

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FULL COUNCIL HELD ON Thursday, 17th March, 2016, 7.30pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Charles Adje, Peray Ahmet, Kaushika Amin, Jason Arthur, David Beacham, Patrick Berryman, John Bevan, Barbara Blake, Mark Blake, Clare Bull, Gideon Bull, Vincent Carroll, Clive Carter, Pippa Connor, Ali Demirci, Isidoros Diakides, Natan Doron, Tim Gallagher, Joe Goldberg, Eddie Griffith, Makbule Gunes, Bob Hare, Kirsten Hearn, Emine Ibrahim, Adam Jogee, Claire Kober, Toni Mallett, Jennifer Mann (Mayor), Stephen Mann, Liz McShane, Peter Mitchell, Liz Morris, Peter Morton, Felicia Opoku, Ali Gul Ozbek, James Patterson, Sheila Peacock, Lorna Reith, Reg Rice, James Ryan, Raj Sahota, Anne Stennett, Bernice Vanier, Ann Waters, Elin Weston and Charles Wright

149. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Mayor referred to the details as shown on the summons in relation to filming at meetings.

150. TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from councillors:

Ross
Elliott
Newton
Engert
Ejiofor
Strickland
Adamou
Basu
Christophides
McNamara
Ayisi
McNamara

Apologies for lateness were also received from Councillors Adje, and Berryman.

151. TO ASK THE MAYOR TO CONSIDER THE ADMISSION OF ANY LATE ITEMS OF BUSINESS IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 100B OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

The Chief Executive advised that there was one late item of business, which could not be available earlier, and which will need to be dealt with at this meeting. This was in relation to Item 12 – Questions and Written Answers. It was noted that notice of questions is not requested until 8 clear days before the meeting, following which the matters raised have to be researched and replies prepared to be given at the meeting.

152. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Lorna Reith declared a personal interest by virtue of her membership of the local Tottenham and Wood Green Friends of the Earth branch and her partner was also presenting the petition at item 9.

153. TO APPROVE AS A CORRECT RECORD THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2016

That the minutes of the full Council meeting held on the 22nd February 2016 be approved as a correct record of the meeting.

154. TO RECEIVE SUCH COMMUNICATIONS AS THE MAYOR MAY LAY BEFORE THE COUNCIL

The Mayor reported to full Council the events and functions that she had attended and participated in, representing the borough, since the last council meeting. The Mayor also highlighted some forthcoming events that she would be attending as well as preparations for the Queen's 90th birthday celebrations.

NOTED:

On the 7th March the Mayor had visited Greenwich Observatory as a guest of the Mayor of Greenwich.

On Thursday 10th March the Mayor had attended and spoke at a reception, marking the end of the month of celebrations of Chinese New Year at the Ming-Ai (London) Institute in Bounds Green.

On Saturday 12th March the Mayor had attended the Mayor of Enfield's charity ball at Forty Hall.

On Monday 14th March the borough celebrated Commonwealth Day by raising the Flag outside the Civic centre and the theme for 2016 is 'An Inclusive Commonwealth'.

On Wednesday 16th March the Mayor entertained London Mayors and their guests at a showcasing tour of Alexandra Palace and attended a gala celebration of the Commonwealth Africa Summit.

On Friday 18th March the Mayor would be attending and speaking at an assembly at Gladesmore Community School to mark International Women's Day.

On Sunday 20th March the Mayor was due to be presented with a cheque for her nominated special fund, All People All Places at Tottenham Hotspur Football Club.

The 90th birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II on Thursday 21st April would be celebrated with an event and beacon lighting at Alexandra Palace Park.

Haringey residents have been backing 'Clean for the Queen'. Last week pupils from Noel Park Primary School and residents from The Sandlings estate organised a litterpick their local area with Veolia. Eleven children, two teachers and seven residents picked up waste and recycling found on the ground - ten bags were filled with general rubbish, while four were filled with materials that could be recycled.

The meeting noted that the Mayor's Civic Service will take place on Sunday 15th May at 3pm at St Paul the Apostle Church Bradley Road Wood Green.

155. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Chief Executive sought approval of Full Council to the Calendar of meetings for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

The Chief Whip moved and it was:

RESOLVED

That the schedule of meetings for the 2016/17 Municipal Year be agreed.

156. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR CORPORATE GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

There were no matters for the Assistant Director for Corporate Governance to report.

157. TO CONSIDER REQUESTS TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS AND/OR PETITIONS AND, IF APPROVED, TO RECEIVE THEM

The Chief Executive explained that a petition had been put forward which required debate by full Council as it exceeded 2200 signatures.

The petition had been submitted by Mr Quentin Given, on behalf of Friends of the Earth, and called on the council to divest its own financial holdings and those of its pension fund from any business which is involved in the exploration or production of coal or tar sands within two years; and immediately to freeze any new investment in fossil fuel companies. Mr Given was accompanied by Tim Root, Joyce Rosser, Stanley Knill, Cara Jenkinson.

Mr Given was invited by the Mayor to address the meeting and he began his presentation by congratulating the Council's Pension's Committee for agreeing to reduce its equity exposure to fossil fuel business.

Mr Given put forward some further requests to the council:

- Commitment to taking forward a timetable to divesting the remaining two thirds of equity exposure to Fossil Fuels.
- Moving to investment in renewable energy at an increased pace.
- Making use of existing financial relationships with banks to influence them to move away from fossil fuel investment.
- Continuing to lead and set a good example of the borough's wider focus on green issues and using its local and regional networks to encourage further ethical investment.
- Considering the financial and fiduciary reasons for divesting in the coal market and investing in green products which were predicted to have an increased demand in the future, thereby having both a positive financial and moral impact.

Comments from Councillors :

- CBI[Confederation of Business Industry] calling on government to do more to take forward greener investment.
- Already meeting this moral and ethical challenge as an authority and making progress on greener investment.
- Changing influence of the agricultural industry on the green agenda with now more wider acceptance of the need to tackle global warming and climate change due to the impact this has on food chain and economies, meaning a change in investment priorities.
- The weight the council carries as a Member of the Local Pension Fund Forum and can put forward issues to pension investors and have a role in monitoring the outcomes of these meetings.
- Overall fiduciary interest to also consider greener investments, first authority to invest in low carbon index fund.

Cllr Claire Bull, Chair of the Pensions Committee, responded to the petition and acknowledged the environmental challenges facing the borough and the wider world. The council was already taking the first steps in reducing the Pension Fund exposure to fossil fuels. It was hoped that other boroughs would follow the council's example to have more combined impact to create a sustainable future, investing in renewable energy and delivering jobs in a growing industry. The Chair of the Pensions Committee welcomed the petition and the attention it gave to ethical investment. The Pensions Committee had agreed to invest low carbon management fund and would monitor this annually.

RESOLVED

To note the petition.

158. HARINGEY DEBATE - TACKLING HOMELESSNESS IN HARINGEY; IDENTIFYING CHALLENGES AND PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS.

The Mayor opened the debate on Homelessness. This was a subject of growing concern with increasing numbers of single people and families becoming homeless and there being a visible increase in the number of rough sleepers. 'All People' all Places, the main local recipient of funds from the Mayors charity were focused on supporting people who became homeless and have no accommodation. Therefore, it was fitting for the final council debate meeting to consider this key issue.

The Mayor hoped the debate would allow a sharing of experiences and allow the council to develop solutions in this context. The Mayor had invited two external guests to share their local and daily working knowledge of homelessness and to 'set the scene' for the debate.

The Mayor introduced Matthew Downie of Crisis who opened the debate by providing a presentation on homelessness. He highlighted the current trends and policy implications including: the causes, consequences, and the scale of homelessness. The presentation also provided information on the number of applications for housing as a result of homelessness, with information on the numbers of: acceptances for housing, where homelessness had been prevented and relief cases. Mr Downie presented the impact of national policy and provided some suggestions of what the council could still do in this context.

The Mayor invited the second speaker, Mr Michael Baker, Chair of the Board of YMCA North London. Mr Baker focused on YMCA North London's work with young people that it came into contact with on a daily basis. This was aimed at creating a supportive and energising environment which was open to all, where young people could belong, contribute and thrive. Tackling youth homelessness was at the core of their strategy, and the primary objectives of the Life Academy foyer programme were to stabilise chaotic lives, restore self-esteem and enable young people to contribute to their community and reclaim their place in society.

