

**LONDON BOROUGH OF ISLINGTON**  
**COUNCIL MEETING - 26 FEBRUARY 2015**

**MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

At the meeting of the Council held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on 26 February 2015 at 7.30 pm.

**Councillors present:**

Debono	Klute	Heather
Greening	Murray	Jeapes
Andrews	O'Sullivan	Kay
Burgess	A Perry	Ngongo
Caluori	R Perry	Nicholls
Chowdhury	Poole	O'Halloran
Convery	Comer-Schwartz	Parker
Doolan	Smith	Poyser
Fletcher	Watts	Russell
Gallagher	Webbe	Shaikh
Hamitouche	Court	Turan
Hull	Diner	D Ward
Ismail	Erdogan	N Ward
Kaseki	Gantly	Wayne
Khan	Gill	Williamson

**The Mayor (Councillor Theresa Debono) in the Chair**

**23 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the Council meeting on 4 December 2014 as amended be confirmed as a correct record and the Mayor be authorised to sign them.

**24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**25 MAYORAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**(i) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Donovan, Picknell and Spall.

**(ii) Order of business**

The order of business was not changed.

**(iii) Declarations of discussion items**

None.

**(iv) Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor congratulated Councillor Burgess, Maureen Collins from Adult Social Services and Uma Mehta for Legal Services who were recognised in the New Year's Honours list. Councillor Burgess was awarded a MBE for services to local government, Maureen gained a BEM for services to the care of older people and Uma received a CBE for services to children.

The Mayor also encouraged colleagues to attend the Civic Awards Council on 10 March, as it was an important opportunity for us to recognise the achievements and contributions of residents and asked colleagues to support the next fundraising dinner in aid of Home Start Islington and Islington Foodbank on Tuesday 31 March.

**26 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

Councillor Watts thanked the Mayor and noted that the council's budget is being proposed in the context of a very difficult economic situation; that the council and the wider borough faced tough times. Events elsewhere, such as the recent events in Paris, also added to tensions locally and it was particularly regrettable that the Islington Gazette ran an incorrect story that the council had banned pork in schools. Councillors Watts advised that the Council is proud of the borough's diversity.

Councillor Watts also advised that the Council is working with others across London to push for a London City Deal, which would bring more jobs to the borough and help protect vital services; too many decisions affecting the borough are taken elsewhere.

Finally, Councillor Watts added a personal tribute to Councillor Burgess on the award of an MBE in the New Year's Honours list.

**27 EXECUTIVE APPOINTMENTS**

Councillor Watts thanked Councillor Ismail for all her hard work as an Executive Member.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1.1 That the appointment of Councillor Asima Shaikh as the Executive Member for Economic and Community Development be noted.
- 1.2 That Councillor Claudia Webbe's title is now Executive Member for Environment and Transport be noted.
- 1.3 That the appointment of Councillor Asima Shaikh as a member of Voluntary and Community Sector Committee be noted.
- 1.4 That it be noted that the delegation of Executive functions remains unchanged.

**28**    **PETITIONS**

Mr Paul Murphy presented a petition titled 'Stop the Job Losses'.

**29**    **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Councillor Alice Perry moved a procedural motion under Rule 22(k) of the constitution, to suspend Rule 19.3 for the duration of the agenda item and to suspend Rule 19.2 in so far as is necessary to enable the Mayor to read out questions from the public.

Councillor Poole seconded the motion.

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

The Mayor read out the following question from Lloyd Child to Councillor Hull, Executive Member for Finance and Performance:

'I understand that the Government recently announced that a national fund to support the most vulnerable people in our borough has been cut drastically. What provision has the council made in this budget to cope with this further loss of funding?'

Reply:

Thank you for your question. First of all we have say three cheers for the Keep the Safety Net Campaign which did save £74 million of the funding and we have to thank the resident in Cheshire who mounted a judicial review of the government cuts which we supported and which resulted in a victory over the government, which is almost unprecedented. That means we are able to keep the same level of funding as before, using general fund and housing benefit reserves.

