

# DRAFT MINUTES

## MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON

**Monday 26 June 2017 at 6:30pm in The Council Chamber, The Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**

Present: Councillor H Ali, Councillor J Audsley, Councillor J Avis, Councillor J Bains, Councillor S Bashford, Councillor K Bee, Councillor M Bird, Councillor C Bonner, Councillor S Brew, Councillor A Butler, Councillor J Buttinger, Councillor R Canning, Councillor R Chatterjee, Councillor S Chowdhury, Councillor P Clouder, Councillor S Collins, Councillor M Creatura, Councillor J Cummings, Councillor M Fisher, Councillor S Fitzsimons, Councillor A Flemming, Councillor M Gatland, Councillor T Godfrey, Councillor L Hale, Councillor S Hall, Councillor P Hay-Justice, Councillor M Henson, Councillor Y Hopley, Councillor K Jewitt, Councillor H Kabir, Councillor B Khan, Councillor S Khan, Councillor S King, Councillor M Kyeremeh, Councillor T Letts, Councillor O Lewis, Councillor S Mann, Councillor M Mansell, Councillor D Mead, Councillor M Mead, Councillor V Mohan, Councillor M Neal, Councillor T Newman, Councillor S O'Connell, Councillor A Pelling, Councillor J Perry, Councillor H Pollard, Councillor T Pollard, Councillor J Prince, Councillor B Quadir, Councillor A Rendle, Councillor P Ryan, Councillor P Scott, Councillor M Selva, Councillor M Shahul-Hameed, Councillor D Speakman, Councillor A Stranack, Councillor P Thomas, Councillor J Thompson, Councillor W Trakas-Lawlor, Councillor M Watson, Councillor J Wentworth, Councillor S Winborn, Councillor D Wood, Councillor L Woodley, Councillor C Wright, Councillor C Young

## MINUTES - PART A

### **A1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hollands, Clancy and Bennett.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillors Avis, Flemming, Hay-Justice, Shafi Khan and Margaret Mead.

### **A2 Minutes**

The minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on Monday 22 May 2017 were approved as a correct record of that meeting.

**A3 Disclosure of Interest**

No disclosures were made.

**A4 Urgent Business (if any)**

There was no urgent business to consider.

**A5 Announcements**

The Mayor began the meeting by calling for a minute's silence for all the victims of recent tragic events that had taken place and included the terrorist attacks in Manchester, London Bridge and Finsbury Park mosque and the Grenfell Tower fire disaster.

The Mayor, as Returning Officer, announced the results of the June parliamentary elections for the three Croydon constituencies. The successful candidates were:

- Steve Reed OBE for Croydon North
- Sarah Jones for Croydon Central
- Chris Philp for Croydon South

Finally, the Mayor announced a number of fundraising events that were due in the forthcoming months and included a Pirates of Penzance performance in Wandle Park in July and an afternoon tea event in Bernard Weatherill House in August.

The Leader was invited to make any announcements, and the Leader started by thanking all the Croydon staff who offered their support to the Grenfell Tower recovery work for the victims. The Leader then handed the floor to Councillor Butler.

Councillor Butler stated that the Council recognised the concerns tenants and leaseholders in the borough had. It was announced that all tenants had been written to and assured that the Council was undertaking safety tests. A number of actions had taken place since the Grenfell disaster, such as double checking of all fire safety processes. Weekly fire checks would continue to take place and there would be a review of all materials used for cladding on Council tower blocks. It had been announced at Cabinet that the Council had committed to installing sprinklers in the 25 tower blocks that were owned by the borough. Councillor Butler called for central government to provide funding to local councils to invest in further safety measures. Residents were assured that the Council was doing all it could to keep Croydon's residents safe.

**Croydon Question Time**

The Mayor opened the item by informing the Chamber that the Monitoring Officer had ruled out two pre-submitted questions by members of the public due to the questions pertaining to the Local Plan which was a live planning matter.

The item began with questions from members of the public.

Peter Collier stated that Councillor Butler's announcement had answered his question and therefore no further response was required.

Mark Samuels asked how many parking permits had been issued to Members. The Leader responded that the exact number would be provided by officers holding the relevant data.

Jen Pennie asked what steps were being taken to ensure the Council's "name and shame" policy on convicted fly tippers was compliant with human right legislation. Councillor Collins responded that only convicted fly tippers in the borough were named on the Council website, and the full address was not published. Over 150 people had been prosecuted for fly-tipping in Croydon and no issues on the name and shame policy had arisen.

Jen Pennie asked a supplementary question related to her own situation in which she had been named on the website but was currently appealing the prosecution. Councillor Collins responded that he would follow up the case. The legal advice received for the policy was that once the information was in the public domain, namely at the court hearing, there were no legal implications for re-publishing the details on the website. Councillor Collins stated that the policy would be reviewed in consideration of cases going to appeal.

Gunther Preisnner asked why there were no open public toilets in all Croydon parks. Councillor Godfrey responded that the main reason was financial but that the priority was to ensure the contractor opened those already existing to the agreed scheduled times. Conversations were also taking place with community groups over the management of disused toilets in parks.

