

Council

Meeting held on Monday, 26 March 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, Sue Bennett, 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, Timothy Godfrey, Lynne Hale, Simon Hall, Patricia Hay-Justice, 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, Chris Wright and Callton Young

Apologies: Councillor Maria Gatland, Maddie Henson, Phil Thomas and Wayne Trakas-Lawlor

PART A

17/17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

18/17 Disclosure of Interests

There were none.

19/17 Urgent Business (if any)

There were no items of urgent business.

Announcements

The Mayor began the item with a minute's silence for Len Chappell, a long serving Mayoral chauffeur and Macebearer, who had passed away since the last meeting.

The Mayor announced that the Mayoral Gala dinner and dance would take place at the Hilton Hotel on 20 April. The Mayor also welcomed students from the Royal Alexander School who were present in the public gallery.

The Leader announced that the borough's young people had recently elected a Young Mayor and Deputy Young Mayor, and congratulations were given to the successful candidates. There had been an encouraging visit from Ofsted Inspectors; the findings of the visit were due to be published soon after the meeting. Thanks were passed on to all the staff and volunteers who had helped with the relief efforts in Waddon after the evacuations due to the gas leak.

The Mayor then invited the Leader to say some words for retiring and departing Councillors. The Leader spoke of Councillors from both sides of the Chambers, recognising their lengths of service, and the commitment all had shown to their wards and the residents of Croydon.

The Mayor then invited the Leader of the opposition to speak on retiring and departing Councillors. Councillor Tim Pollard also recognised Members from both parties and detailed the many achievements those Councillors had made.

The Mayor then invited three retiring Members from each party to give valedictory speeches. Councillors Carole Bonner, Dudley Mead, Timothy Godfrey, Chris Wright, Mark Watson and Margaret Mead gave valedictory speeches, after which the Mayor moved a resolution on the following terms:

"That the Council tender its grateful thanks to those Members who have decided to retire at the end of the Municipal Year, and lifespan of the current Council, in recognition of their personal contributions to the work of the Council and the diligence with which they have performed their duties as elected Members.

And that this resolution be engrossed, sealed and presented by the Mayor and Chief Executive, on behalf of the Council, in a suitable form, to the following Councillors:

- Carole Bonner
- Mike Fisher
- Timothy Godfrey
- Dudley Mead
- Margaret Mead
- Andrew Rendle
- Mike Selva

- Donald Speakman
- Phil Thomas
- James Thompson
- Wayne Trakas-Lawlor
- Mark Watson
- John Wentworth
- Sue Winborn
- Chris Wright”

Councillor Newman moved the resolution and Councillor Tim Pollard seconded the resolution. The resolution was carried unanimously.

21/17 **Croydon Question Time**

The Mayor began the item with questions from the public.

Norman Young asked what awards Brick by Brick had won. Councillor Butler responded with the list of awards that the company had won as well as other awards that the company had been shortlisted and highly commended for.

Norman Young asked a supplementary regarding the awards being won before building had taken place. Councillor Butler responded that the awards recognised the design work prior to building the properties.

Tony Pearson asked how events marking the 100th anniversary of the Armistice would be funded. Councillor Godfrey responded that the Council would work with its partners to deliver on the events.

Joseph Lee asked for an update on the Blackhorse Lane repair works. Councillor King responded that phase one of the works had been completed and the detailed design work was well under way with a target of beginning enabling works in June 2018.

Joseph Lee asked a supplementary on minimising disruption during the school holidays. Councillor King responded that officers were working with TfL to consult with schools in the area to ensure the limited time the bridge would be closed would avoid school opening times.

Sharon Swaby asked whether drainage issues in Shrublands had been addressed. Councillor King responded that officers were not aware of the issue but would look into it as soon as possible.

Leslie Curtis asked what the criteria was for refusal of planning applications, due to concerns of developers targeting the Riddlesdown area. Councillor Butler stated that the criteria was stated in the National Policy Framework, the London Plan, and the Croydon Local Plan. The number of objections to an application was not a valid criteria for refusal. The Council had to strike a

balance between the objections of residents and the housing needs of residents.

