



Walsall Council

Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 11th January 2016 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House.

Present

Councillor A. Underhill (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillor K. Phillips (Deputy Mayor)

“ A.J.A. Andrew
“ D.A. Anson
“ M. Arif
“ O.D. Bennett
“ M.A. Bird
“ C. Bott
“ P. Bott
“ R. Burley
“ K. Chambers
“ A.G. Clarke
“ C.E. Clews
“ S.J. Cooper
“ D. Coughlan
“ S.P. Coughlan
“ S.R. Craddock
“ C.U. Creaney
“ A. Ditta
“ B.A. Douglas-Maul
“ K. Ferguson
“ M. Follows
“ J. Fitzpatrick
“ S.F. Fitzpatrick
“ L.A. Harrison
“ D.T. Hazell
“ E.A. Hazell
“ A. Hicken
“ E.F. Hughes
“ K. Hussain

Councillor D. James

“ L.D. Jeavons
“ C. Jones
“ T.J. Jukes
“ A. Kudhail
“ M. Longhi
“ Mrs. R.A. Martin
“ J. Murray
“ A.A. Nawaz
“ M. Nazir
“ G. Perry
“ L.J. Rattigan
“ I.C. Robertson
“ J. Rochelle
“ E.B. Russell
“ H.S. Sarohi
“ K. Sears
“ Mrs. D.A. Shires
“ I. Shires
“ P.E. Smith
“ G.S. Sohal
“ C.D.D. Towe
“ S. Wade
“ P. Washbrook
“ F.J. Westley
“ V. Whyte
“ T.S. Wilson
“ R.V. Worrall
“ A. Young

70. **Apology**

An apology for non-attendance was submitted on behalf of Councillor Harris.

71. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th November 2015 copies having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as a correct record and signed.

72. **Declarations of interest**

The following members declared an interest in the items indicated:

Councillor E. Hazell
Councillor Hughes
Councillor Wade
Councillor P. Bott
Councillor Nawaz

Item 13 – Walsall Housing Group –
Governance proposals

Councillor Hicken

Item 16 – Notice of motion – Housing
and Planning Bill

73. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to be considered in private session.

74. **Mayor's announcements**

(1) **Death of former Councillor Bill Madeley**

The Mayor referred to the recent death of former Councillor Madeley and paid tribute to his services to the borough over a period of many years. Councillors Nazir, S. Coughlan, Bird, I. Shires, Smith, Clarke and Anson also paid tribute to Mr. Madeley, following which it was **moved** by the Mayor, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That this Council expresses its regret at the death of Mr. S.W. Madeley, M.B.E., a member of Walsall County Borough Council from 1971 to 1974, a member of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council from 1972 to 2012, Mayor in 1988/89 and Freeman of the Borough and places on record their appreciation of his services to the borough over a period of many years and expresses its condolences to his family at this sad time.

(2) **Death of former Councillor Bob Pearce**

The Mayor referred to death of former Councillor Pearce and paid tribute to his services. Councillors I. Shires, Bird and Smith also paid tribute to Mr. Pearce, following which it was **moved** by the Mayor, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That this Council expresses its regret at the death of Mr. R.N. Pearce a member of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council from 1982 to 1986 and places on record their appreciation of his services to the borough over a period of many years and expresses its condolences to his family at this sad time.

(3) **Death of Don Peacock**

The Mayor referred to the death of Mr. D. Peacock and paid tribute to his services. Councillors Bird, I. Shires and Smith also paid tribute to Mr. Peacock, following which it was **moved** by the Mayor, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That this Council expresses its regret at the death of Mr. D.H. Peacock former Director of Engineering and Town Planning and places on record their appreciation of his services to the borough over a period of many years and expresses its condolences to his family at this sad time.

(4) **Former Mayoress, Mary Slater**

The Mayor informed the Council that this year was the centenary of the death of Mary Slater, Mayoress who died of her injuries after being hit by shrapnel during a Zeppelin raid during World War I in 1916.

Members and officers stood in silence as a mark of respect.

75. **Petitions**

The following petitions were submitted:

- (1) Councillor D. Coughlan: Objections to planning application 15/1540 – Providence Chapel, New Road, Willenhall.
- (2) Councillor James: Old Church Primary School to become a 2-form entry school.
- (3) Councillor Phillips: Consultation process with regard to the axing of free activity classes run by Walsall Healthcare Lifestyle Physical Activity Team.