Judith Cooper asked a question related to a number of incidents of anti-social behaviour around the Croydon Minster area. Councillor Ali responded that the Council were aware of the issue and a number of steps were being taken. The area had been designated a controlled drinking zones which enabled confiscation of alcoholic drinks consumed in the area. Third sector groups were also being engaged with to assist with issues of rough sleeping and substance misuse in the area. The issue was also on the agenda of the forthcoming Safer Streets board meeting. Members of the public who witnessed anti-social behaviour in the area were encouraged to call the non-emergency police line to report such incidents.

The Mayor then moved to Councillor questions to the Leader.

The Leader announced his displeasure at the recently publicised coalition agreement between the Conservative Party and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) in which £1billion had been allocated to Northern Ireland. It was estimated, calculated on per-head population, that Croydon had missed out on £200million due to this deal.

- Councillor Tim Pollard asked how many of the Local Plan sessions the Leader and Cabinet Members had attended. The Leader responded that he had not attended the sessions as the submitted plan was that of the Council, which had been through the correct processes and the administration would wait for the Inspectorate to conclude its findings and provide feedback on the submission.
- Councillor Tim Pollard asked a supplementary question alleging that it was disrespectful to local residents' associations that the Leader had not attended. The Leader responded that there had been numerous debates in the Town Hall on the Local Plan, and significant resident involvement in the process, and the Leader claimed that the question appeared to show a misunderstanding of the process. The Leader claimed that the opposition were attempting to whip up fear over the Local Plan.
- Councillor Rendle asked whether the opposition party had made further representations for a directly elected mayor model for Croydon. The Leader responded that despite many received the previous year, there had not been such representations made since the general election result.
- Councillor Fisher asked whether the Labour party had been required to complete a risk assessment and pay a deposit for the recent election rally held in Park Hill, as other organisations had been asked to do for events held in the borough's parks. The Leader responded that Members of the opposition had already been written to in detail regarding the question raised and stated that the rally in Park Hill had been organised by the national party.
- Councillor Fisher asked a supplementary question as to whether the organisations made to pay a fee for holding events in the borough's parks should be refunded if it transpired that the Labour party had not been made to meet

such requirements. The Leader responded that he would ensure that the Councillor would be written to with full details of the charges made for the Park Hill rally.

- Councillor Audsley asked that, given recent central government announcements that austerity was over, had any communication be made to the Council regarding investment in local services. The Leader responded that no such communication had been forthcoming from central government and confirmation was yet to be given for the £10million required for the installation of sprinklers in the borough's tower blocks. The Leader also stated that Croydon had been underfunded by central government for seven years, yet £1billion had been found for the deal with the DUP.
- Councillor O'Connell asked why the scrutiny review of the night time economy had still not been published despite the report being available on social media platforms. The Leader responded that it was not the executive's role to comment on scrutiny matters, but that the snap general election had effected the ability to publish the report and the Leader's understanding was that the Sub-Committee would need to meet again to approve the report before formal publication.
- Councillor O'Connell asked a supplementary question on the Leader's opinion on the recommendations from that report. The Leader responded that no one could question the diversity and growth of Croydon's night time economy in recent years, with particular reference to Box Park and the recent concert held there of Croydon superstar Stormzy.
- Councillor Stranack asked whether the fly-tipping "name and shame" page of the Council website would be taken down whilst the issues raised by members of the public were investigated. Councillor Collins responded that the member of public in question had been talked to and her name had been removed whilst the appeal process took place. The process would be looked at to ensure it catered for cases which went to appeal.
- Councillor Stranack asked a supplementary question stating that 20% of the names on the page were resident of New Addington, and whether this area was being specifically targeted. Councillor Collins responded that officers targeted hotspots, which created the likelihood of more prosecutions in such areas. There was no excuse for fly-tipping and the Council was determined to prosecute those who committed such acts.

The Mayor then moved the item to Councillor questions to the first pool of Cabinet Member.

Councillor Godfrey announced that the Croydon parks masterplan had been going well but had incurred a delay due to the snap general election. The Small Community Grants had now been assessed and final checks were being undertaken by officers.

Councillor Flemming announced that the Croydon Ofsted inspections had commenced the week before the meeting and a positive outcome was hoped for. The July Youth Congress was also highlighted and all Members were invited to attend the event, the agenda for which had been led by young people. Finally, Councillor Flemming announced that the funding for the Youth Zone project had been secured and delivery of the scheme was hoped to be completed by the end of 2018. Particular thanks were paid to an anonymous individual who had donated £1million towards the project.

Councillor Woodley announced that there had been a very successful Carers' great which had seen a high participation rate. The "Time To Be Me" project was highlighted as an example of excellent work undertaken for young adult carers with very positive feedback from participants. Finally, it was announced that the number of families housed in emergency bed and breakfast accommodation had been successfully reduced to only eight families.

- Councillor Helen Pollard asked why there had been so many consultations on Croydon park plans, and when work would actually take place. Councillor Godfrey stated that the Croydon Talks Parks report, borough-wide in scope, should not be confused with the separate consultation on how Section 106 funding could be utilised for individual parks. It was hoped that a template could be formulated out of the latter process that could be applied to individual parks across the borough. This would help access as many funding streams as possible for development works in parks.
- Councillor Helen Pollard asked a supplementary question pertaining to how much money had been spent on the many consultations undertaken. Councillor Godfrey responded that the process was for the purpose of leveraging as much money as possible for park development works. It was stated that funding for parks was cut under the previous administration but not by the current administration. Money had to be sourced from elsewhere until central government halted

austerity and provided funding to the Council.