The Mayor read out the following question from George Sharkey to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

'As a Labour Council, the GMB recognises that the unprecedented cuts imposed by this Tory-led Government will fall hard on our communities. Many will be driven deeper into poverty, as a trade union and a Labour Party that was formed out of poverty and deprivation, how can we jointly come together again within Islington to resolve any differences and work towards one single aim of eradicating this inept Tory Government?'

Reply:

Thank you for your question. First of all, we have been cut more than the leafy conservative areas. We've lost 40-45% of funding when western Dorset's funding has gone up. This government is brutal. Their areas get more. We get less. I ensure regular communication with trade unions and we are a much better administration because of it. The GMB are enormously helpful, the campaign for school meals for example, they are a partner in delivering a fairer and better borough. We have to work together to get rid of the Tories. We will fight them here and in more marginal seats as well.

The Mayor read out the following question from Ernestas Jegorovas to Councillor Joe Caluori, Executive Member for Children and Families:

'How does cutting the Connections Team (provides young people with information and advice on education, training and jobs) fit in with Islington Labour's 2014 manifesto priority of every young person has a job, is in college or an apprenticeship?'

Reply:

Thank you for your question. It's a good question, as it is important to spell out what we are doing regarding employment in schools. We are going through a process of discussion with schools to help us identify the things that matter most. Schools have asked us for more control over these services and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson school, which Ofsted have rating outstanding again, are leading on this. We are also working with the Youth Councillors and looking at best practice. There are different ideas about how best to deliver advice and guidance in schools. I don't think that the service was working well and we are looking at the options to provide skills and line of sight for young people into work. This is not a betrayal, it's an exciting opportunity.

The Mayor read out the following question from Andy Bain, chair of Islington Hands Off Our Public Services (IHOOPS) to Councillor Hull Executive Member for Finance and Performance:

'How will the proposed cuts affect the range and quality of council services to the public and will the staff left be able to cope in a safe and healthy manner?'

Reply:

Thank you for your question. It's true there are some job losses, but we have done all we can to keep them to a minimum and have reduced the number of compulsory redundancies down to 55. We are turning agency staff into permanent posts and can assure you council staff health is a priority.

The Mayor read out the following question from Muge, Salome Wolfam and Zingara Filipe to Councillor Murray, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

'What law does Councillor Murray cite as justification / or compels him to continue to overcharge council tenants, particularly on Spa Green, for communal heating or hot water?'

Reply:

Thank you for your question. I will address this more fully in my response to Councillor Russell who has asked the same question, but any money paid by tenants in ring-fenced for the purpose of providing heating and hot water, even if the balance in year is not equal.

The Mayor read out the following question from Sue Richards to Councillor Hull Executive Member for Finance and Performance:

'Last summer, the Islington Gazette ran a front page that claimed several vital council services were, in their words, set to be 'axed'. The front page and article implied that libraries were under threat, Cally Pool would close, school crossing patrols would be cut, the Ecology Centre would close and the Plus Bus service would end. Could the Executive Member for Finance please confirm whether any of these services are affected by this budget?'

Reply:

Thank you for your question. Happily I can confirm that none at all have been cut in this budget, although I am not holding my breath for next week's Gazette story.

The Mayor read out the following question from Charlie Kiss to Councillor Watts, Leader of the Council:

'Please can you tell me when there will be a ward partnership meeting for the Holloway Ward?'

Councillor Watts nominated Councillor Smith to reply.

Reply:

The 12 March.

### **30 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

Question (a) from Councillor Caroline Russell to Councillor James Murray, Executive Member for Housing and Development:

"Will the Council review its decision to hold on to overpayments made by tenants with communal heating systems this year and repay the money immediately?"

Reply:

Thank you for your question. Firstly we charge the way we do for communal heating and hot water because it is more efficient, cheaper and it allows us to have fairer charging across the borough. We are setting the budget tonight for 2015-16 and we don't know exactly what our costs will be or how cold it will get. We set a reasonable estimate based on last year's costs and sometimes the final cost is below that and sometimes it is above; just like people pay by direct debit for other services. The money paid is now ring-fenced. We use any surplus to smooth out the costs to residents, however, if a significant surplus develops we would make a refund to residents and have done so in the past. At the end of the year we will make an assessment and there may be a large enough surplus to make a refund this year.