- (4) Councillor S. Coughlan: Market charges and safeguarding of Willenhall Market for the future.
- (5) Councillor Sohal: Additional timed street parking at Darbar Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Rollingmill Street, Walsall.
- (6) Councillor Jukes: Against the proposed closure of Beechdale Library.
- (7) Councillor Anson: Against the proposed closure of Pleck Library.

76. Petition: Against Darlaston Multi-Purpose Centre being used as a site for travellers

A report was submitted.

Mr. Steventon presented the petition opposing the site of Darlaston Multi-Purpose Centre being turned into a permanent traveller's site.

Councillors Andrew, Burley, S. Coughlan and Chambers spoke on this item, following which it was **moved** by Councillor Chambers, duly seconded and:

Resolved

- (1) That the content of the petitions be noted.
- (2) That it be noted that Cabinet will take the petitions and other representations made about the draft Site Allocation Document into account when it considers the Publication version of the Site Allocation Document (SAD) at a future date.
- (3) That it be noted that, subject to the outcome of consultation on the publication version of the SAD, Council will at a future date consider the submission version of the SAD.

77. Questions by members of the public

(1) Scrap metal collections

Mr. S. Fazal asked the following question of Councillor Harrison:

“In light of the collapse of raw steel pricing due to the continued dumping by our new found far eastern conservative ally. The market for scrap metal has collapsed dramatically resulting in previous collectable items being left at Roadside. Problem is particularly acute in the collection of empty oil cans from takeaway restaurants as an example. How does the cabinet member for clean and green promise to deal with this situation in the light of further budget cuts?”

Councillor Harrison replied that in Walsall the number fly tipping incidents was as follows:

2011/12 – 1,995

2012/13 – 2,067

2013/14 – 3,389

2014/15 – 3,362

2015/16 - up to the end of October 2015 there had been 2,605 incidents.

Councillor Harrison said that the number of metal related incidents varied with 856 incidents of fridges/freezers reported in 2013/14, 526 incidents reported in 2014/15 and 426 in 2015/16 up to the end of October.

With regard to the number of reports on fly-tipped chemical, oil or fuel drums, the number was relatively low and the recorded data did not differentiate between metal or plastic drums. The number had increased from 17 in 2011/12 to 29 in 2013/14 but decreased to 25 in 2014/15. In the current financial year from April to October 2015, there had been 11 reports.

The Clean and Green's street cleansing team worked with colleagues in Environmental Enforcement to identify perpetrators and remove reported fly-tipping seven days per week throughout the Borough. The average response time for the removal of reported fly-tipped items was usually within one working day.

Mr. Fazal asked the following supplementary question:

“Everyone here has to pay for the removal of goods and so far as I am concerned we have reported numerous incidents to people but nothing gets done, no one gets prosecuted.”

Councillor Harrison replied that to prosecute the Council needed evidence so that a case would stand.

(2) Proposed closure of Pleck Library

Mr. S. Hussain asked the following question of Councillor Bird:

“What measures/steps have been taken and can be taken to ensure the individuals and diverse communities of Pleck will not be disadvantaged or adversely affected by these proposals and can the resident(s) of Pleck put forward viable options for consideration supporting the Pleck Library to remain open?”

Councillor Bird replied that the current proposals would save £487,912. The libraries put forward for consideration of closure, including the mobile library, accounted for only 17% of the 1.1 million visits libraries in Walsall received each year and 26% of the items loaned

He said that in drawing up these proposals careful consideration had been given to how to maintain a service that was still reasonably accessible to residents, including those in Pleck. There would still be a library within 2 miles of every household in the borough and both Darlaston and Central Libraries were under 2 miles away from the current Pleck Library site.

Mr. Hussain asked the following supplementary question:

“I have forwarded a report with some proposals. He referred to costs and usage, he had put forward a case, including value for money showing current usage as the cheapest library to run; their suggested proposals would show that the Council would be able to keep the libraries open.”

Councillor Bird said that this was encouraging, with the reducing budgets of many millions of pounds, effectively the Council had to look at ways of providing services or charging for free services. He welcomed proposals being shown to him at an early stage. There had been a long consultation.

