

## **MINUTES**

**of the proceedings of the Ordinary Council Meeting of the London Borough of Waltham Forest held at Walthamstow Town Hall, Forest Road, London E17 on Thursday, 13 July 2023.**

### **PRESENT:**

**Mayor:** Councillor Roy Berg

**Councillors:** Afzal Akram, Raja Anwar, Naheed Asghar, Vicky Ashworth, Elizabeth Baptiste, Kastriot Berberi, Marsela Berberi, Emma Best, Catherine Deakin, Andrew Dixon, Rosalind Doré, Paul Douglas, Shabana Dhedhi, Rhiannon Eglin, Marion Fitzgerald, Kizzy Gardiner, Mitchell Goldie, Kisha Green, Justin Halabi, Jemma Hemsted, Crystal Ihenachor, Kay Isa, Tim James, Ahsan Khan, Johar Khan, Kira Lewis, Khevyn Limbajee, Sally Littlejohn, Clyde Loakes, Gerry Lyons, Zafran Malik, Anna Mbachu, Miriam Mirwitch, Louise Mitchell, John Moss, Sam O'Connell, Jack Phipps, Caramel Quin, Uzma Rasool, Sebastian Salek, Alistair Strathern, Richard Sweden, Katy Thompson, Terry Wheeler, Grace Williams and Jennifer Whilby

### **20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Tony Bell, Whitney Ihenachor, Sazimet Patla-Imre, Jonathan O'Dea, Marie Pye, Keith Rayner, Catherine Saumarez, Steve Terry and Sharon Waldron.

### **21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **22. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 25 MAY 2023**

The minutes of the Annual Council Meeting held on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

### **23. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCIL LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

The Mayor made announcements relating to a number of civic events including flag raisings for Philippines Independence Day and Windrush Day, The Mayor had also attended Age UK's Windrush festival, Armed Forces Day celebrations and a Police Cadets competition. The Mayor expressed his desire to support members of the armed forces community.

The Mayor then presented a certificate for service to residents to the former Youth Mayor, Olivia Darby. He said that the applications for the new Youth Mayor had

closed and he would be reviewing these application.

The Mayor informed council of two upcoming events for Merchant Navy Day and a service for the Battle of Britain.

Councillor Williams, the Leader of the Council, then paid tribute to Martin Esom who had helped steward finances during austerity and help bring stability and credibility to the Council. He had worked with councillors and officers to change outcomes for children, reflected in the good outcomes and outstanding leadership ratings in the 2019 OFSTED inspection.

Councillor Asghar, Portfolio Lead Member for Health and Wellbeing, said that the previous week marked 75 years of the NHS. She said that she was looking to press central government on funding for the Whipps Cross hospital redevelopment to ensure that work began in the autumn, as early indicators had currently shown that the next phase of work would take a long time until resolution.

Councillor Loakes, Deputy Leader (Climate and Air Quality), updated the Council on the Healthy Streets Scorecard, noting that Waltham Forest had the third highest result for Outer London boroughs, the second highest number of Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), highest amount of separated cycle paths, second highest number of schools with travel plans and was in the top ten for number of school streets. He said that there still was work to do and wanted to encourage other local authorities to support decarbonisation.

Councillor Khan, Deputy Leader (Housing and Regeneration), said that Cabinet had approved a report to increase the number of affordable homes across the borough. An independent housing commission had been set up and had brought recommendations to Cabinet, which had been accepted and expected that the commission would bring further recommendations to council. Councillor Khan thanked the Chair of the Independent Housing Commission and the Chairs of the Housing and Growth Scrutiny Committee, and invited all councillors to a briefing once the findings had been considered.

## **24. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

Question 1 from Councillor Moss to Councillor Khan, Deputy Leader (Housing and Regeneration). The Council noted the supplementary question put to Councillor Khan confirming that steps had been taken to rescind the decision made by the Planning Committee. Councillor Khan confirmed that the decision could not be rescinded and had been made on existing policy, so little weight was given to LP2.

Question 2 from Councillor Best to Councillor Khan, Deputy Leader (Housing and Regeneration). The Council noted the supplementary question put to Councillor Khan asking if the council had responded to the consultation for the grant system. Councillor Khan said that they had received helpful feedback from scrutiny and would be responding to the consultation.

Question 3 from Councillor Best to Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council. There were no supplementary questions.