- Councillor Clouder welcomed the progress made on the Fairfield Hall development and asked that, given the recent tragic events at Grenfell Tower, the materials used for the development works were fully compliant with fire regulations. Councillor Clouder additionally asked what fire safety arrangements were being factored into the development to properly cater for disabled users. Councillor Godfrey stated that all the fire regulations requirements had been dealt with at the planning stage of the development. However, additional checks would be made to provide reassurance.
- Councillor Hopley asked a question on the proposed changes to the Health and Wellbeing Board and the removal of voting rights to voluntary sector representatives. Councillor Woodley responded that constitutional changes did not fall under her portfolio. The Leader responded that the Board had incurred significantly more spending responsibilities in recent years and as such the governance needed to reflect those changes. The voting arrangements reflected the proportionality system that was used with all other committees.
- Councillor Henson asked a question pertaining to the public opening of Ashburton Library due for 22nd July 2017. Councillor Godfrey responded that the opening of the library was a hallmark of the administration delivering on projects and the work undertaken would create an excellent building safeguarded for one hundred years. Engagement and involvement of residents was key to the project's success.
- Councillor Henson asked a supplementary question pertaining to the Ashburton Park masterplan. Councillor Godfrey responded that the previous administration had set park against park in the borough whereas the masterplan reflected the current administration's support for all parks in Croydon. There was a long term investment need for the borough's parks, and Councillor Godfrey stated that it had been a privilege to deliver the Ashburton masterplan.
- Councillor Rendle asked whether the Cabinet would thank the management and staff at Croydon University Hospital for their recent changes to their facilities to create an autism-friendly environment. Councillor Woodley responded that she joined the Councillor in thanking and commending the work done at the hospital and additionally highlighted the work undertaken by Councillor Rendle in ensuring the changes took place.

- Councillor Wright asked for assurance that those parks outside of the scope of the masterplan would not be neglected. Councillor Godfrey responded that the Council's work on parks was based around the principle that all the borough's parks matter. An example was the previously mentioned work on securing s106 funding that was being designed as a template format for other parks to utilise.
- Councillor Wright asked a supplementary question regarding what resources would be made available to a resident-led project at Grange Park to provide further facilities at that park. Councillor Godfrey responded that while staff resources were spread thinly across the borough's many parks, there was a commitment to support all grassroots community work undertaken at parks.
- Councillor Canning asked what action was being done to address the long waiting lists for organ transplants in the UK. Councillor Woodley responded that Croydon Health Services were undertaking a number of projects, and the Councillor would welcome any schemes that the Council could support.
- Councillor Canning asked a supplementary question regarding Enfield Council's recent allocation of its website to an organ donation campaign. Councillor Woodley responded that discussions would be had with the Director of Public Health and the Croydon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to see if similar work could be undertaken at Croydon, and seek out other examples of best practice on this issue.
- Councillor Bird asked what the total cost was for repairs to damage at Park Hill caused by the Labour election rally held there. Councillor Godfrey stated that he would speak to officers as the information was not available at the meeting but that if there was any wear and tear caused by the rally it would be fixed.
- Councillor Bird asked a supplementary question as to whether it was good use of public money to hold an election labour rally during the pre-election period. Councillor Godfrey responded that every political party was entitled to hire public spaces for election rallies and that the Conservatives could have done the same.
- Councillor Wood asked what plans BH Live had at the new Fairfield Halls that ensured that diverse local artists would be

supported. Councillor Godfrey responded that BH Live were committed to supporting community groups and some of the revenue from the venue would be reinvested into supporting community groups and artistic programmes. The combination of no direct public subsidy to the venue and the social aspect of the not-for-profit enterprise was a real asset to the community.

- Councillor Quadir asked what would be the fate of local parks that did not have friends groups supporting them through fundraising. Councillor Godfrey responded that such parks would still be supported but encouraged Ward Councillors to support efforts to set up friends groups at parks where they did not exist. Where residents showed active care for their parks, the Council should do all it could to get them organised.

The Mayor then moved to Councillor questions to the second pool of Cabinet Members.

Councillor Watson announced that there had been a successful launch event for the newly upgraded Surrey Street market which had been delivered on time and to budget.

- Councillor Helen Pollard asked why the Council was pressing ahead with a footpath at Heathfield Gardens in South End despite serious concerns raised by residents. Councillor Butler responded that she would look into the matter further and discuss the issue with residents.
- Councillor Helen Pollard asked a supplementary question regarding whether the local Safer Neighbourhood Team would also be consulted regarding the proposed footpath. Councillor Butler responded that she would ensure the team would be included in the discussions.
- Councillor Chowdhury asked how many times Conservative Members had opposed Brick by Brick housing development schemes. Councillor Butler responded that a number of Brick by Brick sites had been opposed by the Conservative group however hope was expressed that this would be overcome in the future with new developments forthcoming.
- Councillor Chowdhury asked a supplementary question regarding opposition behaviour at Planning Committee meetings. Councillor Butler responded that Planning was on

the most emotive issues the Council dealt with, particularly so for residents who lived near proposed development sites. However, through the planning process residents were listened to and at Planning Committee Members had to consider each application under planning terms.

