

# MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 21 July 2021 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Damien Egan (Mayor), Councillors Obajimi Adefiranye, Tauseef Anwar (Speaker), Chris Barnham, Paul Bell, Peter Bernards, Chris Best, Kevin Bonavia, Andre Bourne, Juliet Campbell, Suzannah Clarke, Patrick Codd, Liam Curran, Brenda Dacres, Amanda De Ryk, Colin Elliott, Aisling Gallagher, Leo Gibbons, Alan Hall, Carl Handley, Octavia Holland, Coral Howard, Mark Ingleby, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Caroline Kalu, Silvana Kelleher, Louise Krupski, Samantha Latouche, Jack Lavery, Jim Mallory, Paul Maslin, Joan Millbank, Hilary Moore, Pauline Morrison, John Muldoon, Olurotimi Ogunbadewa, Rachel Onikosi, Lionel Openshaw, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Stephen Penfold, Kim Powell, James Rathbone, Joani Reid, James Royston, Jonathan Slater, Alan Smith, Luke Sorba, Eva Stamirowski, James-J Walsh and Susan Wise.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sophie McGeevor and Councillor Sakina Sheikh.

## 19. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on May 26 2021 be confirmed and signed as correct records.

## 20. Declaration of Interests

Councillor John Paschoud declared a personal interest in Item 7 as a close family member held an NHS role. He also declared a personal interest in Item 6 as a close family member was receiving a package of Adult Social Care support. Councillor Jacq Paschoud declared corresponding interests as his wife.

Councillor Liam Curran declared a personal interest in Item 6 as a Director of the Baring Trust.

Councillor Mark Ingleby declared a personal interest in Item 6 as Chair of the Friends of the Grove Park Nature Reserve and as a member of the Fabian Society.

## 21. Announcements or Communications

### *Obituaries*

The Council was notified of the deaths of former staff members Gloria Phillips and Malcolm Ball.

The Mayor paid tribute to Malcolm Ball noting his incredible contribution to Lewisham and expressing deepest gratitude for all the contributions he had

made. He praised his deep commitment to public service rooted in a Deptford experience and illustrated by his involvement with the internationally acclaimed Young Mayor programme which former Mayor Sir Steve Bullock claimed as his proudest achievement. The Mayor indicated that thought would be given to ways in which Malcolm's legacy could be commemorated by the Council.

Malcolm Ball's partner, Amanda Brown responded to the words of the Mayor by saying how touched she had been by them and also by the tribute website and the compilation of a treasured photo album. She thanked the Council for inviting her to the meeting and for the tribute offered to Malcolm.

All present observed a 1 minute silence in memory of Gloria Phillips and Malcolm Ball.

#### *Staffing matters*

The Council marked the retirement of two long serving Council officers, Kevin Sheehan and Ralph Wilkinson and noted the resignation of the Director of Law, Suki Binjal.

#### *Tokyo Olympic Games*

The Council sent its best wishes to Alex Yee from Lewisham who was competing in the Triathlon.

### **22. Petitions**

Councillor Stephen Penfold presented a 22 page petition requesting extra street lighting for Lucas Street SE4.

### **23. Public questions**

70 questions were received from members of the public which were answered by the Cabinet Member indicated. Thirty minutes were made available at the meeting for questioners to raise supplementary questions.

A copy of the questions and answers was circulated separately and can be viewed on the Council website with the meeting papers.

### **24. Member questions**

18 questions were received from Councillors which were answered by the Cabinet Members indicated. A copy of the questions and answers was circulated separately and can be viewed on the Council's website with the meeting papers.

### **25. Motions**

The first motion was moved by Councillor Bonavia and seconded by Councillor Latouche . Following contributions from Councillor Slater and

Speaker Anwar, the motion was then put to the vote and declared to be clearly carried. Councillor Gibbons asked that his vote in abstention be recorded.

