

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, 19 October 2023.

PRESENT:

Mayor:

Councillors: Raja Anwar, Naheed Asghar, Vicky Ashworth, Elizabeth Baptiste, Tony Bell, Karen Bellamy, Kastriot Berberi, Marsela Berberi, Roy Berg, Emma Best, Catherine Deakin, Andrew Dixon, Rosalind Doré, Paul Douglas, Shabana Dhedhi, Rhiannon Eglin, Marion Fitzgerald, Kizzy Gardiner, Mitchell Goldie, Jenny Gray, Kisha Green, Justin Halabi, Jemma Hemsted, Crystal Ihenachor, Whitney Ihenachor, Sazimet Palta Imre, Tim James, Kira Lewis, Khevyn Limbajee, Sally Littlejohn, Clyde Loakes, Gerry Lyons, Zafran Malik, Anna Mbachu, Miriam Mirwitch, Louise Mitchell, John Moss, Sam O'Connell, Jonathan O'Dea, Yusuf Patel, Jack Phipps, Marie Pye, Caramel Quin, Uzma Rasool, Keith Rayner, Catherine Saumarez, Sebastian Salek, Richard Sweden, Steve Terry, Katy Thompson, Terry Wheeler, Grace Williams and Jennifer Whilby

31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Afzal Akram, Tom Connor, Kay Isa, Johar Khan and Sharon Waldron.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Whitney Ihenachor and Kisha Green.

32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

33. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETINGS HELD ON 13 JULY 2023

Council approved the minutes of the Special and Ordinary Council Meetings of 13 July 2023.

34. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCIL LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Mayor spoke of the events he had recently attended and thanked everyone that attended his Charity Railway Day at Ridgeway Park with the Chingford & District Model Engineering Club that raised over £1000 for his Charity.

The Mayor also announced the appointment of the two Youth Mayors, Jacob Middleton and Ray Tapper, who would be supporting his charity ambitions and theme of the year

Cllr Mitchell, Portfolio Lead for Adults informed Council that:

- 1) All Waltham Forest care residents have been offered the latest iteration of the covid vaccination and all those that are homebound will also be offered a visit.
- 2) Mappleton Road and George Mason Lodge Care Homes had maintained their Good rating by the CQC
- 3) She had recently met resident Louise Evans at Mappleton Care home that and asked Council to join her in wishing Louise a happy 100th birthday.

Cllr Loakes, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Lead for Climate and Air Quality was proud to announce that 69 Schools in the borough received TfL's "Travel for Life" accreditation and the council was currently in second place in London.

Cllr Limbajee, Portfolio Lead for Community Safety stated that following the case review into the Metropolitan Police, Waltham Forest was the first London Borough to launch a Citizens' Assembly in partnership with the local police, on The Future of Neighbourhood Policing. The Citizens' Assembly will bring together a panel of residents from different backgrounds to reform the police force into one that all can be proud of.

Cllr Gardiner, Portfolio Lead for Children and Young People informed Council about the launch of the Foster Carer campaign "Be the One"

Cllr Douglas, Cabinet Member for Resources informed Council about the new Menopause Policy which outlines the support available and that the Chief Executive would be the Council's first menopause champion to ensure barriers are removed and employees seek help and support.

35. PUBLIC STATEMENTS

It was moved by Councillor Best and seconded by Councillor Goldie that Council Procedure Rule 11.1.3 be waived so that all speakers that had requested to speak, by the deadline, be given the opportunity to address Council.

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

For the Motion Councillors: E Best, M Fitzgerald, M Goldie, J Halabi, J Hemsted, S Palta-Imre, T James, J Moss, S O'Connell and C Saumarez.

Against the Motion Councillors: R Anwar, N Asghar, V Ashworth, E Baptiste, T Bell, K Bellamy, K Berberi, M Berberi, C Deakin, S Dhedhi, A Dixon, R Doré, P Douglas, S Dhedhi, R Eglin, K Gardiner, J Gray, C Ihenachor, W Ihenachor, A Khan, K Lewis, K Limbajee, S Littlejohn, C Loakes, G Lyons, Z Malik, M Mirwitsch, L Mitchell, K O'Dea, Y Patel, J Phipps, M Pye, K Rayner, C Quin, U Rasool, S Salek, R Sweden, S Terry, K Thompson, T Wheeler, J Whilby and G Williams

Abstentions None.

