

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING 6 FEBRUARY 2006

Councillors: *The Mayor (Councillor Griffith), *The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Adamou);
Councillors *Adje, Aitken, *Basu, *Bax, *Beacham, *Bevan, *Blanchard, *Bloch, *Herbie
Brown, *Jean Brown, *Bull, *Canver, *Davidson, *Davies, *Dawson, *Diakides, Dillon,
*Dobbie, *Dodds, Edge, *Engert, Featherstone, *Floyd, Gilbert, *Haley, *Hare, Harris,
*Hillman, *Hoban, *GMMH Rahman Khan, Knight, *Krokou, *Lister, Makanji, *Manheim,
*Meehan, Millar, *Milner, *Newton, *Oatway, *Patel, *Peacock, *Erline Prescott, *Quincy
Prescott, *Reith, Reynolds, *Rice, *Robertson, *Santry, Simpson, *Stanton, *Sulaiman,
*Williams, Winskill and *Wynne.

* Members present

88. APOLOGIES: Apologies for lateness was received from Councillor Bull, and for absence from Councillors Aitken, Dillon, Edge, Featherstone, Gilbert, Harris, Knight, Makanji & Winskill.

89. LATE/URGENT ITEMS OF BUSINESS: See items 94, 98, 100 & 101.

90. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:

Members were asked by the Mayor to declare any personal interest in respect of items on the agenda. In accordance with Part 2 of the Members Code of Conduct set out in the Council Constitution, any Member disclosing a personal interest which was also prejudicial would be asked to withdraw from the Chamber during consideration of the item and neither were they to seek to improperly influence a decision on the said item.

Councillor Meehan declared a personal interest that he was in receipt of a Freedom Pass, in relation to the report on financial planning.

91. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST CONCERNING OUTSTANDING COUNCIL TAX OR COMMUNITY CHARGE LIABILITY:

Members were also reminded of the need to consider whether they needed to make a declaration in accordance with Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 in relation to unpaid community charge or council tax liability, which was two months or more outstanding.

No such declarations were made.

92. MINUTES:

Copies of the Minutes having been circulated, they were taken as read.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9 January 2006 be signed as a true record.

93. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS:

1. The Mayor, with great sadness reported that Sheila Berkery-Smith OBE died on 24th January. Sheila was a former Leader and Mayor who served on the first Council following Haringey's inception in 1964. Prior to that she was a Councillor

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for the Borough of Tottenham. She served as a Labour Councillor for South Tottenham from 1964-74 and in 1974-1978 for the Town Hall Ward. She was Leader on two occasions in 1967-68 and again from 1971-73, and served as the Leader of the opposition from 1968-1971. Sheila was elected as the Mayor of Haringey from 1973-74. Sheila also had the distinction and honour of receiving the Order of the British Empire and the Dame of St Gregory on behalf of the Pope in 2003. Sheila continued to work and was very active in the community.

The Mayor commented of his personal acquaintance as a member of SACRE and that amongst her many voluntary roles she was on the School Organisation Committee, the Schools Admissions Forum, a member representative of the Westminster Diocese Board for Schools and a Governor of St Thomas More RC Secondary School.

Following words from Councillors Meehan, Peacock, Bax and Jean Brown, the meeting stood for one minutes silence in her memory.

2. The Mayor informed the meeting of his delight that six charities would benefit from the recycling incentives scheme. He advised that all Members would have seen that the Council had set up a charity fund that gets bigger the more that residents recycled. Along with the Mayor's Special Fund for this year, which supports the fight against prostate cancer, the other five charities that are supported were: -

Friends of the Earth, Shelter, Mind, The British Trust for Conservation Volunteers; and The Worldwide Fund for Nature.

The Mayor advised that the aim was to have a fund worth £20,000 by March 2006, and that he would encourage all members of the Council and the public to do their very best to put as much as they can in their green recycling boxes, and in the local bring banks, and to recycle every week.'

3. The Mayor reminded the meeting that tickets were available for the Fundraising Ball on March 18th. This was in aid of the Special Fund which was raising funds for the Prostate Cancer Unit at the North Middlesex hospital. The Mayor asked for support with this worthy cause.

94. STATE OF THE BOROUGH (Agenda item 7):

The Mayor agreed to admit this report as urgent business. The report was not available at the time of the despatch as it was still being compiled in order to ensure that the most up to date information was available

The Leader reported that the Council had a successful year in 2005. For the second year running Haringey had improved its rating in the annual Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). In the service block assessment in December 2005 Haringey achieved a 'good', three star rating, even though the test had been made harder this year. (The Council was rated as 'fair' in 2004, improving from 'weak' in 2003).

The following were some of the highlights of last year:

Nearly 75% of performance indicators have been maintained or improved.

