

MINUTES

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON

Monday 17 October 2016 at 6:30 p.m. in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon, CR0 1NX

Present: Councillor H Ali, Councillor J Audsley, Councillor J Avis, Councillor S Bashford, Councillor K Bee, Councillor S Bennett, Councillor M Bird, Councillor C Bonner, Councillor S Brew, Councillor A Butler, Councillor J Buttinger, Councillor R Canning, Councillor R Chatterjee, Councillor S Chowdhury, Councillor L Clancy, Councillor P Clouder, Councillor S Collins, Councillor M Creatura, Councillor J Cummings, Councillor M Fisher, Councillor S Fitzsimons, Councillor A Flemming, Councillor M Gatland, Councillor T Godfrey, Councillor L Hale, Councillor S Hall, Councillor P Hay-Justice, Councillor M Henson, Councillor Y Hopley, Councillor K Jewitt, Councillor H Kabir, Councillor B Khan, Councillor S Khan, Councillor S King, Councillor M Kyeremeh, Councillor T Letts, Councillor O Lewis, Councillor S Mann, Councillor M Mansell, Councillor D Mead, Councillor M Mead, Councillor M Neal, Councillor T Newman, Councillor A Pelling, Councillor H Pollard, Councillor T Pollard, Councillor J Prince, Councillor B Quadir, Councillor A Rendle, Councillor P Ryan, Councillor P Scott, Councillor M Selva, Councillor M Shahul-Hameed, Councillor D Speakman, Councillor A Stranack, Councillor P Thomas, Councillor W Trakas-Lawlor, Councillor M Watson, Councillor J Wentworth, Councillor S Winborn, Councillor D Wood, Councillor L Woodley, Councillor C Wright, Councillor C Young

MINUTES - PART A

A1 Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on Monday 18 July 2016 be signed as a correct record.

A2 Disclosure 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.

A3 Urgent Business (if any)

There was no business under this item.

A4 Announcements

The Mayor thanked the Cabinet Member for Economy and Jobs for the successful Pride event held at Surrey Street market on 28 August 2016. White Label were thanked for their hard work on the Croydon Business Excellence awards.

The Mayor also announced that a successful Labour verses Conservatives charity football match had been held to raise money for the Mayor of Croydon's Charity. Councillor Thompson was thanked for the idea and the Old Whitgiftian's Sports Club for hosting the match.

A Business Breakfast was due to be held in a few weeks on the subject of arts and culture. A successful and busy Business Drinks had also recently been hosted.

Finally, the Mayor announced that a "Love Not Hate" fundraiser was due to be held at Stanley Halls on 12 November 2016.

The Leader of the Council announced that he was proud of the part Croydon was playing in supporting young children at the Calais refugee camp. The first children had arrived and a lot of work had been done by officers to re-house these children.

A5 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE MAYORALTY AND HONORARY FREEDOM SELECTION SUB-COMMITTEE

In moving the recommendations of the report, the Leader stated how much of a pleasure it was to recognise the many years of dedicated service by Canon Boswell and Colonel McRobbie. Canon Boswell had served over 20 years in Croydon as Canon, school governor, and trustee of many local charities. The Leader stated he would miss Canon Boswell's powerful contributions at Remembrance Sunday services, and his sermons that tackled many issues - from global peace to housing and homelessness. Canon Boswell had overseen many great occasions in this borough and many sad ones as well. Colonel McRobbie had served in the Territorial Army for 38 years and had been a trustee of many charities, including Home-Start. In June 2012 Colonel McRobbie was central in Croydon becoming the first London borough to host an armed forces' week, and played a major role in establishing Croydon's military covenant. The Colonel had also been Her Majesty's representative at many key events for the borough including Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday.

Councillor Tim Pollard, Leader of the Opposition, stated he was very happy to second the recommendations of the report. Councillor Pollard noted that the two distinguished guests brought two different spheres of service – military and church. However, Councillor Pollard stated that he believed the connection was the desire to serve the

community and help people achieve their full potential. Councillor Pollard stated he was in awe of both guests' length of service, and was delighted to see their outstanding contributions to Croydon recognised.

The motion was put to the vote and **carried**.

After the vote, the meeting adjourned at 6.41pm to allow for the Special meeting of the Council to take place.

The Ordinary meeting of the Council resumed at 7.01pm.

A6 THE CROYDON DEBATE

The Mayor introduced this item by stating that ordinarily petitions related to a statutory process and consultation would be disallowed under Part 4A, paragraph 3.12(2) and (4) of the Constitution. As an exception, the Mayor allowed for the received Borough petition.

