Minutes of the Council Meeting
Of the London Borough of Redbridge on Thursday, 20 June 2019

Thursday, 20th June, 2019 (7.15 p.m. - 11.23 p.m.)


Officials: Chief Executive, Corporate Director of People, Corporate Director of Resources, Corporate Director of Strategy, Operational Director – Assurance and Head of Democratic Services and Elections.

Public: 65

Prayers were said by the Mayor's Chaplain.

1. Apologies for Absence (COU/01/200619)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Farah Hussain, Rai, Santos and Turbefield.

2. Declarations of Interest (COU/02/200619)

All Members and officers in attendance were reminded of the requirement to consider whether they had an interest in any matter on the agenda that needed to be disclosed and, if so, to declare the interest when Council reached that item on the agenda.

3. Correspondence (if any) (COU/03/200619)

Correspondence was received from Councillor Robin Turbefield that he had resigned from the Conservative Group and would serve on the Council as an Independent Member.

4. To receive the Mayor's announcements (COU/06/04/200619)

(i) Upcoming Mayoral events:

- An event would be hosted at Spice Khazana on 9 July. Details had been circulated to all Members and the Mayor would welcome all support offered;

- The Mayor was hoping to host a meal at a local Chinese Restaurant,
further details of which would be circulated once confirmed;

- The Mayors Civic Service would be held on Sunday 14 July at the Islamic Community Centre, Albert Road and he welcomed the attendance of all present.

5. To hear questions from members of the public and replies thereto, in accordance with Standing Order 17 (COU/05/200619)

1) Mr Intisar Shah asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal, that as it was a full year since Redbridge Council agreed to look into the setting up of purpose built GP premises along the lines of the so called Basildon model, could Councillor Santos or the responsible councillor report on how close we were to seeing these additional GP places coming on stream, which was particularly important for attracting GPs to the area in light of the recent news about the nationwide drop in the numbers of GPs.

The Leader replied that he could confirm that good progress had been made over the year. The Council was actively progressing the plans with the CCG for a new GP surgery to sit alongside the Council’s community hub in Seven Kings. The consultation on that community hub had started and the CCG had also confirmed that they would like GP provision to be included in any proposals for the Gants Hill Hub, which the Council would consider alongside consideration of what the residents wanted. More work was needed, but the Council had to ensure that the CCG was on board and they were on board for the first two community hubs, which would be in Seven Kings, where the consultation had started, and Gants Hill community Hub, where the consultation had started online. Public events would be coming up in the following months and once that stage was past the hope was to have both the community hubs built before the next term, but certainly within the next three years. This would take time because it had to follow rigorously through a Planning process and then from there to procurement before building started. This was high on the agenda and had not been forgotten.

By way of supplementary, Mr Shah asked whether GP premises would be incorporated into all the Community Hubs and would the number of GP places be data driven.

The Leader replied that data was a big driver because like all local residents he did not like to wait when he fell ill as he sometimes had regained full fitness by the time an appointment came around and he had to remember to cancel that appointment. With regard to the future of the community Hubs, the Council had stated it wanted public participation to shape them and if the public asked for GP premises then they would be provided in the subsequent community hubs, as time progressed. He however did not want to commit to something and at the same time be saying that it would be driven by public consultation. He believed however that the public would agree that the community hubs should have GP surgeries within them and the Council would be listening to the public and making sure that this was delivered.
2) Mr Andy Walker asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal, whether the Leader would agree to help the “Save King George A&E and Extend it instead” campaign by writing to Mr Hancock, the Secretary of State for Health asking him to revoke the 2011 Government decision to close King George A&E; writing to BHRUT to request they provide a universal ambulatory care service at King George; and live streaming the meeting from his phone on the Council Facebook page to amplify the campaign to extend King George Hospital during the petition debate on King George.

The Leader replied that King George Hospital (KGH) A&E was not under threat nor was it going to be closed. He had written to Andrew Lansley, Jeremy Hunt and Matt Hancock when the A&E was under threat. It was no longer under threat as Mr Walker had seen publicly, privately, in writing and in recordings. He would therefore not be writing to the Secretary of State. In terms of the universal ambulatory care service, the clinical strategy was being developed and the Council would feed into that. In terms of live streaming Mr Walker’s Facebook Page on the Council’s website, the Council would not want to set any kind of precedent where an external person was live streaming anything on its Facebook page especially when they were not actually telling the truth, such as that KGH A&E was under some kind of threat. In this chamber there were 63 councillors from differing political parties and none of them agreed with Mr Walker. Everybody was happy, rejoicing that the A&E was no longer under threat. Mr Walker needed to accept that as well. The battle had been won.

By way of supplementary, Mr Walker asked whether he could have the Leader’s permission to put up a banner at the Town Hall before 20 July to say we should be campaigning to extend KGH?

The Leader replied that Mr Walker was clearly not listening, as he had just said that KGH A&E was not under any kind of threat. Why would the Council, the residents, the councillors, want to put up something that was scaremongering, scaring the staff who may feel that their jobs were under threat, when they were not. There would be no banner on the Town Hall because as he had said many times KGH was not under threat. He could not be any clearer than that and he thought that everybody in the Chamber should be happy and accept that KGH A&E was safe.

3) Laura Wingrove asked the Cabinet Member for Civic Pride, Councillor Howard, whether Redbridge Council would consider following in the footsteps of councils like Rotherham in changing their current model of mowing, weeding and spraying grass verges within the borough to a money-saving and nature-regenerating Re-Wilding scheme, with three main focuses—planting of local wildflowers and regenerative plants on the verges instead, to promote a resurgence in pollinator populations, elimination of mowing on the verges unless necessary for plant regrowth, and eliminating the use of all harmful, toxic and bee-killing pesticides on the verges.

Councillor Howard Replied that the short answer was yes. It was something the Council was looking to establish. There were areas that had to be maintained for safety reasons, such as at junction corners and important roads. The Council was looking to improve biodiversity. There was a trial
scheme in place, working in partnership with local residents within 5 roads, looking at spaces throughout the Borough that consisted of parks and grass verges. This would be continued. The Council was looking to develop its own policy around increasing biodiversity and how to do that with the local community. Grass verges would only be cut once or twice a year to enable flowering bulbs. Pesticides were only used on hard standing areas and shrub beds and were not used on grass verges at all. This was definitely going to be looked at and he was hoping to come back at some point in the near future to talk about exactly how it was going to be delivered.