(3) **Budget savings**

Mr. M. Lynch asked the following question of Councillor Bird:

“In the light of the comment made following George Osborne's 2015 Autumn Statement by Gary Porter, the Conservative Chair of the Local Government Association, that even if councils stopped filling in potholes, maintaining parks, closed all children's centres, libraries, museums, leisure centres and turned off every street light, they will not have saved enough money to plug the financial black hole they face by 2020", what is the council's strategy to avoid simply managing its own funeral arrangements over the next four years?”

Councillor Bird replied that it would not be his intention to see a negative budget. He said he would listen to proposals. After 2018 this Council under the present government proposal would only be looking after children, potholes, keeping the lights on and collecting rubbish. No way after 2018 could we balance the budget. We could hold a referendum because Westminster do not understand what was happening in the Black Country boroughs.

Mr. Lynch asked the following supplementary question:

“Will this do the job because we have a clear statement of intent and would Walsall Council join with other Councils in other parts of the country to build a serious campaign to get the Government to change course? Many Councils will struggle to deliver statutory services.”

Councillor Bird said he was happy to see anything that gave us more funding.

78. Questions by members of the Council

(1) Prudential borrowing

Councillor I. Shires asked the following question of Councillor Bird:

“Could the Leader give me, this Council and the wider public an explanation as to what constitutes “Prudential borrowing” and could he also give an example of where this has been used recently?”

Councillor Bird replied that Prudential Borrowing was used to fund an investment where a Council service sought funding for a capital project, and as a result of a project would either generate additional income or reduce expenditure commitments in future years. This income and / or the savings could be used to repay the loan. The service should be aware that they needed to pay for the financing of this borrowing in terms of both principal and interest.

He said that as required by The Prudential Code all borrowing should be sustainable in terms of all borrowing could be repaid, prudent in terms of the borrowing complementing the capital strategy and Medium Term Financial Strategy and affordable in terms of the impact to the Council tax payer by way of the cost of the minimum revenue provision. All borrowing should follow best practice.

The Prudential Code provided freedom for authorities to enter into borrowing to fund capital investment proposals, without government consent, where they could afford to service the additional debt without government support.

The Prudential Code sets out a minimum level of prudential indicators which must be measured to determine whether the local authority's capital investment plans followed good practice and were affordable. By linking prudential indicators to the capital strategy it was expected that capital investment decisions were made within an overall strategic planning framework. The Code thus built on this framework, requiring decision makers to consider the full cost over an asset's life, business cases for proposals and affordability of those plans.

Councillor Bird said that included within the indicators were measures against the authorised limit for external debt which sought to control the maximum level of borrowing at which the Council was prohibited from borrowing beyond that limit, and the operational boundary which was a range of limits of which the Council did not expect to exceed.

These indicators were monitored by the Treasury Management Panel and reported regularly to Audit Committee.

The Code was also underpinned by codes of practice which the Council had already adopted, such as treasury management and the medium term financial strategy and outlook. The government retained a reserve power to limit borrowing. The Council was responsible for setting the borrowing limits under which the authority operated.

Finally Councillor Bird said that the Old Square re-development used Prudential Borrowing in order to invest in the project.

Councillor Shires asked the following supplementary question:

“Can the Leader confirm that the recent overspend on the new Bloxwich and Walsall Wood leisure centres estimated at £700,000 will require slippage and which project will be delayed as a result?”

Councillor Bird said that the overspend was £1.1m. Japanese knot weed had been found on the site at Bloxwich and adverse conditions in relation to the foundations required additional works. The overspend in relation to Walsall Wood related to the redesign of the road junction which had not been included in the capital programme. The capital programme will be submitted to Council in February when all the proposed schemes will be included.

(2) Ofsted inspection

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Burley:

“Given that in mid 2014 OFSTED judged the local authority’s arrangements for supporting school improvements to be “ineffective” and further given that 18 months later and very recently, we have learned that Walsall Primary Schools have been judged by OFSTED to be amongst the worst performing schools in England, rated 143rd out of 150 schools in England, could you briefly outline how your Committee’s strategy to scrutinise robustly the performance of Walsall’s schools and more importantly to scrutinise the effectiveness of the local education authority’s role in bringing about improvement, can succeed without your Committee being heavily reliant on the advice of and information from those in charge of the very services that are supposed to be under scrutiny?”