The Borough petition was received from residents and Sony Nair introduced the petition.

- Mr Nair believed that the Council was not listening to the voices of residents. There was a protest at the last Council meeting, and the signatures for this petition were up to three thousand local people from across the borough. The proposed Local Plan would lower the status of green belt land and designate a gypsy and traveller site on an area previously deemed unacceptable. The proposals would intensify development in low density areas and allow a tall building to be built in Purley.
- Councillor Butler responded by thanking those residents who had attended the Council. All submissions made to the consultation would be considered and the plan itself would be objectively assessed as to whether it would be deliverable and legally compliant. The draft plan was the culmination of years of work from both this administration and the previous one. It included safeguarding the environment and ensure a good design for development in the borough. The plan would also be compliant with national policy and the London plan. Following the last consultation, some areas of the plan had been reviewed, however it was difficult to balance the needs of all residents and it was important that there was sustainable development for a growing population in Croydon.
- Councillor Tim Pollard thanked the Mayor for exercising his discretion in allowing the debate to take place, despite it being on an active planning matter. It was important the debate was

heard as this was the final opportunity for consultation. While most of the plan was good, there were some areas that were not and were hugely unpopular with residents. It was stated that almost all the affected areas in the plan were Conservative held Wards. The proposed gypsy and traveller site at Purley Oaks was originally 15th on the list of preferred sites but was now first choice. Councillor Pollard stated that this looked like an act of spite to punish local residents in that Ward. Equally, residents in quiet suburban streets were being singled out for intensification. Councillor Pollard asked whether this was sly social engineering at work.

- Councillor Scott highlighted that Croydon needed 31,000 new homes and that the traveller site proposed was safe from flooding. It was noted that Councillor Perry, in the 2013 draft of the plan, stated that open metropolitan land and green belt land held the same level of protection, and so the proposed changes were a re-designation only, not a lowering of status. The proposed plan met the needs of the borough and protected its green and open character.
- Councillor Brew stated that Site 324 – the proposed Purley Oaks traveller site – was situated on a steep hill that would need gritting in the winter. An independent report stated that the area should not be designated for development due to being a high-risk site for flooding. In addition, there was a contaminated pond adjacent to the site. Other sites for the gypsy traveller camp had been excluded due to the level of noise, yet this site was situated next to the busy Brighton mainline track. The site was next to the recycling centre which was in urgent need of expansion. Alternative sites for the gypsy and traveller site should be considered, such as under-used industrial sites similar to the Latham Way.
- Making final comments, Mr Nair stated that those residents in opposition to the proposals were not against sustainable development. However, Croydon had recently been turned into a large building site with many petitions against developments being ignored. This was not Croydon being open and transparent but instead being secretive.
- Councillor Butler stated that she was appalled by Councillor Pollard's speech. The Purley Oaks site was originally designated as a residential site and there had been no objections by Councillors then. The reason it had been designated for a gypsy traveller site now was due to deliverability of the plan. The next steps would be to consider the representations that had been submitted during the formal consultation period.

CROYDON QUESTION TIME

This item began with the Mayor putting questions to Cabinet Members that had been received from local residents via email, who were unable to attend in person.

- Teresa De Matos asked why Croydon did not have a policy that a percentage of their job vacancies must be filled from Job Centres within the borough. Councillor Watson responded that a job brokerage scheme was in place which worked exclusively with local Job Centres and the Council's own Gateway service.
- Dr Marzia Nicodemi asked for progress on retrieving the Council's unspent public money from the Croydon Communities Consortium. Councillor Ali stated that the matter was still being taken very seriously and steps were still being taken, and that legal proceedings would be instigated as a final resort.
- Paul Cowling asked why Norbury was not receiving funding compared to other Wards such as Thornton Heath. Councillor Watson responded that work was being done in Norbury, such as the setting up of a Business Improvement District (BID), as were other district centres in the borough.
- Sean Creighton asked a question regarding the consultation that took place for the proposed BMX track in Norbury Park. Councillor Godfrey responded that he was confident that the two consultations that took place for the proposal had been adequate.

At the conclusion of the questions put on behalf of residents who were unable to attend in person, the Mayor called for questions from the public gallery.