**By way of supplementary Ms Wingrove asked** whether Councillors Blackman and Howard would consider adding these rewilding efforts and replanting of native wildflowers to measure No 9 of the Climate Change motion which was improving biodiversity and carbon storage.

Councillor Howard replied, yes. There was a part of the motion to look at a working panel with a broad heading, so the things Ms Wingrove mentioned were things that were definitely going to be considered. It would not be mentioned in the motion but would definitely be looked at with a report back to Cabinet.

4) **Mr Alec Cushway asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal**, that given that the Early Bird membership increase would make it financially difficult for him and others to continue swimming at Fulwell Cross and would have a direct impact on his health and on several of his fellow swimmers, when a neighbouring borough offered swimming for the elderly at £52 per year, while Vision RCL wanted to increase to £240 per year, nearly 5 times the cost, was the reason that this borough could not do the same and offer swimming at the same rate, because of the inefficient running of Fulwell Cross by Vision RCL?”

The Leader replied that they would look into it. Vision was an independent company of the Council and residents over 60 years of age could swim freely from 1:30pm to 5:30pm at the various swimming pools throughout Redbridge, and for those over 60 years who swam 5 days a week outside the free period this was an increase of 10p a swim. That was the answer given by officers of Vision. In his view if it is such a small figure for residents it is a small figure for Vision. Swimming made such a difference to people’s lives and such a difference to the health impact on the Borough so he would take what Mr Cushway was saying back to Vision because he was not quite content with the answer that was provided.

**By way of supplementary Mr Cushway asked** that given that Fullwell Cross informed them that the prices were equivalent to neighbouring Boroughs, but they were not, as Barking gave swimming to over 60’s at £52 per year, why the price difference between Redbridge and Barking?

The Leader replied that he could not comment on what the prices were, but he would certainly start a campaign to say that they wanted the same prices as neighbouring boroughs if Vision was increasing the prices. There was a current system that worked, that people liked and what he would try to do was carry on with that. He was not aware of what Barking and Dagenham
charged but he knew what Vision charged and what Vision wanted to charge, as well as that residents were not happy with what Vision was about to charge, so he would try to see what could be done about it.

5) Mr Len Anness was not present to ask his question and the Mayor advised that a written response would be sent to him.

6) Ms Habiba Ali asked the Cabinet Member for Planning and Planning Enforcement, Councillor Bain how would the Council support infrastructure around the huge amount of housing constructed in the Ilford South area as the infrastructure in the Redbridge local plan was highly inadequate for the indicative let alone the doubled up figures these builds were now being proposed at.

Councillor Bain replied that the Council had numerous means of providing supportive infrastructure for the Borough. The Local Plan (2015-30) had set an ambitious growth agenda for Ilford. This ambitious growth will be increased through the new London Plan. The Local Plan considered infrastructure requirements (primarily, education, and health) to support the growth anticipated over the full 15 years of the plan. Where required, the Local Plan allocated sites for new schools, community buildings and health facilities and schemes were generally being seen promoting these uses in line with the Plan.

Whilst the housing numbers on some sites were in excess of the allocations, they remained within the totals broadly expected over the full 15 years and therefore the Council’s assessments were likely to be broadly accurate. The infrastructure provision would be kept under constant review. There were number of new housing developments coming forward in Ilford and the Council was determined to balance this with more facilities and benefits for its communities. She would urge residents to take part in the consultations to influence these new developments.

Redbridge was one of the fastest growing Local Authorities in the country and the second most crowded borough in London, meaning that it had the second fewest homes relative to its population size in London. Redbridge also had the second lowest amount of housing stock in London, thousands less than neighbouring boroughs. There was a housing crisis in London and, here in Redbridge, more than 5,500 people were on the housing waiting list. The main reason for the huge increase in the number of homeless families was the lack of affordable housing.

Development of new homes was a priority for the Administration. Everyone deserved to live in a decent home. The Council was committed to improving life for its residents and delivering the housing and facilities they deserved.

By way of supplementary Ms Ali asked that given that Extinction Rebellion were in the Chamber and the Council had been discussing a climate emergency, how did the Council consolidate this with their drive to increase pollution by building high rises in densely polluted areas south of Redbridge, which sounded counter intuitive to the Council proposals.
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Councillor Bain replied that all of the developments in Redbridge would be sustainable and follow the highest regulations in relation to new buildings.

7) Meenakshi Sharma asked the Cabinet Member for Civic Pride, Councillor Howard why did the Draft Air Quality Action Plan 2019-2024, on which there was currently a consultation, rely on modelled pollution data from 2013, rather than on real time data from the most up-to-date Redbridge Air Quality Annual Status Report and why did it not include modelled data from the Redbridge Local Plan analysis, which showed, due to the distribution of new housing units, Ilford South would have an average 30% increase in traffic flow, while some other areas would actually see a decrease in traffic flow.

Councillor Howard replied that at the time of drafting the Air Quality Action plan, 2013 was the latest modelling data set that was available. Since then, the 2016 data had become available and as the plan had gone to consultation as a draft, the final version would be updated. The important point was that the plan did not rely on data produced from the emissions modelling work. The fundamental point was that it was known that there was a problem with pollution in the Borough and that this needed to be fixed. The level of pollution just magnified how bad the situation was. As Councillor Bain touched on as well, the development of new housing units required Air Quality assessments. The Council was using detailed computer modelling of real time data to establish the existing pollution in the area. The assessment had to meet the Air Quality neutral benchmarks and Air Quality Objectives criteria for exposure, to minimise the impact on local air quality, and all major developments in Ilford South were part of this. As Councillor Bain mentioned earlier there was also a requirement on new build and new developments to reduce car ownership and to help increase the public transport offer. Many of the flats on Ilford Hill were helping fund the new Ilford Crossrail Station entrance, which looked fantastic. It was also part of the plan to improve walking and cycling within Ilford, to create a less polluted Ilford Town Centre generally, and to help reduce car ownership and reduce overall levels of pollution from transport in the area.

By way of supplementary Ms Sharma asked that given that in the draft AQAP it was very clear that the more deprived areas inevitably had higher levels of pollution, and given that 14,000 units of the 17,000 odd in the Local Plan were in Ilford South, she was amazed and shocked at the little amount of attention given to this fact within this consultation and did the Council realise that no account was being taken of class and race issues in their allocation of resources, given that the most deprived areas had much higher levels of ethnic minorities, who inevitably were more deprived.