RESOLVED that the following motion be agreed:

### **1. Adopting the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims working definition of Islamophobia**

#### **This council notes:**

- The huge contribution that Muslim residents make to the borough whether that is through the participation of civic life, contributions to voluntary work or cultural events.
- This council is a borough of sanctuary, which is proud of its diversity and standing against all forms of racism
- In 2019/20 over 50% of religious hate crimes recorded by the police was targeted towards Muslims (Home Office, 2020)

#### **This council resolves to:**

1. Adopt the All Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims working definition of Islamophobia:

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

Contemporary examples of Islamophobia in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in encounters between religions and non-religions in the public sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, instigating or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims in the name of a racist/ fascist ideology, or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as such, or of Muslims as a collective group, such as, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslim entryism in politics, government or other societal institutions; the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism, and claims of a demographic ‘threat’ posed by Muslims or of a ‘Muslim takeover’.
- Accusing Muslims as a group of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person or group of Muslim individuals, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.
- Accusing Muslims as a group, or Muslim majority states, of inventing or exaggerating Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing or genocide perpetrated against Muslims.

- Accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to the 'Ummah' (transnational Muslim community) or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying Muslim populations the right to self-determination e.g., by claiming that the existence of an independent Palestine or Kashmir is a terrorist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims behaviours that are not expected or demanded of any other groups in society, e.g. loyalty tests.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic Islamophobia
- Holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of any Muslim majority state, whether secular or constitutionally Islamic.

The second motion was moved by Councillor Walsh and seconded by Councillor Kalu. Following a contribution from Councillor Smith the motion was then put to the vote and declared to be unanimously carried.

RESOLVED that the following motion be agreed:

### **Unlocking the potential of local high streets**

**This Council believes** that healthy high streets are essential for community cohesion, civic pride, employment, shopping, services and leisure. But many shops and businesses were struggling even before the Covid pandemic: high street retail employment fell in more than three-quarters of local authorities between 2015 and 2018 according to the Office of National Statistics (1) and more than half of all UK consumers were shopping online before the pandemic (2).

**This Council notes** that retail is among the sectors most affected by the coronavirus pandemic, and retail workers have been on the frontline of the crisis throughout. The almost complete shutdown of non-essential shops between March and June 2020 has hit businesses hard, and the need for social distancing has changed the way many businesses operate, reducing footfall. The pandemic has accelerated what, in many cases, has been a longer trend of lower footfall and changing shopping habits. As the Portas Review a decade ago acknowledged, the form and function of many high streets needs to radically change if they are to adapt and survive.

**This Council welcomes** the willingness of Government to acknowledge the problems, however it must not be more empty rhetoric — Towns across the country need action now and this must be fairly resourced centrally, but led locally by those of us who know and understand our communities;

The Treasury Select Committee stated in 2019, the current system of Business Rates places an unfair burden on “bricks and mortar” businesses compared to online ones, and the Business Rate system needs radical overhaul (3).

### **This Council resolves to:**

- Write to the Government to urge them to undertake an urgent review of business rates in order to support high street businesses recovery from the pandemic ,and level the playing field between online and high street businesses, to make it fair and sustainable for all.
- Sign up to the Co-operative Party’s Unlock the High Street Campaign and explore what local action can be taken to revive our high streets now whilst business rates are reviewed.
- Sign LB of Lewisham up to the Co-operative Party’s campaign to devolve the Towns Fund, Levelling Up Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other national funding pots, to give local communities, councils and regions the



The third motion was moved by Councillor John Paschoud and seconded by Councillor Hall . Following a contribution from Councillor Smith, the motion was then put to the vote and declared to be clearly carried. Councillor Gibbons asked that his vote in abstention be recorded.

RESOLVED that the following motion be agreed:

### **Planning Reforms**

This Council believes planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; and therefore calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to object to individual planning applications.

The fourth motion was moved by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Ingleby. Following contributions from Councillors Clarke, Curran and Moore the motion was then put to the vote and declared to be unanimously carried.