- Diane Bindman asked a question in relation to the Council's use of herbicide glyphosate. Councillor Godfrey responded that the use of this herbicide was something the Council was looking to minimise as much as possible. The key issue was the cost of alternative products; other councils would be looked at to learn from.
- Michael Clark asked whether the Council would back an

anti-smoking campaign to be promoted in the borough's schools. Councillor Flemming responded that it was very important to encourage young people not to smoke, however it would be for individual schools to decide whether the specific campaign would be promoted in their establishment.

- Andy Hilton asked whether the organ at Fairfield Halls had been removed or maintained since the closure of the building three months ago. Councillor Godfrey responded that the organ continued to be maintained and that engineers had visited Fairfield Halls that week to undertake maintenance work.
- Michael Hewish asked how a statement of common ground could be applied to the Local Plan. Councillor Butler explained that a statement of common ground indicated where two or more parties had agreement on aspects of the Local Plan; it would then be up to the Planning Inspectorate to determine whether to take the matter any further.
- Alex Arbisman asked whether a statement of common ground between the residents' association and developers could be established with regard to the Shirley Oaks village open land. Councillor Butler responded that while a statement of common ground could not be confirmed at that stage, there was a commitment to continue to engage with residents as the plan goes forward.
- Sharon Swayby asked whether the exclusion of Shrublands from the Local Plan meant that there were no plans for development in the area. Councillor Butler responded that Brick by Brick was in discussion with the Shirley community centre regarding potentially rebuilding that centre. Any proposed sites for development would be consulted on by local residents.
- James Hogg asked whether the business case for the Rise Gallery would need to be reconsidered in light of the Theatre Trust's review report. Councillor Godfrey responded that the report was very positive and that the Rise Gallery was in very early stages of consideration and any business case would consider the findings of the report.
- Oscar Bruney asked whether the Rise Gallery would be run on a commercial basis or as a free-of-charge venue. Councillor Godfrey responded that the business case had not been concluded at this stage.

- Leanne Bruney asked what responses had been forthcoming regarding the recent scrutiny mini-review recommendations on gypsy and traveller welfare in Croydon. Councillor Butler responded that the report had not been considered by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee yet.
- Diane Tarron asked that, as the garden waste service had been withdrawn, wouldn't a better use of the Purley Oaks site be an extension of the recycling centre, rather than the proposed gypsy and traveller site. Councillor Collins responded that the Purley Oaks recycling centre was being reconfigured to ensure that closures were less frequent, and that traffic markings had been added to the road to ensure traffic could flow through when it was busy. Councillor Collins also stated that the garden waste service had not been withdrawn, and that thousands of residents had signed up for the paid for service.
- Robert Ward asked how the Brick by Brick company was held accountable. Councillor Butler responded that there were a number of ways that Brick by Brick was held accountable; the Council was the sole shareholder and an officer monitoring group was due to be established.
- Barbara White asked whether the north of the borough would be overdeveloped as much as the south was intended to be. Councillor Butler responded that overdevelopment would not be allowed in the north or the south of the borough.

This concluded the public questions section of the item. The Mayor then moved to the Councillor questions section of the item, and began with questions to the Leader of the Council.

CROYDON QUESTION TIME: LEADER QUESTIONS

- Councillor Tim Pollard asked whether the Leader had confidence in the Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn. The Leader replied that he had full confidence in Jeremy Corbyn.
- Councillor Tim Pollard asked a supplementary question on concerns that Labour politicians may be deselected due to not supporting Jeremy Corbyn. The Leader responded that he was proud to be a member of an inclusive party.

- Councillor Shafi Khan asked whether the Leader agreed that the Conservative motion presented at the last Council meeting, calling for a reduction in Councillor numbers, was narrow-minded. The Leader responded that he was proud to be the Leader of the fastest growing economy in London, but that residents must have a say how Croydon was changing. The Leader stated the Conservative motion was a disgrace and assumed that less committee meetings meant less work for Councillors, when in fact Councillors should have been working harder to support their constituents.
- Councillor Helen Pollard asked why the Council was subsidising the Box Park development but not other businesses in the borough. The Leader responded that the money allocated to Box Park was a loan and therefore an investment, and highlighted other such investments throughout Croydon such as Surrey Street market, New Addington, South Norwood, BID in Purley and Thornton Heath.
- Councillor Wentworth asked what other plans there were to continue the growth in Croydon's economy. The Leader responded that a proposed three year budget would be consulted on with residents next year. The Leader stated that the current administration had got the Council's finances under control unlike the previous administration.
- Councillor Bashford asked whether the Leader believed that parents should have all choices available when picking a school for their children. The Leader responded that more Croydon parents than ever before had got one of their top three choices of school, and that recent exams results were better than the national average. The Leader stated he believed that every school should be an outstanding school.
- Councillor Bashford asked a supplementary question regarding whether the Leader believed that this choice should include the option of grammar schools. The Leader responded that the proposed national policy of bringing back grammar schools was divisive and that the key issue for Croydon parents was to have decent schools in the borough.
- Councillor Creatura asked about the capacity of parking in central Croydon as many car parks had been closed such as Fairfield Halls. The Leader responded that whilst Councillor King could give an update on the capacity, the bigger issue was around public transport such as the poor train service being delivered by Southern. The Leader stated that this

franchise should be ended immediately.