Councillor Howard replied that not all the high air pollution areas were in Ilford South. A number of them were along the A12 corridor, which affected a number of different wards on a range of different income levels. In fact, one of the most polluted areas was on Herman Hill on the approach to Charlie Brown’s roundabout. However, when housing development and building new houses was talked about people objected because of bad air pollution. This was not from a genuine concern about stopping air pollution. It was about stopping development. The Council needed to step up and tackle air pollution whether or not houses were built. The question was not whether to build or
not. It was about what sort of development was needed in an area and the critical question was about building cleaner greener better communities that supported low air pollution areas. Ilford South was a good example of that, where badly needed new homes were being built. New homes for people in Redbridge to live in and work and bring up families. The Council was underpinning the regeneration strategy in the area, was reducing car parking spaces and investing money from TFL into Ilford to increase walking and cycling. To suggest that the Council was not doing things properly because it was racist was the most ridiculous thing he had ever heard.

8) Mr Philip Barker asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal, whether he agreed that a one bedroom flat requiring a minimum income of £55,000 should accurately be described as affordable housing and how much section 106 money had Redbridge spent on housing, for what purposes, per year from 2012 to 2019.

The Leader replied that there were three types of affordable housing in London, the London Affordable Rent, London Living Rent and Shared Ownership. He could go through each one but just to put them under the banner of affordable housing and ask a question did not do them justice. The section 106 spend on affordable housing since 2012 was as follows:

- 2013/14 – the total spend was £2,500,000
- 2014/15 – the total spend was £2,500,000
- 2015/16 – the total spend was £1,837,108

This gave a total of £6,837,108. Although the overall spend was NIL in the years 2016/17, 2017/18 and 2018/19, the total unspent would be allocated for the building of over 600 genuinely affordable homes by March 2022., which would total in the region of £8.2 million.

By way of supplementary Mr Barker asked that given that the £55,000 referred to in the Metropolitan Development and Shared Ownership was described as 100% affordable housing by the Cabinet, Head of Housing and the Deputy Head of the Council, would the new affordable housing in the Britannia buildings be at London Living Rent, which was described by the GLA as for middle income earners, which questionably has lower and higher cut off points, and could the Council Leader guarantee by just stating yes or no, that those who were most in need of housing on the Council waiting list would not be excluded from this housing.

The Leader replied that before saying yes or no he wanted to add some context to the question and his answer. Wherever the Council tried to build any type of housing there was push back from lots of people. However, there were targets that had to be met. Despite people in the Chamber saying you can’t build here, you can’t build there, if enough houses were not built the stark reality was that the Council would have the Planning portfolio taken away and it would be run from Central London by Central Government. That would not be a good thing because the Council needed to leverage whatever it could get in terms of infrastructure locally. In terms of housing needs, Redbridge was the second most overpopulated Borough in the whole of London, which meant that this Council for the last 50 years had not built
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enough houses and was in danger of having this taken away. The Council was
doing everything it could over the whole of the Borough. He wanted to give a
yes answer to the question Mr Barker asked and would build where they
thought it possible to do so.

6. **To receive any petitions, which will stand referred to the appropriate Chief
Officer in accordance with Standing Order 19 (COU/06/200619)**

The following petitions were submitted:

i. Petition submitted by Councillor Hatfull on behalf of residents of Southview
Crescent requesting that the Council take action to curtail drug dealing in
Southview Crescent and surrounding area;

ii. Petition submitted by Councillor Hehir on behalf of local residents, requesting
that the Council investigates the problem of speeding on New North Road and
consults with residents and local Ward Councillors about any potential
problems;

iii. Petition submitted by Councillor Donovan requesting that the Council declare
a Climate Emergency and take action to address the issues involved;

iv. Petition submitted by Councillor Merry on behalf of a local Eco-Church
community requesting that the Council declare a Climate Emergency and take
action to address the issues involved;

The Petitions will be referred to the Petitions Officer and the appropriate Chief Officer.

6a **Petition for Debate - No Built Development on Redbridge Green Belt
(COU/06a/200619)**

The report sought consideration of a petition which had 3,567 signatories, in excess of
the 1,500 signatories required for the matter to be debated at Full Council, in
accordance with the Council’s Petition Scheme.

The Petition’s request to the Council was “No built development on Redbridge Green
Belt” to stop the proposal to relocate the Corporation of London three massive London
markets - Billingsgate, Smithfields and New Spitalfields. The area pinpointed by the
Council was 162 acres of green belt farmland on Hainault and Red House Farms on
Hainault Road, Little Heath.

Mr Karlik Parekh addressed the Council on behalf of the Lead Petitioner, Mr Chris
Gannaway following which the petition was debated.

The recommendations in the report were put to the vote and declared carried.

**Resolved:** That Council:

(i) Note the petition; and
(ii) Note the comments of the Operational Director Regeneration, Property and Planning, set out in section 4 of this report.

(Councillor Berlin declared a personal interest as a member of Old Parkonians Cricket Club).

6b Petition for Debate - New Plan for King George Hospital A&E Closure (COU/06b/200619)

The report sought consideration of a petition which had 1,566 signatories, more than the 1,500 signatories required for the matter to be debated at Full Council, in accordance with the Council’s Petition Scheme.

The petition request to the Council was “Stop the new plan to close King George Hospital A&E and so overload Queens.”

Details in respect of the above were set out in section 3 of the report.

Mr Andy Walker addressed the Council as lead petitioner, after which the petition was debated.

The recommendations were put to the vote and declared carried.

Resolved: That Council:

(i) Note the petition: and

(ii) Note the comments of the Corporate Director of People set out in section 4 of the report.

The Mayor proposed that in accordance with Standing Order 22, the Order of Business be changed to enable item 13(II) (Business Motion on School Places) to be taken after item 7a (Deputation on Lack of School Places).

This motion was carried.

Resolved: Council agreed that pursuant to Standing Order 22 the Order of Business be changed to enable item 13(II) (Business Motion on School Places) to be taken after item 7a (Deputation on Lack of School Places).

7. To receive any deputations in accordance with Standing Order 20

7a Lack of School Places to Meet Demand in the West of the Borough (COU/07a/200619)

The deputation was from Lee Bonnick, Peter Sagoo, Rokaya Ahmed, Hannah Maggs, Rebeka Smith and Patience Rusinga. Mr Lee Bonnick, spokesperson for the deputation, addressed the Council, expanding on the issue that the deputation wished to bring to the Council’s attention.
Questions were put to the deputation by Members and responses were received.

