

# **LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY**

## **MINUTES**

**of the proceedings of the Meeting of the  
Council of the Borough  
held at 7.00 pm on 17 July 2023**

**Present:**

**The Worshipful the Mayor  
Councillor Mike Botting**

**The Deputy Mayor  
Councillor Keith Onslow**

### **Councillors**

Hannah Gray  
Christine Harris  
Jeremy Adams  
Jonathan Andrews  
Jessica Arnold  
Felicity Bainbridge  
Kathy Bance MBE  
Yvonne Bear  
Kim Botting FRSA  
Mark Brock  
Graeme Casey  
Will Connolly  
Aisha Cuthbert  
Peter Dean  
Sophie Dunbar  
Robert Evans  
Simon Fawthrop

Adam Jude Grant  
Dr Sunil Gupta  
FRCP FRCPATH  
Colin Hitchins  
Alisa Igoe  
Julie Ireland  
Mike Jack  
Simon Jeal  
David Jefferys  
Josh King  
Andrew Lee  
Kate Lymer  
Tony Owen  
Christopher Marlow  
Ruth McGregor  
Tony McPartlan  
Alexa Michael

Angela Page  
Chloe-Jane Ross  
Will Rowlands  
Shaun Slator  
Colin Smith  
Diane Smith  
Alison Stammers  
Melanie Stevens  
Harry Stranger  
Ryan Thomson  
Michael Tickner  
Thomas Turrell  
Sam Webber  
Rebecca Wiffen

The meeting was opened with prayers

In the Chair  
The Mayor  
Councillor Mike Botting

Before commencing with formal business, the Mayor presented a scroll to the previous Mayor, Cllr Hannah Gray, in appreciation of her service as Mayor for 2022/23.

**10 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Nicholas Bennett JP, David Cartwright QFSM, Kira Gabbert, Charles Joel, Kevin Kennedy-Brooks, Jonathan Laidlaw, Chris Price, Mark Smith and Pauline Tunnicliffe.

**11 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

**12 To confirm the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 24th April and 10th May (special and annual meetings)**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023, the special meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 and the annual meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

**13 Questions**

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

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

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

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

At the request of Cllrs Simon Jeal, Alisa Igoe and Tony McPartlan, the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing, Cllr Yvonne Bear, made a statement on the removal of mobile telephone antennas from the top of Burnt Ash Heights as part of the building's impending demolition. She explained that the masts had been removed as part of the demolition of the building and the redevelopment of the site. Planning policy did not provide for the replacement of the equipment, and any decision to do so would be a commercial decision for the mobile phone companies. The Council was working with telecoms providers to improve full fibre and mobile connectivity across the borough – this work was being led by the Economic Development Team. The Council had no powers to force telecoms providers to install equipment but where areas of poor coverage are identified officers would endeavour to seek collaborative solutions. The Portfolio Holder was not aware that concerns had been raised about this location, but now that she was aware officers were investigating what could be done with the telecoms providers to improve services for local residents.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder stated that it was in the interests of the providers to deliver good coverage. She confirmed that the Council had good relationships with the providers and officers had spoken with both telecoms companies. They were looking for temporary solutions and any developments would be reported as soon as the Council was informed. The Portfolio Holder agreed that the possibility of including relevant policies in the Local Plan could be looked at, and she re-stated that there were options being looked at with the providers.

**15           Renewal of the Armed Forces Covenant**  
Report CSD23074

A motion to note the renewal of the Armed Forces Covenant was moved by Cllr Colin Smith, seconded by Cllr Mike Botting and **CARRIED**.

**16           Provisional Final Accounts 2022/23**  
Report CSD23098

A motion to agree that a sum of £2,000k be set aside as a contribution to the Building Infrastructure earmarked reserve as detailed in paragraph 3.8.2 of the report was moved by Cllr Christopher Marlow, seconded by Cllr Colin Smith and **CARRIED**.

**17           Constitution Update**  
Report CSD23100

Report WITHDRAWN.

**18           Request for Waiver of Six Month Attendance Rule**  
Report CSD23072

A motion to grant a waiver of the six-month attendance requirement to Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw to extend his absence for up to an additional six months was moved by Cllr Colin Hitchens, seconded by Cllr Christine Harris and **CARRIED**.