CROYDON QUESTION TIME: CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS

Councillor Ali congratulated all the volunteers that were recently recognised at the Mayor's Civic Awards.

Councillor Watson announced that a series of events were due to take place to promote Croydon's night time economy and encouraged everyone to attend.

- Councillor Bennett asked why Shirley was not being protected from de-designation of land unlike other part of the borough. Councillor Butler responded that the issue of the status of land in Shirley had already been answered earlier in the meeting but reiterated that Council planning officers had looked at this in great detail; the designations were being categorised correctly so as to reduce the risk of successful challenge.
- Councillor Bennett asked a supplementary question related to a recent Shirley residents' planning forum in which 95% of those present were against the proposed development at the World of Golf site in the area. Councillor Bennett also stated that local Ashburton Councillors were against the proposed plan as well. Councillor Butler responded that this was about correct designation of land, in which external advice has been received, and that green belt land would not be built on.
- Councillor Kabir asked whether residents with special needs would be given extra consideration when allocating housing stock. Councillor Butler responded that housing allocation was done on a case by case basis and where housing appears unsuitable for a given person, it would not be considered as an option for them.
- Councillor Hale asked whether the Council had received value for money from the resident engagement undertaken by Brick by Brick. Councillor Butler responded that she did not have the exact costings to hand, but that a small number of minor issues had been identified during early consultations and were being addressed.
- Councillor Hale asked a supplementary question on the many errors that had occurred during the resident engagement. Councillor Butler responded that it was important that the Council got value for money and that it had learned from any mistakes.

- Councillor Pelling asked what radical changes Councillor Butler would like to see in central government housing policy. Councillor Butler responded that some proposals were identified in the Labour motion that would be discussed later in the meeting. Councillor Butler added that she had faith that Gavin Barwell MP would support the Local Plan.
- Councillor Pelling asked a supplementary question regarding whether Gavin Barwell MP's position on the Local Plan. Councillor Butler responded that she was confident that the plan would be approved by the Inspectorate.
- Councillor Gatland asked how the downgrading of Croham Hurst Wood could be justified. Councillor Butler responded by reading out wording from the previous administration that stated that metropolitan open land is given the same level of protection as metropolitan green belt land.
- Councillor Gatland asked a supplementary question stating that de-designation is a slippery slope to downgrading land and why the Council was not listening to the views of residents. Councillor Butler responded that land must be correctly designated in the plan otherwise it would be open to challenge by developers or disallowed by the Inspectorate.
- Councillor Lewis asked for an update on progress with the new leisure and community centre in New Addington. Councillor Butler responded that planning application had been granted and the next steps for its development were now taking place.
- Councillor Lewis asked a supplementary question on further details of the facilities that would be included in the new centre. Councillor Butler responded that the new facility would be state-of-the-art and include a gym, swimming pool and catering facilities. Compared to older swimming pools in the borough that cost a lot to maintain, these newer facilities would have lower running costs.
- Councillor Wright asked why the Council had failed to get a grip on the incompetency of the agencies working for Brick by Brick. Councillor Butler responded that this had already been answered in response to Councillor Hale's question and reiterated that where any mistakes had been made, lessons would be learnt.