Details of the matters raised by the spokesperson for the deputation, questions from councillors to the deputation and responses from members of the deputation, can be found in the audio recording on the Council’s website via the link


Resolved: That the deputation be thanked for their contribution.

(Councillor Vasey declared a personal interest in this matter as his son was caught up in the school places issues).

13(II) Business Motion - School Places (COU/13(II)/200619)

Councillor Adams moved and Councillor Mrs Nolan seconded the following business motion:

This Council notes that:

We are fortunate to have many outstanding schools within the Borough of Redbridge, and recognises the hard work and commitment of teachers, and other staff, in maintaining such high standards. The Council recognises the dedication of the admissions team in their efforts to provide school places to every young person in Redbridge.

Whilst there is a surplus of primary school places across the Borough, inadequate planning has led to a surplus of some 200 places in the Ilford region of the Borough, whilst other regions are left with chronic shortages. In 2019 dozens of children in the Woodford/Wanstead area were not offered any of their six preferences; including those that selected their six closest schools. These families were offered a school further than the two-mile statutory walking distance.

This Council moves that:

I. Offering pupils a primary school place within the statutory walking distance should be an explicit, measured, and publicly published target of the Admissions Department

II. An investigation should be carried out by the Admissions Department into:

   o Why primary school places were expanded in areas where we now have excess capacity;
   o Why primary school places were not expanded in areas that are now oversubscribed

This should be provided in a report to the Education Scrutiny Committee in due course. This report should also include, but not be limited to:

   o Current forward projections for primary school place demand across the Borough, and how these have altered from previous projections;
   o How the aforementioned projections were derived;
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- How the demand projections compare to current primary school expansion plans;
- A plan of action to meet the demand of primary school places, with the aim of offering every child a school within the statutory walking distance in every part of the borough;
- Whether an increased demand for primary school places will translate into higher secondary school place demand in coming years, and how this secondary school place demand may be met

III. Where, if at all, the report highlights areas of the Borough with significant, and persistent primary school place deficiency, the plan should aim to increase the number of school places to alleviate the issue within a reasonable timeline.

Amendment

An amendment to the Motion was moved by Councillor Norman and seconded by Councillor Athwal as follows:

This Council notes that:

We are fortunate to have Redbridge has many good and outstanding schools within the Borough of Redbridge, and This council recognises the hard work and commitment of teachers, and other staff in maintaining these high standards. The Council also recognises the dedication of the admissions team in their efforts to provide school places to every young person in Redbridge.

In addition, this Council notes the excellent achievement of the council’s Children’s Services team in being accredited a judgement of ‘OUTSTANDING,’ the highest accolade OFSTED can give and the highest in the history of the Borough despite the unprecedented funding cuts from the Conservative Government.

Whilst there is a surplus of are adequate primary school places across Redbridge inadequate planning has led to there is a surplus of some 200 places in the Ilford region South of the Borough, whilst other regions are left with chronic shortages and a small shortfall in the West. The Motion states that in 2019 dozens of Thirty-One children in the Woodford/Wanstead area were not offered West of the Borough across ten schools did not get any of their six preferences; including those some that selected their six closest schools. These families were instead offered a school further than the two-mile statutory walking distance.

The council notes that only 13 of the families mentioned above listed all 6 preferences when applying for school places. Had the families of all 31 children used all 6 preferences and chosen their 6 closest schools, there would have been only 6 families not given a preference school.

In 2014 30 additional school places were created in the West of the Borough to meet demand and as a result there were sufficient places in the West of the Borough in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. However, a small shortage of places currently exists across the 10 schools in the West of the
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Borough which has meant that some families have unfortunately not been offered a place as close to home as we would wish.

In recognition of this issue, the council will be creating 60 additional school places in the West of the Borough, in order to help as many families as possible.

All of these extra places will be provided for in time for the start of September 2019 School year.

This council notes that under the previous Conservative administration, over 6% of families were unable to get a place at a preference school. Since this Labour administration took control of the Council in 2014, the percentage of families not being offered a place at one of their 6 preferred schools has more than halved to less than 3%.

This Council moves that:

I. Offering pupils a primary school place within the statutory walking distance should be an explicit, measured, and publicly published target of the Admissions Department, but should also take into account the needs and wishes of parents who want their children to go to specific schools which are outside the two mile limit.

II. An investigation should be carried out by the Admissions Department into:

   - Why primary school places were expanded in areas where we now have excess capacity;
   - Why primary school places were not expanded in areas that are now oversubscribed

   This should be provided in a report to the Education Scrutiny Committee in due course. This report should also include, but not be limited to:

   - Current forward projections for primary school place demand across the Borough, and how these have altered from previous projections;
   - How the aforementioned projections were derived;
   - How the demand projections compare to current primary school expansion plans;
   - A plan of action to meet the demand of primary school places, with the aim of offering every child a school within the statutory walking distance in every part of the borough;
   - Whether an increased demand for primary school places will translate into higher secondary school place demand in coming years, and how this secondary school place demand may be met.

III. Where, if at all, the report highlights areas of the Borough with significant, and persistent primary school place deficiency, the plan should aim to increase the number of school places to alleviate the issue within a...
The Director of Education will commission a comprehensive review carried out jointly between officers in Education, Place and with school and parental consultation. It will explore all aspects of pupil place planning, projected housing development and estimated pupil yield from these, school capacity and where that will need to be increased, admission arrangements, and the advice and guidance offered to parents in expressing their preferences.

This review will be carried out during Autumn 2019, with interim progress reports being made to Education Scrutiny.

The outcomes of the review will be used to develop a new school Organisational Strategy, with detailed and updated school projections not only for each of the three pupil place planning areas but also at individual school by school level. It will include detailed proposals for capacity building in schools so that there is an integrated School Organisational Strategy and Education Capital Strategy.

Those integrated School Organisation and Education Capital Strategic plans will be presented to Cabinet for consideration in Spring 2020.

Following debate, the amendment was put to the vote using the electronic voting system and the result was as follows:


AGAINST: (0)

ABSTAIN: (1) Councillor Zulfiqar Hussain (Mayor)

The amendment was carried.

Following debate, the substantive motion, as amended, was put to the vote and was carried.

Resolved: That the following motion be agreed:

This Council notes that:

Redbridge has many good and outstanding schools. This council recognises the hard work and commitment of teachers, and other staff, in maintaining these high
standards. The Council also recognises the dedication of the admissions team in their efforts to provide school places to every young person in Redbridge.

