MINUTES
of the proceedings of the Ordinary Council Meeting of the London Borough of Waltham Forest held at Walthamstow Town Hall, Forest Road, London E17 on Thursday, 3 March 2016.

PRESENT:
Mayor: Councillor Saima Mahmud


61. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies received from Councillors Roy Berg and Andy Hemsted.

62. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors were reminded that section 106 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 applied to this meeting, meaning that where, at the time of this meeting, a Councillor who had council tax arrears which had remained unpaid for at least two months must disclose the fact that this section applied to her/him as soon as practicable after the start of the meeting and shall not vote on any question in respect of the setting of the Council’s council tax. Failure to do so was a criminal offence. No councillors indicated that this section applied to them.

All councillors had applied in writing for a dispensation from any pecuniary interest in setting council tax under the Local Government Finance Act 1992, in accordance with Appendix 4 of the Council’s Code of Conduct. These dispensations were granted by the Monitoring Officer. Therefore councillors were not precluded from participating in the debates and voting on setting the council tax, allowances, pay or indemnity given to members by reason of their being council taxpayers and councillors.

No other interests were declared.
63. MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2015

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 December 2015 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

64. ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, COUNCIL LEADER, CABINET MEMBERS AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The following announcements were made by the Mayor:

Former Mayor Mr Bob Wheatley;
The Mayor referred to the death of former Mayor Bob Wheatley. The Council expressed their condolences to family and friends affected by her death for their sad loss. Members and all present stood for a minute’s silence as a token of respect.

The Mayor's Charity Appeal;
The Mayor highlighted recent events connected to her charity appeal, including
(i) The Chief Executive’s Quiz
The Mayor thanked the Chief Executive, Management Board, organisers and participants for raising more than £2000 at the recent Chief Executive’s Quiz.
(ii) Hook a duck in the fountain
The mayor reminded Councillors that plastic ducks were still available for sale for the hook a duck competition.
(iii) Charity dinner
The Mayor advised that her charity dinner would take place on 15 April and full details would follow shortly.

Private Rented Property Licensing Scheme
Cllr K. Limbajee made an announcement regarding the Council’s Private Rented Property Licensing Scheme (PRPL) and a short video was shown about the PRPL Action Day:- the multi-agency operation targeted privately rented properties in order to reduce anti-social behaviour and improve the quality of housing for residents. Council was informed that further action days would take place throughout the year and the aim was to knock on 20,000 doors by the end of the year.

Laurie Cunningham Legacy
The Leader made an announcement regarding the Laurie Cunningham Legacy Campaign. With support from Leyton Orient FC and football's equality organisation Kick it Out, the Council would be making a major contribution to raise awareness and funds to honour Laurie Cunningham, as one of the borough’s football greats with a campaign to raise money for a statue in Leyton’s Coronation Gardens.

Lea Bridge Station
The Leader invited Catherine Scott representative from Network Rail to address full Council regarding Lea Bridge Station which was on track to open in May 2016.

Secondary School Place Allocations
Cllr Rusling was pleased to announce, that contrary to the coverage in the national and local press regarding results of parents' applications to secondary schools, the position in Waltham Forest was extremely positive. The Council offered the highest proportion of first preferences across London with 81% getting their first choice school (London total is 69%), 94% received a place at one of their top 3 preferences (London total is 89%). 98%
were offered a place at one of their six preferences (London total is 94%).

2016 Sustainable City Awards
The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Lead for Environment, Cllr Clyde Loakes announced that the Mini-Holland Team had just won the Travel and Transport category at the 2016 Sustainable City Awards. This category rewards schemes that encourage people to use more sustainable forms of transport, or help reduce the impact of traffic and transport on the environment.

65. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Gail Lovell, Resident from Chapel End Ward addressed Council and asked that the Council allocate funding to the borough’s GP’s to ensure a continued service.

Cllr Ahsan Khan, Portfolio Lead for Health agreed to meet with Ms Lovell to address her concerns.