As a result of voting the Mayor declared the motion in the names of Councillor Best

and Councillor Goldie LOST.

The following local residents addressed Council:

Shanta Prasad	Speed humps causing damage to homes/properties and affecting health and well-being.
Matt Curtis	20mph speed limit in Waltham Forest, speed reduction measures, and active travel.
Yvonne Johnson	Traffic calming on Waltham Way vibration and noise concerns.
Howard Bowman	20mph speed limit and traffic calming measures in the north of the borough

36. MONITORING OF SPEED HUMPS ETC

With the agreement of Council, the Mayor varied the order of the agenda to take the Notice of Motion and Leader's Autumn Statement (items 7 and 8 on the agenda), immediately after Public Statements.

It was moved by Councillor Hemsted and seconded by Councillor Palta-Imre that

- It is clear that an increasing number of residents are contacting us as Councillors to complain about damage to their homes that they believe has been caused by vibrations from speed humps, tables etc that have been installed across the Borough.
- The Council is concerned that if true this could leave the Council facing many potentially costly legal actions.
- The Council therefore agrees to carry out an independent review which includes, but is not limited to, using Vibration Monitoring Devices to discover and monitor what effect any vibrations from speed humps etc are having on surrounding buildings.

There was debate, in which Councillors Moss, Halabi, O'Connell, Goldie, Loakes and Best spoke, following which, Councillor Hemsted exercised her right to reply

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

For the Motion Councillors: E Best, M Fitzgerald, M Goldie, J Halabi, J Hemsted, S Palta-Imre, T James, J Moss, S O'Connell and C Saumarez.

Against the Motion Councillors: R Anwar, N Asghar, V Ashworth, E Baptiste, T Bell, K Bellamy, K Berberi, M Berberi, C Deakin, S Dhedhi, A Dixon, R Doré, P Douglas, S Dhedhi, R Eglin, K Gardiner, J Gray, K Green, C Ihenachor, W Ihenachor, K Lewis, K Limbajee, S Littlejohn, C Loakes, G Lyons, Z Malik, M Mirwitch, L Mitchell, K O'Dea, Y Patel, J Phipps, M Pye, K Rayner, C Quin, U Rasool, S Salek, R Sweden, S Terry, K Thompson, T Wheeler, J Whilby and G Williams

Abstentions None.

As a result of voting the Mayor declared the motion in the names of Councillor Hemsted and Councillor Palta-Imre LOST.

37. LEADER'S AUTUMN STATEMENT

The Leader began her statement reflecting on the recent events in Israel and Gaza. She expressed her unequivocal condemnation of the killing of thousands of innocent victims in the region. The Leader called upon the British Government to provide humanitarian support and acknowledged the emotional toll of these global scale events within the local community.

The Leader then spoke of her views of political crisis, with a hope of an upcoming election. The Conservative Party's approach was criticised for not addressing the cost of living crisis and scrapping important projects like HS2, which were essential for the economic future of the North. The Leader expressed concern about the government's handling of the climate crisis and its focus on culture wars. The need for support for slower speeds in urban areas and the importance of making decisions that prioritise walking, cycling, and environmental concerns was emphasised. The Leader also criticised the government's approach to local councils and the threat of centralising power.

The Leader also spoke of the financial crisis facing local government, acknowledging the challenges posed by rising demand for services, high inflation, and insufficient government funding. The impact of 13 years of austerity on local government finances was highlighted, leading to a significant budget deficit. The Leader spoke of her priorities and expressed her commitment to putting residents' needs first and addressing the rising cost of housing, homelessness, and building homes in the right places. The use of council reserves to cover essential services was noted as unsustainable.

The Leader emphasised her commitment to serving residents, especially during tough times, and making decisions based on principles of providing a strong safety net for the most vulnerable, promoting resilience, and ensuring accessible and cost-effective services.