The Mayor thanked Mr Downie and Mr Baker for their valuable contributions which would help stimulate the debate and bring forward further ideas and solutions for tackling homelessness.

The debate ensued and the Members made the following comments:

- The accumulative impact of past government policies, an unregulated rent sector, and less homes being built creating a nationwide problem of homelessness.

- The council's moral duty to tackle homelessness had to be considered against a difficult national policy context and with decreasing powers.
- The council was a first contact point for homeless families unable to afford housing and in need of support. This meant working with community groups to signpost families to housing solutions before they become homeless and ensuring resources are available to help people access services.
- The problematic government cuts to public agencies, in particular Mental Health services which a young single homeless person may access. This meant a greater need for local authorities and agencies/ partners to work together and effectively combine their available resources to look after homeless people.
- The results of the LGA [Local Government Association] survey, which included a significant increase in the short term reasons for homelessness.
- The forced sale of high value council housing stock was expected to have a negative effect.
- Councillors could provide essential support information to a rough sleeper by accessing:
- <http://www.streetlink.org.uk/>
- Homelessness had increased as a result of failings in housing system which included: problems with access to accommodation and increase in short term tenancies.
- Rogue landlords needed to be tackled to disrupt them continuing to take advantage of the continuing demand for housing by increasing rents, only providing short term tenancies and evicting families who fall behind on rent. The new private sector lettings agency recently launched by the council will provide families with a safer and fairer option.
- There was a need to revive a civil route for tackling rogue landlords with both a national strategy and ongoing local strategic approach, to ensure tenancy lengths were extended and poor conditions of housing tackled.
- Within the council, there was a need to continue tackling tenancy and RTB [Right to Buy] fraud.
- Continuing to argue to government for an increase in social housing.
- Homelessness required national action as instability for families affected children's education. Homelessness was a long standing problem for Haringey and the council needed increased resources to make a difference.
- The previous buffer of council housing had slowly eroded away through increased RTB sales.
- The issue of hotel homelessness of the 80's had re - appeared with increased number of families in emergency accommodation for increased lengths of time. Understanding that this experience can have a detrimental impact on children's attainment.

- Homeless families from communities fleeing persecution and in need of accommodation through their circumstances and not through choice should be recognised.
- The Government should be challenged on their housing policies and council land for housing should be safeguarded. Also the forced planning position on social housing development, inflicted by the government should be acknowledged so residents do not blame the council for lower ratios of social housing being built.
- Council housing was not subsidised and continuing to voice that London's relationship with developers should be redefined to increase housing in the borough and London. The Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Panel will be examining the viability assessments for affordable housing and reporting their findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the coming quarter.
- Closer links between private and public sector to increase housing in London were needed.
- The Housing and Planning Bill would have a negative impact, undermining social rented sectors, and increased RTB was expected to have a detrimental impact on housing stock numbers, with a potential 149 homes that could be sold in the borough.
- The growing public stigma of homelessness should be tackled through understanding the background of the homeless person sleeping rough and helping them receive the right help and support.
- More and more people on the edge of homelessness through circumstances not in their control.
- Re-housing people outside London was likely to increase. The detrimental impact of recent changing national housing policies making it difficult to strategically plan ahead housing availability.

Responding to the debate, the Leader of the Council remarked on its quality and echoed the sentiments of fellow councillors and the external speakers on how aspects of housing crisis have been evident to everyone in the borough with the visible increase in rough sleepers, the increased number of housing-related cases in surgeries and the range of people affected, rising rent levels and significant houses price increase making purchasing a home difficult.

It was important to note that this was not a problem just for Haringey and the solution would need to be London wide and on a national basis. There was a significant need to build more homes in London, 50,000 being built a year to meet demand. The council would need to be clear and honest about what this meant. There was a strong feeling about London remaining a mixed community and this would inevitably mean a change in the skyline for London, including estate regeneration and building up housing at higher density with a social mix.

There were concerns about the Housing Bill including its disregard of social housing, the unfairness of Starter Homes which would only be affordable to a small group of people on high incomes. The tackling of rogue landlords and the rogue landlords register were the only redeeming features of the Bill.

