

MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

Wednesday, 17 July 2024 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Jacq Paschoud, (Chair), Tauseef Anwar, Yemisi Anifowose, Dawn Atkinson, Chris Barnham, Paul Bell, Peter Bernards, Bill Brown, Suzannah Clarke, Will Cooper, Laura Cunningham, Mayor Brenda Dacres, Sophie Davis, Sian Eiles, Ese Erheriene, Billy Harding, Coral Howard, Mark Ingleby, Mark Jackson, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Eva Kestner, Louise Krupski, Ayesha Lahai-Taylor, Jack Lavery, Aisha Malik-Smith, Joan Millbank, John Muldoon, Oana Olaru-Holmes, Rachel Onikosi, Rosie Parry, John Paschoud, Stephen Penfold, Kim Powell, James Rathbone, James Royston, Sakina Sheikh, Luke Sorba, Eva Stamirowski, Rudi Schmidt, Aliya Sheikh, Liam Shrivastava, Hau-Yu Tam, Luke Warner, Carol Webley-Brown and Susan Wise

Attending remotely Councillors Edison Huynh and James-J Walsh.

ALSO PRESENT: Jennifer Daothong – Chief Executive, Jeremy Chambers – Director of Law and Corporate Governance, Emma Campbell Smith – Head of Governance and Committee Services.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chris Best, Councillor Andre Bourne, Councillor Natasha Burgess, Councillor Liam Curran, Councillor Amanda De Ryk and Councillor Hilary Moore

1. Minutes

The Speaker MOVED, the Deputy Speaker SECONDED and it was RESOLVED that the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a true and accurate record.

2. Declaration of Interests

None.

3. Announcements or Communications

The Mayor welcomed Cllr Pauline Dall to the Council. She had been elected in a recent by-election to serve as ward councillor in Blackheath.

The Mayor announced Councillor Oana Olaru-Holmes as the new Cabinet member for Safer Lewisham Refugees and Equalities.

The Mayor thanked Lewisham Foodbank for all their work in meeting the needs of the local community. She then invited a representative to speak on behalf of the charity. The project manager addressed the Council. She said that they were thrilled to be nominated charity of the year in 2023. The news had come at a time when demand for food was increasing, and supply was being stretched to the limit. She thanked the Council for the money raised through fundraising events and the support they had received from councillors and officers. The Mayor presented the

charity with a cheque for £22, 848. This money had been raised from the charity events.

The Mayor announced that Urban Synergy would be her charity for the year. She had known the founder Leila Thomas for a number of years and had been impressed by the commitment she had made to the young people in Lewisham. Synergy provided mentoring and work experience opportunities for young people. A video was then shown of the work that Synergy do and can be seen on this link. <https://youtu.be/6Bqb4aW04Fk> The Mayor then invited Ms Thomas to address the Council. Ms Thomas said that Synergy helped to bridge the gap between education and the world of work. It showcased all the different jobs that might appeal them and then supported them in accessing these roles. She thanked Lewisham Council for their financial support.

The Mayor announced that Leila Thomas would be her Mayoress for the municipal year 2024/25.

4. Petitions

There were no petitions.

5. Public Questions

Supplementary questions were asked and answered as follows:

Supplementary to Question 21

Paul Maslin: Does the Council continue to believe that ‘concerns’ expressed about how self-identification could impact women-only spaces’, are expressions of ‘moral panic’ and does it think that these should therefore be ignored?

Cllr Bell: The Council did not say this. This Council does not believe that discrimination should exist in any part of our community. In this case the Trans community are legally able to use any cubicle they wish at any stage of transition. This Council supports the Trans community Trans people entitled to use single sex facilities in accordance with their gender identity and should not be required to use gender neutral toilets unless they wish to do so.

Supplementary Question 31

Mark Bennett: What issues does the Mayor expect to raise with the Met Commander at their next meeting?

Dacres: I have not yet decided the issues I wish to raise with him, but they will be current issues within Lewisham.

Supplementary Question 32

Mark Bennett: Will you remind Councillor Krupski that she should answer the question raised rather than answer the question she wanted to be asked.

Dacres: There is a timeline in which preparation for the reply to supplementary questions takes place. A resident will receive a more complete answer if the question is submitted before the meeting.

Cllr Krupski: The answers I have prepared are from supplementary questions that have been submitted to me in writing. I will look at a script because I have

prepared carefully. It is better for me to have a well-prepared answer rather than being unable to have time to consider my response.

Supplementary Question 39

Alan Hall: In 2020, a former Cabinet member stated that budgets in Lewisham ‘disintegrated on the first contact with reality’. The reply from the Cabinet member referred to significant overspends in certain areas. What has changed?

Cllr Dacres: Very little has changed because of 14 years of cuts imposed on the local community by central government. That is why there is the Lewisham Food Bank, supporting local residents and making a difference to their lives. The future is not known, but officers and members were working hard to provide statutory duties and trying to drive down costs and pressures to meet the needs of residents in Lewisham.

Supplementary Question 40

Alan Hall: Having spent £1484.30 on LGBT pride, how much is left in the budget for the rest of the financial year, and what are the celebrations proposed for LGBT+ community and our history within this borough.

Cllr Huynh: The costs in the reply related to Lewisham’s attendance at Pride in London. The percentage of the budget remaining will be provided by the end of the week.