- Councillor O'Connell asked what the Council had been doing in response to the doubling of the rate of violent crime in the borough over the past 12 months. Councillor Ali responded that the issue was a London-wide trend and not isolated to Croydon. A significant amount of joint work was being undertaken between the police and the Council, which included enforcement activities, seizing of weapons and the training of front-line staff to undertake weapon sweeps. The Youth Offending Service and Trading Standards teams had also been undertaking work to deal directly with the issue of weapon-related crimes. Finally, the Council's Community Safety Strategy had recently been adopted by Cabinet.
- Councillor O'Connell asked a supplementary question pertaining to whether the Cabinet Member would consider her position if the incidents in Croydon did not begin to decrease. Councillor Ali responded that Councillor O'Connell had not been held personally responsible for the rise in knife crime when he was in the Cabinet post, and it was offensive to make such an accusation. The considerable amount of work being undertaken had already been spelled out, however reference as made to the thousands of police officers that had been removed from the capital's streets due to the central government austerity measures. These cuts were negatively affecting the ability to address the challenges being faced.
- Councillor Rendle asked whether the cladding used on terraced housing in the Ashburton Ward would be inspected by the Council. Councillor Butler responded that this would be checked and the issue had been raised very soon after the Grenfell Tower incident.
- Councillor Rendle asked a supplementary question regarding whether central government should be providing funding for local authorities to address the additional fire safety measures being implemented. Councillor Butler responded by commending the inspections undertaken by Council officers so soon after the Grenfell disaster happened. It was further stated that the government needed to help resource the efforts, and the borrowing cap on Housing Revenue Account (HRA) needed to be addressed.

- Councillor Creatura asked what was being done to address the outlook of many young people that carrying knives was a form of self-protection, when in fact the opposite was the case. Councillor Ali responded that the message was being brought to young people in a number of ways including working directly with parents and with primary and secondary schools. There was also the Youth Congress taking place in Croydon in which the agenda would be shaped by young people and provided further opportunities to get the message out. It was further stated that partnership work was critical to ensure the issue was addressed effectively.
- Councillor Creatura asked a supplementary question regarding male suicide and what the Council were doing to address this significant issue affecting young men. Councillor Ali responded that detailed information would be provided to the Councillor on what the Council was doing on this issue.
- Councillor Chowdhury asked what the Council was doing to address residents' anxiety after the recent terrorist events in the capital and Manchester, alongside the recent Grenfell Tower fire. Councillor Ali responded that two major documents had been published recently that addressed what would be undertaken in Croydon and London generally; these were the Croydon Community Safety Strategy and the Mayor of London's Police and Crime Plan for London. After the Finsbury Park Mosque attack Council officers had been working with Croydon's mosques to address concerns and funding had also been allocated to support places of worship throughout the borough.
- Councillor Stranack asked a question pertaining to the loss in the Council of the post for a Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) project worker, despite school holidays identified as the highest risk period in the year for FGM crimes being committed. Councillor Ali responded that the budget for FGM work had been extended with financial investment maintained for the voluntary sector organisation leading on the work.
- Councillor Stranack asked a supplementary question pertaining to the cutting of the FGM project worker role and the risks associated with the upcoming summer holiday period. Councillor Ali responded that the Council had funded significant work in this area which included training 1500 front-line workers on how to identify and address cases of FGM. Furthermore, policies and risk assessments were in place across the borough to combat FGM and Croydon's teachers were better equipped with how to identify potential cases in their schools. It was stated that the emphasis should be on

prosecuting those responsible for the crime.

- Councillor Clouder asked what was being done to promote the employment of young people in Croydon. Councillor Watson responded that the job brokerage scheme was providing many of the borough's young people with work experience opportunities and ensuring that all residents benefitted from the significant investment and growth that Croydon was experiencing.
- Councillor Mohan asked what the Council was doing to support religious celebrations of Eid taking place in Croydon. Councillor Ali responded that the Council supported community organisations to run their own events and celebrations. The Council focussed on running inter-community events such as the Interfaith Bike Ride that promoted intercultural communication whilst supporting individual faith events.

The Mayor moved the meeting to the third pool of Cabinet Members.

Councillor King announced that earlier that day the Council had hosted an Air Quality Summit and Croydon had put its name to a robust London-wide air quality consultation.

- Councillor Bashford asked a question pertaining to the speed enforcement measures undertaken for 20mph roads in zones one and two of the borough. Councillor King responded that fines for speeding were issued by the police and thus they could provide the Councillor with the relevant data. Monitoring of speed levels would continue and initial data was expected to be available by March 2018 when the scheme would be fully rolled out in zones three, four and five.
- Councillor Bashford asked a supplementary question regarding what further measures would be taken to encourage compliance with the new limits. Councillor King responded that numerous measures had been taken, in partnership with the police, which included speed tables, additional signage, and the deployment of automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) visors. The work being undertaken proved that 20mph was indeed enforceable, despite some people suggesting it was not.
- Councillor Canning asked what the Council did to measure

performance of the services it provided, particularly from the resident experience side. Councillor Hall replied that the Council monitored performance as well as resident panels and feedback from these different avenues was welcomed. There were also contractual measures that could be used for sub—contractors when their service provision dropped below agreed levels of standards.