In addition, this Council notes the excellent achievement of the council’s Children’s Services team in being accredited a judgement of ‘OUTSTANDING,’ the highest accolade OFSTED can give and the highest in the history of the Borough despite the unprecedented funding cuts from the Conservative Government.

Whilst there are adequate primary school places across Redbridge there is a surplus of some 200 places in the South of the Borough and a small shortfall in the West. In 2019 thirty-one children in the West of the Borough across 10 schools did not get any of their six preferences; including some that selected their six closest schools. These families were instead offered a school further than the two-mile statutory walking distance.

The council notes that only 13 of the families mentioned above listed all 6 preferences when applying for school places. Had the families of all 31 children used all 6 preferences and chosen their 6 closest schools, there would have been only 6 families not given a preference school.

In 2014 30 additional school places were created in the West of the Borough to meet demand and as a result there were sufficient places in the West of the Borough in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018. However, a small shortage of places currently exists across the 10 schools in the West of the Borough which has meant that some families have unfortunately not been offered a place as close to home as we would wish.

In recognition of this issue, the council will be creating 60 additional school places in the West of the Borough, in order to help as many families as possible. All of these extra places will be provided for in time for the start of September 2019 School year.

This council notes that under the previous Conservative administration, over 6% of families were unable to get a place at a preference school. Since this Labour administration took control of the Council in 2014, the percentage of families not being offered a place at one of their 6 preferred schools has more than halved to less than 3%.

This Council moves that:

I. Offering pupils a primary school place within the statutory walking distance should be an explicit, measured, and publicly published target of the Admissions Department, but should also take into account the needs and wishes of parents who want their children to go to specific schools which are outside the two-mile limit.

   o The Director of Education will commission a comprehensive review carried out jointly between officers in Education, Place and with school and parental consultation. It will explore all aspects of pupil place planning, projected housing development and estimated pupil yield from these, school capacity and where that will need to be increased, admission arrangements, and the advice and guidance offered to parents in expressing their 6 preferences.

   o This review will be carried out during Autumn 2019, with interim progress reports being made to Education Scrutiny.

   o The outcomes of the review will be used to develop a new school
Organisational Strategy, with detailed and updated school projections not only for each of the three pupil place planning areas but also at individual school by school level. It will include detailed proposals for capacity building in schools so that there is an integrated School Organisational Strategy and Education Capital Strategy.

Those integrated School Organisation and Education Capital Strategic plans will be presented to Cabinet for consideration in Spring 2020

(Prior to debate on this item Councillor Vasey declared a personal interest as his son was caught up in the school places issue)

7b Making Redbridge Enjoyable and Safe to Walk and Cycle (COU/7b/200619)

The deputation was from Kris Sangani, Hugh O'Dowd, Elise Brady and Tim Harris. Mr Sangani, spokesperson for the deputation, addressed the Council, expanding on the issue that the deputation wished to bring to the Council’s attention.

Questions were put to the deputation by Members and responses were received.

Details of the matters raised by the spokesperson for the deputation, questions from councillors to and responses from members of the deputation, can be found in the audio recording on the Council’s website via the following link:


Resolved: That the deputation be thanked for their contribution.

At this point in the meeting there was an adjournment for a ten minute comfort break.

8. To consider appointments of Members / Terms of Reference of Committees or other bodies (COU/08/200619)

8a Changes to Committee Memberships (COU/08a/200619)

The report proposed changes to appointments to Council Committees.

Resolved: That (i) Councillor Duffell replace Councillor S Bhamra as a member of the Standards (Hearings) Sub Committee;

(ii) Councillor Javed replace Councillor Zammett as a substitute member of the Pension Fund Committee.

9. To receive and consider the following report from Officers: (COU/09/200619)

9a Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19 (COU/09a/200619)

The report presented the Scrutiny Annual Report. Scrutiny existed to provide an
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independent examination of decisions by the Council’s Cabinet and other decision-making bodies. It ensured transparency and accountability and had an important role in challenging and informing policies and decisions.

Each year the Scrutiny Unit produced an Annual Report, which outlined scrutiny activities undertaken in the previous municipal year. This was sent in electronic form to Members of the Council and partner organisations and is available via the Council’s website (found under “Scrutiny in Redbridge”)

The Scrutiny Annual Report was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

Resolved: That Council notes the Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19 attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

10. To hear statements, if any, by the Leader of the Council, members of the Cabinet or Chairs of Committees in accordance with Standing Order 18 (COU/10/200619)

The Leader, in accordance with Standing Order 18.1, made a statement on the Outstanding Ofsted rating received by Children’s Services. He congratulated the Chief Officers and their teams, the Cabinet Member and the Chief Executive on such an extraordinary achievement.

The Leader of the Opposition replied to this statement.

Details of the Leader's statement, and the reply by the Leader of the Opposition can be found in the audio recording on the Council’s website via the following link:


11. To hear questions from Members and replies thereto, in accordance with Standing Order 17 (COU/11/200619)

1) Councillor Mrs Huggett asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal, whether he could explain why the Fairlop Liaison Group had not met during the last year.

The Leader replied that the Fairlop Gravel Advisory Panel (FGAP) was renamed the Fairlop Liaison Group (FLG). This body was not required to meet with any specified frequency and this was usually governed by the current status of planning applications and gravel operations. Given that the restoration of the last phase (Area D) to be worked was completed in December 2016, there was no requirement for the FGAP (now the FLG), to meet. There was no real work for it.

By way of supplementary Councillor Mrs Huggett asked whether the Leader could give an undertaking that the Panel would convene within the next 3 months, so that the issue over the Hall Road access, which was now extremely urgent, could be discussed by that group.
The Leader replied that the next FLG meeting was provisionally scheduled to take place on Friday 6th September 2019.

2) Councillor Berlin asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal that bearing in mind the Council's commitment to protect Redbridge Green Belt, would the Council now apply for Fields in Trust status at Oakfield Playing Fields?

The Leader replied that the straight answer was no. He knew that Councillor Berlin had asked this question many times before. He would like Councillor Berlin to know that whether it was Oakfield or the Fairlop Plain, it was very important to Redbridge. The local plan was something, that, had the Conservatives won the 2014 election, they would have supported and voted for. To put everyone's minds at rest, the lease with the Old Parkonians had been agreed. They had two leases, one which expired in 2025 and one in 2050 and they had both been normalised to 2050. That guaranteed that Old Parkonians will have a home until that particular time. He saw to that himself but did not feel the need to grandstand. However, now that he was asked, he felt the need to tell Councillor Berlin that the green belt was safe in Labour's hands.

