DARTFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the proceedings of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Council held on Monday 14 March 2011.

PRESENT:

The Mayor Councillor P F Coleman
The Deputy Mayor Councillor E J Lampkin

Councillor Mrs A D Allen
Councillor Ms C Angell
Councillor I D Armitt JP
Councillor D J Baker
Councillor A Bardoe
Councillor S H Brown
Councillor M J Bryant
Councillor R Bryant
Councillor M J Davis
Councillor S East
Councillor C Gallagher
Councillor D A Hammock
Councillor J A Hayes
Councillor D E Hunnisett
Councillor S Johnston
Councillor P Kelly
Councillor J A Kite
Councillor A R Lloyd
Councillor A R Martin

Councillor D E May
Councillor Mrs A Muckle
Councillor J I Muckle
Councillor V Openshaw
Councillor J M Ozog
Councillor R S L Perfitt
Councillor A E Peters
Councillor M I Peters
Councillor D M Pickersgill
Councillor G T Prout
Councillor B E Read
Councillor Mrs J A Rickwood
Councillor P J Scanlan
Councillor Mrs R L Shanks
Councillor C J Shippam
Councillor T C H Smith
Councillor A Wells
Councillor Mrs N C Wightman

ABSENT:

Councillor L J Bobby
Councillor T A Maddison
Councillor Mrs D J Stoate
Councillor Mrs P A Thurlow

104. PRAYERS: FATHER SCANLAN

The Mayor invited Father Scanlan to say prayers. Particular expressions of sympathy were extended to and prayers said for the people of Japan, at this time of natural and other disasters facing their country. Special prayers were also said on behalf of Keith Thurlow, former Councillor and Mayor of Dartford, who had been taken gravely ill, and an expression of sympathy and best
wishes extended to Councillor Mrs Patsy Thurlow and her family at this worrying and stressful time.

105. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors: L J Bobby; T A Maddison, Mrs D J Stoate and Mrs P A Thurlow.

106. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

107. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the General Assembly of the Council held on 31 January 2011 be confirmed, with page 3 paragraph 3 amended to reflect that Mr Smith had been Mrs Allen’s Deputy during her Mayoral Year in question, rather than vice versa.

That the Minutes of the General Assembly of the Council Budget meeting held on 28 February 2011 be confirmed as accurate.

108. MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Japanese Disaster

The Mayor informed the Council that he had written to the Japanese Ambassador in London, extending the sympathy of the people of Dartford to the people of Japan, at this time of natural and other disasters being suffered in that country. He added that by coincidence, a party of Japanese teenagers were visiting Dartford Girls Grammar School at present.

Keith Thurlow - former Councillor and Mayor of Dartford

The Mayor asked the Assembly to join him in extending their thoughts and prayers on behalf of Keith Thurlow, former Councillor and Mayor of Dartford, who had been taken gravely ill over the preceding week-end. The Assembly also joined the Mayor in extending their sympathy, concern and best wishes to Councillor Mrs Patsy Thurlow and her family, at this time of great personal stress and worry.

Production of Calamity Jane

Members were advised that as in previous years, the Dartford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society (DAODS) had reserved a block of seats for Members for the Society’s forthcoming production of Calamity Jane at the
Orchard Theatre. However, this year Members would have to contact the Orchard Theatre ticket office to reserve a seat in the block booking by 31 March, after which date any remaining reserved seats would be released for general sale. The Mayor said he would issue a flyer with full details.

109. LEADER’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Mrs Patsy Thurlow

The Leader paid particular tribute to Councillor Mrs Patsy Thurlow at this time of great personal stress for her and her family. Despite her husband Keith’s grave condition, Mrs Thurlow was continuing to meet her Council responsibilities and had played a full part in Cabinet business that morning, in her role as portfolio holder responsible for Central Park. The Leader extended his personal thoughts and prayers and those of his Group to Patsy Thurlow and her family at this very worrying time.

The Shadow Leader said that his thoughts and prayers and those of his Group were also with Councillor Mrs Patsy Thurlow and her family at this time.

Dartford Awards

The Leader advised that in consultation with the Shadow Leader, it had been agreed to confer the title of Alderman of the Town of Dartford upon Councillor Terry C H Smith (Conservative, Heath Ward) and former Councillor Ivor T N Jones (Labour, Stone Parish). Councillor Kite emphasised the unique nature of the award of Alderman which, to his knowledge, had been made on only two previous occasions. He added that the awards were fully merited by two outstanding Members of the Council, past and present.

The Shadow Leader confirmed his Group’s nomination of former Councillor Ivor Jones for the award of Alderman of Dartford and fully endorsed the nomination of Councillor Terry Smith to receive this unique civic award. He added that both nominations were richly deserved by two worthy and well respected people.

110. QUESTIONS FROM POLITICAL GROUP LEADERS

No Questions were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 14.