- Councillor Cummings asked a question in relation to the forward selling proposed as part of the decision on affordable housing made at the previous Cabinet meeting. Councillor Hall responded that if inflation were greater it would improve the viability of the scheme, however forward selling was a small part of the overall scope of the limited liability partnership proposed. The ultimate purpose of the scheme was to allow for hundreds of affordable homes in the borough whilst also improving the Council's general fund.
- Councillor Cummings asked a supplementary question around who would pick up the cost if forward selling the income failed. Councillor Hall responded that all investment decisions carried a degree of risk and the scheme was constructed to mitigate associated risks as much as possible.
- Councillor Audsley asked what local action was being taken on air quality improvement. Councillor King responded that the current consultation would run until 31 August 2017. Residents were encouraged to take part in the process and to look at the published draft plan. There were a number of initiatives that would take place and in particular tackling the issue of idle vehicles, which brought with it difficult enforcement issues. The key was therefore to promote cultural change to tackle the issue long term and encourage drivers to switch off the engine when stationary.
- Councillor Audsley asked a supplementary question regarding the key demands the Cabinet Member had for central government on the issue of air quality. Councillor King stated that one national initiative needed was a diesel scrappage scheme. New legislation was also needed to provide local authorities with more powers to take the action needed on a local level. It was stated that the issue of air quality had become a public health crisis.
- Councillor Brew asked why the 20mph zones had omitted A and B roads, despite the majority of traffic accidents taking place on such carriageways. Councillor King responded that at the outset of the process it was identified that residential roads

would be the focus. Other interventions were taking place on A and B roads such as enhanced pedestrian crossings. It was also stated that a third of traffic accidents occur on residential roads and therefore it was important to tackle the issue beyond main carriageways.

- Councillor Brew asked a supplementary question pertaining to the need to focus on main roads as these incurred the highest number of accidents. Councillor King responded that all roads needed to be considered as accidents did not occur only on main roads. Councillor King also criticised Members of the Opposition for opposing 20mph limits on roads with a number of schools on them.
- Councillor Mann asked how the Council would respond to the cuts to night-time train routes servicing East Croydon proposed in the Gibb report. Councillor King responded that there was concern over the proposed loss of the service and the duplicitous timing of the publication of the report during the height of the general election. Through lobbying by the Council a rail replacement service had been secured from Clapham Junction which would service the affected line. The Council were also informed the closure of the line would only be temporary and was not a permanent measure.
- Councillor Mann asked a supplementary question around what opportunities the Mayor of London's Transport strategy offered for Croydon, in particular around replacement work for the borough's bridges. Councillor King responded that the Council were aware of the need to address the issue of bridge works in Croydon and measures had been taken place to deal with the worst affected bridges such as implementing one-way systems. One bridge had been closed due to a severe risk of collapse. Work was due to commence on two bridges in the borough at the very latest by January 2019 and monthly updates would continue to be provided for Ward Councillors on progress.
- Councillor Bains asked how much borrowing the Council had undertaken in the past year. Councillor Hall responded that a finance paper was due to go to Cabinet in July and a report had also gone to the General Purposes and Audit Committee that provided further details.
- Councillor Bains asked a supplementary question as to whether the borrowing figure was £1.4billion. Councillor Hall responded that detailed information would be provided at the July Cabinet meeting. It was further stated that the current

administration would borrow to deliver new homes and schools to make a difference to residents, as opposed to the previous administration's borrowing to fund the new Council offices.

- Councillor Lewis asked for information on plans for youth engagement as part of the Green and Clean Croydon campaign. Councillor Collins responded that a good education programme had been established and was being shaped to fit the school curriculum. One example of engagement with schools were the plans for an inter-school poster competition to promote recycling; the winning poster would feature on the new "Big Belly" bins located across the borough.
- Councillor Lewis asked a supplementary question pertaining to when the new cleaning equipment would be rolled out. Councillor Collins responded that the deployment would be taking place very soon and a promotion campaign would be launched alongside the roll out to engage with the community across Croydon. An example of the engagement proposed was a naming competition for the new vacuum cleaners, which combined promotion of the new equipment alongside having fun with the community as well.
- Councillor Neal asked whether the Cabinet Member believed the consultation process for 20mph limits in zones three, four and five were fair, despite many residents in the south of the borough believing it was not. Councillor King responded that the reasons for the different consultation method in zones three, four and five had been discussed openly at the December 2016 Cabinet meeting and the key reasons were to make it a simpler and easier process. Opposition Members present at that Cabinet meeting had not raised any objections to the proposed new process.