By way of supplementary, Councillor Berlin asked whether the Leader would ask the Mayor to please arrange next year's annual cricket match at Oakfields.

The Leader replied by asking the Mayor whether he would please organise the cricket match as requested.

3) Councillor Canal asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal, that given that between 1995 and 2014 in England and Wales, over 100,000 people over 15 took their own life, 76,000, over 75%, were men; between 1995 and 2014, in Redbridge, 312 people over 15 took their own life, 245 were men, over 75% of the total; and that for several years suicide had been the largest cause of death amongst men aged under 49, and actually killed more men than prostate cancer, could the Leader advise what steps were being taken locally, nationally and regionally to address suicide amongst men and women, and also what steps were being taken to address the disproportionate number of suicides amongst men, and young men in particular.

The Leader replied that he knew the painful circumstances that had led to the question. The effects of suicide were felt long after the suicide itself. Prevention remained the absolute priority as well as improving the overall mental wellbeing of residents. Nationally, there were six key objectives:

1. Reduce the risk of suicide in key high-risk groups;
2. Tailor approaches to improve mental health in specific groups;
3. Reduce access to the means of suicide;
4. Provide better information and support to those bereaved or affected by suicide;
5. Support the media in delivering sensitive approaches to suicide and suicidal behaviour; and
6. Support research, data collection and monitoring.

Locally, the most recent Redbridge Suicide Prevention Strategy 2018 – 2021 built on existing work that sought to prevent suicides in Redbridge.
strategy refreshed the data on suicides to increase understanding of the scale of the issue in Redbridge and streamlined the ambitions set out in the last Redbridge Suicide Prevention Strategy. Strengthening partnerships was a key aim of the strategy to improve delivery of ambitions through a multi-agency suicide prevention action plan.

The strategy took a life-course approach to suicide prevention in Redbridge to enable identification of developmental stages, critical life periods and risk factors that allowed:

1. support of the mental wellbeing of residents in order to promote resilience and prevent escalation of challenges and concerns;
2. working more effectively with those at the greatest risk of suicides to reduce risk factors;
3. working with key health and social care services and community organisations to support groups that experienced the greatest suicide risk factors.

In addition to the local suicide prevention action plan, Redbridge was collaborating with neighbouring boroughs to maximise delivery for mental health outcomes across a bigger geographic area. More needed to be done and any light that could be shed on this problem together was needed because there was a need to work harder and better at this.

**By way of supplementary, Councillor Canal stated** that on 2 July 2017 Paul Simms aged 49 killed himself in Wanstead. His daughter, as part of her degree course had produced a 4-minute animation entitled “Manner,” which addressed issues surrounding male suicide and signposting support that was available to those who might need it. Councillor Canal asked whether the Leader would kindly consider publishing this animation video on the Redbridge website to highlight issues surrounding male suicide and the support that was available to those who may need it.

**The Leader replied that he** thought this was something that they could work together on, to publish the video and see how this could be developed further, to prevent any further suicides and alleviate some of the suffering, especially on those left behind.

4) **Councillor Brewer asked the Cabinet Member for Civic Pride, Councillor Howard,** whether he could summarise the measures to improve street cleanliness in South Woodford (not only in George Lane but across the whole ward) that were being delivered following the decision to invest an extra million pounds in street cleaning in 2019/20, despite £130 million in Central Government cuts.

**Councillor Howard replied** that this had given him an excellent opportunity to talk about the fact that this Administration cared about all parts of the Borough and did not limit themselves to certain parts of it and that they cared about all residents equally no matter where they lived. As part of the budget an extra £1 million was added to the street cleansing service which was unprecedented given the ongoing austerity of the Tory government’s plan to neuter local government. In South Woodford in particular, the Council was removing mechanical sweeping and introducing a regular manual clean, which would
give residents a much better quality of clean so when the street cleaning team finished that street it would be in a much better state.

Supplementary manual cleans would also be introduced and there would be a mechanical one on top, for the places that needed it. Regular litter picking teams were being introduced to undertake a programme of litter picking after bin day. Introduction of wheelie bins would help with reducing street litter and having litter picking the day after bin day would dramatically help that as well. For the moment, there was no pool of staff to cover holiday or sickness. Sometimes the problem in Redbridge was that there was an inconsistent service on occasion when someone was off sick or went on holiday. That would no longer be the case as there would be a team to cover that. There were also additional resources for flytipping and a focus on emptying litter bins and emptying flytipping hot spots and there would be an annual jet washing of high footfall areas such as George Lane, twice a year, which obviously would leave spaces like South Woodford Town Centre much cleaner than they were at the moment. They were also undertaking significant digitalisation of the service, which would improve response times and help make the service quicker and more effective, as well as introducing the fantastic red bag pilot for flats above shops, which would improve the appearance of George Lane and other small shopping parades.

By way of supplementary, Councillor Brewer asked whether Councillor Howard would assure residents that the administration would continue efforts to make all of South Woodford a cleaner place not least through improved enforcement and other preventative measures.

Councillor Howard responded, absolutely. The focus was on changing behaviours and having the appropriate enforcement where necessary. The west of the Borough was lucky because they had an excellent neighbourhood manager who he knew, from accounts from all sides, did sterling work. He would continue to support residents in South Woodford and to support Councillors to make the area better. The Council would continue to have dedicated enforcement for the West of the Borough and a dedicated cleansing team to make sure that South Woodford could be the best it could possibly be.

5) Councillor Mrs Clark asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal, whether he could say if there had been any progress looking into finding an alternative to Cashless Parking in the Parks.

The Leader replied that cashless parking was introduced approximately 18 months ago and had been very successful, making annual savings on cash collection. Charging the public to pay somewhere and then paying someone to go and pick up the cash from the metres resulted in very little money being made for the Council. More money was being made now. Following introduction, very few complaints were received (on average, one a month) about the service, and thousands of people continued to use the parks. The principle reason for introducing cashless parking was due to the ongoing vandalism of parking meters and thefts, with a loss of income totalling over £20,000 per annum, which will not be lost anymore. The Parking Strategy was looked at in April and went to Cabinet. The idea was to bring forward proposals together because, if done piecemeal, effectively, everything would have to be
 undone. This was going to tie in very nicely with the one-hour free parking, which was on its way. The controlled parking zones would also be introduced as well, and somehow they would try to deal with the cashless parking and allowing alternatives to that, which he knew Councillor Howard was working on.

