

Council

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 27 February 2018 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber - Town Hall

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Toni Letts (Chair);

Councillors Mike Selva, Hamida Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Jeet Bains, Margaret Bird, Carole Bonner, Simon Brew, Alison Butler, Jan Buttinger, Robert Canning, Richard Chatterjee, Sherwan Chowdhury, Luke Clancy, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Mario Creatura, Mike Fisher, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Maria Gatland, Timothy Godfrey, Lynne Hale, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Maddie Henson, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Maggie Mansell, Dudley Mead, Margaret Mead, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Tony Newman, Steve O'Connell, Andrew Pelling, Jason Perry, Helen Pollard, Tim Pollard, Joy Prince, Badsha Quadir, Andrew Rendle, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Donald Speakman, Andy Stranack, Mark Watson, John Wentworth, Sue Winborn, David Wood, Louisa Woodley and Callton Young

Apologies: Councillor Sue Bennett, Phil Thomas, James Thompson, Wayne Trakas-Lawlor and Chris Wright

PART A

11/18 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

12/18 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

13/18 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

14/18 **Announcements**

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Henson on the recent birth of her second child. The Mayor also thanked Councillor Shahul-Hameed and her family and friends who had organised a very successful cultural event that had raised over £2,000 for the Mayor's Charity.

15/18 **Council Tax and Budget**

At the start of the item Councillor Newman proposed, and Councillor Tim Pollard seconded, a motion that the consideration of the item move straight to the debate at section (d) of item six on the agenda.

The motion was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

The Mayor therefore moved to the debate under section (d) of item six.

The Leader, moving the recommendations, thanked officers for working on a strong budget for Croydon. It included the most significant investment in young people in the borough for a decade, such as the announcement at Cabinet of the Youth Zone. The budget included campaigns for fairness and fighting injustice such as the London Living Wage, the white ribbon campaign against domestic violence, the landlord licensing scheme, and the commitment to fit sprinklers into the Council's tower blocks. The administration had intervened to help residents affected by the universal credit reforms and had brought the borough's libraries back into community control.

It was stated that these achievements were made despite the previous administration leaving Croydon with a £100million black hole in the Council's finances, filthy streets and the borough's Riesco collection sold off. It was stated that the new administration had turned this situation around and Croydon should never return to it.

It was further stated that the current administration had taken their share of responsibility for the Ofsted report's findings of children's services in Croydon, and the Leader claimed that the opposition had failed to take their share – such as cutting funding for youth services when they were in power, and abstaining to vote for more funding for vulnerable adults when in opposition.

The Leader stated that Croydon was now London's growth borough which included successes such as large companies moving to Croydon, Crystal Palace Football Club committing to stay in Croydon for the long-term, the Westfield-Hammerson development becoming a reality, and hundreds of new affordable homes being built.

The Leader stated that culture in the borough had grown significantly under the current administration, with the redevelopment of Fairfield Halls being a significant example. The Leader stated he was confident that the proposed

budget would maintain Croydon as London's growth borough, whilst ensuring that all residents in Croydon would have the opportunity to benefit from the growth and securing the long term future of Croydon with stable finances.

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

Councillor Tim Pollard stated that the budget was a testimony to the failure of the administration. It was stated that the Leader attempted to blame the government cuts for everything whilst failing to mention government measures introduced to allow local authorities to source additional income streams. The reason for the government cuts, it was stated, was due to the Labour government's spending and mismanagement of the economy.

Councillor Pollard stated that whilst the administration was calling for more funding it was not demonstrating a commitment to keep debt under control; the finances were out of control, with the Council failing to stick to its budgets such as in the People department. Key projects in the borough had been delayed and thus Council Tax was being raised to cover the missed revenue. It was announced that due to these errors by the administration, the opposition had no choice but to support the proposed rise in Council Tax so as to deal with the mess made of the finances by the administration.

Councillor Tim Pollard stated that the opposition, if elected, would re-introduce a free bulky waste collection. It would deliver on key issues such as affordable housing and bin collections. It was also stated that the opposition would make serious capital investments in the borough's parks, including creating a super-park. It was stated that the administration had failed Croydon.