## **A7 Member Petitions**

The Mayor invited Councillor Shafi Khan to read out the title of the submitted Member petition which read:

"We the undersigned residents call upon the Council to allow Towndate Property Management (a residents' company comprising 12 households, responsible for the maintenance of the common parts of 16-18 Arnull's Road, SW16 3EP) to purchase the piece of land owned by the Council which reaches 5 metres inside the entrance to the private close. The houses in the close have no front

gardens, and recently have been shown to be vulnerable to youths on mopeds, who have both committed and attempted theft, and have attacked a resident. At present it is not possible to attach gates to the brick pillars at the entrance to the close, because the land residents own starts 5m further into the close."

Councillor Hall responded that officers had researched the matter and had found that the land in question was not owned by the Council. Officers would work with the management company to clarify the ownership of the land and confirm the process for acquiring the land.

The Mayor invited Councillor Mohan to read out the title of the submitted Member petition which read:

"We the undersigned, residents of Fellmongers Yard in Croydon, have very serious concerns around fly tipping, security and general cleanliness on our street. We therefore request Croydon council consider taking the following steps to help mitigate these concerns and issues:

1. Install a security gate at the entrance of Fellmongers Yard, with access restricted to residents and emergency services only. Certain market traders on Surrey Streets will require day time access, and this can also be provided.
2. Ensure that the Council's plans for Sunday and night time trading on Surrey Street does not restrict access to those delivering goods, parcels and services to residents of Fellmongers Yard.
3. Install public toilets on Surrey Streets, to prevent the pavements on Fellmongers Yard from being used as a public toilet, as is currently done."

Councillor Watson responded that the gate was part of the public highway and thus if it was stopped up the responsibility for the road would fall to the land owner and adjoining properties. A Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) had been considered by officers however the required level of evidence, coupled with the proportionality test, were unlikely to be met in this case. Regular patrols were taking place in the area and CCTV had been added, which had helped secure prosecutions of fly-tippers.

There had been six months of Sunday trading and no issues had been raised of it affecting deliveries to residents in the area.

Residents had been informed of processes in place to ensure the smooth running of the area during Sunday trading.

There were numerous amenities with toilet facilities available on Surrey Street, including at the nearby Centrale shopping centre.

There were also 24 hour toilet facilities in the vicinity at Queens Gardens. In addition, enforcement officers had been deployed at Surrey Street to discourage public urination at night-time.

The Mayor invited Councillor Prince to read out the title of the submitted Member petition which read:

"We, the petitioners below, call upon Croydon council to alter controlled parking hours so as to improve local residents' access to parking spaces in Bourne Street and Lower Church Street."

Councillor King responded that it was recognised that there was a high demand for parking in the area due to the number of permit holders and limited number of bays on the roads. There was little scope for the introduction of additional bays however residents had access to the Jubilee Bridge car park where permits could be purchased. Officers would write to residents in the area to inform of the alternative arrangements at the Jubilee Bridge car park.

## **A8 Annual Reports**

The Mayor invited the Chairs of Scrutiny to introduce the Scrutiny Annual Report.

Councillor Fitzsimons began by thanking all the Members, officers and residents who had taken an active role in scrutiny meetings throughout the year.

There had been 38 meetings in total which had included a number of question time sessions with Cabinet Members, and two call-ins. A wide range of issues had also been considered, from rail station accessibility to landlord licensing, with numerous recommendations generated through the scrutiny process. It was also announced that a review of the civil contingency plan would be added to the work programme for the forthcoming municipal year, to ensure it was fit for purpose, particularly after the events at Grenfell Tower.

Councillor Buttinger noted that the scope of the Children and Young People Sub-Committee was wide however a number of key issues were considered which included unaccompanied asylum seeking children, reviewing the work of the safeguarding and looked after children. Members were encouraged to hear of the improvement in the borough's Key Stage 1 attainment results and the significant number of schools rated Outstanding.

Councillor Bonner thanked Members and officers for facilitating what had been a significantly heavy work load for the Sub-Committee. A particular focus of the year had been commissioning for over 65s and the Sub-Committee had written to the Secretary of State regarding the CCG's cutting of free IVF treatment for residents in Croydon.

The Mayor then invited questions from Members on the report.

- Councillor Pelling asked for comment on the IVF decision made by the CCG, which it was believed had been take at an

inquorate meeting. Councillor Fitzsimons responded by expressing his displeasure at the CCG decision. Whilst Croydon had been underfunded from central government everyone agrees, it was the only borough where couples could not receive funded IVF and the Chair of the Sub-Committee would ensure that the CCG were held to account.