**19           Committee Membership and Proportionality**  
Report CSD23075

A motion to accept the following recommendations was moved by Cllr Colin Hitchens and seconded by Cllr Christine Harris:

- (1) The changes to proportionality involving creation of three additional Sub-Committee seats be agreed as set out in section 3 of the report.
- (2) The following changes to Committee membership be agreed –
  - (i) Cllr Michael Tickner replaces Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw on Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee;

- (ii) Cllr Andrew Lee replaces Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw on General Purposes and Licensing Committee;
  - (iii) Cllr Dr Sunil Gupta replaces Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw on Audit and Risk Management Committee;
  - (iv) Cllr Simon Fawthrop replaces Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw on Pensions Committee.
- (3) It is noted that Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw will be appointed to Industrial Relations Sub-Committee and Rights of Way Sub-Committee by General Purposes and Licensing Committee and to Plans 1 Sub-Committee by Development Control Committee at the earliest opportunity.

On being put to the vote the motion was **CARRIED**.

**20 Local Pension Board - Appointment of Board Members**  
Report CSD23096

A motion that Emma Downie and Chloe West be appointed as Employer Representatives to the Local Pension Board for four year terms of office commencing on 17<sup>th</sup> July 2023 was moved by Cllr Keith Onslow, seconded by Cllr Christopher Marlow and **CARRIED**.

**21 To consider Motions of which notice has been given.**

**(A) Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

The following motion was moved by Cllr Julie Ireland and seconded by Cllr Will Connolly:

“Bromley Council, like other authorities, has a responsibility to house refugees and asylum seekers. The Council recognises the importance of supporting these individuals and the local community. While the Home Office leads the support for refugees and asylum seekers, the Council plays a role in ensuring they receive the necessary local services.

Council appreciates the valuable work to set up and run the Ukrainian Support Hub and aims to expand on its success. Additionally, Council acknowledges the generosity of the voluntary sector in the borough, which is eager to collaborate with the Council in supporting the new arrivals.

Therefore, Council recommends that the Executive:

1. Establish a Support Hub Service to coordinate local services and connect refugees and asylum seekers with other available support.
2. Collaborate with local partners, including other levels of government, non-profit organisations, and community groups, to ensure the effective delivery of services and support to refugees and asylum seekers in the borough, with a particular focus on preparedness for their arrival.

3. Serve as a liaison with the Home Office regarding the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers in the borough, with a strong emphasis on monitoring the quality of services provided by the Home Office's local contractors responsible for accommodation and meals.
4. Provide public information about the Council's role in supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the borough.
5. Allocate resources from existing budget allocations to operate the Support Hub and advocate for additional funding and support from other sources."

The following amendment was moved by Cllr Simon Jeal and seconded by Cllr Jessica Arnold:

Add the following words after the second paragraph:

"The Council's ability to support refugees is limited by lack of government funding and processes which instead diverts money to private companies making profit from the asylum dispersal scheme, which not only raises accommodation costs for local authorities competing with them when trying to source temporary accommodation, but also results in inadequate support for refugees and asylum seekers, as recently demonstrated by people accommodated in the borough who recently presented at community food providers because they were not being provided with enough appropriate foods.

The Council resolves that the Chief Executive should write to the Home Secretary, to raise these deficiencies and call for an urgent and immediate change in contract terms with the current contract providers so that sufficient funding can be provided directly to local councils including Bromley, who (partnering with our strong local voluntary sector) are better able to deliver a cost effective and supportive service for refugees and asylum seekers, as demonstrated through the delivery of our Ukrainian Support Hub."

Remove the following text:

"Therefore, Council recommends that the Executive:

1. Establish a Support Hub Service to coordinate local services and connect refugees and asylum seekers with other available support.
2. Collaborate with local partners, including other levels of government, non-profit organisations, and community groups, to ensure the effective delivery of services and support to refugees and asylum seekers in the borough, with a particular focus on preparedness for their arrival.
3. Serve as a liaison with the Home Office regarding the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers in the borough, with a strong emphasis on monitoring the quality of services provided by the Home Office's local contractors responsible for accommodation and meals.
4. Provide public information about the Council's role in supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the borough.

5. Allocate resources from existing budget allocations to operate the Support Hub and advocate for additional funding and support from other sources.”

Motion, if amended, to read in full -

“Bromley Council, like other authorities, has a responsibility to house refugees and asylum seekers. The Council recognises the importance of supporting these individuals and the local community. While the Home Office leads the support for refugees and asylum seekers, the Council plays a role in ensuring they receive the necessary local services.

