

# **CROYDON COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

**of the meeting held on Monday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2016 at 6.45pm.**

### **THE MAYOR COUNCILLOR PATRICIA HAY-JUSTICE PRESIDING**

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

Absent: Councillors Fitzsimons, B Khan, D Mead and M Mead.

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologises for absence were received from Councillors Fitzsimons, B Khan, D Mead and M Mead.

#### **2. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Ordinary Council Meeting held on Monday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2015 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 (If Any)**

None

## **5. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor announced that she had attended the recent New Year Day parade with a number of volunteer groups and that the Council had won an award.

The Mayor congratulated Croydon residents who had been honoured in the New Year's Honours List as follows:

- Maureen Martin, Headteacher, Coloma Convent Girls' School, an OBE for services to education.
- Anita McGowen, Lecturer and personal tutor, Croydon College, MBE for services to further education and to the community in Sutton and Croydon.

Councillor Newman, Leader of the Council added his congratulations to those of the Mayor to the two recipients.

Councillor Newman, advised Members that the Council and the Board of Fairfield had met and that significant progress had been made that would enable redevelopment of the Fairfield Halls to progress.

## **6. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION - PUBLIC PETITIONS AND HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD.**

Councillor Tim Pollard moved that this item be deferred for debate as the contents of the report had not been agreed with his Group.

Councillor Newman advised that the report had been agreed by the cross party constitution working group and that item should not be deferred.

The Chief Executive explained that the paper before Council needed to be agreed as an interim solution, to allow the public petition at agenda item 7 to proceed. He went on to say that the cross party constitution working group still had the opportunity to amend the Constitution. The Chief Executive explained that under paragraph 3.49 only items from Cabinet or Committee could be deferred for debate. This item was from the Acting Monitoring Officer.

Councillor Newman proposed the recommendations contained in the report, Councillor Butler seconded.

### **Council RESOLVED**

1 That in respect of public petitions, the Council Procedure Rules at para.3.21 and 3.52 Part 4A of the Constitution be amended as detailed in para.3.2 and 3.3 of the report;

1.2 That the rules of procedure of the Health and Well-Being Board at para.8.7, Part 4L of the Constitution be amended allow for the appointment of an additional vice-chair who would be a representative from the CCG.

## **7. PUBLIC PETITION DEBATE- DRAFT CROYDON LOCAL PLAN - SHIRLEY**

A petition with in excess of 3,600 signatures had been presented to Council regarding the draft Croydon local Plan – Shirley area. The petition was worded as follows:

“We call on Croydon Council to drop its demands for Shirley. We oppose the intensification associated with the gradual change of the area’s local character, de-designation of Metropolitan Open Land around Shirley, Gypsy Traveller Sites and development on Garden land.”

The Chief Executive explained the process for the debate and that there would be no vote taken at the end of the debate.

The Lead Petitioner, Mr David Greenwood presented the petition and spoke for three minutes.

Councillor Alison Butler said she welcomed the opportunity to give some clarity around the Local plan and address some of the misinformation that has been spread. The Local Plan is a requirement from central government to set out local planning polices and identify how land is to used, determining what can be built and where and to ensure all land is correctly designated across the borough. The Croydon plan needs to show how we can meet the Mayor of London target of 1435 new homes per year in Croydon, and how we can exceed that to achieve a target of 31765 homes over a 20 year period. She went on to say that many of these homes wold be built in the Town Centre, but others would need to be built across the borough. The Council has a legal duty to consider the needs of gypsy and travellers sites and assessment have shown that 39 new sites need to be identified over the 20 years. The wiliness of the land owner to make a site available for development is an important factor when concluding whether to allocate land. Should the residents who own the land and freehold in Shirley Oaks not wish to make this land available then that is their decision, the Council has no plans to build on the land or to compulsory purchase it. In summing Cllr Butler said that all views received would be fully considered.

Councillor Susan Bennett spoke of the dismay felt by local residents and that the petition was a result of residents speaking with 'one voice' and highlights the pending disaster not just for Shirley but the whole of Croydon. Cllr Bennett went on to say that the Plan was ill-conceived; planning to build 700 homes on MPOL, allow back garden developments and demolition of properties to allow the building of flats against the wishes of local people. She went on to ask if the Council had consulted on who owned the land and if local residents wanted what was being proposed in the Plan. In summing up Cllr Bennett said that the boroughs green and open spaces were under threat by this plan.

Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed said that what made Croydon was the strong character and local heritage, landmarks and views of the area and that Shirley residents were bound together by strong relationships and common interests. The Local Plan will enable the Council to plan ahead to protect the unique character and attractiveness of the borough, to identify land that could be used for development

across the borough for future generations.

Councillor Jason Perry said that the people of Shirley were feeding back their views as over 7,000 had responded to the consultation and nearly 4000 had signed the online petition. He went on to say that this was a grass root response to the proposed policies including downgrading Shirley Oaks Village MOL, Croham Hurst, Purley Downs, Sanderstead Plantation, Coombe playing fields and placing 3 gypsy travellers sites in green belt in direct opposition to Government policy. He went on to say that Croydon is London's greenest borough and the loss of areas of special character across the borough was wrong. In summing up he said that there were a huge number of brown field sites available and that the administration should listen to the residents across the borough in opposition to the local plan and drop these divisive policies.

Councillor Mike Fisher said it was a privilege and honour to represent Shirley since 2002 and before that Spring Park and that he had never seen an issue make residents as angry as the Local Plan. Shirley residents were opposed to the local plan and felt under threat from the proposal that completely changed the character of the area. He went on to say that the Plan did not respect the character and nature of Shirley or any other part of the borough. In summing up Cllr Fisher said that there were so many things wrong in the proposals that the Council should withdraw the plan and review it.

Councillor Paul Scott said that London's population was growing rapidly and that every borough will need to meet challenging new growth targets. To meet those targets Croydon will need to build 32,000 new homes by 2036, the majority of the homes will be built in the town centre, on previously developed brown field sites, in areas with good public transport. There is not enough space to accommodate all the new homes in those areas, a relatively small proportion will need to be located in the suburbs. This administration is committed to protecting the character of Shirley and other places in Croydon. The government requires justification for all aspects of the local plan, the borough. In summing up Cllr Scott said that allotments, playing fields and the pond will be protected and the other areas offered opportunities to build new homes. The land is owned by residents of the estate and they will decide if they wish to release any of it for development.

At the conclusion of the debate Councillor Fisher moved, under 1.11(8), for a suspension of standing orders to allow for a vote, Councillor Chatterjee seconded the motion. The Chief Executive clarified to the Chamber what the procedure should be as set out in Council procedure rules. He advised that this was a motion moved without notice and can only be moved at the discretion of the Chair. The Mayor explained why she would not accept the procedural motion, there followed much loud protesting from Councillors and interruptions from the public gallery. At 7:45pm the Mayor suspended the meeting due to the level of disruptions.

The meeting reconvened at 8:00pm

## **8. 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 and online. Oral supplementary questions were asked by members of the public.

Oral replies were provided by the relevant Cabinet Members.

[The meeting was webcast, please see link at the end of these minutes]

PQ004-16 Mr P Collier  
PQ005-16 Mr J Cartwright  
PQ006-16 Mrs C Lumb  
PQ011-16 Mr M Hewish  
PQ013-16 Mr R Buckler  
PQ048-16 Ms A Pollard  
PQ049-16 Mr A Arbisman  
PQ055-16 Mr M Samuel

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

## **9. PETITIONS TO BE PRESENTED BY COUNCILLORS TO COUNCIL ON BEHALF OF THE PEOPLE OF CROYDON**

A Petition was presented formally by Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh on behalf of residents of Mer sham Road in accordance with Council Procedure Rules.

In accordance with procedure the petition will stand 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 Ordinary 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. There were no questions.

Councillor Collins advised Members that following the presentation of the Public Petition on Green Waste at the previous Council meeting he had written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer seeking fair funding for Croydon. The letter had been added to the meeting papers on the website.

## **11. MOTIONS FOR DEBATE**

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

## **The first Motion**

### **1. Proposed by Councillor Yvette Hopley Seconded by Councillor Sara Bashford**

*'Whilst accepting that online access to services is significantly cheaper and suits many younger residents' lifestyles, this chamber is concerned that the push to digital-only access is discriminatory against the 14% (or more) of residents who are not digitally enabled and that appropriate non-digital points of access to all services should continue for as long as there is a need.'*

Councillor Hopley speaking for the motion said she was a supporter of technological advancement but that many residents were being left behind as they were unable to access key services and felt isolated. She went on to say that 14% or more of local residents did not have the means or skills to use the internet. The Fairness Commission had highlighted the problems for many elderly residents where the phone is the only means of communications and accessing Council services this way can be confusing. She went on to say that digital zones did not address the problem and that a recent user Panel had proved to be ineffective as the IT did not work correctly. In summing up Cllr Hopley said that the current system of using online services were discriminatory and excluded many residents throughout the borough that did not have the skills or means to access Council services online.