Councillor Burley replied that immediately after the June 2014 inspection, a comprehensive action plan was drawn up and shared with Ofsted. The Scrutiny Committee requested regular updates on the progress being made on the six priorities contained within the comprehensive plan. Senior officers were required to provide evidence of progress and were challenged on areas of underperformance.

An Education Challenge Board was set up to regularly monitor progress towards the objectives in the plan. This Board was independently Chaired and contained representatives from various stakeholder groups, including head teachers, governors and the portfolio holder. The Chair (Frances Done) was requested to provide independent reports on progress to Scrutiny and to answer questions from members. The Chair’s reports had been found to align with those of senior officers. Reports were detailed, containing agreed data sets, where possible comparing Walsall to the national averages on a range of issues, so that members had a realistic view of strengths and areas for further development. For example, Scrutiny received data to show the improvement in the percentage of schools now graded ‘good or better’ by Ofsted over time, but at the same time the nature of the gap to the national average.

Councillor Burley said that in addition to relying on advice and information from senior officers and the independent Chair of the Challenge Board, the Scrutiny Committee benefited from input from other sources, including from members. At the meeting on 5th January, the sponsor of an under-performing academy was invited to attend to participate in a question session on that theme.

She said that although Ofsted had not yet re-inspected provision in Walsall, the Scrutiny Committee received feedback from an external review that was commissioned in June 2015 to evaluate progress against the priorities and the report concluded:

“There is strong evidence of a significant improvement in the systems, structures and procedures implemented over the past year. The senior leadership have been robust in their drive for improvement and progress is evident in each of the six priorities. Although there has been some improvement in the quality of school improvement work, this remains an area for further development.”

The Committee has also been informed of a number of other examples of external validation of the work of the school improvement team, showing that systems and protocols were now fit for purpose, clear and more consistently applied.

Councillor Burley said that in the recently published (1st December 2015) annual report of Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector, regional variations in performance were outlined. The number of primary schools in Walsall graded good or better improved by 3% over the last year, whereas in secondary the improvement was 10%.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

“On 14.6.78, Dennis Healey compared Geoffrey Howe as being savaged by dead sheep – do you think you may be thinking the same about the Scrutiny Committee.”

Councillor Burley said that Councillor Smith only having chaired one scrutiny panel before he resigned and did not get the feel of how effective and robust the Committee was. They are challenging and proud of their work.

(3) Homes granted planning permission

Councillor I. Shires asked the following question of Councillor Andrew:

“Can the portfolio holder for Economy, Infrastructure and Development please inform me, this Council and the wider public how many homes in Walsall have been granted planning permission yet are still waiting to be built.

Councillor Andrew replied that as at 1st January 2016 there were sites for a total of 3,022 homes in Walsall where planning permission had been granted but construction had yet to commence. He said that 910 homes were on sites where construction on part of the site had commenced, 1,140 homes had a valid planning permission but no construction had commenced anywhere on the site and 972 homes had a planning permission that had lapsed. A further 628 homes were under construction.

Councillor Shires asked the following supplementary question:

“How many brown field sites have been deemed by developers as unsuitable for housing?”

Councillor Andrew said that no one had said that any sites were unsuitable, it was the cost to clear up the sites to make them suitable for housing. He said 650 homes per annum were being delivered and that figure would increase to 668 to meet Black Country targets, it was about how much public funds would be put into remedial works on sites.

(4) School performance – banding arrangements

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Burley:

“Given that:

- (a) In mid 2014 Ofsted judged the local authority’s arrangements for supporting school improvements as being “ineffective”,
- (b) part of the Education authority’s response to improve school performance is to assess schools and place them in a band (A to D) in order to prioritise where help and support would be most needed and effective,
- (c) at the June 23rd 2015 meeting of the Education and Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee, a majority of the Committee (with only one member voting against) voted to support the advice of Education officers and the Portfolio holder to ensure that these banding arrangements by the education authority which place schools in categories A – D remained confidential
- (d) as recently as last month, Ofsted's Annual Report revealed that Walsall Borough slumped to 143rd place out of 150 local authorities for youngsters attending good or outstanding primary schools, putting Walsall in the bottom 5% in the country,

Do you not think that instead of supporting those who want to keep the parents and guardians of around 64,000 children “in the dark” about the local education authority’s own assessment of the schools attended by their children, instead your Scrutiny Committee should be supporting and indeed leading the call that this information be shared with parents and guardians whose help and support is absolutely essential if under performing schools are to improve?”