Question 4 from Councillor Best to Councillor Khan, Deputy Leader (Housing and

Regeneration). The Council noted the supplementary question put to Councillor Khan asking if the Council would approach tenants regarding the redesign of Montague Road Estate. Councillor Khan said that all residents had been written to and a public meeting had been organised.

Questions 5 from Councillor Akram to Councillor Loakes, Deputy Leader (Climate and Air Quality). The Council noted the supplementary question put to Councillor Loakes about how often streets had been cleaned in the last twelve months. Councillor Loakes said he could provide the detail to Councillor Akram, but streets tended to be cleaned based on the level of cleanliness.

Question 6 from Councillor Hemsted to Councillor Douglas. The Council noted the supplementary question put to Councillor Douglas about the timeline for the new lease for South Chingford Library. Councillor said that the timeline was currently active.

Question 7 from Councillor Fitzgerald to Councillor Loakes, Deputy Leader (Climate and Air Quality). The Council noted the supplementary question put to Councillor Loakes asking if contractors and residents could have an article reminding them that they contact the council if there were any issues. Councillor Loakes agreed to this.

## **25. PUBLIC STATEMENTS**

Beste Kayalar, representing Ashiana, an organisation that worked with women and girls at risk of domestic violence and abuse that had worked with women in Waltham Forest addressed the council in relation to the trust and confidence in the police motion. Her statement addressed that fear of the police was still common amongst women and that it was the responsibility of the police to provide safe spaces, acknowledge the importance for representation by and for marginalized communities, recognise the effects of violence and trauma, particularly as survivors tended to express uncertainty after reporting, and that they understood that perpetrators tended to manipulate survivors of domestic abuse. She surmised that it was a basic human right that women felt empowered and safe.

## **26. NOTICES OF MOTION**

## **27. TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE**

It was moved by Councillor Limbajee and seconded by Councillor Green that:

The council noted:

- The Baroness Casey Review into the Metropolitan Police demonstrates conclusively the scale and extent of the problems within the force and their impact on communities and victims. It paints a picture of a force that is institutionally racist, sexist and homophobic. It documents systematic failures about the way it has vetted and maintained professional standards, the support offered to vulnerable victims of rape and domestic abuse, and its record of safeguarding children and protecting the public. It highlights the hollowing out of local policing and disempowerment of local leaders
- The review shows that the Government's cut in real terms funding for the Met over the last ten years – £700 million, 18% lower than the start of the previous

decade - has had an adverse impact on neighbourhood policing. Sharp decreases in the rates of crimes solved and in measures of trust and confidence coincide with the period around 2017 and 2018 when police officer, staff, PCSO and Specials numbers were at their lowest and when the Joint Basic Command Units were introduced, which the Casey Review calls 'an austerity measure'.

- Since July 2022, there have been eight homicides in Waltham Forest, the majority of which involved knife crime. Six of these victims were under 30 and two – Renell Charles and Chimaera Osuji - were under 18.
- Waltham Forest currently scores the worst in London for the proportion of residents who think the police are doing a good job (38%, MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, Q4 2022/23).
- Stop and Search disproportionately affects our black residents, who make up 15% of the borough's population but constitute 36% of subjects of stop and searches in the last 12 months.
- North East BCU has the second lowest number of officers in London as of May 2023. It also has the third lowest number of female officers (MPS Workforce report, May 2023). Over a quarter of all police constables in Waltham Forest and Newham have less than 2 years' experience in the police force and nearly half of detective constables have less than 2 years' experience (Casey Review, 2023).

This council believes:

- There are many daily countless acts of individual bravery and selflessness by serving police officers. However, it is clear beyond any doubt that the Met requires nothing short of total reform to create the culturally competent police service that Londoners deserve. The Met must accept it is institutionally racist, sexist and homophobic if it is to change.
- The voices of Waltham Forest residents are missing from the way our borough is policed. Existing structures do not provide a clear way for Waltham Forest Council and our residents to hold the Met to account for how it polices and tackles crime in the borough.
- Given that the Met is 77% white and 70% male, and that half of officers do not live in the city they police, reform must begin with listening and understanding the lived experiences of our community. This includes those who have experienced discrimination and poor service, especially Black residents who have been under-protected and over-policed.
- Effective neighbourhood policing, including engagement with and visibility in communities and strong child-focused partnership working by the police with the council and other agencies, is essential if we are to tackle violence and the causes of violence – including poverty, domestic abuse and poor mental health in our borough.

