

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

MINUTES

of the proceedings of the Meeting of the
Council of the Borough
held at 7.00 pm on 24 April 2023

Present:

**The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Hannah Gray**

**The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Christine Harris**

Councillors

Jeremy Adams	Dr Sunil Gupta	Angela Page
Jonathan Andrews	FRCP FRCPATH	Chris Price
Jessica Arnold	Colin Hitchins	Chloe-Jane Ross
Felicity Bainbridge	Alisa Igoe	Will Rowlands
Kathy Bance MBE	Julie Ireland	Shaun Slator
Yvonne Bear	Mike Jack	Colin Smith
Nicholas Bennett J.P.	Simon Jeal	Diane Smith
Kim Botting FRSA	David Jefferys	Mark Smith
Mike Botting	Charles Joel	Alison Stammers
Mark Brock	Kevin Kennedy-Brooks	Melanie Stevens
David Cartwright QFSM	Josh King	Harry Stranger
Graeme Casey	Jonathan Laidlaw	Ryan Thomson
Will Connolly	Andrew Lee	Michael Tickner
Aisha Cuthbert	Kate Lymer	Pauline Tunnicliffe
Peter Dean	Keith Onslow	Thomas Turrell
Sophie Dunbar	Tony Owen	Sam Webber
Robert Evans	Christopher Marlow	Rebecca Wiffen
Simon Fawthrop	Ruth McGregor	
Kira Gabbert	Tony McPartlan	
Adam Grant	Alexa Michael	

The meeting was opened with prayers

In the Chair
The Mayor
Councillor Hannah Gray

81 Apologies for absence

All Members were present - there were no apologies for absence

82 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

83 To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27 February 2023

Members requested that the statements made by Councillors Shaun Slator and Kate Lymer be transcribed in full in the minutes.

RESOLVED that, subject to the change set out above, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 27th February 2023 be confirmed.

84 Questions

Three questions had been received from a member of the public for oral reply. The questions, with the answers given, are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

Four questions had been received from members of the public for written reply. The questions, with the answers given, are set out in Appendix B to these minutes.

Twelve questions had been received from members of the Council for oral reply. The questions, with the replies given, are set out in Appendix C to these minutes.

Four questions had been received from members of the Council for written reply. The questions, with the answers given, are set out in Appendix D to these minutes.

85 To consider any statements that may be made by the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holders or Chairmen of Committees.

(A) Payment Options for Parking

At the request of Councillor Julie Ireland and members of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Nicholas Bennett, as Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety, made a statement on payment options for parking in the light of the expectation of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities that parking services should remain accessible.

The Portfolio Holder emphasised that the proposals had been supported by the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee at its meeting in November 2022. 92% of the UK population owned a smart-phone, but parking bays could still be booked using a land-line or an ordinary mobile phone. The Secretary of State was entitled to his opinion, but an Equalities Act impact assessment had been undertaken and independently assessed by an officer

from Adult Social Care, and the changeover to a cashless system was found to be compliant.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder stated that he would be prepared to respond to questions about the impact of the changes and emphasised that as car parks were never full it should be easy to book a place via a land-line. He had received 25 complaints about this, all on email, so these people cannot have been digitally excluded. The report considered by the PDS Committee had covered the experiences of other councils in bringing in similar policies; for example, the cost of providing opportunities to buy parking in a shop in Southwark was more expensive than the income raised. The option of retaining a small number of card payment machines had been considered at the PDS Committee meeting and rejected. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council was not a monopoly supplier of car parks.

(B) Parking Charges

At the request of Councillors Jeremy Adams and Simon Jeal, Councillor Nicholas Bennett, as Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety, made a statement on increases in parking charges.

The Portfolio Holder explained that charges had risen by 20 pence, with a service charge of 20 pence for Ring-go. The increase was the first for four years, and had been supported by the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee at its November meeting. Parking income was an important part of the Council's revenue.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder stated that on-street parking charges were considerably higher in neighbouring boroughs such as Greenwich, Lambeth and Southwark – Bromley had probably the lowest parking charges in London. He also stated that officers did take into account circumstances such as motorists making genuine mistakes and not being able to receive signal and could waive fines.

(C) Potholes

At the request of Councillor Julie Ireland and members of the Liberal Democrat Group, Councillor Nicholas Bennett, as Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety, made a statement on potholes.

The Portfolio Holder stated that it was not an appropriate use of the statements process to produce the detailed statistical information that had been requested, but referred members to the detailed answer he had given recently to a question from Councillor Alison Stammers.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder stated that the Council's contractor, Riney, had tried to get more staff to address potholes, but all highways authorities in the country were experiencing the same problems, so it was not possible to put more crews together. However, instead of stopping when the backlog was addressed, crews would continue working over the

summer to be prepared for next winter. He accepted that the danger from pot-holes and failing temporary repairs was particularly acute for cyclists and motorcyclists, and he was determined that the problem should be brought under control over the summer. He did not have figures on insurance pay-outs to hand, but this could be obtained. He had to rely on the technical experts to prioritise repairs and to ensure that the correct materials were used. He was prepared to see whether it would be possible and useful to differentiate between temporary and permanent repairs on Fix My Street. He informed Members that the Council was carrying out repairs on the Principal Road Network in the borough, despite not receiving funding from the Mayor of London. The Portfolio Holder concluded by stating that if there was abnormal weather again next winter it was likely that the same problems would re-occur across the country. However, there was a rolling programme of comprehensive re-surfacing, and 35 roads had been prioritised in the latest programme, scrutinised by the PDS Committee in March.

86 Budget Monitoring 2022/23
Report CSD23052

A motion to agree the release of £2m from the Health reserve for the ICB as detailed in paragraph 3.10 of the report to the Executive as moved by Councillor Christopher Marlow, seconded by Councillor Colin Smith and **CARRIED**.