Councillor Butler stated that the proposed budget would support homelessness prevention as well as delivering on much needed homes through Brick by Brick. This would be coupled with the landlord licensing scheme that was driving up standards in the private sector. The Council would continue to invest in improvements and repairs to its housing stock, including fitting sprinklers in the taller tower blocks. The administration would continue to lobby government on matters such as matched funding, the enforced rent reduction and to lift the cap on borrowing against the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It was also stated that the Council should be allowed to choose how to spend its right to buy receipts.

Councillor Butler welcomed the investment earmarked for regeneration in the borough's district centres and thanked the officers in the housing and gateway departments for the huge difference they had made for the residents of Croydon.

Councillor Hale stated that despite a housing crisis, the administration had not built one council house. It was claimed that Brick by Brick lacked transparency and had taken large sums of Council money and yet had not completed construction of one property as yet. It was further claimed that despite huge sums of money gained through the landlord licensing scheme, only two licences had actually been revoked and that there continued to be appalling

conditions in the private sector. It was stated that despite the administration's pledge on arts and culture, the Fairfield Halls opening had been delayed, the parks department had been severely cut, and Croydon had lost the Mayor of London's borough of culture bid.

Councillor Ali stated that it was scandalous that government had failed to provide adequate funding for children's services, and instead had placed the burden on residents through Council Tax. It was stated that the Mayor of London was doing everything he could to protect the Metropolitan Police from government austerity measures, using the precept and business rates to plug the huge funding gap left by government cuts. In addition the administration had taken steps to boost safety and enforcement in Croydon such as a 50% increase in enforcement officers. A new community fund had been announced, providing £250,000 to work with residents on schemes to support young people in the borough. It was stated that the choices made in the budget were made on the side of residents.

Councillor Mohan stated that the Take Pride in Croydon campaign had failed to deliver. Recycling rates had dropped and it was claimed Croydon had gone from being the best performing borough in this area to one of the worst. It was further claimed that fly tipping had sky-rocketed, and the £5million savings in the new waste contract were, it was claimed, nothing but an accounting trick. It was stated that the additional £1million in landfill charges showed a failure of the Council's recycling policy and yet the budget included the closing down of neighbourhood recycling centres. It was stated that the money spent on 20mph road signage would have been better spent on targeted work in accident hotspots. Finally, it was claimed that the planned closure of Council car parks would result in over half a million pounds a year of lost revenue.

Councillor Lewis stated that the proposed budget was ambitious but responsible. A lot of investment had been targeted at New Addington, a ward that had been overlooked by the previous administration, it was claimed. This investment had included a new leisure centre, a health living hub, and a new Special Educational Needs (SEN) school. There had also been improvements to the central parade, commitment to installing sprinklers in the ward's tower blocks, additional police officers, a community food stop and an outdoor gym. It was claimed that this was the choice residents face: investment in services for young people, vulnerable adults and working in partnerships to support the health and safety of residents, or underinvestment and cuts to services.

Councillor O'Connell stated that the Greater London Authority (GLA) had voted against the Mayor of London's budget however the Mayor had been provided opportunities to increase funding via devolved powers given by government. It was stated that Croydon's budget failed to allocate significant investment in dealing with serious youth violence such as knife crime, and support for young people more generally.

Councillor Flemming stated that Croydon had the largest youth population in London and the largest number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children

(UASCs). The administration would continue to lobby for a fair funding level from government to meet these unique challenges, and the provision for young people contained in the proposed budget was welcomed. Councillor Flemming stated her pride in the investment in world class facilities for young people in the borough such as the Youth Zone as well as other initiatives such as the redevelopment of Fairfield Halls and the Krept and Konan Foundation supporting young people in the borough. It was stated that the number of schools rated good or outstanding had risen considerably under the current administration and the community fund of £250,000 was welcomed as a key initiative to support local groups in preventing youth gang and knife crime.