Leslie Curtis asked a supplementary question regarding suggestions that developers were being guaranteed planning permission. Councillor Butler responded that the planning documents containing the criteria was publicly available which allowed individuals to identify the grounds of refusal.

Ola Kolade asked what was being done to improve the Children's Services since the Ofsted Inspection. Councillor Flemming responded that an Improvement Board had been set up to hold the Council to account for improvements and that a significant amount of funding had been allocated for frontline improvements in the current budget and the 2018/19 budget. Peer support was also being received from Camden Council.

Tony Campbell asked a question regarding the protection of public parks and open spaces in the Local Plan. Councillor Butler responded that no protections had been lost as the 31 open spaces were protected both by the Local Plan and the National Policy Framework. A robust defence of the green spaces was submitted to the inspector however the inspector did not agree with the proposals.

The Mayor then moved to Councillor questions to the Leader.

Councillor Tim Pollard asked whether the Leader would put an emergency halt on Brick by Brick developments to consult with residents. The Leader responded that the administration had committed to building homes in the borough and that tough decisions had to be made to tackle the housing crisis and ensure young people were provided with housing opportunities.

Councillor Prince asked whether the Leader would join her in congratulating the staff, local businesses and emergency services who supported Waddon residents during the gas leak evacuation. The Leader responded that he was moved by the efforts of the different groups to support the relief on the Sunday night, and those people would be properly recognised by the Council in due course.

Councillor Chatterjee asked whether the Leader would apologise for a number of policies the administration had undertaken, such as 20mph speed limits and intensification of local areas for housing. The Leader responded that he was proud of policies such as 20mph speed limits and air quality initiatives, which were saving lives and promoting the health of Croydon residents.

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

Councillor Butler announced that the 31 local green spaces referred to in previous public questions were protected under planning regulations.

Councillor Ali announced that a number of local community projects had won community seed funding from the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to support projects tackling knife crime in the borough. Cabinet Members had also recently met with the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime to discuss preventive and public health initiatives in dealing with knife crime in Croydon.

Councillor Shahul-Hameed announced the recent launch of Croydon Means Business, which would host 120 events throughout the borough in 2018. It was also announced that the Council would be sponsoring two awards in the Croydon Business Awards event.

Councillor Hale read out a question from a resident regarding the replacement of family homes into blocks of flats. Councillor Butler responded that intensification in some areas of the borough was required to meet the demands for homes in the borough, and targets set by central government. The Council had a duty to grant planning permission where none of the planning regulations were being contravened.

Councillor Hale asked a supplementary question around developments that had stalled such as the former Taberner House site, Royal Mail sorting office and Nestle tower. Councillor Butler responded that the delay to Taberner House was due to the deal made by the previous administration that, it was claimed, was a poor deal for residents with limited affordable housing and significant encroachment onto the neighbouring Queen's Gardens. A better deal had been agreed and development on the site was now moving forward. The other mentioned sites were privately owned and the Council was doing what it could to encourage development but lacked powers from central government to speed up development. Impositions from central government made it difficult to build council housing whilst keeping the current stock in a good and safe condition, such as installation of sprinklers in council tower blocks, which the government were refusing to help fund.

Councillor Canning asked for more information on the Croydon Means Business initiative. Councillor Shahul-Hameed responded that it was an initiative proposed out of the Small Business Commission findings. It fostered links between local businesses and colleges to grow young local talent and promote opportunities in the borough such as apprenticeships.

Councillor Canning asked a supplementary question regarding how the initiative could encourage businesses to sign up to the Good Employers charter. Councillor Shahul-Hameed responded that the charter was embedded in the principles of Croydon Means Business and a number of initiatives were taking place to promote the values of the charter with local businesses.

Councillor Helen Pollard asked a question on behalf of a resident regarding development work on a green space at the end of Eldridge Road. Councillor Butler responded that the space in question had been considered carefully for

development and was not used for recreation and was formerly a designated site for housing.

Councillor Helen Pollard asked a supplementary question regarding the aspects of the site such as benches and two trees. Councillor Butler responded that the Ward Councillors for the area had not referred the development application for the area when it had been publicised.