The Leader referred to the Housing Benefit changes which reduced access to the private rented homes market and the abolition of housing benefit for under 22s, would be devastating to vulnerable young people. The required 1% reduction in rents would also impact on housing income for councils and delay repairs in housing stock.

The Leader continued to speak about the scale, nature and complexity of homelessness prevention and officers were constantly being challenged to find new effective ways for preventing homelessness to keep up with demand. Local authorities had to deal with difficult circumstances but meet the challenges by building more housing, bringing forward build to rent, ensuring the recently launched lettings agency was a success. She welcomed the challenges to the Housing Strategy and Homelessness Strategy and undertook to ensure that the strategies would take account of the discussion.

The Leader thanked the Mayor for taking forward this debate. The debate had signalled the ongoing commitment of the council to ensure good oversight of housing crisis and ensure the council were working hard to tackle this.

The Mayor thanked all councillors for their participation in the debate and further thanked Matt Downie and Michael Baker for their contributions.

NOTED

159. TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM THE FOLLOWING BODIES

i] Staffing & Remuneration Committee Report No 1 2015/16

Councillor Amin MOVED the report from the Staffing & Remuneration Committee of 26 January 2016 recommending Full Council approve the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17 (attached as Appendix B) for publication in April 2016.

ii] Standards Committee Report No 1 2015/16

Councillor Sahota informed the meeting that he had received representations from Councillor Gideon Bull about the allocations in the SRA bandings and he would be considering the issues in the coming year through Standards Committee.

Councillor Sahota moved the recommendations of the Standards Committee report

RESOLVED

1. To approve the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17 as explained in the Chair's report and attached as Appendix B;
2. To revoke the Members Allowances Scheme for 2015/16 as of 31st March 2016; and approve the proposed new Members Allowances Scheme for 2016-17, as set out in Appendix 2, to this report to take effect from 1st April 2016;
3. To appoint Lisa Klein as Independent Person, and Alison Lowton as secondary Independent Person under s28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 for a period of 4 years commencing 1 July 2016 and ending on 30 June 2020; and

To approve the allowance paid per annum to the Independent Person, and Secondary Independent person be £1250.00 and £250.00 respectively

160. TO ANSWER QUESTIONS, IF ANY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE NOS. 9 & 10

The Mayor agreed to the admission of this item as urgent business. Under Standing Orders, notice of questions was not requested until eight clear days before the meeting, following which matters raised had to be researched and replies prepared in order to be given at the meeting.

There were 6 oral questions and 9 for written answer.

Oral answers to oral questions 1 – 6 were asked and responded to.

Written answers to written Questions 1- 9 were received and noted

161. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MOTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL RULES OF PROCEDURE NO. 13

Motion E [2015/16]

Councillor Morris MOVED, and Councillor Beacham seconded the substantive Motion E as follows:

Housing Crisis

This council is concerned by the effects of London's housing crisis on local people in Haringey and across London.

This council is further concerned that:

- in 2014, 24,543 households in London were found to be homeless
- 13,034 of those households included dependent children

- In Haringey only 420 affordable homes were delivered in 2014
- There were 1,357 vacant homes in Haringey in 2014 and 218 council homes were lost through Right-to-Buy
- In 2015 there were 5,550 children in temporary accommodation in this borough

This council notes:

- In England, the biggest single recorded reason for homelessness is now the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy (AST)- the type of tenancy most commonly held by private renters
- The percentage of homelessness acceptances in England recorded as being due to the loss of an AST has doubled over the last five years, from 13% in 2008/9, to 26% in 2013/14.'

This council further notes:

- Liberal Democrat, GLA Member, Caroline Pidgeon has proposed retaining the Olympic Precept at £20 a year and converting it into a Housing Precept.

This council also notes the Housing Precept would generate £2 billion of funds:

- to build 200,000 homes
- to build 50,000 new council homes and 150,000 homes for private rent and sale

This council welcomes Caroline Pidgeon's proposal for a large scale home-building which would benefit people in Haringey and across the capital, helping to tackle the housing crisis.

Councillor Jogee MOVED an amendment to Motion E, which was seconded by Councillor Stephen Mann as follows:

The Housing crisis and the impact on homelessness:

This council is concerned by the effects of London's housing crisis on local people in Haringey and across London particularly with respect to homelessness.