By way of supplementary, Councillor Mrs Clark asked whether, when this one-hour free parking was introduced, would that apply to the parks as well because this would help the situation, where the old people who wanted the scratch card option, had approached her.

The Leader replied that it had always been said that the one-hour free parking was going to be on street parking. He was not going to make policy on the hoof now and introduce something different. There would be one-hour free parking, as was put in the Labour Group manifesto, on streets everywhere. That was where they wanted to get to. But the reason they had not reached there yet was because of the fraud that went on with the half hour free parking. People simply pressing the button and then moving on and doing it again and again. This time, with the one hour, they would just have to do it less frequently but they would still be defrauding the Council. The aim was to try to introduce contactless cards or some sort of other system universally, across the Borough, whether it was in the parks or on street.

6) Councillor Mrs Nolan asked the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Norman, whether, given that parents had been receiving misleading and unhelpful information about the allocation of primary school places from the Customer Contact Centre, who refused to put them through to the Admissions Department, would the Cabinet Member seek to avoid this additional stress and worry on parents by reinstating the system of parents being able to contact the Admissions department directly as soon as possible?”

Councillor Norman replied that she, along with the Director of Education were at that meeting when some parents raised their concerns over information and advice they had received from the Council when they had contacted the contact centre. The Operational Director explained he would look into it and they both had agreed that the concerns raised by some parents needed to be looked into to ensure the service helped every family every time. They also wanted to ensure that the advice and guidance offered was relevant, appropriate and accurate. However, in their view changing the system back to what it was previously would result in a return to the previous problems of long waits for responses at times when the demand for admission peaked. So instead, the focus of the Director's review would be how to improve the arrangements so that the needs of all families were met whether or not they were dealt with initially by the contact centre or were referred on to the admissions team.

By way of supplementary, Councillor Mrs Nolan asked for reassurance that the Contact Centre staff would be properly trained to ensure that they provided the proper information to parents, stating that parents needed to be sure about getting good and proper information about admissions and that if the contact centre continued to be used, staff there needed to be properly trained to be able to refer parents to the proper contacts, as what was happening at the moment was that they were not aware of anything and were just taking
numbers, which was unhelpful to parents and to Admissions.

**Councillor Norman replied** that she could assure Councillor Mrs Nolan that the review would actually address that question and the Director and herself were both quite committed to ensuring that parents received adequate, proper and responsive responses to enquiries.

7) **Councillor Vasey asked the Cabinet Member for Civic Pride, Councillor Howard** how much had been collected in fines by the camera on Fairlawn Drive over the period in which the signage had been down.

**Councillor Howard replied** that since the signage had been down £5,915 had been collected in fines. Since only one sign had been down this did not render the location unenforceable as a second sign was in situ and clearly visible.

By way of supplementary **Councillor Vasey asked** that given that at the Forum in the West of the Borough held in the autumn, the Leader committed to putting in lights on the signs to make them more visible to the people driving through there so that they were aware they were about to be fined, how does the Council think it is ethical when the Leader said the signage needed to be better at informing people, that it is in fact inadequate; and as there was half the signage there, how could they go from needing more signage to now it is fine, as the other sign was visible; and also, could Councillor Howard confirm that there were no problems on the bank holidays since the last time he asked this question.

**Councillor Howard replied** by answering the second question first saying that he could not confirm there were no problems but he would check and confirm to Councillor Vasey in writing. In terms of the first part of the question, the Leader’s response at the Local forums when residents told him about a set of problems, often was to go out and fix it, which was what made him such an excellent leader of this Administration. They went away and worked with officers but unfortunately were heavily regulated by the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directive 2016, which made very clear things they could and could not do. Unfortunately, lights could not be used and the Council was governed very strictly on what signs could be put up. They were planning to replace the sign but were waiting for a heavy-duty post to make sure it could not fall down again, before installing a second one. He had observed the signs and they said very specifically when one could not drive through, and he would urge people when going through the area to be aware of the signage and take note of it.

8) **Councillor Mrs Huggett stated when posing her question to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Norman**, that she believe that her original first question had been superseded by the Motion heard earlier and therefore proceeded to ask her supplementary question, which was whether the Cabinet Member could inform them of where the extra 60 school places would be in the west of the Borough.

**Councillor Norman replied** that the Council would be creating two bulge classes in the west of the Borough to help more of those families affected to get a place closer to home. One of those bulges would definitely be at Oakdale and
she believed that the second was proposed at Nightingale.

9) Councillor Berlin asked the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal, that given that the Council’s budget allowed for a £250,000 spend on a “High Street Improvement Fund,” how much of this was to be spent on High Street Barkingside.

The Leader replied that at the moment the Economic Development Teams around the Council were actually taking a health check of all the town centres so a decision had not been made. They were trying to identify the priority areas and alongside that, the opportunities to leverage match funding through grants. So, it was not just the £250,000, as they were hoping that they could maximize funding by utilising the high need areas and also making sure that the £250,000 was spent effectively, while leveraging it to get more money from other pots from around the country. Therefore, at the moment there was no answer to the question, because this money had not been allocated to any area.

12. To consider any matter that has been called in by Members under Standing Order 54 (COU/12/200619)

There were no matters called in.

13. To consider the following Business Motions Continued:– (COU/13/200619)

Business Motion I – Domestic Violence

Councillor Gomez moved and Councillor Namreen Chaudhry seconded the following business motion:

Domestic abuse is a growing issue within Redbridge and 2 million adults aged 16 to 59 years are estimated to have experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2018. In particular, women, 1.3 million female victims are twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse than men who still form over 600,000 victims. At least 80% of children in domestic abuse households are known to at least one public agency. Every day almost 30 women attempt suicide as a result of experiencing domestic abuse and every week three women take their own lives. People are thought to suffer through domestic abuse for 2-3 years before seeking help and 130,000 children live in homes where there is a high risk of domestic abuse. Redbridge had the 10th highest number of child protection assessments in London during 2018 in households where domestic violence was a factor.