Supplementary Question:

Smoothing sounds marvellous, but if any ordinary customer overpaid one of the big six, they would get their money back. Tenants are angry that they don't get the same from the council – they are effectively giving the council a loan. I am glad you are considering a refund. Will you consider increasing the attention paid to insulating people's homes so people get lower bills?

Reply:

This council takes fuel efficiency very seriously. Street properties are much harder to insulate, but we have a huge programme to insulate wherever possible; it's good for the environment and it reduces fuel bills for residents. We are going to smooth out costs across all tenants on communal heating charges to share the benefit. Tenants and Leaseholder get charged the same over the longer term. We are trying to make heating charges low and predictable so bills don't go up hugely one year and down the next.

Question (b) from Councillor Caroline Russell to Councillor Janet Burgess, Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing:

"Why is the Council cutting funding for the Latin American Women's Aid Refuge?"

Reply:

The Latin American Women's Aid Refuge contract with the council was until 2013 with an option to extend for two years to 31 March 2015, which we did. The contract was paid for out of the Supporting People Grant, which is being reduced by 50% this year and although the refuge is located in Islington, people don't go to refuges near where they live for obvious reasons and we therefore believe that refuges should receive plan-London funding. We are contacting colleagues from other councils to support organisations like this and they are submitting a bid to the DCLG for funding which we hope will be successful. We continue to support their work and provide business rate relief for example. I can assure Caroline that we take their work very seriously.

Supplementary Question:

It seems unfortunate that for a service which delivers so much, it's a shame more work was not done to prepare them for the funding to disappear.

Reply:

They knew two years ago that the contract was extended for only two years and we have done a lot to support them.

Question (c) from Councillor Dave Poyser to Councillor Asima Shaikh, Executive Member for Economic and Community Development:

"Given our diverse community here in Islington, which makes all of us so proud to be Islingtonians, what actions does Councillor Shaikh hope she will be able to take in her new role working with our excellent voluntary sector to promote our 'harmony in our diversity'?"

Reply:

I feel really privileged to take on this new role, especially as it affords an opportunity to champion the voluntary and community sector which lies at the heart of our ambitions to achieve a fairer Islington. Community organisations help improve the quality of life for our most vulnerable residents. Islington communities get on well with each other. Community cohesion can be undermined by inequality, the local impact of global events, deprivation and an irresponsible media. There are three things we intend to do to promote cohesion and harmony. Improve understanding within and across our communities and the Council and the voluntary sector have a vital role in facilitating relationships. Shared values based on trust, respect and tolerance bind communities together. Secondly we will strive to ensure cohesion is placed within the fairness agenda; that it sits at the heart of the fairness agenda. We will also ask questions about the sections of our community which suffer disproportionate structural inequalities. Tackling inequalities is vital. Despite the Tory led cuts, we will continue to reach out to communities to achieve and maintain community harmony in our borough.

## **31 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2015-16**

Councillor Hull, seconded by Councillor Watts, moved the recommendations in the report.

Councillor Russell moved her amendment.

Councillors Burgess and Heather contributed to the debate.

The amendment was put the vote. Voting was recorded as follows:

**For:** Councillor Russell.

**Against:** Councillors Andrews, Burgess, Caluori, Chowdhury, Comer-Schwartz, Convery, Court, Debono, Diner, Doolan, Erdogan, Fletcher, Gallagher, Gantly, Gill, Greening, Hamitouche, Heather, Hull, Ismail, Jeapes, Kaseki, Kay, Khan, Klute, Murray, Ngongo, Nicholls, O'Halloran, O'Sullivan, Parker, Alice Perry, Rupert Perry, Poole, Poyser, Shaikh, Smith, Turan, Diarmaid Ward, Nick Ward, Watts, Wayne, Webbe and Williamson.

The amendment was **LOST**.