111. MOTIONS

No Motions were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 10.

112. URGENT ITEMS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL
MONDAY 14 MARCH 2011

There were no items of urgency.

113. COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor J A Kite and seconded by Councillor A R Martin and:

RESOLVED:

That in accordance with Standing Order 11(3) the General Assembly of the Council go into Committee and the Rules of Procedures for Committees do apply.

THE LEADER, COUNCILLOR J A KITE IN THE CHAIR

114. REFERENCES FROM OTHER COMMITTEES (IF ANY)

There were no references from other committees.

115. SEX ESTABLISHMENTS AND SEXUAL ENTERTAINMENT VENUES

Members received a brief resume from the Strategic Director on the proposal to adopt changes to the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982; as introduced by the Policing and Crime Act 2009; in respect of the control of Sexual Establishments and Sexual Entertainment Venues.

The Strategic Director advised that the changes in legislation had been made by the Government in response to the increase in casual lap and pole dancing activities in establishments granted a music and dancing provision to their licence under the Licensing Act 2003. The 2003 Act was not designed to exert effective control over lap dancing and other forms of sexual entertainment. Under the 2003 Act license holders could only have their licences considered under the four statutory objectives of the Act i.e. for the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, public nuisance or the protection of children from harm. Licensing authorities could not consider any objections from local people based on grounds outside the scope of the four objectives such as lap dancing or any other forms of sexual entertainment, and whether such activities were appropriate to a given residential locality. Under the new legislation residents would have more say in the granting of future licenses.

She assured Members that adoption of the new legislation was a precautionary measure and that the Council currently had no venues offering sexual entertainment on a scale that would require licensing. She added that if the new legislation was adopted, it was proposed that all aspects of sex establishment licensing be delegated to the Licensing Committee.

She further clarified that the adoption of Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982; as amended by the Policing and Crime
Act 2009 would have immediate effect with the provisions taking effect from 1 September 2011.

Members welcomed the proposal to adopt preventative legislation that would enable the licensing authority and residents to review licences on moral and decency grounds and help prevent any increase in current activity by license holders in the sexual entertainment field.

RESOLVED:

1. That the General Assembly of the Council endorses the adoption of Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, effective 1 September 2011, in order that sexual entertainment venues can be more strictly controlled.

2. That the General Assembly of the Council delegates all aspects of sex establishments licensing to the Licensing Committee together with the consultation functions and the adoption of a non-statutory policy.

116. RECONVENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNCIL

It was moved by Councillor J A Kite, seconded by Councillor A R Martin and:

RESOLVED:

That the General Assembly of the Council be reconvened for discussion of the remaining item of business.

THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR OF DARTFORD, COUNCILLOR P F COLEMAN, IN THE CHAIR

117. RESERVED MINUTES

Members considered Minute 123 from the Cabinet meeting held on 27 January 2011 – Power Outage – EDF Payment – which had been reserved by the Shadow Leader.

The Shadow Leader welcomed the payment by EDF, in recognition of the difficulties suffered by Dartford residents, businesses and other organisations, during the power outage in July 2009. He noted that Bexley Council had received a similar sum in compensation from EDF.

Councillor Prout suggested that the payment from EDF provided the Council with an opportunity to give financial assistance to people and organisations in the Borough who did not normally benefit from financial assistance - an opportunity to support people beyond core funding. He understood that the bids received to date were quite eclectic in nature, and said it would be important to ensure transparency in the decision making process for the distribution of the EDF funds. He posed three questions in this respect:
1. Who would be sitting on the proposed Advisory Group to consider the bids for EDF money?
2. What criteria would be used by the Advisory Group to govern the success or failure of a bid?
3. When would the outcome of the bids be known and how would the details be advised to the applicants and Members?

The Leader of the Council welcomed the opportunity the EDF final compensation settlement of £375,000 gave to the Council to consider making innovative payments to an eclectic selection of bodies and causes, including businesses and other organisations. Ideas had been actively sought from the Dartford community with adverts placed in the local papers in addition to the Leader advertising the funding on Radio Kent.

He advised that, as agreed by Cabinet, the initial sifting body considering applications for EDF funds comprised himself, the Deputy Leader and the Managing Director. However, it was proposed to expand the membership to include some Dartford residents, in particular Rosanna Curran who had been so instrumental in forcing EDF to revise their initial offer of compensation, and Mick Gibson of the Street Pastor organisation, who had a wide knowledge of worthy charitable organisations within Dartford that might benefit from receipt of EDF monies. Bids totalling £100,000 had been received to date with the present round of bidding due to close on 21 March 2011. Thereafter, depending on the amount of EDF monies remaining, a rolling programme of funding would be considered in response to subsequent applications. He added that the onus had been placed firmly on the community to come up with spending proposals and any / all bids received would be given full and careful consideration.

The meeting closed at 7.50 pm

Councillor P F Coleman
MAYOR