Councillor Gatland stated that the culture of blame from the administration had been corrosive within the Council and the opposition would be more open and collaborative in their approach if elected. It was stated that the Ofsted report highlighted the administration's failure to prioritise the protection of young and vulnerable people. Whilst the additional funding to children's services was welcomed, more needed to be done such as a mentoring campaign which some opposition Councillors had already begun work on. The investment in services for children with disabilities was welcomed however it was important that parents led the design of the services provided.

Councillor Collins stated that the history of Croydon illustrated that Conservatives cut services whereas Labour invested. Examples were provided such as afternoon street bin collections and weekly residential bin collections. It was further stated that there had been a significant increase in the rate of fly tip clearances within 48 hours of reporting. There had been increased enforcement measures as well as high numbers of prosecutions and a campaign to motivate residents. It was claimed the current administration had monitored the contractor properly and a better value contract had been negotiated for the near future. Local residents had been mobilised through recruiting street champions and a number of community clean ups. Questions were also raised regarding the costings to the opposition's proposals for a 24 hour monitoring system, which it was claimed would cost nearly £12million.

Councillor Jason Cummings stated that the administration had a very poor record of meeting budgets and was abdicating its responsibility for this by blaming central government. It was stated that there were local solutions available but by blaming government, the administration was not looking for solutions. The administration, it was claimed, had allowed an overspend in the People department for four years, and this was a reason why the opposition had reluctantly agreed to support the proposed Council tax increase. It was stated that the previous Conservative Mayor had kept taxes low, whilst the new Labour Mayor had increased taxation on residents. Councillor Cummings questioned if the increased precept was going to the Police when the budget had been cut yet there was growth in other areas of the GLA. It was stated that where Labour were in power there were tax increases, and where Conservatives were in power there were tax cuts.

Councillor Hall stated that in 2014 the administration had inherited a £100million financial black hole from the previous administration. In addition, since that time there had been huge cuts to local authority funding. It was further stated that Croydon had suffered from historic underfunding when accounting for issues such as being a universal credit pilot authority, and the disproportionately high number of UASCs in the borough. It was stated that in this context Croydon could have ended up in the situation that Northamptonshire Council had found itself in, with government intervention to control its dire financial situation. It was claimed that the work of the administration had ensured that Croydon had emerged in a much stronger financial situation with measures such as the Gateway service and bringing more services back in-house. It was stated that the administration had got the Council's finances under control and this had allowed it to react to events such as providing additional money to children's services after the Ofsted inspection. There had been a number of other investments such as increased street cleaning and more funding for young people through the community fund and the Youth Zone. New Addington had also seen significant investment with new community facilities. It was claimed that government had made it very difficult for local authorities to deliver on new homes. It was further stated that the government was operating on the basis that local councils would increase council tax and the precept to the maximum allowed.

The Mayor then moved the item to section (c) and invited the Chair of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to present the scrutiny business report.

Councillor Fitzsimons stated that the Committee had looked at the proposed budget in December and the education budget had been considered at a separate meeting at the Children and Young People Sub-Committee. The scrutiny committees had also undertaken a number of question and answer sessions with Cabinet Members throughout the year. The key issue identified was an increased in demand for Council services with a lack of funding from government. Particularly acute pressure was identified in services for young people and over 80s.

The Mayor then moved to the vote on the recommendations.

The first vote was for recommendation 1.1: A 2.99% increase in the Council Tax for Croydon Services (a level of increase Central Government has assumed in all Councils' spending power calculation).

The recommendation was put to a poll vote:

Members who voted in favour: Hamida Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Jeet Bains, Margaret Bird, Carole Bonner, Simon Brew, Alison Butler, Jan Buttlinger, Robert Canning, Richard Chatterjee, Sherwan Chowdhury, Luke Clancy, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Mario Creatura, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Maria Gatland, Timothy Godfrey, Lynne Hale, Simon Hall, Maddie Henson, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Toni Letts, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Maggie Mansell, Dudley Mead,

Margaret Mead, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Tony Newman, Steve O'Connell, Andrew Pelling, Jason Perry, Helen Pollard, Tim Pollard, Joy Prince, Badsha Quadir, Andrew Rendle, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Mike Selva, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Donald Speakman, Andy Stranack, Mark Watson, John Wentworth, Susan Winborn, David Wood, Louisa Woodley, Callton Young.