- Councillor Audsley asked whether Member visits to the CCG would be beneficial. Councillor Fitzsimons responded that scrutiny Members had undertaken visits as part of exploring issues. The main concern with the CCG from Members had been the restructure in the organisation which, it was claimed, had produced no tangible benefit to the people of Croydon. A Member visit to the CCG was welcomed as a useful suggestion for the forthcoming municipal year.
- Councillor Clouder asked what steps had been taken to engage young people in the scrutiny process. Councillor Fitzsimons responded that youth involvement in scrutiny was vitally important. Previous engagement activities included the young people “takeover” of the Sub-Committee, and it was welcomed that there had been a significant increase in young people voting in the recent election.
- Councillor Creatura asked what the process had been for the Sub-Committee agreeing to send the letter to the Secretary of State related to the CCG decision on IVF treatment. Councillor Bonner responded that officers present at the meeting had advised on the process for making the decision. The Sub-Committee had subsequently been advised that the advice was incorrect and action was taken to ensure the decision was made correctly.
- Councillor Rendle asked what one measure could be implemented to make scrutiny more effective. Councillor Fitzsimons responded that the biggest issue of recent years had been the Council’s interpretation of what a key decision is. The current interpretation being applied appeared to only relate to expenditure of over £1million but this was believed to be a misrepresentation of the law. An example proffered was the selling of the Riesco collection which, in the opinion of Councillor Fitzsimons, affected more than one ward and thus should have been considered a key decision. Councillor Fitzsimons welcomed the appointment of a new Monitoring Officer at Croydon and hoped that a broader definition would be applied to future key decisions.

The Mayor thanked the Chairs of Scrutiny for the report and their hard work taken throughout the municipal year. The Mayor then

moved to the General Purposes and Audit Committee (GPAC) annual report and invited the Chair of that Committee to introduce the report.

Councillor Jewitt: Thanked all the GPAC Members for their diligent work undertaken throughout the municipal year. The Grant Thornton audit report was highlighted as a key piece of work by the Committee and welcomed that the outcome of that report concluded that Croydon was a Council of good practice.

- Councillor Audsley asked what had been identified as the biggest risk the Council faced by the Committee. Councillor Jewitt responded that the key risk was the lack of central government funding and Westminster should invest to save money in the long term.
- Councillor Bashford asked for clarity at paragraph 17 of the report regarding the number of managers that had attended workshops. Councillor Jewitt responded that officers would advise what the exact figure was.
- Councillor Chatterjee asked why the implementation of recommendations had been significantly lower than in previous years. Councillor Jewitt responded that the figures in the report were the most up-to-date available, but would not be fully complete until the end of the 2017 calendar year.
- Councillor Chatterjee asked for further comment on the level of implementations at the time of publication of the report. Councillor Jewitt responded that officers would prepare a detailed written reply regarding the figures. Councillor Hall added that the implementation of recommendations can take a number of years to complete, such as the Stubbs Mead security recommendation which took seven years to fully implement.
- Councillor Bains asked for clarity on the figures regarding the satisfaction rates that had been recorded. Councillor Jewitt responded that officers had explained the figures in detail at the GPAC meeting in which the report was adopted, and there was no intention to hide anything within the statistics.

One motion, with cross party support, was submitted for debate:

“This Council sends its deepest condolences to the families affected by the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower and welcomes the Council's recently announced investment in sprinklers for all our high rise blocks. We further welcome the Council's prompt action to carry out safety checks on all Council-owned cladded blocks. We will continue to work with the fire service and the private sector to reassure all residents, including those in privately-managed blocks, that they are safe in their homes. This Council further calls upon the Government to relax the borrowing restrictions on the HRA, to allow this council & others to fund ongoing investments into both sprinklers and necessary improvements to our housing stock.”

Councillor Newman, proposing the motion, stated that the tragedy at Grenfell that was most likely also a crime; nothing in terms of housing policy and regulations would ever be the same again. Croydon was the first borough to commit to retrofitting all its tower blocks, of ten stories or more, with sprinklers to ensure that no risks to residents' safety were taken.

It was stated that what had happened was a political issue; the local Council had sat on £240million of balances, provided a Council Tax rebate to its residents, but yet had used cheap cladding on the tower that was unsafe and for the sake of a small amount of money saved. The political campaign to scrap regulations, that were in place to save lives, was also to blame. Credit was given to Croydon staff and Councillors who had helped with the rescue efforts at Grenfell. The priority had to be to invest in housing safety, and the Leader confirmed he had written to the Housing Minister to ask for support to allow for borrowing against the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to fund such safety initiatives. Lessons had to be learnt from a disaster that never should have been allowed to happen.

Councillor Tim Pollard seconded the motion and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Dudley Mead stated that he had been involved in housing in Croydon since 1992. Councillor Mead recalled that local authorities had been persuaded to buy out of the Tenant Tax, but that Councils should lobby for its reintroduction. Christmas day of 2017 would be ten years since sixteen flats caught ablaze in Marston Way, Croydon, where lessons were learnt and the tenants had eventually returned after rebuilding work had taken place on the block.

Installation of sprinklers and other safety measures were a small cost compared to the financial impact of large fires such as Marston Way and Grenfell. It was recommended that sprinklers should be installed in all multiple occupancy housing and blocks that were lower than ten stories.

Councillor Lewis stated that lessons had to be learnt to ensure that such a disaster as Grenfell never happened again. Tribute was paid to Croydon Council's leadership in the wake of the disaster – proactive in undertaking fire safety audits, installation of sprinklers and the communication and outreach to residents to provide reassurance.

The fire had raised questions such as why government ministers had ignored concerns raised and why the costs of cladding had been put ahead of the safety of the residents. Councillor Lewis stated that the results of the recent election showed that voters had had enough of austerity and that the cuts had gone too far. The government must therefore allow local authorities to take all the steps necessary to protect their residents, starting with allowing for Councils to borrow against the HRA. Schemes such as Landlord Licensing introduced by the current administration were steps to improve standards in the private sector in Croydon as well as the authority's own stock. Councillor Lewis concluded that the Grenfell tower tragedy should never be forgotten.