The recommendations in the report were put to the vote. Voting was recorded as follows:

**For:** Councillors Andrews, Burgess, Caluori, Chowdhury, Comer-Schwartz, Convery, Court, Debono, Diner, Doolan, Erdogan, Fletcher, Gallagher, Gantly, Gill, Greening, Hamitouche, Heather, Hull, Ismail, Jeapes, Kaseki, Kay, Khan, Klute, Murray, Ngongo, Nicholls, O'Halloran, O'Sullivan, Parker, Alice Perry, Rupert Perry, Poole, Poyser, Shaikh, Smith, Turan, Diarmaid Ward, Nick Ward, Watts, Wayne, Webbe and Williamson.

**Against:** Councillor Russell.

The recommendations were **CARRIED**.

**RESOLVED:**

**The General Fund Budget 2015-16 and MTFS (Section 3 of the Main Report)**

- 2.1 That the 2015-16 net Council cash limits as set out in Table 1 (paragraph 3.1.4 of the report) and the MTFS at Appendix A to the report, which include the revenue savings in Appendix B to the report, be agreed.
- 2.2 That the report of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015 be noted in reviewing the 'Budget Proposals 2015-16' and its recommendation for the addition of an invest-to-save scheme comprising the installation of photovoltaic (PV) plates on corporate Council properties (excluding leisure centres, schools and housing, which are subject to ongoing exploration) (Paragraph 3.1.3 and Appendix B of the report) be agreed.
- 2.3 That it be agreed that within the 2015-16 revenue budget, £1.16m from general grant funding, to continue to provide a Resident Support Scheme following the reduction in Local Welfare Provision (LWP) funding by the Government, on being transferred from specific to general grant and that it be noted that we will review expenditure on the Resident Support Scheme in the first three months of 2015-16 and supplement this funding as required from the Housing Benefit Reserve up to the level of the LWP funding for 2014-15 (£1.44m) be agreed (Paragraphs 3.2.5 to 3.2.6 of the report).
- 2.4 That the requirement to report on the number of maintained schools that have completed the Schools Value Financial Standard (SVFS) by 31<sup>st</sup> March to the Department for Education by 31<sup>st</sup> May each year be noted (Paragraph 3.2.15 of the report).
- 2.5 That the fees and charges policy and the schedule of 2015-16 fees and charges (paragraph 3.2.16-17 and Appendix C of the report) be agreed.
- 2.6 That the Council's policy on the level of General Fund balances and the estimated use of the Council's earmarked reserves be agreed (Paragraph 3.2.21-22 and Table 3 of

the report).

**The HRA Budget and MTFs (Section 4 of the Main Report)**

- 2.7 That the balanced HRA 2015-16 budget within the HRA MTFs at Appendix D1 of the report be agreed.
- 2.8 That it be noted that the proposed increases in 2015-16 for HRA rents and other fees and charges were agreed by the Council's Executive on 12 February 2015 (Paragraphs 4.4 to 4.9, Table 5 and Appendix D2 of the report).

**The Capital Programme 2015-16 to 2017-18 (Section 5 of the Main Report)**

- 2.9 That the 2015-16 capital programme be agreed and that the provisional programme for 2016-17 to 2017-18, which includes funding for an expanded Phase 2 Bunhill heat and power scheme (funded on the expectation that it will be a priority for planning gain from developments in Bunhill) be noted (Paragraph 5.1, Table 6 and Appendix E1 of the report).
- 2.10 That it be agreed that the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources applies capital resources to fund the capital programme in the most cost-effective way (Paragraph 5.3 of the report).
- 2.11 That the schemes that comprise the Capital Allowance pot of eligible affordable housing and regeneration schemes be noted (Paragraph 5.4 and Appendix E1 of the report).
- 2.12 That the schedule of planned Traffic and Transportation schemes in 2015-16 be noted and the related decision-making responsibilities for these schemes be agreed (Paragraph 5.5 and Appendix E2 of the report).

**Treasury Management Strategy (Section 6 of the Main Report)**

- 2.13 That the Treasury Management Strategy, Annual Investment Policy, Prudential Indicators, Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement and investment criteria be agreed (Section 6 and Appendices F1 to F4 of the report).