Councillor Burley said that Ofsted reports were freely available to parents and other interested parties, ensuring that they were not ‘in the dark’ about school performance. Similarly, schools were required to publish a range of data on their websites, to enable interested parties to make comparisons between schools on a range of issues such as attainment, progress and attendance. In addition, parents received regular updates on the performance of their children and had opportunities to support schools in a variety of ways.

She said that parents and guardians were very concerned about school performance and to say that they were kept in the dark was suggesting that they had not got the sense to challenge. Naming and shaming did not help and would affect relationships between schools and parents. Councillor Smith’s figures were greatly over estimated. He was elected as Chair of the Education and Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and after the first meeting he resigned, if he was interested why did he run away. Did Councillor Smith not think that education was as important as his bid to be re-elected. Why did he not stick it out.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

“Bearing in mind that parents are being kept in the dark about the Council’s Ofsted inspection, the Council had just been informed that Edgar Stammers school was about to have another Ofsted Inspection given that it’s performance seemed to have deteriorated since becoming an academy, why did Scrutiny fear the grade being given to parents prior to the Ofsted Inspection, fuelling the perception that the Council had something to hide, that the Scrutiny Committee was weak, ineffective and does not have this situation under control?”

Councillor Burley had no comment to make.

(5) Council tax arrears levels

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Bird:

“Given that at the 13th July 2015 Council meeting and in response to a question from me on arrear levels amongst the estimated 19,465 low income householders, expected to pay 25% Council tax for the first time, from April 2015 due to a new policy introduced by the previous administration, you (Cllr. Bird) replied:

"I can confirm that as at 30th June 2015 34% of householders affected by these changes were in arrears with their Council Tax. This equated to 6,600 of the 19,465 households."

"I can further confirm that the estimated arrears attributable to the change are currently £343,000",

Could you now give me, this Council and the public an update as to the latest available figures with regard to the number/percentage in arrears (of this 19,000 plus cohort paying the 25% for the first time) and to the actual amount owed that is attributable to the introduction of the 25% contribution requirement?"

Councillor Bird confirmed that at the 1st January 2016, 25% of households expected to pay Council tax for the first time, due to changes in the Council tax reduction scheme, were in arrears with their Council tax. This equated to 4,900 households. He further confirmed that the estimated arrears attributable to the change was currently £820,000. On current collection levels the service was on target to meet the budgeted collection rate for the extra 25% of Council tax.

(6) Household waste collections

Councillor Smith withdrew his question with regard to household waste collections.

(7) Bus lane enforcement

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Andrew:

"With regard to Bus Lane enforcement and the income from penalties issued and fines collected, would you inform me, the Council and the public:

- (a) What is the total amount of income received by the Council from bus lane enforcement penalties in the present financial year to date?"
- (b) In particular, what is the amount of money "netted" by the Council from penalties of those caught by the controversial bus lane camera on the short bus lane, High Street, Bloxwich?
- (c) Approximately what percentage of penalties issued are actually paid?"

Councillor Andrew advised that the total income received from bus lane enforcement penalties in the current financial year was £296k.

The bus lane in Bloxwich High Street was introduced 18 years ago as a bus showcase route, with improvements undertaken in 2008 including the peak period only restriction, and co-ordinated with further works in 2011 for the red route and bus lane works along A34. This bus lane assisted in giving reliability and reduced travel times for almost 3 million passenger journeys in the area per year. Due to concerns about compliance and the impact on journey times a static camera was installed in September 2015.

He said that that some £99k had been received by the Council from penalties in the current financial year from this short length of bus lane in High Street, Bloxwich, but compliance had now improved significantly.

Councillor Andrew also said that as was similar for other local authorities, fees for 77% of penalties issued were received.

(8) Street cleansing

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Harrison:

“Given that in the draft budget considered by Cabinet on 28th October 2015, there is a proposal to cut £150K in 2016/17 through a reduction in street cleansing and to quote from p 57 of the report *“Some areas of the borough will continue to receive a routine service every 12 days or so whilst other areas of lower deterioration rates will result in a service every 36 to 72 days”*, could you elaborate by informing us which areas of the Borough will continue to get the routine service every 12 days and which areas have the “lower deterioration rates” and would therefore be cleaned only every 36 to 72 days (every 5 to 10 weeks), should this become part of the Cabinet's budget proposals at its February meeting?”

