

CROYDON COUNCIL

MINUTES

FIRST EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

HELD ON

**Monday, 24th February 2014 at 8.25pm in the
Council Chamber, Town Hall.**

THE MAYOR, COUNCILLOR YVETTE HOPLEY - PRESIDING.

Councillors Arram, Avis, Ayres, Bains, Bashford, Bass, Bee, Bonner, Butler, Buttinger, Chatterjee, Chowdhury, Clouder, Collins, Cromie, Cummings, Fisher, Fitze, Fitzsimons, Flemming, Gatland, George-Hilley, Godfrey, Gray, Hale, Hall, Harris, Hay-Justice, Hoar, Hollands, Jewitt, Kabir, Kellett, B Khan, S Khan, Lawlor, Lenton, Letts, Mansell, Marshall, D Mead, M Mead, Mohan, Neal, Newman, O'Connell, Osland, Parker, Pearson, Perry, H Pollard, T Pollard, Quadir, Rajendran, G Ryan, P Ryan, Selva, Scott, Shahul-Hameed, Slipper, Smith, Speakman, Thomas, Watson, Wentworth, Winborn, Woodley and Wright.

Absent: Councillor Kyeremeh

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Matthew Kyeremeh

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (agenda item 2)

All Members of the Council confirmed that their interests as listed in their Annual Declaration of Interests Forms were accurate and up-to-date.

3. MATTER FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE COUNCIL (agenda item 3)

The Extraordinary Council Meeting had been requisitioned to debate a motion proposed by Councillor Sara Bashford and seconded by Councillor Tim Pollard, who reserved his right to speak.

The wording of the requisition was as follows:

“This Council welcomes the freezing of Council Tax this year and the £25.00 rebate to Council Tax payers, which was only possible because of the sound stewardship of Council resources by the Conservative administration. This is in stark contrast to the record of the previous Labour Council that more than doubled Council Tax when it was in power.”

Councillor Bashford opened the debate saying that 8 years of prudent financial management have ensured that Council tax payers have received value for money and excellent services. She spoke about previous labour tax increases at a time of plenty, how would they manage now at the time of cuts in funding? She went on to speak about Labour’s proposal for a 20mph borough wide zone, how would they pay for it and administer it, more police and enforcement officers, how would they pay for it, the answer – increase taxes. She compared Labour’s reserves with the Administrations. By putting money into reserve this administration are able to help residents in times of trouble like the recent floods. She suggested that labour needed to read the budget, there was no cut in the Freedom Pass but in fact a growth of £981K. This Conservative administration is prudent and will look after the Council services and budgets, a labour administration would increase taxes.

Councillor Woodley speaking against the motion listed where Labour would target spending. CCTV will be provided in New Addington and London Road, more enforcement officers to crack down on fly tipping, one hour free parking in district centres to aid local businesses, new safer neighbourhood team in New Addington and fund more police. There will be more investment in jobs for young people.

Councillor Pearson speaking in favour of the motion spoke about said that the current administration will look after the council finances whilst the opposition would tax and spend. He spoke of Labours sale of Crossfield and closure of the Water Palace and the sale of the Council car parks but that the still squandered the reserves, leading to huge increases in council tax. This Conservative administration would keep council tax low whilst maintaining excellent Council services.

Councillor Avis speaking against the motion said that the subject of the motion was

disappointing having just debated it in the Council Tax meeting. She went on to say that the £25 refund was 7pence per day and that those most in need would not get it. Should we not be debating child poverty or low immunisation or the lack of development on Cherry Orchard estate, or disabled people and the reduction in adult services budgets? A Labour administration will disinvest in tobacco, stop the rise in betting shops, fast food shops that damage young people's health and support the credit union to stop pay day loans.

Councillor Godfrey speaking against the motion said that last Council Tax was raised by 1.85% this may have brought money into the council but lost a government grant of over £1million. For the last 5 years the Labour party have voted for a council tax freeze, the Tories have voted for an increase. The Tory claim that Labour increased Council Tax by 108% yet the Tories have never reduced the Council Tax. He went on to speak about cuts to culture funding, closures of the Warehouse theatre, David Lean cinema and the mobile library, sold Riesco, and cancelled the redevelopment of Fairfield Halls. In summing up he said that Labour would work hard to keep Council Tax down and make the council work harder and deliver more cost effectively for the residents of the town.

Councillor Pollard in seconding the motion spoke of Labour promise for "One Croydon", as long as you were in the north of the borough or New Addington. Labour did not freeze Council Tax when they were in power they put it up. He went on to say that listening to the Labour pledges it would cost in the region of £100m but they have not said where the money would come from. They nearly bankrupted the council by running finance into to ground with reserves at an all time low. In 2005 they closed Care Homes and workshops for the disabled, selling the car park, parking charges increased and so did permit charges. If the costs of BWH are so high why have residents not seen it in their Council Tax? Whilst the Labour group may not be increasing Council Tax this time they will do after that.

The motion was put to the vote and was **carried**.

4. TERMINATION OF MEETING

The meeting ended at 20:52.