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Council

Meeting held on Tuesday, 4 May 2021 at 5.00 pm.

This meeting will be held remotely.

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MINUTES

- Present:** Councillor Maddie Henson (Chair);
Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Hamida Ali, Muhammad Ali, Jamie Audsley, Jeet Bains, Leila Ben-Hassel, Sue Bennett, Margaret Bird, Simon Brew, Alison Butler, Jan Buttinger, Janet Campbell, Robert Canning, Richard Chatterjee, Luke Clancy, Chris Clark, Pat Clouder, Stuart Collins, Mary Croos, Patsy Cummings, Nina Degrads, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Sean Fitzsimons, Alisa Flemming, Felicity Flynn, Clive Fraser, Maria Gatland, Lynne Hale, Patricia Hay-Justice, Simon Hoar, Steve Hollands, Yvette Hopley, Karen Jewitt, Humayun Kabir, Bernadette Khan, Shafi Khan, Stuart King, Oliver Lewis, Stephen Mann, Stuart Millson, Michael Neal, Oni Oviri, Ian Parker, Andrew Pelling, Jason Perry, Helen Pollard, Tim Pollard, Joy Prince, Badsha Quadir, Helen Redfern, Scott Roche, Pat Ryan, Paul Scott, Manju Shahul-Hameed, Andy Stranack, Robert Ward, David Wood, Louisa Woodley and Callton Young
- Apologies:** Councillor Mario Creatura, Jason Cummings, Toni Letts and Gareth Streeter

PART A

1/21 **Disclosure of Interests**

There were none.

2/21 **Urgent Business (if any)**

There were no items of urgent business.

3/21 **Election of Mayor**

Madam Mayor, called on the Leader, Councillor Hamida Ali, to propose Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury as the new Mayor of Croydon.

The Leader proposed the motion and took the opportunity to emphasise Councillor Sherwan's commitment to the people of Croydon with over forty years of service, including two decades as a councillor.

The commitment to wanting to make a difference in the community has meant that Councillor Chowdhury had built up a reputation to being a responsive, active and supporting councillor and had championed a number of community organisations, particular those dealing with equality and diversity in the borough. Councillor Chowdhury's commitment to the Bangladeshi community was also recognised through his role in helping to establish the Bangladeshi Welfare Association of which he served as both its President and General Secretary.

The support he had given to Madam Mayor was acknowledged along with the support that would be provided by Councillor Felicity Flynn as Deputy Mayor.

Madam Mayor invited the Leader of the Opposition, Councillor Jason Perry, to second the motion.

Councillor Perry reiterated the Leader's comments regarding the great support that Councillor Chowdhury had given the Bangladeshi community throughout his time as a councillor and that the community held great respect for him as a result.

Councillor Perry also expressed the hope that Councillor Chowdhury would have the opportunity to have a more traditional year as Madam Mayor had had to carry out many of her duties in a virtual capacity and looked forward to supporting Councillor Chowdhury.

Before the vote was taken the Madam Mayor confirmed that there were 37 Labour members and 22 Conservative members present on the call.

Madam Mayor put the motion to the vote which was unanimously passed to elect Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury as the Mayor of the London Borough of Croydon for 2021/22.

The meeting paused briefly (from 17:15 to 17:27) to allow The Mayor to dress in his chains of office and the Deputy Mayor to put on her badge.

The Mayor read out the declaration of office:

I, Councillor Sherwan Chowdhury, having been elected to the Office of Mayor of the Council of the London Borough of Croydon, hereby declare that I take the said office upon myself, and will duly and faithfully fulfil the duties of it according to the best of my judgement and ability. I undertake to observe the Code of Conduct which is expected of Members of the London Borough of Croydon.

It was explained to the meeting that both declarations would be signed, in a socially distanced way at the end of the meeting.

The Mayor formally announced Councillor Flynn as Deputy who also read out the declaration of office.

Mrs Rohema Chowdhury was formally announced as Mayor's consort.

They explained that the past-Mayor's badge and citation would be presented to Councillor Henson and the past-consort's badge to Mr Mark Henson as soon as social distancing restrictions were sufficiently relaxed to allow this to happen.

In his acceptance address, The Mayor described the honour of becoming the first citizen and Mayor of Croydon having lived in the Borough for over forty years. In addition The Major spoke about the many years that he had worked in the social housing sector.

When growing up The Mayor was inspired by his father's passion for helping others in the community which made him want to give back to the community that he lived in. The Major then outlined some of the work that he had been involved in.

The Mayor went on to say that as a first-generation immigrant who this country has given an opportunity, he wanted to ensure that every person had the same or better opportunities, that they did not face discrimination in any form and that they get the chance to explore and secure their aspirations and dreams. The Mayor spoke about his role within the Bangladesh community and the organisations that he had been part of.

