

Council

Meeting held on Wednesday, 17 May 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall,
Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair);
Councillor Sue Bennett (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Kola Agboola, Jeet Bains, Leila Ben-Hassel, Adele Benson,
Margaret Bird, Claire Bonham, Simon Brew, Janet Campbell,
Louis Carserides, Richard Chatterjee, Chris Clark, Sherwan Chowdhury,
Mario Creatura, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Nina Degrads,
Rowenna Davis, Danielle Denton, Samir Dwesar, Lara Fish, Sean Fitzsimons,
Clive Fraser, Amy Foster, Simon Fox, Gayle Gander, Maria Gatland,
Brigitte Graham, Matt Griffiths, Lynne Hale, Patricia Hay-Justice,
Maddie Henson, Christopher Herman, Yvette Hopley, Mohammed Islam,
Karen Jewitt, Mark Johnson, Humayun Kabir, Stuart King, Ola Kolade,
Joseph Lee, Endri Llabuti, Enid Mollyneaux, Stella Nabukeera, Michael Neal,
Tamar Barrett, Eunice O'Dame, Ian Parker, Ria Patel, Tony Pearson,
Jason Perry, Ellily Ponnuthurai, Holly Ramsey, Helen Redfern,
Chrishni Reshekaron, Scott Roche, Manju Shahul-Hameed,
Nikhil Sherine Thampi, Luke Shortland, Appu Srinivasan, Andy Stranack,
Aladair Stewart, Esther Sutton, Catherine Wilson, Robert Ward and
Callton Young

Apologies: Councillor Jade Appleton, Mike Bonello and Stuart Collins

PART A

52/21 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

53/21 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meetings held on 29 March were agreed as accurate records.

54/21 **Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair of Council for the Municipal Year 2023-24**

Councillor Alisa Flemming gave words of thanks on behalf of herself and Councillor Sue Bennett, to all those who had supported them in their year as

Civic Mayor and Deputy Civic Mayor of Croydon, stating that it was a privilege and an honour to share the mayoralty with Councillor Bennett.

Councillor Flemming recognised the challenges of the role, but declared it an honour to have served the people of Croydon in this way.

Councillor Flemming thanked her children and her sister for their support; her Consort John Wentworth and his wife; Councillors Appu Srinivasan, Mohammed Islam, Patsy Cummings, Enid Mollyneaux, Chris Clark, Callton Young, Ola Kolade and other Conservative members who had supported her. Councillor Flemming also extended thanks to the Mayor; the Deputy Lieutenant and his wife; and to the officers – among other staff, the registry team, Town Hall Concierge, the photographers, also thanked Bishop Rosemary for agreeing to be involved in reintroducing the Chaplaincy.

Councillor Flemming wished the new Civic Mayor and Deputy Civic Mayor the best of luck for the year of their Mayoralty.

The Chair then asked for nominations. Mayor Jason Perry nominated Councillor Tony Pearson as Civic Mayor and Councillor Appu Srinivasan as Deputy Civic Mayor for the 2023-24 municipal year. This was seconded by Councillor Stuart King, and:

RESOLVED, unanimously to appoint Councillors Tony Pearson and Appu Srinivasan to the roles of Civic Mayor and Deputy Civic Mayor respectively for the 2023-24 municipal year.

Mayor Jason Perry then spoke in favour the nominations, stating that Councillor Pearson was a well-known figure in his ward who worked hard for the community, as a champion of the armed forces and a military veteran. He also welcomed the nomination for the Deputy Civic Mayor.

Councillor Stuart King, Leader of the Opposition, then spoke on behalf of the Labour Group, and welcomed the nominees mentioning Councillor Srinivasan's extraordinary record of public service from working in local food banks to international work on behalf of the Tamil community in the UK.

The Chair then retired to the parlour followed by the procession.

There was a short adjournment while Councillor Pearson changed into the Mayoral robes, after which the Mayoral procession returned.

Cllr Pearson made his declaration of acceptance of office, which was signed before the Chief Executive, Katherine Kerswell. Councillor Appu Srinivasan

then made his declaration of acceptance of office, which was signed before the Chief Executive.

The Civic Mayor then presented the past Civic Mayor's Badge and past Civic Mayor's Consort badge to Councillor Flemming and John Wentworth, and presented flowers to Councillor Sue Bennett.

Mayor Jason Perry then gave words of thanks, followed by Councillor King, who gave words of thanks on behalf of the Labour Group.

The Chair then addressed Council, giving thanks to his wife and family, and his colleagues. He also thanked his predecessors for their hard work the previous year. He also stated his keenness to form good working relationship with officers and outlined the need for respect between members, and respect for the position of the Chair of Council. The Chair then stated that his two charities for the year were the Duffus Community Foundation, and the Brenda Kirby Cancer Charity.

The Chair then invited the Deputy Civic Mayor, Councillor Appu Srinivasan, to make his acceptance address, during which he emphasised that he wished his journey to be a symbol of hope for others, and that he looked forward to serving the borough in this role.

55/21 **Political Balance of the Council and Composition of Committees**

The Chair moved the recommendations as contained in the report. This was seconded by Councillor Mario Creatura, Conservative Group Chief Whip, and:

RESOLVED, unanimously to:

- 2.1 Note that the Council is comprised of 34 Labour Group members, 34 Conservative Group members (including the Executive Mayor), two Green Group members, and one Liberal Democrat member; and,
- 2.2 Agree the size of committees and the allocation of seats on committees as set out in this report.