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As part of the CPA all the higher weighted services scored 3 out of 4; these were Adult Social Services, Children's Services and the Use of Resources.

In the annual Direction of Travel statement, the Audit Commission have rated the council as 'improving well' which is the third highest of the four categories. The Audit Commission states: 'this year has seen positive outcomes in services for children and young people and for vulnerable adults.

In 2005 the council was awarded beacon council status, an award for excellence and innovation in the 'getting closer to communities' category. The council's achievements highlighted in the beacon award included; the seven area assemblies and their popular 'making the difference budgets' for local people, Local Partnership Boards and youth forums and the Neighbourhood Resource Centre at Northumberland Park.

The new Children's Service has been successfully established to provide social care and educational services for children and young people.

The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs grade A*-C improved from 43% in 2004 to 48% in 2005. The greatest improvement had been seen in the schools in the east of the borough. Good progress had also been made by black and minority ethnic pupils.

The results at Key Stages 1 and 2 in Haringey have been improving and at Key Stage 3 the progress was well ahead of the national figures.

Attendance at primary schools continues to improve (absences 6.5% in 2005) and low numbers of secondary school children were excluded from school.

The assessment of Adult Social Services by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in 2005, awarded the service two stars, improving from one star last year. The judgement stated that most people were 'well served' and the service had promising prospects for improvement.

The Performance Review Report highlighted improvements in Adult Social Services including; improved services for carers, better partnership working, more people helped to live at home and improved take up of direct payments.

Continued investment through the Better Haringey campaign with an additional £6.5 million spent in the last year to clean up the borough.

In Environment Services achievements included:

- 95% of residents had access to recycling services
- 80% of Haringey schools now recycle
- 18% of rubbish recycled in 2005, compared with 9% in 2004
- no children were killed on Haringey roads during 2004/05
- cleaner streets and less litter
- 50,000 square metres of graffiti removed
- top quartile performance in planning with 78% of major applications dealt with in 13 weeks.

The council was continuing to make improvements in the time taken to carry out urgent repairs to council properties, with 99% completed within the specified timescales.

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Regeneration programmes were transforming the east of the borough. Working with partners the council had secured £5.5m of Local Development Agency (LDA) resources to support regeneration activity in the Upper Lee Valley and the sub region. The key sites programme continued to progress, having secured £1.8 million for the regeneration of Tottenham High Road.

Funding in excess of £1.3 million had been allocated to the safer communities' agenda and the council was working with partners to make Haringey safer. We are providing extra funding for anti social behaviour and more CCTV around the borough.

Car crime had reduced by 13% and crime committed by young people was down by 4.1%

Library opening hours have been extended. More people visited the libraries during 2005. Internet facilities in the libraries have increased with 185 PCs providing free Internet access. All our Libraries now have Wi-Fi internet access which allows people to use the internet from their lap tops free of charge.

The Leaders report contained greater detail of the achievements outlined above. This highlighted not only the wide-ranging and important services provided to our community but also the continuous improvements being made to them by our three star Council.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke in response.

RESOLVED:

That the Leader of the Council's State of the Borough report be received and agreed.

95. VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS – EXECUTIVE REPORT 15:

The meeting agreed to vary the order of business to permit Executive report number 15 and the appendix on financial planning to be taken at this point.

The Mayor agreed to the admission of report number 15 of the Executive as urgent business. The Executive report was late because the Executive only met on 31 January 2006 after the despatch of the Council Summons on 27 January 2006.

The report was urgent as it contained recommendations to the Council.

RESOLVED:

That report 15 /2005-6 of the Executive be received and adopted and that the following recommendations contained in the appendix to report number 15 be agreed:

1. To agree the changes and variations set out at paragraph 9 and appendix B.
2. To note the outcome of the consultation processes set out at paragraph 11.
3. To agree the new savings and investment proposals set out in paragraphs 12 and 13 and appendices D and E.

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4. To agree the changes to existing savings in respect of Red Gables, IT and Social Service commissioning set out in paragraph 12.1.
5. To agree the proposals for the children's services (DSG) budget set out in appendix F and to note the request to the school's forum to approve an additional increase to the central expenditure limit.
6. To agree a rent increase for 2006/07 at an average of 4.99% in line with the public consultation process.
7. To agree the proposals for the HRA budget set out in appendix G.
8. To agree the proposals for the capital programme set out in appendices H and J.
9. To agree the treasury management strategy and policy and prudential limits set out in appendix K.
10. To agree the proposed general fund budget requirement of £366.102m, subject to the final settlement and the decisions of precepting and levying authorities, and the consequences for council tax levels.
11. To note that the final decision on budget and council tax for 2006/7 will be made at the Council meeting on 20 February.

96. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Agenda item 8): There were no matters to report.

97. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (Agenda item 9): There were no matters to report.

98. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES (Agenda item 10):

The Mayor agreed to admit this report as urgent business. The report was not available at the time of despatch as the proposed appointments to outside bodies had only recently been considered at Party Group meetings. It was urgent in order to permit changes to be made to outside body appointments.

RESOLVED:

That appointments to outside bodies as detailed in the attached appendix be agreed.

99. DEPUTATIONS AND PETITIONS (Agenda item 11):

There were no requests for deputations or petitions.

100. QUESTIONS (Agenda item 12):

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

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There were 10 oral questions and 20 for written answer. Oral Questions 3-10 were not reached in the allotted time and written answers were supplied to these questions.

101. COMMITTEE REPORTS AND VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS:

The meeting agreed to vary the order of business to permit the General Purposes Committee report to be taken first and for Motion N to be taken following the Executive reports 13 & 14.

The Mayor agreed to the admission of report number 4 of General Purposes Committee as urgent business. The General Purposes report was late because General Purposes met on 30 January 2006 after the despatch of the Council Summons on 27 January 2006. The report was urgent as it contained recommendations to the Council.

RESOLVED:

1. That report 4/ 2005-6 of the General Purposes Committee be received;
2. That the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee of 30 January 2006 in respect of amendments to Council Standing Orders (Procedure Rules) amending the notice for public and member questions to eight clear days set out in Appendix 1 of the report be adopted, subject to implementation of the change for the 20 March 2006 Council meeting and that Part E.8 of the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly;
3. That the recommendation of the General Purposes Committee of 30 January 2006 in respect of amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers as set out in Appendix 2 of the report be adopted and that Part F.7 of the Council's Constitution be amended accordingly.
4. That reports 13 & 14 /2005-6 of the Executive be received and adopted.

102. MOTION M (2005/06):

It was moved by Councillor Reith and seconded by Councillor Wynne that:

"This Council notes the importance of voluntary sector organizations in delivering local services, building community cohesion and encouraging civic pride throughout our area. Their work within the community, fostering engagement, driving forward local initiatives and campaigning for local projects is invaluable to our vision of an effective and working society.

This Council believes that in order to ensure both the Council and the third sector are able to compliment each other to the best of their abilities there must be a clear partnership framework.

As such, this Council welcomes the news that a period of consultation on a formal compact with voluntary sector organizations closes shortly and that the final compact will be brought to the next Council. This compact will clearly lay out what voluntary organizations can expect from Haringey.

This council is committed to maintaining a high level of financial support to

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voluntary organizations, in sharp contrast with the situation in London boroughs controlled by Liberal Democrat and Conservative administrations”.

The Motion was then put to the meeting and declared CARRIED.

103. MOTION N (2005/06):

It was moved by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Hoban that:

“Acknowledges the findings of the Audit Commission’s report into the project management of Tech Refresh and endorses the findings and criticism of the council’s management of this project contained therein;

Apologises to the people of Haringey for the £10 million plus budget overrun of the projects and deeply regrets the loss of funding this entails for vital council services;

Believes that members of the Council Executive must be held to account for their negligent lack of involvement and senior sponsorship of such a large project and the Executive must learn the lessons of this negligence.”

An amendment to the motion was moved by Councillor Sulaiman and seconded by Councillor Milner proposing :

Delete all after "This Council acknowledges the findings of the" and replace with text below to read

This council acknowledges the findings of the “District Auditor’s report into the Tech Refresh project.

Tech Refresh is a project designed to support the delivery of better housing, cleaner streets and safer communities for the people of the borough through the use of better more resilient and efficient technology.

The council notes that in June 2003 the Tech Refresh project was being delivered and programme managed by external partners. Once the overspend was reported to councillors in May 2005, programme management was undertaken in-house. Tech Refresh is now 95 per cent complete and is already helping to deliver more efficient use of council resources.

This council notes the following findings from the district auditor’s report:-

- Whilst the project implementation was problematic the new IT systems will help the council deliver better services.
- The original budget was very tight meaning that additional expenditure was always likely.
- Haringey is an improving three star council with a track record of strong financial management.
- The funds to pay for this overspend were found from earmarked reserves last year meaning that this is not funded through a council tax rise.

This council also notes the Executive asked the district auditor to examine the project last year and that a report from the Interim Chief Executive has already been requested to address the lessons that need to be learnt.

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Finally this council is a good and improving borough and is well equipped to make further progress - a fact that has been recognised by the recent Audit Commission rating.

The Amendment was then put to the meeting and declared CARRIED.

The substantive Motion was then put to the meeting and declared CARRIED

Councillor Griffith
Mayor