Councillor Bashford seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak until later in the debate.

The Mayor advised that she had been notified of a Notice of Amendment to the Motion, this had been circulated.

Councillor Mark Watson, moved the amended motion, which was seconded by Councillor Oliver Lewis

The amended motion read:

*'Whilst accepting that online access to services is significantly cheaper and is increasingly the only way to access many services, this chamber is concerned that the 14% (or more) of residents who are not digitally enabled will continue to be disadvantaged and therefore welcome this Council's Basic Digital Skills Action Plan, which includes a target of 40 digital zones being established across Croydon, to ensure that appropriate points of access to basic digital skills training should continue for as long as there is a need, while still providing services in cost effective ways which ensure no one is left behind.'*

Councillor Watson speaking in support of the amended motion said that the Council was putting more services online that would save in excess of £5m a year. This would provide a better and more efficient service for residents, but the administration recognised that some residents lacked the digital skills required to access all these services. He went on to say that the Council were developing a basic digital skills action plan to assist those that are not digitally enabled, introducing 40 digital zones across Croydon. The Council GoOn Digital zone was the country's first, and has been shortlisted for the Digital Council of the year and the exemplar model for other London boroughs. He went on to say that anyone without the means to access

through digital means would be assisted, there would be free course for those on benefits, web chat services to support customers online, floor walkers in Access Croydon to assist those who visit to use the Council services. In summing up Cllr Watson said almost everyone can access online with help.

Councillor Lewis seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak until in the debate.

Councillor Stranack speaking in support of the original motion said that whilst he enjoyed new technology and various social media and websites which will be part of our futures. However Cllr Stranack said he runs a charity in Selsdon & Heathfield for residents with over 250 of those using the services over 75 many of them find using technology confusing and upsetting that they can't get online to renew Freedom Pass, Blue badge or register for the Green Waste service. He went on to say that a more customer focused response needed to help the most vulnerable in the borough. In summing up Cllr Stranack said that many broadband packages were expensive and therefore not always affordable for families on lower incomes.

Councillor Jewitt speaking in support of the amended motion spoke of the challenge of using new technology to many elderly and vulnerable groups. However by working with those groups and showing them the basic skills made it less daunting. Cllr Jewitt went on to describe examples of showing people how to use technology to be able to Skype and contact relatives in different parts of the world. She went on to say that she understood why people feared the use of technology and that the ability to access Council services by other means would always be there.

Councillor Lewis seconded the amended motion and went on to say the GoOn campaign launched in Croydon was aimed at giving people better digital skills and getting more people online. He went on to say that the original motion ignored some of the work already done by the Council to support people with digital channel shift. Learn Direct are available every Monday in Access Croydon to promote digital skills courses and staff offer assistance to residents to complete their forms online. This Council is ambitious for its residents in face of Tory cuts, engaging with residents to improve their digital skills which will enable them to access not just council services but also other services like gas, electricity and bank accounts.

Councillor Bashford seconding the original motion and speaking against the amendments to the motion went on to say that she couldn't support the amended motion but did support a variety of means for residents to access Council services. She went on to say that many residents through either fear of the unknown or lack of money were excluded by the Council. She was pleased that digital enabling is being rolled out but this is a small minority only and those that are unable to use service in this way are made to feel unwanted and part of another era. Cllr Bashford went on to ask how residents that don't have IT facilities or the basic skills to access services, pay their rent, rates etc and that many feel distressed that they cannot use the online services, even with help. Cllr Bashford said that even the Council's telephone services can be confusing as residents are often directed to online services. In summing up Cllr Bashford said that the reducing in hours for the contact centre also made is difficult for residents to get assistance, and that being directed to an online

service rather than being asked if the resident was able to go online would be more helpful.

The amendment to the motion was **put** to the vote and **carried**, with no votes against.

The amended motion then became the substantive motion; this motion was **put** to the vote and **carried** with no votes against.

## **The second Motion**

Note: At 20:50 Councillor Newman advised Members that Councillor Butler and Councillor Scott had left the meeting due to illness and that Councillor Collins would speak on her behalf.