Councillor Lewis asked if the Cabinet Member would welcome the launch of the Building Futures academy in New Addington. Councillor Shahul-Hameed responded that she very much welcomed it and provided details on the many opportunities it would provide local students with training and qualifications.

Councillor Lewis asked a supplementary question on how this scheme supported getting Croydon's young people into work. Councillor Shahul-Hameed responded that it was important work that supported businesses and promoted important initiatives for young people such as apprenticeships.

Councillor Bennett asked a question from a resident who had claimed the Council had written to a landowner inviting him to build a large number of flats on his land in Shirely Oaks. Councillor Butler responded that she was not aware of the situation and invited the Councillor to provide the information so that an answer could be proffered.

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

Councillor Collins announced that free bulky waste collection would be rolled out in the borough from April 2018.

Councillor King announced that the Council had pledged to stop using energy generated from fossil fuels by 2050. The Council had joined an alliance of public and private sector organisations committing to sourcing energy from renewable sources.

Councillor Jason Cummings asked what improvements in the People budget had been made since the launch of the monitoring board for the department's budget. Councillor Hall responded that given the pressures to the department there was successful progress being made on managing the budget.

Councillor Jason Cummings asked a supplementary question as to whether the £33m overspend in the department was acceptable. Councillor Hall responded that the service was dealing with significant funding cuts from central government and rise in demand for the service and the administration would not cut services to the most vulnerable residents.

Councillor Patsy Cummings read out a message from a resident who had thanked the Council for the Council Tax relief for care leavers and asked how this relief was being funded. Councillor Hall responded that the administration

had committed to supporting carers and care leavers and had encouraged supported housing for foster children.

Councillor Mohan asked what the Cabinet Member would spend an additional £7m on. Councillor Hall responded that extra funding that had been negotiated was put into front line services.

Councillor Mohan asked a supplementary question regarding alleged business rates lost to the value of £7m due to delays in regeneration projects. Councillor Hall responded that a number of the projects were private sector and the Council was doing everything it could to support the delivery of those schemes. However it was noted that each scheme would be ensured that it delivered the best deal for Croydon residents.

Councillor Pelling asked a question on compensation for missed bin collections. Councillor Collins responded that he had looked at what different offers were being considered by neighbouring boroughs. The Council had been much tougher with the contractor over missed bin collections through measures such as penalty fines. A compensation scheme would be hugely expensive.

Councillor Hollands asked a question on high rates of fly tipping and reduced rates of recycling in the borough. Councillor Collins responded that recycling rates had been falling since 2012 and it was a national trend. The council was working to educate residents on it and with a particular focus on schools and educating young people. The current South London Waste Partnership contract had limited the ability of the Council to make the changes required, however improvements had been made such as reconfiguring recycling centres and there were proposals to increase the recycling bins for home recycling.

Councillor Hollands asked a supplementary question regarding reporting of recycling. Councillor Collins responded that the Council had campaigned to encourage residents to report fly tipping which has led to increased rates of reporting and thus allows for quicker clearances due to better response times. In addition education campaigns were taking place on fly tipping.

Councillor Mann asked a question on proposals to introduce 24/7 surveillance vehicles to combat fly tipping. Councillor Collins responded that it would be an expensive scheme and that covert surveillance being undertaken by the Council was far more effective at catching fly tippers.

Councillor Mann asked a supplementary on the increase in green waste collections. Councillor Collins responded that through requests from residents the green waste collection would be year round service and would include Christmas tree collections after Easter.

Councillor Bains asked a question on the reduced rates of recycling in the borough. Councillor Collins responded that this was a national issue that required a national campaign. However local initiatives were taking place such

as education campaigns and street champions, who had worked hard on improving recycling rates and it was noted that Croydon was above the London average for recycling rates.

Councillor Newman proposed, and Councillor Tim Pollard seconded, a procedural motion to move to the next item of business to ensure discussion was held for the remainder of the agenda.

The motion was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

Councillor Godfrey announced that funding had been secured from the Mayor of London for the establishment of a creative enterprise zone in the borough. In addition, Cabinet had recently approved the establishment of a collections trust to ensure the borough's collections of artwork was protected.