Domestic abuse not only leaves physical and emotional scars on those who experience it directly but also adversely impacts on families and in particular, children. It is estimated that the costs associated with domestic abuse in the UK amount to £66bn a year, including the impact and funding to healthcare and support agencies. The effects of domestic abuse are far reaching, and unchallenged have the power to become almost acceptable, repetitive and hidden, and therefore it is incumbent on us to take a zero tolerance approach and challenge domestic abuse in all its forms and wherever it is found.
While the Council welcomes the draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 by the Government, we:

- Ask that the Chief Executive write to Government asking that it ensures that statutory and voluntary sector services are properly funded to both intervene early to reduce domestic violence, provide effective support to victims of domestic violence, and work towards a domestic abusers register.

In addition, we agree that Redbridge Council:

- Review its domestic abuse strategy in line with the Government’s draft Domestic Abuse Bill 2019 and ensure the support is joined up and accessible to all, specifically hard to reach groups.
- Ensure that Council policies challenge cultural behaviours where domestic abuse may be considered ‘normalised’.
- Highlight through its policies and communications facilities that domestic abuse is not limited to physical violence but can manifest itself through mental abuse and other controlling and coercive behaviours.
- Demonstrate leadership by offering all staff up to 10 days paid leave who as a result of domestic violence may be required to organise new housing to escape abusive relationships.
- Takes a zero tolerance approach to all forms of domestic abuse against all members of society, regardless of age, sex or gender.
- Recognises and takes into consideration the additional barriers and challenges in seeking support from people who may be disabled, older, LGBTQ+, and have different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Following debate the motion was put to the vote and was declared carried unanimously.

Resolved: That the following motion be agreed:-

Domestic abuse is a growing issue within Redbridge and 2 million adults aged 16 to 59 years are estimated to have experienced domestic abuse in the year ending March 2018. In particular, women, 1.3 million female victims are twice as likely to have experienced domestic abuse than men who still form over 600,000 victims. At least 80% of children in domestic abuse households are known to at least one public agency. Every day almost 30 women attempt suicide as a result of experiencing domestic abuse and every week three women take their own lives. People are thought to suffer through domestic abuse for 2-3 years before seeking help and 130,000 children live in homes where there is a high risk of domestic abuse. Redbridge had the 10th highest number of child protection assessments in London during 2018 in households where domestic violence was a factor.

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- Demonstrate leadership by offering all staff up to 10 days paid leave who as a result of domestic violence may be required to organise new housing to escape abusive relationships.
- Takes a zero tolerance approach to all forms of domestic abuse against all members of society, regardless of age, sex or gender.
- Recognises and takes into consideration the additional barriers and challenges in seeking support from people who may be disabled, older, LGBTQ+, and have different ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

Business Motion III – Climate Change

Councillor Blackman moved and Councillor Howard seconded the following motion:-

This council resolves to declare a climate emergency.

This council notes that:

- According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) urgent and unprecedented changes are needed to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5C.
- There has been dramatic changes in the climate as a result of carbon emissions generated by human activity are already resulting in drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty, with hundreds of millions of people due to be affected if global warming exceeds 1.5C.
- Pollution levels have reached epidemic proportions, with 9,500 Londoners (50,000 people countrywide) a year dying due to pollution. A loss of biodiversity has seen 25% of mammals, 41% of amphibians and 13% of birds under threat.
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This council further notes that:

- the growing public concern about climate change and support for radical measures to address it, as manifested by Extinction Rebellion and schoolchildren’s climate demonstrations.
- councils can play a key role by changing their own behaviour and services to reduce emissions and to show leadership and encourage others to take similar action. It is important also for councils to work together, locally, nationally and internationally.

This council resolves to:

- Produce a report on Redbridge’s impact on Climate with an appropriate action list to stop climate change that will go to cabinet for approval within 3 months, including measures to:
  1. Make the council Carbon neutral by 2030 and being carbon free by 2050, in line with commitments already made by over 40 others other councils, from Newham and Waltham Forest, to Somerset and Scarborough.
  2. Undertake a green audit of council services.
  3. Prioritise action to tackle air pollution caused by car emissions, in particular, around schools.
  4. Reduce the emissions associated with waste collection and disposal by encouraging more reuse, minimising waste and increasing opportunities for recycling.
  5. Eradicate single plastic use from Council premises and promote the eradication of single plastic use in Redbridge.
  6. Look to make new and existing council owned property as energy efficient as possible.
  7. Encourage renewable and sustainable energy in Redbridge, through the council’s planning, estate management, investment and procurement policies.
  8. Explore municipal renewable energy companies alongside other London Boroughs.
  9. Improve biodiversity and carbon storage (e.g. tree planting)
  10. Provide advice on how residents and businesses can operate in a more environmentally friendly way.

- Establish a corporate panel that will track the council’s progress on tackling climate change and make additional recommendations to cabinet.

The motion was put to the vote and declared carried unanimously.

Resolved: That the following motion be agreed:-

This council resolves to declare a climate emergency.

This council notes that:

- According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) urgent and unprecedented changes are needed to keep global warming to a
maximum of 1.5C.

- There has been dramatic changes in the climate as a result of carbon emissions generated by human activity are already resulting in drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty, with hundreds of millions of people due to be affected if global warming exceeds 1.5C.

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  8. Explore municipal renewable energy companies alongside other London Boroughs.
  9. Improve biodiversity and carbon storage (e.g. tree planting)
  10. Provide advice on how residents and businesses can operate in a more environmentally friendly way.

- Establish a corporate panel that will track the council’s progress on tackling climate change and make additional recommendations to cabinet.
14. Any Urgent Business (COU/14/200619)

None

15. Motion to Exclude the Public (COU/15/200619)

None

Mayor
Agenda Item 5: Unasked Questions

Question from Len Anness to the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal

“In April of this year Vision RCL informed the Early Bird swimmers at Fulwell Cross that they were changing our membership to one which would be of equal cost to our existing membership. This turned out to be untrue and I am now faced with a 28% increase in my membership fee along with many other pensioners who swim at that time. I am sure that the Council will accept that a 28% increase for pensioners of any kind is totally unacceptable especially when they have been told there would be no increase. Can the Council please confirm that they agree with this statement and then also commit to take action to rectify this injustice against those least able to afford such increases?”

Reply from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Athwal

Thank you for raising this issue with me. Vision is an independent trust commissioned by the Council and they make the decisions regarding swimming fees. I am advised that residents over 60 can swim for free at any Redbridge pool on weekdays between 1.30pm and 5.30pm and for those over 60’s who swim 5 days a week (outside the free period), there is an increase of 10p a swim. I am looking into this matter and will certainly come back once I have had a discussion with Vision”.

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