2. Proposed by Councillor Tony Newman.  
Seconded by Councillor Alison Butler.

*'This Council condemns Tory Government plans that will all but end affordable housing to rent and help put home ownership out of the reach of the majority of local people here in Croydon'.*

Councillor Newman opened the debate quoting Lord Kirslake saying central government was attempting to phase out social housing. Home ownership was in decline and insecurity in the private rented sector meant there was a housing crisis that government had few answers. He went on to say that Council's would need to sell 100,000 properties to meet right to buy demand. Cllr Newman spoke of the £450m that would be removed from the HRA over the next 30 years, money that could have been used to pay for new houses and improve existing properties. He said that to purchase starter homes would require a £77,000 minimum income, Croydon residents average income is £25,000. In summing up Cllr Newman said that this administration would continue to lobby against government cuts.

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

Councillor Neal speaking against the motion said that Labour had first introduced right to buy in 1959 but over the years had changed their policies as number of times. He went on to say that the government wanted to transform a generation of rent to a generation to buy. He went on to speak about the Housing Bill that would give right to buy to housing tenants at discounted rates. This would allow people to achieve their aspiration of home ownership.

Councillor Audsley speaking in support said there was a housing crisis and that London needed to build 40,000 new homes a year for the next 20 years to meet demand. He went on to say that Croydon residents were increasingly unable to get on the housing ladder and many were finding it more difficult to pay rents. He went on to speak about the Housing Development Company that was being set up by the Council and that developers were being asked to provide up to 50% affordable homes in new developments. In summing up Cllr Audsley spoke of the Landlord Licensing Scheme that protected those in the private rented sector.



Councillor Speakman speaking against the motion said that it was devoid of substance. He went on to say that the Council had received £11m in the last 6 years for housing with a further £11m to come over the next 5 years. Cllr Speakman went on to say that more housing was needed but it should not destroy local area character. The Council should be looking at the demand side of the current housing crisis but Labour do not care about the destruction of communities. He spoke of affordable housing targets, homes would have small rooms, no parking and leisure facilities were not being developed. In summing up he spoke about areas where the Council were planning to build 45,000 new homes and the extra spending that would be required to ensure the infrastructure was improved.

Councillor Hale speaking against the motion said the previous labour government had left both a housing and economic crisis. in 2010 house building had reached its lowest level, homes for social rent had decreased by 420,000 with millions on the waiting list. She went on to say that everyone should be able to afford a home but that too many people in Croydon were struggling to do this. Cllr Hale went on to say that more affordable homes in Croydon to rent or buy would be welcome. The Housing and Planning Bill would increase the pace of house building, starter homes programme would see home built for first time buyers and achieve their aspiration of home ownership.

Councillor Collins in seconding the motion said that the governments housing policies were an attack on social housing. He went on to say that since 2010 homelessness had increased by a third amid a crisis in the number of affordable homes. Cllr Collins went on to speak about some of the reasons for the current crisis, home ownership was at its lowest for a generation, Croydon was being forced to sell high value homes, end of fixed term tenancy agreements that broke up communities, pay to stay and attack on aspirations of council tenants and working families, reducing housing benefits, right to buy for housing association properties with no plans to replace the stock. He said that whilst starter homes were welcome but not priced at £450,000 as quoted.

The motion was **put** and **carried**.

## **12. BUSINESS REPORT OF THE LEADER INCORPORATING COUNCILLORS' WRITTEN QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND 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 and posted on the Council website. 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.

At 21:25, Councillor Pollard moved a procedure motion 1.11.9 to move to the next item of business. This was seconded by Councillor Newman and agreed by Council.

The following Cabinet Members made announcements:

**Councillor Newman**, as Chair of the Mayoralty and Honorary Freedom Selection Sub-Committee, made an oral recommendation to the Council that Councillor Wayne Trakas-Lawlor be invited to allow his name to be submitted to the Annual Council meeting on 23 May 2016 for election to the office of Mayor for the Council Year 2016/17.

**Councillor Hall** made an announcement with regarding to the letting of part of Bernard Wetherill House, the sale of Jeannette Wallace House and vacating Leon House that would improve revenue by £2m making sure that the Councils assets were used for the benefit of residents.

**Councillor Collins** announced that sufficient residents had signed up for the Green Garden Waste service to continue from April. He advised that residents would still be able to sign up for this service.

**Councillor Woodley** announced that the Council had received two awards, Good Food for London, Croydon recognised as a most improved borough, and Sustainable Food Cities, recognised Croydon Food Flagship. Cllr Woodley thanked officers for their hard work and the good work being done in schools.