Council appreciates the valuable work to set up and run the Ukrainian Support Hub and aims to expand on its success. Additionally, Council acknowledges the generosity of the voluntary sector in the borough, which is eager to collaborate with the Council in supporting the new arrivals.

The Council's ability to support refugees is limited by lack of government funding and processes which instead diverts money to private companies making profit from the asylum dispersal scheme, which not only raises accommodation costs for local authorities competing with them when trying to source temporary accommodation, but also results in inadequate support for refugees and asylum seekers, as recently demonstrated by people accommodated in the borough who recently presented at community food providers because they were not being provided with enough appropriate foods.

The Council resolves that the Chief Executive should write to the Home Secretary, to raise these deficiencies and call for an urgent and immediate change in contract terms with the current contract providers so that sufficient funding can be provided directly to local councils including Bromley, who (partnering with our strong local voluntary sector) are better able to deliver a cost effective and supportive service for refugees and asylum seekers, as demonstrated through the delivery of our Ukrainian Support Hub.”

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

The original motion was put to the vote and **LOST**.

### **(B) Council Support for LGBTQ+ Equality**

The following motion was moved by Cllr Simon Jeal and seconded by Cllr Kathy Bance -

“Bromley Council notes with concern the record rise in homophobic and transphobic hate crime in London and across the UK in recent years. The Council unequivocally condemns such acts - including the recent incident on 27th June (during Pride Month) of hate-crime motivated vandalism of floral displays, created by local primary school children, on Bromley High Street.

We reiterate our unwavering commitment to supporting LGBTQ+ people living, working and studying in Bromley, including the Council's own staff and those accessing Council services. We will continue to work with Police, Health Service partners, Schools and employers across the borough to challenge anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination and provide inclusive services in line with our Equality Policy.

As part of this commitment, the Council agrees to establish a cross-party members' task and finish group to consider options for Bromley Council, within existing budgets, to mark and celebrate events of significance to LGBTQ+ residents as part of the Civic calendar. To provide recommendations to this effect to the Mayor."

It was moved by Cllr Thomas Turrell and seconded by Cllr Simon Fawthrop that the motion be amended to read –

"Bromley Council notes with concern the record rise in reported homophobic and transphobic hate crime in across London which remains the responsibility of Mayor of London Sadiq Khan to get a grip of. The Council unequivocally condemns such acts - including the recent incident on 27th June in Bromley of hate-crime motivated vandalism of floral displays, created by local primary school children, on Bromley High Street.

The Council reiterate our unwavering commitment to treat all Bromley residents, employees and members of society fairly, whatever their background without fear or favour."

The following members voted in favour of the amendment:

Councillors Jonathan Andrews, Felicity Bainbridge, Yvonne Bear, Kim Botting, Mark Brock, Aisha Cuthbert, Peter Dean, Robert Evans, Simon Fawthrop, Adam Grant, Sunil Gupta, Christine Harris, Mike Jack, David Jefferys, Andrew Lee, Kate Lymer, Christopher Marlow, Tony Owen, Angela Page, Will Rowlands, Shaun Slator, Colin Smith, Diane Smith, Melanie Stevens, Harry Stranger, Michael Tickner and Thomas Turrell (27)

The following members voted against the amendment:

Councillors Jeremy Adams, Jessica Arnold, Kathy Bance, Graeme Casey, Will Connolly, Sophie Dunbar, Alisa Igoe, Julie Ireland, Simon Jeal, Josh King, Ruth McGregor, Tony McPartlan, Chloe-Jane Ross, Alison Stammers, Ryan Thomson, Sam Webber and Rebecca Wiffen (17).

The following members abstained:

Councillors Mike Botting Hannah Gray, Colin Hitchins and Keith Onslow (4).

The amendment was **CARRIED**.

The motion as amended above was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

**22           The Mayor's announcements and communications.**

The Mayor thanked Members for attending the Armed Forces Day Ceremony and signing of the Armed Forces Covenant on 21<sup>st</sup> June and the Bromley Stars evening on 7<sup>th</sup> July. He reminded Members about the Annual Civic Reception for Volunteers on 27<sup>th</sup> July, the Charity Ball on 21<sup>st</sup> October and the Dinner at the East India Club on 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

Events being planned included a Sunday Lunch to raise funds for Ukraine in January, a Wine Tasting in December, the Carol Service in December, a visit to the Bromley little Theatre in January and the Mayor's Quiz in February – details would be available in due course.

The Meeting ended at 9.06 pm

Mayor