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MINUTES OF THE MAYOR AND CABINET

Wednesday, 22 February 2017 at 9.17 pm

PRESENT: Sir Steve Bullock (Mayor), Councillors Alan Smith, Chris Best, Kevin Bonavia, Janet Daby, Joe Dromey, Damien Egan, Joan Millbank and Rachel Onikosi.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Obajimi Adefiranye, Councillor Abdeslam Amrani, Councillor Chris Barnham, Councillor Peter Bernards, Councillor Bill Brown, Councillor Suzannah Clarke, Councillor John Coughlin, Councillor Liam Curran, Councillor Brenda Dacres, Councillor Amanda De Ryk, Councillor Colin Elliott, Councillor Alan Hall, Councillor Carl Handley, Councillor Maja Hilton, Councillor Simon Hooks, Councillor Sue Hordijkenko, Councillor Mark Ingleby, Councillor Joyce Jacca, Councillor Stella Jeffrey, Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin, Councillor Roy Kennedy, Councillor Helen Klier, Councillor Jim Mallory, Councillor David Michael, Councillor Sophie McGeevor, Councillor Hilary Moore, Councillor Pauline Morrison, Councillor John Muldoon, Councillor Jacq Paschoud, Councillor John Paschoud, Councillor Pat Raven, Councillor Jonathan Slater, Councillor Luke Sorba, Councillor Eva Stamirowski, Councillor Alan Till and Councillor James-J Walsh and Councillor Susan Wise.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Paul Maslin.

583. Declaration of Interests

The Mayor declared a prejudicial interest as a former Director of the Surrey Canal Sports Foundation and withdrew from the meeting while the agenda was considered.

584. New Bermondsey Establishment of an Independent Inquiry

In the absence of the Mayor, the meeting was chaired by Councillor Alan Smith.

Where a report is received less than 5 clear days before the date of the meeting at which the matter is being considered, then under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100(b)(4) the Chair of the Committee can take the matter as a matter of urgency if he is satisfied that there are special circumstances requiring it to be treated as a matter of urgency. These special circumstances were stated to be as follows:

This report was not available for the original dispatch because was drafted in part in relation to continuing allegations appearing in the press. The report was urgent and could not wait until the next meeting of Mayor & Cabinet and Council because there was an urgent need for the Council to consider whether to establish an Inquiry to inspire public confidence as soon as possible.

Having considered an earlier debate at Council, and a formal presentation by the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Alan Smith, the Cabinet:

RESOLVED that:

(1) an independent Inquiry be established to investigate matters related to the Council's proposed compulsory purchase order of land at New Bermondsey/Surrey Canal;

(2) the terms of reference for the Inquiry as set out in paragraph 5 be approved;

(3) the Chair of the Bar Council be approached to appoint a QC who meets the criteria set out in paragraph 6 to conduct the Inquiry and, if he is unable to make such an appointment, to nominate an alternative intermediary with an equal level of probity and independence;

(4) expenditure of up to £500,000 be approved for the conduct of this Inquiry;

(5) the Executive Director for Children and Young People be the Council's officer lead in relation to the establishment and conduct of the Inquiry;

(6) a cross party New Bermondsey/Surrey Canal Inquiry Committee be established comprising four majority group members and the minority party member to receive the report of the Inquiry, to receive periodic reports on progress, expenditure incurred and to make recommendations to full Council and Mayor and Cabinet for any action arising from the Inquiry; and

(7) if, in the course of the investigation, the person conducting the Inquiry is of the view that there are any other matters which ought to be explored in the context of the Inquiry, they should investigate those matters and report on them to the Council.

The meeting closed at 9.18pm