The Leader spoke of the importance of working with local community groups and responding to residents' needs, including improving neighbourhood safety and public transport. She thanked councillors from all wards as over 2,000 responses had been received from residents offering suggestions to improve their neighbourhoods. As a result, the council was quickly tackling reports of fly tipping, fixing equipment at parks and reporting safety concerns to the police. Residents had requested more greenery, investment in parks, along with active travel measures to reduce car access and improve pedestrian and cycle safety, including more 20 mph zones. The long-term decisions and investments, such as improvements to Leyton Underground Station and the Superloop 1 route, launching later this year would improve connectivity for residents of Chingford and Walthamstow to other areas in Outer London. The Leader concluded with a commitment to work together to address the various challenges and crises facing the community.

The Mayor thanked the Leader for her statement and invited the Leader of the Opposition to respond.

Councillor Best firstly echoed the Leader's comments on the events in Gaza. She

then went on to respond to the Leader's autumn statement and criticised the Leader for focussing on the Central Government issues rather than local issues and reminded the Council how much the Government had spent on cost of living crisis and they had kept Whipps Cross Hospital open. She stated that the Conservatives were not anti 20mph, not anti cycling, were not against development of financially viable schemes but were opposed to the Mayor of London's ULEZ charge. Cllr Best urged the Leader to listen to residents.

The Leader of the Council briefly exercised her right of reply.

38. MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

The Council noted the ten questions from Members and received replies as set out in the Order Paper in Appendix A.

The following supplementary questions were put to the Portfolio Holders:

Councillor Moss to Councillor Loakes, Deputy Leader and Climate and Air Quality Portfolio Holder:

How will residents be benefitted and how will the Council ensure that no one is disadvantaged by the change of move to full digital parking?

Cllr Loakes stated he would respond in writing.

Councillor Moss to Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council:

The asbestos report was clear that there were failings in the recording system, therefore I do not think the written response is correct, so please can you point out where I am wrong?

Cllr Williams stated she would respond in writing.

Councillor Moss to Councillor Ahsan Khan, Deputy Leader, Housing and Regeneration Portfolio Holder:

At the April meeting of this Council the cabinet member for Housing and Regeneration stated the Local Plan report would be published in the spring, however it was published on 17 October 2023. Will the cabinet member formally apologise to this council for misleading us in April?

The question was noted as Cllr Khan was not present at the time of Councillor questions.

Councillor Best to Councillor Loakes, Deputy Leader and Climate and Air Quality Portfolio Holder:

When can we expect a more comprehensive response to the move to digital parking as there is paper parking voucher scheme running on Station Road, E4 and people without mobile phones will be disadvantaged.

Cllr Loakes stated he would respond in writing.

Councillor James to Councillor Loakes, Deputy Leader and Climate and Air Quality Portfolio Holder:

Will the Council be using its influence on TfL via their member that sits on the Board of Directors and with the London Mayor, Sadiq Khan in funding up to date research on 20mph zones.

Cllr Loakes responded and stated that the Conservative members should use their

influence on the Secretary of State to secure the funding in research due to the national significance.

Councillor Goldie to Councillor Loakes, Deputy Leader and Climate and Air Quality Portfolio Holder:

Would an FOI request provide a list of works done on altering or removing speed bumps as the written response stating no records are kept seems incorrect?
Cllr Loakes reiterated his written response and welcomed the FOI request.

**39. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
2022-23**

It was moved by Councillor Phipps and seconded by Councillor Malik that the Council note the annual report of the Audit & Governance Committee during the 2022-23 municipal year.

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

40. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEES 2022-23

It was moved by Councillor Pye and seconded by Councillor Rasool that the Council note the Scrutiny Annual Report 2022-23, and endorse the proposed 2023-24 scrutiny workplans.

There was debate in which Councillor Moss spoke, following which Councillor Pye exercised her right to reply.

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

41. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY MID-YEAR REVIEW 2023-24

Council agreed the treasury management activities from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023 as detailed in the 2023-24 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report.

It was moved by Councillor Douglas and seconded by Councillor Phipps that the Council agree the treasury management activities from 1 April 2023 to 30 September 2023 as detailed in the 2023-24 Treasury Management Mid-Year Report.

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

42. APPOINTMENTS

Outside Bodies:

Walthamstow Almshouses Charity

Shenice Adams be appointed for a 4 year term.

The Council rose at 9.25 pm having completed its business.