- Councillor Wright asked a supplementary question about dealing with the agencies that work with Brick by Brick. Councillor Butler responded that since the first consultation with Councillors when Brick by Brick had been set up, no issues had been brought forward by Councillors, and that in the first instance, the Councillor should raise any issues with the Cabinet Member.
- Councillor Canning asked for information of what events were being held for Black History Month. Councillor Ali responded that Black History Month was a very important event in the borough's calendar. The Croydon schedule was commenced with a successful launch event and the theme for this year was "young achievers". The full programme of events could be found online at: www.croydon.gov.uk/ccbh
- Councillor Canning asked a supplementary question regarding a significant Black History Month event due to be held in Waddon. Councillor Ali responded by congratulating the residents of Waddon for the planned event.
- Councillor Quadir asked whether it was acceptable to have a gypsy and traveller site in a residential area. Councillor Butler responded that as a permanent traveller site would be a residential area, this would be appropriate.
- Councillor Quadir asked a supplementary question regarding whether the proposed gypsy and traveller site would be more appropriately used for an expansion of the Purley Oaks recycling depot. Councillor Butler responded that this issue had already been dealt with earlier by Councillor Collins and that this was one of three recycling centres in the borough.
- Councillor Rendle asked what action the Council could take with other agencies to deal with groups of young people driving scooters around green spaces in Ashburton Ward. Councillor Ali responded that this was an issue raised in other wards across the borough. A multi-agency group had been set up to deal with this specific issue, and Councillors would be updated on the work of this group. Councillor Ali encouraged residents to look for licence plates of offending scooters and report this information to police.
- Councillor Rendle asked a supplementary question on how community hubs, such as the now re-opened Ashburton

library, could be used to tackle anti-social behaviour. Councillor Ali responded that community hubs were important to bring young people together and to use their time constructively.

- Councillor Hopley asked for the justification in down-grading the status of ancient woodland in Sanderstead in the Local Plan. Councillor Butler responded that this was not a downgrading of the land but was a re-designation so that the land held the correct protection status, and would be safer from challenge.
- Councillor Hopley asked a supplementary question on why specific areas were being chosen for intensification. Councillor Butler responded that the specific areas mentioned by the Councillor should be fed into the consultation so that this could be reviewed prior to submission of the draft Plan to the Inspectorate.
- Councillor Kabir asked how the Council could support organisations that were not successful in bids for community funding. Councillor Ali responded that the Community Fund was an important investment and its scope was being broadened so that more organisations would benefit. The Stronger Community Partnership Board looked at the fund regularly and it was important to evaluate and learn from the experience from organisations and how they would be supported for future bids.
- Councillor Stranack asked how the existing pool building in New Addington would be utilised once the new leisure facility was opened in the Ward. Councillor Butler responded that the current village green designation made it difficult to deal with the building at present but that the Council would work with residents moving forward with a solution that was supported by residents.
- Councillor Thomas asked a question on increased rates of fly-tipping in the borough – particularly in Councillor Collins' Ward. Councillor Collins responded that reporting of fly-tipping was on the increase, and this was due to increased methods for residents to report incidents. Awareness campaigns were needed to make fly-tipping a stigma, and Croydon had been in discussions with other boroughs to introduce measures such as larger bins. More resources were also being allocated for covert surveillance of suspected offenders and hot spot sites.

- Councillor Thomas asked a supplementary question on what new ideas the administration had got for dealing with the increase in fly-tipping. Councillor Collins responded that recycling centres were being improved and, despite central government cuts, no streets had been cut from street cleaning. The Don't Mess With Croydon campaign would continue to engage with street champions and landlords and tenants.
- Councillor Kabir asked how education could be used in combating fly-tipping. Councillor Collins responded that key hotspots had been identified for targeted education such as going into schools to discuss recycling and taking pride in the local area. A good example was the Thornton Heath action group, who engaged with street sweepers and promoted community clean ups.
- Councillor Bird asked why the Labour group had previously stated that it was not their job to report fly-tipping. Councillor Collins denied this and stated that reporting had been improved, with many occurrences of the same incident being reported multiple times. Offenders would continue to be named and shamed.
- Councillor Wood asked what benefits the opening of the new West Croydon bus station would bring to local residents. Councillor King responded that he was delighted to have attended the opening of the new station which had received the modernisation it deserved. The new station was more accessible, allowed for more efficient journeys, included a large sheltered waiting area with more seating and a retail outlet was soon to open. The Deputy Mayor for Transport had stated it was a benchmark for other bus stations in the capital.
- Councillor Wood asked a supplementary question on the new charging system for bus fares in London. Councillor King responded that he endorsed the new fare regime and stated it was a huge success across London and in Croydon and allowed for an easy interchange between buses and trams.
- Councillor Helen Pollard asked why graffiti was prolific across the borough and had extended to tagging on trees in some areas. Councillor Ali responded that enforcement action was being undertaken on graffiti; authorities believed it to be the work of a small number of perpetrators due to the 'tags' being used.

