor Lewis paid tribute to Councillor Gerry Ryan, describing him as a great encourager who would be missed as a colleague and friend. Cllr Lewis seconding the motion said that previous speakers had already described how Croydon has suffered from £100m cuts from government. He went on to say that the local Tories had not spoken against this and had sacrificed the ambition of Croydon residents.

Cllr Lewis said that local communities had been ripped apart by bedroom tax, struggled to put food on the table for their family, expensive heating bills, cuts in family credit and an A&E crisis. He said that the previous administration had spent money on a new HQ rather than on front line services. In summing up Cllr Lewis said that this Labour administration will take a prudent approach and a long term view. They had already restored council finances and will deliver outcomes that match the ambitions of Croydon's people.

The Motion was **put** and **carried**.

12. 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.

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 T Pollard, Pelling, Brew, Benn, Stranack, Audsley and Thomas.

Councillor Toni Letts: Councillors Perry, Wright, Neal and Winborn.

Councillor Simon Hall: Councillors Cummings, Canning and H Pollard.

Councillor Stuart Collins: Councillors Thomas, Kabir, Creatura, Rendle and Chatterjee.

Councillor Louisa Woodley: Councillors M Mead, Quadir, Hopley, Brew and Creatura.

Councillor Alison Butler: Councillors D Mead, Canning, Neal and Perry.

At 21.24 Councillor Newman moved a procedure motion 1.11.9 to move to the next item of business. This was seconded by Councillor Butler and agreed by Council.

The following Cabinet Members made announcements

Councillor Woodley: advised the date of her bulletin should read January 2015.

Councillor Butler congratulated Chloe Phelps, who works in Planning, who has been nominated for the Emerging Women Architect of the Year 2015 as part of the Architects' Journal's 'Women in Architecture Awards'. (Councillor Dudley Mead and Councillor Perry added their congratulations on this nomination)

13. BUSINESS REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY & STRATEGIC OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Councillor Sean Fitzsimons, Chair of Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee, presented a written report to Council summarising the proceedings of that Committee since the last ordinary meeting of the Council, including matters considered by the Scrutiny Sub-Committees.

Councillor Andrew Pelling asked a question regarding pre decision scrutiny of the budget to which he received a reply.

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

14. COUNCILLORS' OPEN SESSION ON WARD MATTERS ON BEHALF OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Councillor Bonner said she was privileged to have represented **Fieldway Ward** for eight years, part of the community that is New Addington. The residents are excellent fund raisers for many good causes and there are many unsung heroes in the ward who make a daily difference without seeking recognition. She went on to say that Fieldway was one of the most deprived wards in the borough. Cllr Bonner said that residents have been failed by the previous administration; they have been hit by government cuts in benefits, bedroom tax, less police on the streets and fly tipping was out of control. Labour has made a good start to deliver on their manifesto promises, there will be two additional police officers, new swimming pool and fly tipping is now cleared quicker.

Councillor Clancy said he was honoured to have been elected in **Coulsdon West Ward** and paid tribute to the previous councillors David Osland and Ian Parker. He spoke about the Cane Hill development and the judicial review over the traffic impact and asked that the council keeps an open mind for a southern access road to the A23. Cane Hill is a massive development that will provide 675 homes and 3000 sq metres of business premises. He went on to say that residents want to know how services will be improved, how local infrastructure would support extra residents. Local schools are being asked to provide bulge classes; health facilities at Purley hospital have been downgraded. In summing up Cllr Clancy asked for CCTV to be installed in Coulsdon North.

Councillor Fitzsimons said he was proud to serve **Addiscombe Ward**, an area of central Croydon. One of the key roads in Croydon is Cherry Orchard Road which accommodates many different facilities, East Croydon Station, shops, offices, schools and there are a number of new developments. However many of these do not deliver for local residents, building luxury flats that local residents cannot afford, the bridge to nowhere that the Council is now being asked to finish. The area will gain over 1000 new homes with these new developments but over the years many jobs have been lost. He went on to say that under Permitted Development schemes small flats were being built that were only 13 sq metres and he asked for more affordable homes and regeneration for the many not just the few.

Councillor Speakman said he was delighted to represent **Purley Ward**. He spoke about the Island site in the centre of Purley and said residents rely on Cllr Scott, as Chair of Planning, to ensure that there are quality buildings on the site. He spoke about the flood prevention provision and thanked Cllr Bee for her reply for clearance of the gullies and maintenance of recycling centre pond. With regard to the Purley pool he thanked those that had put in the efforts to bring the petition to Council for debate. He cautioned that following the earlier debate on the Purley pool the administration needed to keep the pool open until a solution or alternative site is available. In summing up he said that politicians are believed by their actions not their words.

Councillor Wentworth speaking about **Upper Norwood Ward** said he receives many different types of correspondence from his local residents. He recounted one letter he had received. The letter congratulated him and Cllr Pat Ryan on their re-election as the Ward; it thanked the new administration for the freeze on Council Tax. It went on to say how pleased the residents were that something was being done about fly tipping in the area. Residents were also pleased that the Council were going to bring in a register for landlords. Finally they were pleased that the Council were not selling playing school playing fields unlike the Tories who voted to sell off Highbury playing field last year.

15. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR NON – VOTING CO-OPTES

Council **RESOLVED** to note the recommendations from the Ethics Committee regarding the proposed Code of Conduct for non-voting co-optes at Appendix 1 of the report and agreed to adopt the Code.

16. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES DEFERRED FOR DEBATE

There was no business under this item

17. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 21:52

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

The webcast of this meeting can be found at www.croydon.gov.uk/democracy/dande/broadcasts