**Council Tax 2015-16, incl. Statutory Calculations (Section 7 of the Main Report)**

- 2.14 That the calculations required for the determination of the 2015-16 council tax requirement and the level of council tax as detailed in Section 7 of the report and summarised below be agreed.

- 1) The 2015-16 council tax requirement of £70,648,601 (Paragraph 7.4 of the report)
- 2) The relevant amount of Islington Band D council tax of £981.22, a 1.99% increase compared to 2014-15, and to determine that this is not 'excessive'. (Paragraphs 7.5 and 7.6 of the report)
- 3) The basic amount of Islington Band D council tax for dwellings to which no special item relates (i.e. outside of the Lloyd Square Garden area) of £981.01 and total Band D council tax (including the GLA precept) of £1,276.01. (Paragraphs 7.8 and 7.12 of the report)
- 4) The amount of 2015-16 council tax (excluding the GLA precept) for each valuation band over each of the Council's areas. (Paragraph 7.10 of the report)
- 5) The total amount of 2015-16 council tax (including the GLA precept) for each valuation band over each of the Council's areas. (Paragraph 7.12 of the report)

#### **Matters to consider in setting the Budget (Section 8 of the Main Report)**

- 2.15 That the Section 151 Officer's and the Monitoring Officer's comments in their determination of the revenue and capital budgets for 2015-16 and the basis for the level of council tax, including the Section 151 Officer's report in relation to his responsibilities under section 25 (2) of the Local Government Act 2003, be noted.
- 2.16 That the Resident Impact Assessment (RIA) on the 2015-16 budget be noted (Appendix G of the report).
- 2.17 That the Pay Policy Statement for 2015-16 at Appendix H of the report be agreed.

## **32 CONSTITUTION UPDATE**

### **RESOLVED:**

- 2.1 That the Leader of the Council has approved the changes to delegation of Executive functions be noted.
- 2.2 That the amendments to the Constitution set out in the Appendix to the report be noted.
- 2.3 That the Assistant Chief Executive (Governance and HR) be authorised to make any consequential amendments to the Constitution she considers necessary be agreed.

## **33 REVISED CHIEF WHIP'S REPORT**

### **RESOLVED:**

#### **Appointment of Councillors to political positions**

1. That Councillor Poyser has been elected as an Deputy Chief Whip replacing Councillor Shaikh, for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed be noted.

#### **Appointments to Council Committees:**

1. **Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee**  
That the appointments of Councillors Poyser and Ismail as members of the Policy and Performance Scrutiny Committee and the appointment of Councillor O'Halloran as

Vice Chair, for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed, be agreed.

**2. Health and Care Scrutiny Committee**

That appointment of Councillor Turan as a member of the Health Scrutiny Committee for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**3. Planning Committee**

That the appointment of Councillor Ismail as a member of Planning Committee for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**4. Standards Committee**

That the appointment of Councillor Poyser as a member of Standards Committee for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**5. Health and Wellbeing Board**

That the appointment of Wendy Wallace, Chief Executive, Camden and Islington NHS Foundation Trust and Simon Pleydell, Chief Executive, The Whittington Hospital NHS Trust, as non-voting members of the Health and Wellbeing Board with immediate effect, for one year or until successors are appointed, be agreed.

**Appointments to Outside Bodies:**

**6. Appointment to St Mary Magdalen Academy**

That the appointment of Councillor Angela Picknell to be the LEA Governor for St Mary Magdalen Academy for a period of four years or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**7. Islington Community Covenant Grant Schemes Panel**

That the appointment of Councillor Asima Shaikh to the Islington Community Covenant Grants Schemes Panel for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**8. Cross River Partnership**

That the appointment of Councillor Asima Shaikh to the Cross River Partnership for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

**9. Greater London Enterprise (GLE)**

That the appointment of Councillor Asima Shaikh to Greater London Enterprise (GLE) for the remainder of the municipal year or until a successor is appointed be agreed.

The meeting closed at 8.59 pm

**MAYOR**