- Councillor Helen Pollard asked whether tagging on trees was considered public art. Councillor Ali responded that without further information on the specific cases, comment could not be made. There was a separate investment in promoting street art in the centre of town, and where offensive graffiti was reported it was removed within twenty-four hours.
- Councillor Rendle asked for support in requesting that Transport for London (TfL) prioritise maintenance of the closed bridge in Blackhorse Lane. Councillor King responded by expressing understanding for the disruption caused to residents by the bridge closure. It was a 120-year old bridge that was in disrepair. TfL consultants had almost completed inspections of the bridge and the findings of that work were due at the end of October. Once that report was with the Council, meetings would be held with Ward Councillors to allow for local input into the next stages.
- Councillor Chatterjee asked what the administration's distinction was between street art and graffiti, with particular reference to the boarding around the Taberner House site. Councillor Butler responded that one person's art was another person's graffiti, and that it was good to see local participation at the site, for example with the crocus planting.
- Councillor Prince asked for updated information on TfL's plans for the Fiveways development in Waddon. Councillor King responded that the consultation had been moved from autumn to the spring, and reassurances had been made by TfL that the delay was no cause for concern. The Council would meet TfL later in the year to discuss the proposals.
- Councillor Prince asked a supplementary question on the steps the Council had taken to deal with the racing on Imperial Way. Councillor King responded that an injunction had been sought, and granted, and that the impact of this court order would be monitored, as well as the physical traffic works that had been installed to prevent racing.
- Councillor Cummings asked why it had become necessary for Councillor Hall to sit on an oversight committee for the People department budget. Councillor Hall responded that rather than be victims of the central government cuts, the Council had been proactive with schemes such as the Gateway Service, bringing in properties for temporary accommodation and focussing on the prevention of homelessness rather than crisis management.

- Councillor Cummings asked a supplementary question on whether the minutes of those oversight meetings would be published. Councillor Hall responded that as this was focussed on departmental governance, it would be inappropriate to publish minutes. However, as at the previous Cabinet meeting, details of actions and the results of the excellent work done by officers in the People department would be reported on.
- Councillor Pelling asked whether, in light of planned accessibility works at Selhurst and Coulsdon South rail stations, the Council would lobby for similar accessibility programmes at South Croydon and Waddon stations. Councillor King responded that the Department for Transport set the criteria for Access for All capital funding for such schemes. The complexity and cost of the work required at South Croydon station made it a lower priority for such funding. Improvements for Waddon station were unfortunately outside of the scope of the Fiveways development being undertaken by TfL.
- Councillor Dudley Mead asked whether the car parking capacity in central Croydon would be published, and how the Council would resolve the lack of income from closed car parks. Councillor King responded that there were a number of alternative ways of reaching the centre of Croydon available to residents, for example improvements at West Croydon bus station and projects at Crystal Palace and South Croydon.
- Councillor Henson asked how the Council was making best use of its assets. Councillor Hall responded by highlighting key ways that the administration was proactively looking at all Council assets, such as the disposal of Jeanette Wallace House, the Brick by Brick developments, and investment in buildings with the Ashburton former library offered as an example.

Councillor Godfrey announced the temporary closure of the children's library in the clocktower complex for refurbishment works, and stated that Members would be kept updated on the progress towards its re-opening. It was also announced that the formal procurement for the new Fairfield Halls was due to begin that week and the project remained on schedule.

Councillor Flemming congratulated the young people across the borough for the best ever set of school results, which included at early years level. There had also been the launch of Best Start

launch, and Councillor Flemming expressed her pride in the work being done for the children coming from Calais.

Councillor Woodley announced that the move from Cherry Orchard to Addington Heights mentioned in the Cabinet Member bulletin, had been completed successfully.

- Councillor Gatland asked whether Councillor Flemming would support the introduction of grammar schools in Croydon. Councillor Flemming responded that she supported education for all and that grammar schools could create division in our children.
- Councillor Gatland asked a supplementary question regarding comments previously made by Councillor Flemming in support of the introduction of a grammar school in Croydon. Councillor Flemming responded that she was not anti-grammar schools, but that her priority as Cabinet Member in Croydon was to ensure that all the borough's children had access to excellent education, regardless of which school they attended.
- Councillor Canning asked for an update on the Council's free swimming lessons over the summer. Councillor Godfrey responded that the scheme had been reintroduced after the previous administration had cancelled it. Numbers of participants were up across the borough and there was hope that the scheme would run again next year.
- Councillor Bashford asked a question on the funding situation for the Cotelands Nursery. Councillor Flemming responded that Cotelands was an important provision in the borough, but the specific funding grant received from the Council may not be available next year, and whilst this could be unfortunate it was not the Nursery's main source of income.
- Councillor Bashford asked a supplementary question on whether Councillor Flemming believed that grammar schools were a parental choice. Councillor Flemming responded that she supported choice but also good education for all the borough's young people.
- Councillor Rendle asked what plans were in place to support education for children with autism. Councillor Flemming responded that the forward plan provided for the expansion of St Nicholas – a special needs school for autistic children. The Council was also working with the National Lottery to secure funding to undertake autism workshops in schools under the

banner of “Achieving with Autism”.