66. BUDGET & COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2016/17

It was moved by Councillor C. Robbins, seconded by Councillor C. Loakes
That the Council:

(a) agree that the Waltham Forest basic amount of council tax, including the levying bodies, will be increased by 1.99% in 2016/17;

(b) agree that the 2% permitted increase for Adult Social Care be applied bringing the total increase to 3.99% and resulting in a Council Tax of £1,198.18 per Band D property in 2016/17;

(c) note that the element of council tax charged by the Greater London Authority will be £276.00 per Band D property in 2016/17 which reflects a reduction of £19.00 due to the Olympic funding coming to an end;

(d) agree that the overall council tax to be set for 2016/17 will be £1,474.18 per Band D property, which represents an overall increase of 1.86%;

(e) agree that the projected budget (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report) for 2016/17 of £354.205 million be approved;

(f) agree that following a review of reserves that £4.025 million is transferred from earmarked reserves to the General Fund working balance to increase the level held to £14.7 million;

(g) agree that as part of the overall budget strategy the revised projected surplus of £8.424 million for 2016/17 is allocated to the Budget Strategy Reserve to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy, to mitigate against any budget risks and be considered to support emerging priorities;

(h) agree that following a review of reserves that £8.226 million is transferred from other earmarked reserves into the Budget Strategy Reserve;

(i) consider and had regard to the whole of the Director of Finance’s report made under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 as set out in Appendix 5 and, in particular, his determination in the Financial Implications of this report
that “the 2016/17 revenue budget proposals are, overall, robust and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves, are satisfactory”;

(j) note that Cabinet at its meeting on 15 December 2015 determined the amount of 71,882 (an increase of 3,356 over the previous year), as the Council Tax Base for Waltham Forest for 2016/17, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended);

(k) agree that the following amounts be calculated for 2016/17 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):

i) **Gross Expenditure**

£826.761 million - being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act;

ii) **Gross Income**

£740.633 million - being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act;

iii) **Net Expenditure**

£86.128 million - being the amount by which the aggregate at 2.11.1 above exceeds the aggregate at 2.11.2 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year;

iv) **LBWF Basic Amount of Council Tax**

£1,198.18 - being the amount at 2.11.3 above, divided by 71,882, (the Council Tax Base), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;

v) **Valuation bands**

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Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 2.11.4 above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the 1992 Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the 1992 Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

(l) note that for 2016/17 the Greater London Assembly (GLA) has stated that the following amounts in precepts are expected to be issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

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agree that, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (k)v and (l) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 sets the following amounts of council tax for 2016/17 for each of the categories of dwellings shown:

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note that the relevant basic amount of council tax (excluding precepts but now including levies) for the financial year 2016/17 is £1,198.18, which reflects a 1.99% increase plus 2% Adult Social Care permitted increase on 2015/16 and therefore does not require a referendum;

agree that the Director of Finance and the officers nominated by him be authorised to finalise the necessary publicity as required by Section 38 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and to promote the first day of the month instalment dates, and the six date options within each month for Direct Debit payers, as previously agreed;

note that in order to ensure the required period of notice is given, council taxpayers who receive instalment slips will be requested to pay their first instalment by 6 April 2016 and subsequent instalments on the first of each month;

note the Council’s share of business rate income for 2016/17 to be £17.054 million, which represents our 30% local share;

note that in line with previous years, there is no provision in the 2016/17 budget for the payment of increments;

agree the current position on salary increments should continue subject to and pending Staffing Committee consideration of proposals for rewards, pay and grading in accordance with the Pay Policy Statement.

It was then moved by Councillor M. Davis and seconded by Councillor P. Herrington that the motion be amended as follows:

Paragraphs (i) – (s) of the recommendations will be re-numbered from (t) onwards and the following new recommendations will be added:

(i) The Council needs to continue to reduce its Land Fill tax liability and to this end should fully extend our recycling capabilities into our estates. To do this the Council will commit to spending £90,000.

(j) The Council recognises the need for its employees to be represented by Trades Unions, however this should be funded by the Trades Unions and not by the people of the Borough. Therefore the Council agrees to stop paying the Trade Union Representatives with Council Taxpayers’ money creating a saving of £60,000.

(k) The Council agrees to increase the spending on the community toilet scheme by
£50K to attract more businesses to join the scheme and so increase its coverage.