The recommendation was carried unanimously.

The second vote was for recommendation 1.2: A 2.0% increase in the Adult Social Care precept (a charge Central Government has assumed all councils' will levy in its spending power calculations).

The recommendation was put to a poll vote:

Members who voted in favour: Hamida Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Jeet Bains, Margaret Bird, Carole Bonner, Simon Brew, Alison Butler, Jan Buttlinger, Robert Canning, Richard Chatterjee, Sherwan Chowdhury, Luke Clancy, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Mario Creatura, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Maria Gatland, Timothy Godfrey, Lynne Hale, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Maddie Henson, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Toni Letts, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Maggie Mansell, Dudley Mead, Margaret Mead, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Tony Newman, Steve O'Connell, Andrew Pelling, Jason Perry, Helen Pollard, Tim Pollard, Joy Prince, Badsha Quadir, Andrew Rendle, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Mike Selva, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Donald Speakman, Andy Stranack, Mark Watson, John Wentworth, Susan Winborn, David Wood, Louisa Woodley, Callton Young.

The recommendation was carried unanimously.

The third vote was for recommendation 1.3: This Council welcomes the GLA increase of 5.07%, where over 81% of which is being used for the Police and 16% being used for the Fire service. With reference to the principles for 2018/19 determined by the Secretary of State under Section 52 ZC sub-section 1 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) confirm that in accordance with section 52 ZB sub-section 1 the Council Tax and GLA precept referred to above are not excessive in terms of the most recently issued principles and as such to note that no referendum is required.

The recommendation was put to a poll vote:

Members who voted in favour: Hamida Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jane Avis, Jeet Bains, Margaret Bird, Carole Bonner, Simon Brew, Alison Butler, Jan Buttlinger, Robert Canning, Richard Chatterjee, Sherwan Chowdhury, Luke Clancy, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Mario Creatura, Jason Cummings, Patsy Cummings, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Maria Gatland, Timothy Godfrey, Lynne Hale, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, Maddie Henson, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Toni Letts, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann,

Maggie Mansell, Dudley Mead, Margaret Mead, Vidhi Mohan, Michael Neal, Tony Newman, Steve O'Connell, Andrew Pelling, Jason Perry, Helen Pollard, Tim Pollard, Joy Prince, Badsha Quadir, Andrew Rendle, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Mike Selva, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Donald Speakman, Andy Stranack, Mark Watson, John Wentworth, Susan Winborn, David Wood, Louisa Woodley, Callton Young.

The recommendation was carried unanimously.

The remaining recommendations 1.4 to 1.8 were put to a normal vote *en bloc*, and were carried unanimously.

16/18 **Recommendations of Cabinet or Committee referred to Council for decision**

Item 7.1 was the recommendations from Cabinet related to the Treasury Management Policy Statement. Councillor Hall moved the nine recommendations contained within the report and Councillor Collins seconded the motion.

The motion to approve the nine recommendations contained in the report was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

Item 7.2 was the recommendations from the Cabinet Member for Homes, Regeneration and Planning related to the Croydon Local Plan.

Councillor Butler, moving the recommendations, stated that the proposed Local Plan set an ambitious vision for all parts of the borough. It would meet the needs of Croydon by providing new homes and strengthening district centres. It was stated that the Local Plan protected the borough's parks for future generations and provided additional protections for open spaces and new areas designated with heritage status. The officers involved in the delivery of the Local Plan were thanked for their passion and commitment to the project.

Councillor Scott seconded the motion.