- Councillor Rendle asked a supplementary question, on how the Council could get the excellent skills from specialist schools into the mainstream schools, where many autistic children study. Councillor Flemming responded that many children were still not being diagnosed at an early stage – this was the key issue and sharing of best practice would help progress this.
- Councillor Quadir asked for assurance that the contract for grass cutting in the borough would be fulfilled as per the terms of the contract. Councillor Godfrey responded that there could be no guarantee with this contract, signed by the previous administration, but the Council were fully committed to monitoring it over the next year to ensure all contractual obligations were undertaken.

At this stage of the meeting, the Leader moved a procedural motion under Part 4A, paragraph 1.11(a) of the Constitution, for the meeting to proceed to the next time of business.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Butler.

The motion was put to the vote and was **carried**.

A8 MEMBER PETITIONS

The Mayor invited Councillor Pelling to read out the title of the submitted Member petition which read:

"Petition to increase the parking restrictions on Vicarge Road, Croydon."

Councillor King responded that this petition would be reported to the next Traffic Management Advisory Committee for consideration. Relevant to this matter were the 8am to 8pm, Monday to Sunday, parking controls currently being piloted in two roads in the north permit zone - if this pilot was successful then there was the possibility of extending such restrictions to the west permit zone, which Vicarage Road falls under.

A9 MAIDEN SPEECH

Councillor Young stated that three clear messages came out of his campaign:

- That BME residents may be pushed out of the area due to the regeneration of the borough. It was crucial that regeneration benefits local residents, not displace them.
- That the previous administration did not keep the Ward clean.
- That many BME residents were demanding a stronger voice in local politics.

It was symbolic that this speech was made during Black History Month; politicians must do more than talk on racial equality. The Councillor questioned why there were previously no BME people in the senior leadership of one of the most diverse boroughs, and welcomed the new CEO's steps in addressing this issue. Councillor Young stated that racial equality was high on his agenda and was proud to represent underrepresented communities.

A10

COUNCIL DEBATE MOTIONS

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

Motion 1.

Proposed by Councillor Alison Butler

Seconded by Councillor Manju Shahul-Hameed

"This council calls on Gavin Barwell MP, the Minister for Housing & Planning, to show his commitment to affordable council housing for local people by:

- *Removing the artificial borrowing cap on the HRA to allow councils to borrow funds to enable the delivery of more affordable housing.*
- *To stop the enforced sell off of high value voids meaning this council would need to sell off desperately needed family homes and hand the income over to central government.*
- *To end the unfair 'Tenants' Tax' on working households which could force families from their homes.*
- *To end the enforced 1% rent cut, costing this council £31 million over the next four years, reducing services to tenants and affecting our ability to build new council homes."*

Councillor Butler, in moving the motion, stated that Gavin Barwell MP in his new ministerial role had stated his support for new, affordable homes. However, actions were more important than words. There was a quiet war against social housing taking place through central government regulations that were having devastating consequences for residents who cannot afford new homes.

There were many such regulations that needed to be addressed such as the freezing of the housing allowance, the "Tenant's Tax" and the cap on benefits. There was a long list of new regulations that affected those who could not afford housing in the borough, and the minister should address.

Councillor Shahul-Hameed seconded the motion and reserved her

right to speak.

Councillor Creatura, opposing the motion, stated that the motion was an attack on Gavin Barwell MP who was not present to defend himself. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) cap was in place to control government spending and in 2014 the government made available £300 million for building new homes yet the Council submitted no bids. The money made from selling Council housing stock was funnelled into the Right to Buy scheme, thus enabling people to fulfil their dream of home ownership. It was right to make tenants on higher incomes pay more in rent, those who earn more should contribute more. In any event, over 90% of tenants in Council properties would not be affected.

Equally, the rent reduction would save tenant's bills and also costs in benefits payments. The motion was poorly researched and showed poor understanding of the government's policies.