87 Basic Need Capital Programme Update
Report CSD23053

A motion to approve the updated Basic Need Programme as set out in Appendix 3 to the report to the Executive was moved by Councillor Kate Lymer, seconded by Councillor Colin Smith and **CARRIED**.

88 Constitution Working Group
Report CSD23054

A motion to approve the following changes to the Constitution to take effect for the 2023/24 Council year:

- (a) Amendments to the rules for questions (as in paragraphs 3.6 to 3.8 of the report.)
- (b) Amendments to the rules for motions (as in paragraphs 3.9 to 3.11 of the report, and including clarifying that the deadline for submission of motions will be ten working days before the meeting.)
- (c) Amendments to the rules for call-in (as in paragraphs 3.12 to 3.14 of the report.)
- (d) Amendments to the Petition Scheme (as in paragraph 3.15 of the report.)
- (e) The additional of a special full Council budget and Council tax meeting (as proposed in paragraphs 3.17 and 3.18 of the report.)

and to note that Officers will report to a future meeting on proposals for the overall structure of the Constitution, including using gender-neutral language as proposed in paragraph 3.16 of the report, was moved by Councillor Nicholas Bennett, seconded by Councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe and **CARRIED**.

89 Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23
Report CSD23030

A motion to receive and note the Annual Scrutiny Report 2022/23 was moved by Councillor Simon Fawthrop, seconded by Cllr Robert Evans and **CARRIED**.

90 Health and Wellbeing Board - Chairman's Annual Report 2022/23
Report CSD23060

A motion to receive and note the Health and Wellbeing Board Annual Report for 2022/23 was moved by councillor David Jefferys, seconded by Councillor Robert Evans and **CARRIED**.

91 Appointment of Independent Persons
Report CSD23051

A motion to approve the appointment of Mr Andrew Jackson and Mr Gary Rogers as Independent Persons for a four year term until the end of May 2027, and for them to be co-opted to the Standards Committee in addition to the two existing Independent Persons, was moved by Councillor Nicholas Bennett, seconded by Councillor Melanie Stevens and **CARRIED**.

92 To consider Motions of which notice has been given.

(A) Road Safety Strategy

The motion was withdrawn by Councillors Alisa Igoe and Simon Jeal.

(B) Tackling Damp and Mould

The following motion was moved by Councillor Will Connolly and seconded by Councillor Chloe-Jane Ross:

“Council notes:

- A. There are around 18,000 people living in social housing in the borough.
- B. That during the cost-of-living crisis many local families are reducing heating costs, which is exacerbating problems with damp and mould.

- C. The tragic death of a two-year-old boy Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, where the Coroner ruled that living with prolonged exposure to toxic mould was a cause of his death, and the February 2023 Housing Ombudsman evaluation of responses to damp and mould report.
- D. The casework issues Ward Councillors and Officers have experienced trying to get landlords, including social housing providers, to take swift action to tackle damp and mould.
- E. The need to avoid blaming tenants for damp and mould problems in properties and the lack of practical support many tenants face in tackling mould.
- F. With thanks, the ongoing work carried out by officers on housing issues and the powers that the London Borough of Bromley has to issue improvement notices to landlords of properties to tackle damp problems.

Council calls for;

The Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation and Housing to review the Council's response to tackling damp and mould, and in doing so consider aspects including:

- **Improving accountability** – by creating a log of damp and mould casework, to keep track of individual cases and require housing providers to report back on their response. To present high level statistics on damp and mould housing issues to each Scrutiny Committee meeting so accountability and responsiveness of housing providers can be monitored.
- **Improving response times** - by requiring each housing association to provide an action plan on how they resolve damp and mould problems (step by step), including service standards to the tenant and response times to the authority regarding casework.
- **Improving support for tenants** – create an information sheet, or signposting, for tenants and landlords with the information on the best approaches to preventing and tackling damp and mould and where to seek help, this sheet should be available on the Council website. Require each housing association to provide a similar factsheet for their tenants, with detailed guidance on what to do if damp or mould is found and what service standard the tenant can expect. The Council should review this information annually.
- **Use of enforcement powers** – consider how best to use Council powers under the Housing Act 2004 to act against housing providers that do not resolve damp and mould issues without delay. Report back regularly on the actual use or threat of use to the Scrutiny Committee.”

The following amendment was moved by Councillor Tony McPartlan and seconded by Councillor Chris Price:

- “Remove the first bullet point “Improving accountability.” Replace with:

Improving accountability – by regularly reporting on the Council’s damp and mould log at RRH PDS Committees so accountability and responsiveness of the Council and our partners can be monitored. To present high level statistics on damp and mould housing issues, including, but not limited to, open cases, response times, and cases resolved.

Second bullet point: remove “requiring” and replace with to “working with”

Third bullet point: remove “require” and replace with “work with”

Add additional bullet point at the end:

Introduce a council led campaign – for residents to report to their councillors, the Council and landlords, any damp and mould issues in private rented or social rented accommodation. To add as an agenda item at a future RRH PDS Committee, to discuss the results of this with their local housing associations.”

On being put to the vote, the amendment was **LOST**.

On being put to the vote, the motion was **LOST**.

93 The Mayor's announcements and communications.

The Mayor thanked everyone who had attended the Mayor of Bromley awards, showing the Council’s appreciation of some of the very special people in the borough. She also thanked Members who had attended her final charitable event of the year at the Honourable Artillery Company, and Members from across the parties who had supported all of her events. The Mayor had also recently enjoyed a visit to Bromley’s twin town of Neuwied.

The Mayor reminded Members of the opportunity to buy tickets for the Spitfire Prize Draw.

The Meeting ended at 9.15 pm

Mayor