**Councillor Flemming** thanked Richard Dickson, one of the boroughs foster carers for his continued work with young people won an award for his work over the last 10 years.

Council **RESOLVED** to

1. Note the business report of the Leader and Cabinet;
2. Approve the Cabinet recommendations as follows:
  - 2.1 Agree the proposed Admission Arrangements for Community Schools for the 2017/18 academic year as contained in Appendix 4 of the Cabinet report.
  - 2.2 Agree to the co-ordinated scheme for the 2017/18 academic year as set out in Appendix 5a (Primary) and Appendix 5b (Secondary) to this report and note the Published Admission Numbers for Community Schools for the 2017/18 academic year as set out in Appendix 6 of the Cabinet report.
  - 2.3 Agree the proposed Admission Arrangements for Community Schools for the 2017/18 academic year as contained in Appendix 4 of the Cabinet report
  - 2.4 Agree to the co-ordinated scheme for the 2017/18 academic year as set out in Appendix 5a (Primary) and Appendix 5b (Secondary) of the Cabinet report; and

2.5 Note the Published Admission Numbers for Community Schools for the 2017/18 academic year as set out in Appendix 6 of the Cabinet report.

## **12. COUNCILLORS' OPEN SESSION ON WARD MATTERS ON BEHALF OF OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

Councillor Henson spoke about the progress that had been made in Ashburton Ward over last two years. She spoke about the improvements in Long Lane Woods, made with the help of Ward community budgets, the local children's centre and their outreach programme at Longheath Gardens Community Centre. These were examples of Labour listening to local residents. Cllr Henson also spoke about the development of Ashburton Park library that was being turned into a community hub that residents had asked for. There were local shopping areas and recently Christmas lights had been installed with the help of Ward budgets and local residents associations.

Councillor Creatura said that Coulsdon West residents were community minded and happy. He spoke of the recent Yule feast that had been helped by the community ward budget and residents associations. He went on to say that local residents were passionate about their area and challenged the council to ensure that proposed scheme were for the benefit of the area. Cllr Creatura asked why the Lion Green scheme was not progressing. In summing up he said that the Coulsdon population will increase by 40%, where will they live, how the infrastructure will evolve, these were questions that his residents were asking.

Councillor Pelling spoke of Waddon's view on issue on housing and economic growth in the borough and the opportunities that will come with that growth. He went on to say that outside the centre of Croydon Waddon, Purley, Broad Green will take the burden of extra homes, extra schools. This will have a mitigating effect on air quality in Waddon; Public Health England talk about 2391 premature deaths in Croydon due to poor air quality and this issues needs serious consideration. He went on to speak about more use of public transport, tram services, encouraging walking and looking at park and ride.

Councillor Chatterjee speaking about Shirley Ward said that it was regrettable that not enough time had been set aside for the statutory consultation of the Local Plan for residents to put their thoughts forward. He went on to speak about the community spirit in Shirley as evidenced by the number that had attended the earlier debate and the uncertainty around planning for the future. Cllr Chatterjee spoke about the threat to green spaces used by local children as many have no gardens to play in.

Councillor Kyeremeh said it was an honour to represent Thornton Heath Ward since 2006 although not much happened in Ward until Labour came to power. He went on to say that now Thornton Heath was moving forward with investment of £3m that would benefit the whole borough. Projects would include road improvements, new pavements and improved shops fronts and provide support to new businesses in the area. Cllr Kyeremeh went on to speak about local residents and businesses were in discussion with the Council to give the High Street a much needed facelift. He went on to speak

about the work of local community groups in raising the profile of local parks, conservation areas and leisure facilities and taking an active role in the regeneration of the high street.

#### **14. BUSINESS REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY & OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

Councillor Carole Bonner, Deputy 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.

There being no questions on the report Council **RESOLVED**

- 1.1 To note the Scrutiny work programme for 2015-16 and scrutiny activity since the 25 November 2015.
- 1.2 That all Members are asked to consider the opportunities offered by Local Action Mini Reviews and what contribution they or their constituents can make to these or to the topics selected for Scrutiny as part of the 2015-16 scrutiny work programme.
- 1.3 To note the Lines of Enquiry for each review and consider whether they or their constituents may be able to contribute comments or questions for consideration and to tweet/facebook the topics to their followers.

#### **15. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CABINET AND COMMITTEES DEFERRED FOR DEBATE**

There was no business under this item.

The meeting ended at 21:50

The meeting webcast can be viewed here: <http://www.croydon.public-tv/core/portal/home>