Councillor Flemming announced that 86% of primary school students moving to secondary school got one of their top three choices. The recently established single point of contact for children's services was explained in detail and the Cabinet Member congratulated the successful candidates for Youth Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Woodley announced the successful Health Extravaganza that had taken place in the Whitgift Centre and noted that a national medical journal had published an article on the success of the One Croydon Alliance and the achievements it had made in reducing hospital intake.

22/17 **Member Petitions**

Councillor Bernadette Khan introduced the submitted petition which read:

“Request for Resident Parking Permit

I'm writing this letter to you on behalf of the Keston Road residents in Thornton Heath. We are requesting the council to introduce the resident parking on our street. We don't have any parking spaces at all due to Mayday hospital staffs who are fully occupying our parking spaces with their cars on our street all day and night. Furthermore, behind our street (around Canterbury Road) there is already resident permit holders parking which has been enforced by the council, so those who live around Canterbury Road, also park their cars on our street.

Apart from this car repair centres and MOT Service stations such as Bharadia Autos in Oakwood Road, Thornton Heath Motors in May day Rd, J & A Autos in Canterbury Rd and Auto Tech in Lancing Rd. As you can imagine the difficulty of us going through the parking nightmare in our street daily, most of them who live in this street are families with children studying either in primary school or secondary school. In order to get our children into the car, we are walking two streets away from our house!! There were many occasions in the past we couldn't find any parking space at all and on those days so many of

us parked on the double yellow lines because there was no more parking space left in our street!! Simply it is frustrating to the residents not only for the school runs but also for the essential day to day life.

So we Residents of Keston Road (majority of them) had a detailed discussion, eventually we all mutually arrived at a conclusion that residents permit holders parking is the only way to going forward to solve our parking problem. Also we strongly believe that this should be implemented by the council as early as possible in order to reduce the disruption and hardships we are currently experiencing.”

Councillor King responded that Keston Road had been added to future sites to be considered for a controlled parking zone and a consultation would take place in the summer of 2018.

Councillor Kabir introduced the submitted petition which read:

“We the residents of Quadrant Road and Brook Road, Thornton Heath, would request that due to the high levels of traffic which use Quadrant Road and Brook Road as short cut to avoid Brigstock Road, which results in grid lock during rush hours because the roads are not wide enough for two-way traffic, which then results in accidents and road rage.

We therefore request that the Council adopts a one-way system to alleviate these problems.”

Councillor King responded that both roads were included in the current work programme for investigation and a consultation would take place in the summer of 2018.

Councillor Margaret Mead introduced the submitted petition which read:

“We, as the residents of Addington Village, request that Croydon Council look at options to address the significant increase in street parking that has taken place since the Cricketers/Harvester Pub introduced metered parking within their car park.

It would appear that people were using the Cricketers/Harvester Pub car park when commuting to work by tram or bus and also parishioners for the Church and now that metered parking has been introduced, they have resorted to leaving their vehicles on roads around the Village to avoid the new charges.

We would like the Council to respond to the Addington Village Residents Association with proposed solutions to reduce the number of cars parking on the roads around the Village.”

Councillor King responded that he had asked officers to make contact with the Addington Village Residents Association and to look at potential solutions to the issues raised.

Council Debate Motions

The Mayor started the item with the first motion which read as follows:

“This Council recognises the achievements of this administration including delivering, the London Living Wage, Private landlords licensing scheme, Don’t Mess with Croydon, Pride Festival, White Ribbon Borough, Fairfield Halls regeneration, Improving Schools, Choose your future, Investment in services for older people, affordable housing for local people and much more, Croydon is a place that all our residents are increasingly proud of.

However there is still much more to do to secure Croydon’s long term future, and our town cannot afford to go back to the years of cuts, closures and austerity.”

Councillor Newman, proposing the motion, stated that tough decisions were made to re-establish strong fiscal management of the Council finances after the last administration. This had provided for the funding of numerous projects that had been launched over the previous years. It was stated that the administration had delivered on health, housing, support for young people, and schools; promises that were made were kept, and the pledges moving forward would be made for the benefit of all residents.