The Mayor announced that written notice had been received from Councillor Perry to defer the item for debate. Councillor Stranack seconded the motion for deferral. The motion read:

"We, the Conservative Group request that the recommendation to adopt the Croydon Local Plan be referred back to the Cabinet for further consideration, as the plan in its current form is not fit for purpose. In particular reconsideration must be given to the 31 parks and green spaces losing local protected status, unnecessary intensification zones and the loss of precious green belt"

Councillor Perry, speaking in favour of the deferral motion, paid tribute to the effort of officers in the delivery of the plan. It was stated that the plan did not provide adequate protection for green spaces and it proposed development on green belt land. It was claimed that the administration had failed to properly consult with friends groups of local parks to gather robust evidence for the submission to the inspector. The plan in its current form did not guarantee protection of open spaces in Croydon. It was further stated that the intensification zones in the south of the borough required numerous modifications from the inspector, and many were located in residential areas. The inspector found that the zone boundaries were arbitrary and Councillor Perry stated they were too large and required further revision. It was stated that the plan had not been imposed on the Council, it was the administration's submission, and would result in the loss of green belt land and intrusive intensification in many residential areas.

Councillor Butler stated that the Local Plan was based on well-researched evidence which the inspector considered satisfactory. It was stated that the plan was one of the most scrutinised pieces of work the Council had produced. The administration had disagreed with some of the inspector's modifications and some of these objections had been accepted, but others had not – particularly on green spaces. However there were additional protections afforded by the London Plan, and the opposition were accused of scaremongering on this issue. The intensification zones were necessary to alleviate the housing crisis – particularly for Croydon's young people and the homeless. The administration believed that the green belt was precious, however it was also important to provide enough school places for the borough's young people, and placing schools in green environments was preferable than traffic-polluted areas.

Councillor Stranack stated that, as a disabled resident in Forestdale, there were considerable concerns with the planned intensification of the area. The area had a low public transport level rating and parking was already a serious issue. This had had severe effects on disabled residents trying to access their homes, and this had been echoed by a local charity supporting elderly people. The proposals for the area in the Local Plan would double the local population which would create severe pressure on street parking. It was claimed that some of the intensification zones were placed in areas with poor public transport infrastructure and a high level of elderly residents. It was claimed that this would create ghettos of loneliness and isolation in parts of the borough.

Councillor Prince stated that the motion was to defer back to Cabinet a decision that was four years in the making, and this was clearly impracticable. It was stated that in Waddon there were many residents desperate to enter the housing ladder, or concerned for their children's ability to do so. The number of homes needed in the borough required some controlled intensification and this included not just housing but the infrastructure around this such as transport plans and community facilities. It was critical, therefore, that local authorities had up-to-date plans.

Councillor Bains stated that the administration had been ignoring residents on planning issues – particularly around objections raised at the Planning Committee. It was stated that the Local Plan also did not heed the views of residents and had not been conducted in a fair process; instead it was an ideological imposition. It was claimed that the plan did not take into consideration schools and transport, and failed to protect the character of local areas. It was further claimed that 31 parks and green spaces would lose protected status. It was stated that intensification in areas such as east Addiscombe had created problems for residents, from parking issues to one-way streets.

Councillor Scott read a quote from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government that authorities had to prioritise the provision the delivery of housing to deal with the housing crisis. The inspector had found the Local Plan fit for purpose and it was stated that tackling the housing crisis should not be used by the opposition as a political football. It was claimed an opposition Councillor had stated in a Planning Committee meeting that there was no housing crisis, and it was stated that the opposition opposed garden building yet received planning permission to build on a garden in a property owned by the opposition. There were thousands of families in the borough without secure homes and many children on school waiting lists. The proposed Local Plan integrated the delivery of 30,000 new homes with protections to open spaces and characteristics of neighbourhoods. In four suburban areas, modest intensification was proposed which would enable the retention of existing structures in many of those areas. The Local Plan was commended to the Council as fit for purpose and paving the way for the delivery of the homes Croydon needed.

The deferral motion was put to the vote and fell.

The recommendations from the Cabinet Member for Homes, Regeneration and Planning were put to the vote and were carried. Thus Council **RESOLVED** to adopt the Croydon Local Plan 2018 in accordance with section 23(5) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

The meeting ended at 8.24 pm

Signed:

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Date:

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