Supplementary Question 49

Julia Webb: Please could you ask planning and highways to collaborate with TfL on compiling a specific shopping list of capital projects for public transport at Bell Green.

Cllr Walsh: We are always looking to make improvements. I want to work with Cllr Krupski to champion the needs of the area. Bus provision in the area is limited due to a hard infrastructure; a bridge goes across the road in that area. Representation on this issue has been raised with TfL.

Supplementary Question 50

Julia Webb: Indications in the Lewisham current local plan, that Barrett’s proposed scheme on the gas holder’s site will be deliverable in the first five years, is based on intelligence from the developers. Comments made by developers is merging through documents without disclaimers. How does Lewisham verify claims made before they get repeated without disclaimers and then assumed to be the Council’s own position.

Cllr Walsh: Planning officers take the evidence on board and assess it and rigorously put that through their processes; cross checking where appropriate. I will double check this information and get back to you.

Supplementary Question 51

Mark Morris: Why has the re-opening of Lewisham Library been delayed and what assurances can be given that there will not be any more.

Cllr Huynh: The restoration is a complex development. Delays had been due to design changes and structural issues. Details of these changes would be submitted to planning committee later this month. Until the Library opens, Lewisham would remain committed to the drop-in service at any of our libraries.

6. Member Questions

Supplementary Questions were asked and answered as follows:

Supplementary to Question 1

Councillor Shrivastava: In November 2023, I meet with Cllr Krupski, local residents local and M.P Vicky Foxcroft who raised concerns about road safety and air pollution around Cold Blow Lane tunnel. I presented a petition signed by local residents asking the Council to pedestrianise the tunnel. In two weeks and experimental traffic order will be implemented. As this is a temporary order, do you have any advice for local residents on how we can ensure this pedestrianised scheme is a success?

Councillor Krupski: Use the walk and prove that it has the potential to be a fantastic route. It will be good on match days when Millwall football fans can walk to the ground in safety. Respond to the consultation and make sure it is organised and encourage everyone to respond favourably.

Supplementary to Question 2

Councillor Lahai-Taylor: Please can you say a few words about SEEN Lewisham festival, which took place a Broadway Theatre last month?

Councillor Huynh: It was part of our manifesto to deliver a global majority arts. Over 50 events were held in the theatre and libraries, and the numbers of people attending these events was as follows:

- Participants of all events at the Broadway Theatre 3,682
- The Pop-up market engaged 60 global majority sellers makers, and creators, with 400 people attending the market.
- 254 people attended the SEEN Lewisham Family day
- 400 children were engaged within schools in events run by Jazz refreshed.
- 42 local people signed up to Lewisham Goes Gospel – SEEN Festivals Community Choir
- The pop up library at The Broadway Theatre received 233 visits
- 25 volunteers involved in delivery of the event

It was a good week of events and I hope to repeat the success next year.

Supplementary to MQ 3

Councillor Sorba: Can I be reassured that a conversation will now take place between our officers and TfL that I can report back to my constituents about the designation of this road?

Councillor Krupski: Yes we will be doing that.

Supplementary to Question 4

Councillor Parry: What is Lewisham Labour doing to increase the number of EV charging points in the Borough?

Councillor Krupski: London has dangerous levels of air pollution with the majority of pollution in London coming from road transport. This impacts our health and contributes to climate change.

Lewisham Labour continues to support the replacing petrol and diesel vehicles with electric vehicles.

We are supporting our residents with switching to electric vehicles providing much needed on-street charging infrastructure, as not everyone has such facilities off-street. To complement the existing 211 electric charging units, another 50 will be implemented this financial year, with an ambition to significantly increase by another 200 over the next 2 years.

In order to fund this, we are also applying for the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Scheme funding, in partnership with Royal Borough of Greenwich. The partnership has been allocated £2.98 million and we expect to receive the full amount.

Whilst I am excited about this programme, electric vehicles are not the answer to the climate crisis. In order to get to true net zero, we need a programme to help residents to choose to move away from motorised personal vehicles. Alongside the LEVI charging roll out, we have a programme of measures which enable residents to transition into active transport whilst supporting residents with health and disability issues to continue driving and parking freely throughout the borough.

Supplementary to Question 5

Councillor Walker: Have outcomes for disadvantaged children, including Looked after Children, improved in recent years and how does this exist for other areas?

Councillor Barnham: As pledged in 2022, we are committed to a comprehensive school system in which all children can succeed. The difference between the achievements of SEN children and others is a big and is a worrying part of our educational system. Most of the schools in Lewisham, according to Ofsted, are good or outstanding. Looked after children had their best GCSE results in 2023 and the highest number of children starting university from 'A' level courses, so the situation was improving.

Each year, Children and Young People's Select Committee looks at outcomes by different demographic categories. In their report in March, it showed that disadvantaged children are making more progress in our secondary schools than is the average nationally. Children with SEN are also making more progress in our schools than is the case nationally. It is encouraging that progress is being made but there is still a long way to go to where they need to be. Lewisham will support schools to help them achieve their goals.

7. Committee appointments

It was MOVED by Cllr Millbank , SECONDED by Cllr Stamirowski and RESOLVED to appoint Cllr Dall to Planning Committee B.

8. Motions

There were no motions.