(l) The Council acknowledges the difficult times being suffered by our shopping centres and the traders in them. Therefore, in order to support the Borough’s businesses in the meaningful way that they have asked for the Council agrees to keep the 15 minute free parking scheme thus enabling our residents to park for 25 minutes including the grace period. In order to clamp down on any abuse of the system the council will require the use of time clocks, valid for three years, to indicate when parking has started. These time clocks will be sold to our residents and will then provide an income stream. We envisage an income of £150,000 in the first year. This includes a contingency for any loss of parking income.

(m) The Council agrees to provide a one off grant of £40K to each of the two community libraries in Waltham Forest for library resources.

(n) The Council recognises that the grants given by the community ward forums are an increasingly important part of the funding of our local community groups and facilities. Therefore we will double the grant funding for each ward to £20K, which will still be decided by the local ward councillors, and provide additional funding to administer the grants. As presently constituted the Ward Forums have failed to provide proper community engagement. We intend to abolish the ward forums as presently constituted whilst investigating better and cheaper alternatives. Overall this will require a £190,000 investment.

(o) Given that the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, which is made statutory by the Local Government Act 1986 as amended by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, requires that council newsletters etc be printed no more than 4 times a year and that in March 2015 the DCLG on behalf of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government wrote to the Council rejecting the arguments put forward by the Council for publishing 23 times a year we believe that it is highly likely the Council will be found to be acting contrary to the statutory code. We will preemptively prevent this by cutting WFN and our advertising budget by £150K.

(p) Good governance also requires good oversight and administration. The Council is concerned that cuts made over the past few years have adversely affected the running of committees whose purpose is to have oversight and ensure good governance of the council. We will spend £100,000 on this to address the democratic deficit.

(q) The Council agrees to work with TFL to create better transport links by a series of express bus routes to centres of employment (e.g. Stratford and Docklands) from those parts of the Borough where Transport links are not easy. Up to £250,000 will be used for this purpose.

(r) The Council notes that the spend on agency and consultant fees is still too high. We therefore propose to cut these budgets by £400,000.

(s) The savings and investments outlined in items (i) – (r) balance out and therefore these items produce a balanced budget.

Following debate a recorded vote was held in accordance with Paragraph 17.6 of Council Procedure Rules.
Vote on the amendment in the names of Councillor M. Davis and Councillor P. Herrington

For the Amendment to the Motion

Against the Amendment to the Motion

Abstentions
None.

(Note Councillor Y Osho was not in the chamber at the time of the vote on the Amendment).

As a result of voting the Mayor declared the motion in the names of Councillor M. Davis and Councillor P. Herrington LOST.

Vote on the original motion in the names of Councillor C. Robbins and Councillor C. Loakes

For the Motion

Against the Motion

Abstentions
None.

As a result of voting the Mayor declared the motion in the names of Councillor C. Robbins and Councillor C. Loakes CARRIED.

It was therefore RESOLVED that

The Council:
(a) **agreed** that the Waltham Forest basic amount of council tax, including the levying bodies, will be increased by 1.99% in 2016/17;

(b) **agreed** that the 2% permitted increase for Adult Social Care be applied bringing the total increase to 3.99% and resulting in a Council Tax of £1,198.18 per Band D property in 2016/17;

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(e) **agreed** that the projected budget (as set out in Appendix 1 of the report) for 2016/17 of £354.205 million be approved;

(f) **agreed** that following a review of reserves that £4.025 million is transferred from earmarked reserves to the General Fund working balance to increase the level held to £14.7 million;

(g) **agreed** that as part of the overall budget strategy the revised projected surplus of £8.424 million for 2016/17 is allocated to the Budget Strategy Reserve to support the Medium Term Financial Strategy, to mitigate against any budget risks and be considered to support emerging priorities;

(h) **agreed** that following a review of reserves that £8.226 million is transferred from other earmarked reserves into the Budget Strategy Reserve;

(i) **considered** and had regard to the whole of the Director of Finance’s report made under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 as set out in Appendix 5 and, in particular, his determination in the Financial Implications of this report that “the 2016/17 revenue budget proposals are, overall, robust and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves, are satisfactory”;

(j) **noted** that Cabinet at its meeting on 15 December 2015 determined the amount of 71,882 (an increase of 3,356 over the previous year), as the Council Tax Base for Waltham Forest for 2016/17, in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended);