Councillor Hale, opposing the motion, stated that the events in Calais highlighted the importance of owning your own home. In 2010, house building had reached its lowest level since the 1920's and the number of people on social housing waiting lists nearly doubled to 1.8 million. However, since 2010 over 700,000 homes had been built, including over 270,000 affordable homes. The Right to Buy scheme would see each property sold replaced and it was right that taxpayers should not pay for spare bedrooms. The continuation from the previous administration of building homes on brownfield sites was welcomed. This government was committed to building new homes for everyone.

Councillor Shahul-Hameed, speaking for the motion, stated that the Council was doing all it could to provide high quality social housing to address the current shortages. The Brick by Brick company would build thousands of homes in Croydon by 2018. Yet the Conservative government was doing everything it could to make this more difficult. There was a war on social housing by reducing services to tenants. One example was a resident who attended Councillor Shahul-Hameed's surgery: a supermarket worker who stated he would never be able to afford his own house and was already struggling just to pay rent in a one bedroom flat above a shop in cramped conditions. It was hardworking people like this resident that Gavin Barwell MP should consider when determining the government's housing policy.

The motion was put to the vote and was **carried**.

Motion 2.

Proposed by Councillor Jason Cummings

Seconded by Councillor Yvette Hopley

"This council is very concerned about the pattern of overspends in the people department of Croydon council, particularly in social care.

At the same time many highly vulnerable user groups are complaining that key services they rely on are being withdrawn. Council believes that the administration has lost control of its budgets in this critical area and must take urgent steps to address the issues."

Councillor Cummings, in moving the motion, listed the recent overspends of the People department since 2014, which had been over £7 million pounds each financial year. Whilst the administration blamed central government, this was an issue of adherence to budgets. Councillor Flemming did not protest that there was not enough money when these budgets were set. These budgets were set to take into account demand and allocation from central government and yet Councillor Hall had to step in through the oversight committee.

Councillor Hopley seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Woodley, speaking against the motion, stated that the motion was delusional and a blatant misrepresentation of what was going on. The inconvenient truth in this debate was the £4 million overspend in adult social care by the previous administration in the 2013/14 year. Work was being done to address this matter but was very difficult. There was a determination to bring down the projected overspend for the 2016/17 year. However, it should be noted that two thirds of local authorities were overspending due to central government cuts. The other side voted against raising the precept to help with the costs, and would rather privatise or salami slice the department instead.

Councillor Margaret Mead made a point of order under Part 4A, paragraph 1.15 regarding an incorrect statement made; that the stated overspend for 2013/14 was incorrect.

Councillor Avis, speaking against the motion, stated the speech made in favour must have been contributed to by Gavin Barwell MP. The current administration had saved adult social care in Croydon despite 75% cuts from the Conservative government. The speeches made for this motion should congratulate the Cabinet Members and officers who had still been able to deliver these services to older residents. It was hypocritical that the last Chancellor of the Exchequer would rather impose cuts on Croydon than tax his wealthy friends.

Councillor Hopley, speaking in favour of the motion, highlighted the importance of the issue being raised in the motion. The Cabinet Member had lost control of the budget and staff spending had skyrocketed. The projected costs had not been managed so that services operated within the financial limits imposed. Knee-jerk reactions were being made such as closing services for vulnerable

people, including Heatherway, in which users felt they were not properly consulted over its closure. There was no clear plan for the future of this provision. Likewise at a recent meeting of the Autism Board the plan for diagnostic pathways was dropped in favour of adopting the Bristol model, but was not made clear what this would look like.

The motion was put to the vote and was **lost**.

**A11 RECOMMENDATIONS OF CABINET OR COMMITTEES
REFERRED TO THE COUNCIL FOR DECISION**

Councillor Jewitt proposed, and Councillor Bee seconded, moving the recommendations from the General Purposes and Audit Committee (GPAC) report (attached at Appendix 1) with regard to the appointment of external auditors.

The Council **RESOLVED** to approve the GPAC recommendations for the appointment of an external auditor.

**A12 BOUNDARY COMMISSION WARDING CONSULTATION
RESPONSE**

The Council **RESOLVED** that, to meet the Boundary Commission deadline for submission, final agreement of the Council's warding report be delegated to the General Purposes and Audit Committee, a special meeting of which would be summonsed for this purpose.

A13 Camera Resolution

Not required.

MINUTES - PART B

None

The meeting finished at 21.59. The webcast of this meeting can be found at:
<http://croydon.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>