The Mayor thanked the outgoing Madam Mayor, Councillor Maddie Henson for her work during the challenging year and for the personal support that she had given him.

The Mayor announced that the charities and voluntary organisations that would directly benefit from the Mayor's fundraising activity would be one homelessness charity and two cancer charities.

In his closing remarks the Mayor thanked all those people who had worked so hard during the Covid-19 pandemic including those who had lost their lives.

4/21

Political Balance of the Council and Composition of Committees

The recommendations in the report were proposed by the Leader, Councillor Hamida Ali and seconded by Councillor Jason Perry. They were put to the vote and passed unanimously.

RESOLVED: Council **AGREED** the recommendations in the report:

- 1.1 Confirm that there are 38 Labour Group Members and 27 Conservative Group Members (as set out in Para 3.1);
- 1.2 Confirm that there are 5 vacant positions, to be elected to on 6 May 2021;

- 1.3 Approve the appointment and composition of Committees as set out in paragraph 4.8; and
- 1.4 Note that, as previously agreed by Council at its meeting on 25 January 2021, Cabinet member Advisory Committees will only be implemented following identification of appropriate resources and capacity in the council budget 2021/22.

5/21 **Appointments**

The recommendations in the report were proposed by the Leader, Councillor Hamida Ali and seconded by Councillor Jason Perry. They were put to the vote and passed unanimously.

RESOLVED: Council **AGREED** the recommendations in the report:

- 1.1 Agree, or receive for information as applicable, the following appointments where the number of nominations is equal to the number of available positions:
 - i) The appointments to Committees of the Council (Blue Schedule); and
 - ii) The appointments to all other Panels, Working Groups and Outside Bodies (Pink Schedule).
- 1.2 Agree the suspension of paragraph 2.3 of the Non-Executive Procedure Rules (Part 4F of the Constitution) for the municipal year 2021/2022;
- 1.3 Agree, with the exception of the Licensing Sub-Committee, the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair of all Council committees and sub-committees as set out in the (Blue Schedule) for the municipal year 2021/22. This is without prejudice to the provisions set out in paragraph 2.4 of Part 4F of the Constitution which would continue to apply enabling in year vacancies to either the Chair or Vice Chair to be filled by election at the first meeting of the relevant committee or sub-committee following notification to the Council Solicitor;
- 1.4 Receive, for information, executive appointments made under the Leader and Cabinet decision making framework:
 - i) The appointments of Cabinet Members, Cabinet Committees and Deputy Cabinet Members (Blue Schedule);
 - ii) The appointments to Joint Committees (Blue Schedule);
 - iii) The appointments to London Councils Committees and Panels and Local Government Association bodies (Blue Schedule); and

- iv) The appointment of Councillors to the Health & Wellbeing Board (Blue Schedule); and
- 1.5 Receive for information:
 - i) The appointments of Leader of the Opposition and Shadow Cabinet (Blue Schedule);
 - ii) The appointments of political party group officers (Blue Schedule)

6/21 **Independent Chair of the General Purposes & Audit Committee (GPAC)**

The Leader, Councillor Hamida Ali, reminded councillors that this paper was in response to a recommendation in the Government's Rapid Review Report.

The Leader also thanked Councillor Jewitt for her work in chairing the Committee and in expanding its work programme over the last six months and that the Committee now met on a monthly basis. There were however a few issues that remained and still required consideration which would be brought back to Council at a future date.

Councillor King seconded the recommendations.

They were put to the vote and passed unanimously.

RESOLVED: Council **AGREED** the recommendations in the report:

- 1.1 Agree to delegate authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Deputy Monitoring Officer (Interim), and the Interim Director of Finance, Investment and Risk and Section 151 Officer, to take the necessary actions to commence a recruitment process for an Independent Chair of the General Purposes and Audit Committee;
- 1.2 In order to commence the recruitment process, agree that the Executive Director of Resources and Deputy Monitoring Officer (Interim), and the Interim Director of Finance, Investment and Risk and Section 151 Officer, be delegated authority to prepare a role profile for the Independent Chair including the proposed level of remuneration, to establish a Member-led recruitment and selection process by which the Chair will be recruited and formally appointed, and to commence that recruitment and selection process; and
- 1.3 Agree that a further report be presented to Council at its meeting on 5 July 2021, that will update Members on progress and seek approval for the necessary changes required to the Constitution to enable an Independent Chair to be formally appointed to the General Purposes and Audit Committee.

7/21 **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 5.57 pm

Signed:

Date:

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