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£86.128 million - being the amount by which the aggregate at 2.11.1 above exceeds the aggregate at 2.11.2 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its council tax requirement for the year;

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(o) **agreed** that the Director of Finance and the officers nominated by him be authorised to finalise the necessary publicity as required by Section 38 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and to promote the first day of the month
instalment dates, and the six date options within each month for Direct Debit payers, as previously agreed;

(p) **noted** that in order to ensure the required period of notice is given, council taxpayers who receive instalment slips will be requested to pay their first instalment by 6 April 2016 and subsequent instalments on the first of each month;

(q) **noted** the Council’s share of business rate income for 2016/17 to be £17.054 million, which represents our 30% local share;

(r) **noted** that in line with previous years, there is no provision in the 2016/17 budget for the payment of increments;

(s) **agreed** the current position on salary increments should continue subject to and pending Staffing Committee consideration of proposals for rewards, pay and grading in accordance with the Pay Policy Statement.

67. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2016-17

It was moved by Councillor C. Coghill; seconded by Councillor C. Robbins and **RESOLVED** unanimously

That the Council:

a. **agreed** that no changes are made to the scheme and that year two of the scheme will be implemented leading to a reduction in the maximum award available to working age people receiving support to 76% from 1 April 2016.

b. **agreed** to continue with the £750,000 earmarked in reserves for a Discretionary Hardship Fund under section 13A(1)(c) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as amended by the Local Government Finance Act 2012, to offer additional help and support to those suffering the greatest financial hardship as defined in the Discretionary Council Tax Support Hardship Fund policy 2015/17.

c. **agreed** that the remaining provisions of the council’s scheme for 2016-2017 will continue as currently published on the council’s website.

d. **delegated** responsibility to make any minor and consequential changes necessary to the detailed provision as a result of any changes in the regulations upon which the scheme is based to the Director of Finance following consultation with the Portfolio Lead Member for Economic Growth and High Streets

68. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

It was moved by Councillor C. Loakes; seconded by Councillor S. Waldron and **RESOLVED** unanimously

That the Council

a) **Adopted** the Pay Policy Statement 2016/17
b) Noted the proposals for review of the Council’s Pay and grade structure

69. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2016/17

It was moved by Councillor P. Douglas; seconded by Councillor J. Edwards and RESOLVED unanimously that the Council:


(b) Agreed the change in MRP strategy for 2015/16 and 2016/17 (as outlined in 7 and 8 of the report, appendix 1 and appendix 2)

(c) Agreed the Prudential Indicators as set out in the Treasury Management Strategy, which demonstrate that the Council’s capital investment plans are affordable prudent and sustainable.

70. FINANCE PROCEDURE RULES

It was moved by Councillor P. Douglas; seconded by Councillor J. Edwards and RESOLVED unanimously that the Council agreed the revised Financial Procedure Rules.

71. REVIEW OF CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES

It was moved by Councillor P. Douglas; seconded by Councillor J. Edwards and RESOLVED unanimously that the Council agreed the changes to the Contract Procedure Rules.

72. COUNCILLOR AND CO-OPTEES REMUNERATION

It was moved by Councillor P. Douglas; seconded by Councillor N. Asghar and RESOLVED by majority that the Council

(a) amend the current Scheme (for 2015/2016 with effect from the beginning of the financial year) by deleting Paragraph 1.4 and replacing it with

Basic, Special Responsibility and Co-Optee Allowances will increase annually in line with the NJC pay award for employees.

That the amendment above also applies to the 2016/17 Scheme and that the Scheme as appended to the report was agreed.

73. HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

It was moved by Councillor A. Khan; seconded by Councillor A. Bean and RESOLVED unanimously that the Council adopt the Waltham Forest Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy attached at Appendix A of the report.
74. APPOINTMENTS

The following appointments were agreed

(a) Committees

Health Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Anna Mbachu be appointed to replace Cllr Johar Khan
Cllr Anna Mbachu be appointed Chair for remainder of the Municipal Year 2015/16

(b) Other Committees and Bodies

Joint Committees

Outer North East London Joint Health & Scrutiny Committee
Cllr Anna Mbachu be appointed to replace Cllr Gerry Lyons

Council rose at 9.25 pm having completed its business.