Councillor Hale stated that everyone had shared similar emotions surrounding the Grenfell tragedy and that only a full inquiry would answer all the arising questions. Councillor Hale described examples of those people who had been directly affected by the terrible events, many who had lost everything. It was right that local authorities committed to implementing all fire safety measures as soon as possible and ensure that residents living in cladded buildings were returned to their homes as soon as such works were completed. Councillor Hale confirmed that she, along with the Leader of the Opposition, had written to the Secretary of State to request that the borrowing cap on the HRA be relaxed to help fund such safety measures. The focus had to be on the victims of the tragedy and ensuring such an event never happened again.

Councillor Butler stated that after the initial phase of sprinkler installations had been completed, all of the Council's stock would be evaluated. The importance of having a home affected almost all aspects of society, from employment, health and education. The Grenfell Tower fire was a wakeup call to everyone and highlighted a shared responsibility to ensure such a disaster never happened again. Central government had to ensure that its building regulations were fit for purpose and had to invest in council housing to ensure tenant safety. Lessons had to be learnt and the Grenfell Tower disaster should be looked back as the day that housing policy changed forever in this country and safety was put at the top of the agenda.

Staff working for the fire services were thanked for the work they had undertaken, as were the officers of the Council who had done all they could to ensure residents were safe.

Councillor Tim Pollard stated that the early estimates of those killed in the fire were likely to be considerably short of the final total and his thoughts were with those affected, displaced and killed. In the aftermath of this tragedy, steps had to be taken in Croydon. Recommendations following a full inquiry of the disaster should be followed, but in the intervening period Councillor Pollard welcomed the steps that had already been taken including the installation of sprinklers and investigations into the cladding used in the borough. Councillor Pollard confirmed that, alongside Councillor Hale, he had written to the Secretary of State supporting the calls for the lifting of the cap on borrowing on the HRA. No stone should be left unturned to ensure the safety of residents and this should include those residents in the private sector.

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

The Mayor added that she had written to the Mayor of Kensington sending condolences from Croydon.

## **A10 Constitutional Changes**

Councillor Newman, in moving the recommendations contained in the report, stated that there had been cross-party support for the proposed changes and expressed surprise at the change of position from the opposition. The proposed changes to the Health and Wellbeing Board reflected the increased roles and responsibilities that the Board had taken on. It was hoped that the broader role of the Board would ensure that situations such as the CCG's conduct over the cuts to IVF services would not happen again.

Councillor Hall seconded the recommendations and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Tim Pollard, opposing the motion, stated that there was opposition support for most of the proposed changes, but great concern expressed regarding the Health and Wellbeing Board proposals. It was stated that the removal of voting rights for voluntary sector representatives on the Board sent a negative message to those partners. The Majority group would hold full control of the decisions made by the Board, and the voluntary sector were not happy with how they had been treated. Councillor Pollard concluded that if the administration were serious about partnership working then a more serious working relationship with those organisations should be established.

Councillor Creatura stated that the proposals were another nail in the coffin for democracy in Croydon. It was claimed that the door was being closed to the expertise of the voluntary sector. The Board had been an apolitical body to commission key services for vulnerable

residents and, it was claimed, was now being politicised with the Labour party holding the majority vote share. Councillor Creatura concluded by stating that the voluntary sector would be disenfranchised by the changes and that the Labour Councillors would be whipped to vote a certain way.

Councillor Hall stated that the proposed changes included providing voting rights to the pensioner representatives on the Pension Committee. It was stated that the real challenges the voluntary sector faced were the central government cuts to funding and the legislation restricted charities' abilities to campaign.

The proposed changes reflected best practice in other Health and Wellbeing Boards and fitted the new responsibilities it would be taking on. It was proper that a Board responsible for large amounts of spending should follow similar governance principles as other Council Committees. Voluntary sector representatives would still hold speaking rights on the Board and the future of the voluntary sector had been secured under the current administration.

The recommendations were put to the vote and **carried**; Council thus **RESOLVED** to:

1.1 Approve the amendments to the Constitution detailed in sections 3 and 4 of the report and detailed more specifically in Appendices 1-9.

1.2 Subject to the approval of the changes to the Health and Wellbeing Board membership and terms of reference as detailed in the report:

a) Note the Nominations to Health and Wellbeing Board by the Leader pursuant to the Health and Social Care Act 2012 and approve the Councillor appointments to Health and Wellbeing Board as Nominated by the Leader and set out in paragraph 4.11 of the report;

b) Direct, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013 that:

i. the Health and Wellbeing Board not be permitted to establish sub-committees

ii. the Members of Health and Wellbeing Board specified in Paragraph 4.12 and 4.13 of the report shall have the voting rights as indicated therein, and

1.3 For the reasons set out in section 5 of the report, agree the Scheme of Members' Allowances detailed in section 5 of the report and appended in full at Appendix 10.

**A11**

**Camera Resolution**

Not required.

**MINUTES - PART B**

None

The meeting finished at 9.49pm.