RESOLVED that the following motion be agreed:

### **Grove Park District Park**

#### **Lewisham Council notes that:**

- The stretch of Metropolitan Open Land in Grove Park, running from the South Circular at Lee to Grove Park town centre, offers a unique linear expanse of natural parkland;
- The railway embankment that borders this land represents an important cultural heritage asset in Grove Park, as the place that inspired Edith Nesbit to write her famous book *The Railway Children*;
- The Grove Park Neighbourhood Forum and other community groups have developed proposals to link up these green spaces in order to create a District Park, responding directly to the Government's commitment to 'Build Back Greener';
- Support for these proposals is reflected in the draft Grove Park Neighbourhood Plan and in the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy;
- The proposed District Park is supported by CPRE London (Campaign to Protect Rural England) as part of their *Ten New Parks for London* campaign;
- The Council has put a number of designations in place to protect the land that makes up the proposed District Park. The land is designated as Metropolitan Open Land and as a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. Tree Protection Orders are in place on all sites not in Council ownership and part of the land owned by the Council has been designated as a nature reserve;
- The Council has worked closely with the local community to improve access to these green spaces, helping to deliver improvements to the Railway Children Walk and supporting the management of the Grove Park Nature Reserve;
- Several parts of this land are in private ownership, including a site owned by Network Rail, and concerns have been raised about breaches of planning law at some of these sites.

### **Lewisham Council believes that:**

- Open and accessible green spaces are vital for the wellbeing of local residents, the conservation of our natural environment and the protection of wildlife and biodiversity in Lewisham;
- The Council has an important role to play in facilitating and supporting local community groups to realise their ambitions for their neighbourhood;
- The creation of an integrated District Park in Grove Park could offer significant opportunities for walking, cycling, recreation, leisure, learning and play, enabling residents to enjoy this natural parkland and celebrate its cultural heritage, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the renewed importance of open and accessible green spaces;
- All landowners have a responsibility to follow planning law and ensure they comply with designations in place to protect green spaces, wildlife and biodiversity.

### **Lewisham Council resolves to:**

- Work with the local community and support community-led projects which seek to enhance and improve this land;
- Engage key partners, landowners and stakeholders in the area, such as Network Rail, Thames Water, the Environment Agency, the GLA and Transport for London, and seek to secure their support for the creation of an integrated District Park, as well as working together to ensure responsible land management and the protection of this important green corridor;
- Maintain the current protections in this area and seek to prevent inappropriate development;
- Hold private landowners accountable for breaches of planning law, taking enforcement action where appropriate;
- Explore all feasible options for acquisition when land in private ownership in this area becomes available.

## **26. Parental Leave Councillor McGeevor**

Councillor Joan Millbank moved that the recommendations be approved and this was seconded by Councillor Hilary Moore and it was then unanimously:

**RESOLVED** that the Council in accordance with Section 85 of the Local

Government Act 1972, approves Councillor McGeevor's non-attendance at meetings until the end of January 2022 so as to accommodate her parental leave.

## 27. Executive Composition

The Mayor informed the Council that the members, listed below, will serve as members of the Cabinet in the remainder of this municipal year.

Name	Portfolio
Damien Egan	Mayor of Lewisham
Cllr Brenda Dacres	Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Member for Safer Communities
Cllr Chris Barnham	Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance
Cllr Paul Bell	Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning
Cllr Chris Best	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care
Cllr Kevin Bonavia	Cabinet Member for Democracy, Refugees and Accountability
Cllr André Bourne	Cabinet Member for Culture
Cllr Pat Codd	Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport
Cllr Kim Powell	Cabinet Member for Business and Community Wealth Building
Cllr Amanda de Ryk	Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

### Proposed Champions – July 2021

Air Quality champion	Cllr Samantha Latouche
Evening & Night Time Economy champion	Cllr James-J Walsh
Women's Night Time Safety champion	Cllr Octavia Holland
Mental Health champion	Cllr James Rathbone
Cycling champion	Cllr Mark Ingleby
Armed Forces champion	Cllr Kevin Bonavia
Heritage champion	Cllr Chris Best

**RESOLVED** that the constitution and composition of the Executive for the municipal year 2021/22 be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.32pm