This council resolves to:

- Deepen our Violence Reduction Partnership to maintain the focus on preventing violence and protecting every child from violence, working in partnership with our communities and schools.
- Urge the Met to accept the Casey Report in full – including the finding that the force is institutionally racist, sexist and homophobic.
- Take all necessary actions to encourage the recommended new borough-based approach founded on sufficient resourcing, greater accountability and transparency.
- Ensure our BCU Commander is accountable for the actions taken in our Borough, including those of central specialist units.
- Work in partnership with the Metropolitan Police and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime to facilitate a Citizens Assembly to develop a new model of neighbourhood policing, and engagement with communities, which rebuilds trust and confidence and reduces the fear of crime.
- Develop our hyper-local Safe Streets approach of police and council officers working together to improve our local response to crime and anti-social behaviour and using all of the levers at our disposal to prevent crime.
- Work in close partnership with Met Police for an effective Right Care, Right Person model so that vulnerable people in our borough are supported and recognise the statutory role that police have in helping vulnerable people to get medical assistance.
- Call on the Prime Minister to make serious violence a national priority.

There was debate, in which Councillors Gardiner and Best spoke, following which, Councillor Limbajee exercised his right to reply.

On being put to the vote, the motion in the names of Councillor Limbajee and Councillor Green was **CARRIED**.

## **28. 2022/23 ANNUAL TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW**

It was moved by Councillor Douglas and seconded by Councillor Phipps that Council agreed the Treasury Management activities and performance against targets for

financial year 2022-23 as detailed in the report at Appendix 1.

On being put to the vote, the motion was **CARRIED**.

## **29. CHANGES TO THE GENERAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

It was moved by Councillor Douglas and seconded by Councillor Phipps that the Council agreed;

- The proposed changes to the General Scheme of Delegation with effect from 4<sup>th</sup> September 2023, and
- Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Governance and Law to change the date on which changes come into effect in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council to account for any unanticipated changes to the Oracle implementation timetable, and
- Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Governance and Law to update other articles of the Constitution that reference the Authorised Officers band structure (paragraph 2 of the Scheme) as a result of this decision.

An amendment to the motion was moved by Councillor Best and seconded by Councillor Akram, that:

- The motion was deferred until the changes had been reviewed by the Constitution Working Group.

A recorded vote was asked for by the members of the Conservative Group.

**Vote on the amendment** in the names of Councillor Best and Councillor Akram

For the Motion

Councillors: A Akram, E Best, M Fitzgerald, M Goldie, J Halabi, J Hemsted, K Isa, T James, J Moss and S O'Connell.

Against the Motion

Councillors: R Anwar, N Asghar, V Ashworth, E Baptiste, K Berberi, M Berberi, C Deakin, A Dixon, R Dore, P Douglas, S Dhedhi, R Eglin, K Gardiner, K Green, C Ihenachor, A Khan, J Khan, K Lewis, K Limbajee, S Littlejohn, C Loakes, G Lyons, Z Malik, A Mbachu, M Mirwitch, L Mitchell, J Phipps, C Quin, U Rasool S Salek, A Strathern, R Sweden, K Thompson, T Wheeler, G Williams and J Whilby.

Abstentions

None.

As a result of voting the Mayor declared the motion in the names of Councillor Best and Councillor Akram **LOST**.

**Vote on the substantive motion** in the names of Councillor Douglas and Councillor Phipps

For the Motion

Councillors: R Anwar, N Asghar, V Ashworth, E Baptiste, K Berberi, M Berberi, C

Deakin, A Dixon, R Dore, P Douglas, S Dhedhi, R Eglin, K Gardiner, K Green, C Ihenachor, A Khan, J Khan, K Lewis, K Limbajee, S Littlejohn, C Loakes, G Lyons, Z Malik, A Mbachu, M Mirwitch, L Mitchell, J Phipps, C Quin, U Rasool S Salek, A Strathern, R Sweden, K Thompson, T Wheeler, G Williams and J Whilby.

Against the Motion  
None.

Abstentions

Councillors: A Akram, E Best, M Fitzgerald, M Goldie, J Halabi, J Hemsted, K Isa, T James, J Moss and S O'Connell.

On being put to the vote, the motion in the names of Councillor Douglas and Councillor Phipps was **CARRIED**.

### **30. APPOINTMENTS**

Council agreed the following appointments;

#### **Pension Fund Committee**

Councillors Rhiannon Eglin and Terry Wheeler to replace Councillors Kisha Green and Crystal Ihenachor.

The Council rose at 9:00pm having completed its business.

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