56/21 **Appointments**

The Chair drew members' attentions to appointment number 4a of Appendix B, to make it clear that a decision had been taken by the Mayor on 12 May 2023 to dissolve the Cycle Forum, the Mobility Forum, and the Public Transport Liaison Panel, and replace them with the Croydon Advisory Forum

on Active, Sustainable and Accessible Transport, and that it was that forum to which members were being asked to appoint.

The Chair then moved the recommendations as contained in the report, which was seconded by Councillor Creatura and:

RESOLVED, to:

- 2.1 Make appointments to committees giving effect to the wishes of the relevant political groups as set out in Appendix A to this report, where political balance rules apply;
- 2.2 Make appointments to other committees, panels, working groups, boards and outside bodies as set out in Appendix B to this report;
- 2.3 Agree the suspension of paragraph 2.3 of the Non-Executive Procedure Rules (Part 4F of the Constitution) for the 2023/24 municipal year;
- 2.4 Wherever applicable, to appoint Chairs and Vice/Deputy-Chairs and substitutes to those non-executive committees detailed in Appendix A to this report, without prejudice to the provisions set out in paragraph 2.4 of Part 4F of the Constitution, which would continue to apply enabling in-year vacancies to either the Chair or Vice/Deputy-Chair to be filled by election at the first meeting of the relevant committee or sub-committee, following notification to the Monitoring Officer;
- 2.5 Receive, for information, the following executive appointments made by the directly elected Mayor;
 - i) The appointments of Cabinet Members, Cabinet Committees and Deputy Cabinet Members (as appropriate) (Appendix A);
 - ii) The appointments to Joint Committees (as appropriate) (Appendix A);
 - iii) The appointments to London Councils Committees (as appropriate) and panels and Local Government Association bodies (Appendix B);and,
- 2.6 Receive, for information:
 - i) The appointments by the directly elected Mayor to those outside bodies, which relate to the exercise of an executive function (marked (*) as detailed in Appendix B);
 - ii) The appointments of Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Cabinet (Appendix A); and,
 - iii) The appointments of political party group officers (Appendix A).

Mayor Jason Perry confirmed to Council that there would be no amendments to the Scheme of Delegation for the municipal year 2023-24.

58/21 **The Mayor's Annual Statement**

Mayor Jason Perry made his annual statement, outlining the instability experienced by the council in previous years, but that despite this the community had thrived. The Mayor stated that he had had the privilege to visit great community groups, businesses, and people who wanted to make Croydon successful. He thanked all of them for their welcome and willingness to move forward, and their optimism for the borough. The Mayor gave a simple message for people to get on board to fix the challenges facing the borough, starting by working with communities and Central Government, and the Improvement and Assurance Panel. The process of fixing the council's finances had been a top priority this year. A difficult but achievable budget had been set, which included a £33m Council Tax support scheme and a £2m hardship fund. The Penn and Kroll reports had been referred to the police to investigate misconduct in public office, and residents could be assured those responsible for the council's financial crash would be held accountable. The Mayor had introduced the Graffiti Removal Team; reintroduced Public Space Protection Orders; revoked the planning design document, SPD2; launched a review of the Local Plan; begun the process of delivering a community pool in Purley; begun to deliver the Housing Transformation plan; established a Mayoral Town Centre Advisory Board; secured good CQC ratings for the council's extra care services; provided funding for activities during school holidays; established the ant-Violence Against Women and Girls strategy; and launched the London Borough of Culture, and had done all this by involving residents along the way.

The Mayor then pledged to continue fixing the finances, negotiating a support package from Central Government; improve the housing service and housing repairs contract; work to regenerate the town centre and increase meantime use of the empty units; remove graffiti; cut the grass, and develop a new robust waste contract. The Mayor expressed his desire to see Croydon returned to a vibrant, clean, thriving borough, and expressed his hope that everyone in the chamber would help to deliver a better future for residents and make Croydon a place people were proud to call home.

Councillor Stuart King, Leader of the Opposition, responded by firstly congratulating the Mayor on his first year in office, and stated that he had witnessed the commitment and determination to the role demonstrated by the Mayor. Increasingly more residents were turning to the council for help during the cost of living crisis; nonetheless the Mayor had made progress in a

number of areas. In particular the progress that had been made with regards to the problems at the Regina Road estate and more widely in the council's housing stock. The financial problem was a shared one, he said, requiring a shared solution, but it was a shame the council had not achieved more of a cross party consensus about facing those challenges. Councillor King urged members to ensure the Mayoral system flourished and succeeded because Croydon voted for it and its success would be the town's success. Labour supported the revocation of SPD2 and welcomed the graffiti removal service and supported ending the Veolia contract. It was a shared objective to return the council to financial stability.

59/21 **Civic Awards Ceremony**

The Council then presented citations for the awards of Honorary Alderman and Honorary Alderwoman to previous members.

Mayor Jason Perry and Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Stuart King, congratulated and gave words of thanks to those receiving awards for their years of service to the council. They also spoke in honour of those receiving the awards of Freedom of the Borough.

The meeting ended at 8.23 pm

Signed:

Date:

.....

.....