This council is concerned that:

- After years of declining trends, all forms of homelessness have risen due to the shortage of housing and ongoing effects of the economic recession combined with Government policies - particularly welfare reforms and cuts to housing benefit. Independent research carried out for Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, shows that homelessness is likely to increase further still.
- Almost one in ten people say they have been homeless at some point, with a fifth of these people saying it happened in the last five years.
- In the UK, over 54,000 people were accepted as homeless and in 'priority need' in 2014/2015 – an increase of 36% since 2009/10.

- According to Government figures, rough sleeping has increased by 55% since 2010.
- 7,581 people slept rough at some point in London during 2014/15, a 16% rise on the previous year and more than double the figure of 3,673 in 2009/10

This council notes:

- Local Authorities have statutory duties towards homeless households these are broadly; providing advice and assistance free of charge to prevent homelessness, providing temporary accommodation while making enquiries into whether a main homelessness duty is owed and when this is accepted, accommodating the household until a suitable offer of settled accommodation is made.
- The Council currently provides a dedicated Housing Advice and Options service which focuses on homelessness prevention and a Homelessness Assessment service which is accessed when homelessness cannot be prevented.
- In Haringey, the Council prevented 647 households from becoming homeless in 2014/15, 96 (17%) more than in 2013/14 and 28% more than in 2012/13.
- In England, the biggest single recorded reason for homelessness is now the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy (AST)- the type of tenancy most commonly held by private renters
- The percentage of homelessness acceptances in England recorded as being due to the loss of an AST has doubled over the last five years, from 13% in 2008/9, to 26% in 2013/14.

This council further notes:

The Housing and Planning Bill currently being debated in Parliament will (if it receives Royal Assent) have significant, far reaching and adverse implications for local residents, the supply of truly affordable housing and the Council, specifically:

- A requirement for the Council to sell 'high-value' council homes on the open market;
- The imposition of a levy or 'housing tax' on the Council to fund Housing Association right to buy tenant discounts, which could be anywhere in England;
- A requirement that the Council charges market or near market rents where households renting from the Council have an annual income of £40,000 or more;
- A new restriction on the Council to offer 5 year or shorter tenancies for new tenants;
- The introduction of 'starter homes' as new form of 'affordable' housing tenure.

The Bill in its current form will...

- undermine the Council's ability to comply with its statutory homeless obligations resulting in families staying longer in temporary accommodation.
- place further pressure on the Council's overall temporary accommodation budget.

- result in additional Council expenditure to administer and enforce the Government's pay to stay proposals.
- result in 'starter homes' being built in place of social housing which will be unaffordable to Haringey families and young people on ordinary incomes.
- further reduce the supply of affordable housing by undermining section 106 requirements on private developers to provide affordable homes.
- undermine and put at risk the Councils housing regeneration programme.
- provide no guarantee that the truly affordable social rented, homes the Council is forced to sell will be replaced like-for-like in Haringey.
- undermine local democracy and decision making by taking 32 new wide and open-ended powers for the Secretary of State over councils,
 - including the power to override locally agreed plans,
 - to mandate rent levels for social tenants,
 - to impose a housing levy on stock-holding councils, violating the terms of the housing revenue account self-financing deal Councils agreed with the government.

Whilst the Bill takes forward some positive measures in relation to the private rented sector, it does not address the affordability, poor conditions and insecurity issues in this sector – and as such will do nothing to help arrest the recent rise in homelessness.

This Council resolves:

- To make clear its opposition to the Housing and Planning Bill and continue to warn the Government and others of the impact of the Housing & Planning Bill on Haringey
- To ask the Cabinet Member for Housing to write to the Secretary of State with the Council's concerns about the Bill.

There were no further requests to speak in relation to the original motion nor the amendments put forward. There was also no further response from Councillor Morris, the mover of Motion E and a vote was taken on the amendment to Motion E.

On a vote, of the amendment to the MOTION E, the amendment was carried.

The substantive MOTION was put to the vote and it was:

RESOLVED

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This council is concerned that:

- After years of declining trends, all forms of homelessness have risen due to the shortage of housing and ongoing effects of the economic recession combined

with Government policies - particularly welfare reforms and cuts to housing benefit. Independent research carried out for Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, shows that homelessness is likely to increase further still.

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This council notes:

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