Councillor Ali seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Hale, speaking against the motion, stated that the achievements by the administration were disappointing and had failed to consult with residents along the way – particularly in relation to planning matters. It was stated that residents had lost faith in the planning system, with green spaces being sold off and the character of local areas being changed with blocks of flats replacing family homes. It was stated that the interests of developers were being put ahead of residents.

Councillor Creatura stated that a number of the administration’s achievements had been disappointing. No landlords had been prosecuted under the licensing scheme, fly tipping had increased significantly in the borough, and the Fairfield Halls redevelopment had been delayed. There had been a lack of affordable housing built and no council homes at all. It was further claimed that the administration had taken credit for schemes launched by the previous administration.

Councillor Ali stated that the administration had supported all residents and not just a few. It had improved the living standards of housing and was ambitious in its cultural work alongside partners. Despite government cuts, the administration had delivered significant investment in the borough. It had also led campaigns for residents that usually go unheard, such as the white ribbon campaign against domestic violence. Despite the government cuts to the police, the administration had introduced community budgets and structural funding for the voluntary sector – unlike the previous administration who had cut funding to the voluntary sector. It was stated that the

administration had implemented a range of measures to support residents – from the London Living Wage campaign to fire safety improvements in the Council's tower blocks.

The Mayor then put the motion to the vote and it was carried.

The Mayor then moved to the second motion which read as follows:

“The closure of Fairfield Halls. Withdrawing the free Green Garden Waste service. Removing the protection on dozens of parks and green spaces. The Purley Skyscraper. Insensitive development in Shirley. Scrapping free parking in Coulsdon. Traffic schemes in Addiscombe. Thousands of objections to contentious planning applications. The deeply unpopular Local Plan. Brick By Brick destroying the green space on estates.

These are a few examples of the issues that literally tens of thousands of residents, from the very north to the very south of Croydon, have petitioned the Council on. But the current administration has systematically not listened to those residents on these issues and many others.

This Council regrets the failure of its Cabinet to listen over the past four years and resolves to treat the citizens of Croydon with respect in future - by listening to them.”

Councillor Tim Pollard, moving the motion, stated that residents across the borough were claiming that the Council was not listening to their concerns. Objections had been raised about how the Council had been dealing with Fairfield Halls, green waste collections, the Local Plan, and the many Brick by Brick developments. It was stated that what was needed was more decisions held in public and credibility restored to the planning process. Resident Associations needed to be promoted and area forums set up across the borough to ensure decisions were made with the support of local residents.

Councillor Bennett seconded the motion and reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Wood, speaking against the motion, stated that the administration was proud of listening to residents and had introduced devolution such as through ward and community budgets. Changes had been made through consultation on the Local Plan. It was stated that the motion misunderstood the difference between not listening and not agreeing. Difficult decisions needed to be taken and the loudest voices are not necessarily the majority.

Councillor Rendle, speaking against the motion, stated that re-development of Ashburton Hall was an example of the Council listening and acting on the views of residents. Other examples were provided such as better crossings on Bingham Road and enforcing parking restrictions on Lower Addiscombe Road.

Councillor Bennett, seconding the motion, stated that a large number of developments were being approved in areas such as Shirely Oaks, where the vast majority of residents were opposed and not being listened to. It was questioned where affordable housing was really affordable for residents in Croydon. It was stated that the Council should listen to residents and build on Council-owned land. It was claimed that the Council also failed to listen to its own social workers who stated that workloads were too high in children's services. Ofsted had blamed the Council leadership and not central government, for failing its inspection of the service. Residents wanted to have their voices heard.

The Mayor put the motion to the vote and it fell.

24/17 **Recommendations of Cabinet or Committee referred to Council for decision**

Councillor Newman moved the recommendation that Councillor Bernadette Khan be invited to allow her name to be submitted to the Annual Council meeting on 23 May 2018 for election to the office of Mayor for the Council Year 2018/19. Councillor Butler seconded the recommendation.

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

The Mayor invited the Leader of the opposition to announce their candidate for Mayor if elected as the majority party after the election. Councillor Tim Pollard confirmed that the opposition's candidate for Mayor would be Councillor Badsha Quadir.

25/17 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 10.01 pm

Signed:

Date:

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