Councillor Harrison replied that Walsall town centre and the district centres of Bloxwich, Brownhills, Aldridge, Darlaston and Willenhall would not be affected by any reduction in service.

Shop fronts and litter bins would continue to be cleansed and emptied on a regular basis. Resources would continue to be focussed on cleansing of strategic gateways, the removal of fly tipping and hazardous waste, removal of graffiti from Council property and collection of dead animals.

She said that areas where reduced routine cleansing might take place were the areas where there was lower deterioration and these had not been defined. They would be subject to review throughout the year but might include areas such as Park Hall/Gillity, Streetly, Clayhanger, part of Short Heath and part of Bloxwich west.

Councillor Smith asked the following supplementary question:

“If and when it's decided which streets will be cleaned – every 5/10 weeks, can an assurance be given that residents will be informed of such streets, presumably the quieter, leafy streets, so that residents' expectations are in tune as far as possible with the reality on the ground.”

Councillor Harrison said that these areas would be reviewed as and when necessary.

79. Mayoralty 2016/17

It was **moved** by Councillor S. Coughlan, seconded by Councillor Nazir and it was:

Resolved

That Councillor K. Phillips be nominated as Mayor of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council for the municipal year 2016/2017.

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Bird and it was:

Resolved

That Councillor M. Longhi be nominated as Deputy Mayor of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council for the municipal year 2016/2017.

80. Site of former Willenhall Town Gas Works

The Council were informed that in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny procedures rule 17.02(a), the Cabinet on 7th December 2015 made an urgent decision with regard to the above. The reason for the urgent decision was because the Public Inquiry commenced on the 8th December 2015 and the Council needed to be in a position to make a decision in relation to potential negotiations to settle the matter if appropriate. If the Council did not have this option it could have prejudiced the Council's position.

Resolved

That the following urgent decision of Cabinet from its meeting held on 7th December 2015 be noted:

- “(1) That Cabinet note the offer to settle made by Jim 2.
- (2) That negotiations be entered into with Jim 2 and authority delegated to the Chief Executive Officer in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, Leader of the Council and the portfolio holder for Clean and Green to reach agreement on a settlement figure.”

81. **Recommendation of Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall and Shelfield Area Panel**

Public participation at Area Panels

It was **moved** by Councillor Wade, seconded by Councillor S. Coughlan and it was:

Resolved

That Mr. Barry Poxon be appointed a co-opted member of the Brownhills, Pelsall, Rushall and Shelfield Area Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

82. **Walsall Housing Group – governance proposals**

A report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird, seconded by Councillor Andrew and it was:

Resolved

That the changes in governance arrangements proposed by WHG set out in the report be approved.

83. **Portfolio holder briefings**

(a) **Community, leisure and culture**

A report was submitted.

In the absence of Councillor Harris, Councillor Bird gave a presentation relating to the Community, leisure and culture portfolio.

Members asked questions in relation to the presentation which were responded to by Councillor Bird.

(b) **Public health and wellbeing**

A report was submitted.

Councillor Martin, portfolio holder for Public health and wellbeing gave a presentation.

Members asked questions in relation to the presentation which were responded to by Councillor Martin.

84. **Notice of motion – Council’s budget**

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor P. Bott:

This Council is faced with sustained past, present and future central Government cuts to the Council's budget which is costing jobs, forcing charges to rise including Council tax, closing down some services and adversely affecting many other public services. This austerity approach by the Government to the financing of local government is now having and is likely to continue to have, serious effects on front line services, with a disproportionate adverse effect on the already most disadvantaged sections of the Borough's community.

Therefore this Council declares itself to be in full sympathy with those local residents, local businesses, interest groups and organisations, service users, workers, trade union members and others, who are understandably concerned about the continuing bombardment of local Council budgets and justifiably feel the need to initiate, organise and/or join peaceful and lawful campaigns that are opposed to central government cuts to the Council budgets and the adverse effects they are having and are likely to have in the foreseeable future.

Amendment moved by Councillor Bird and seconded by Councillor Andrew:

That the motion be amended by the deletion of the words “interest groups and organisations” in the second paragraph.

During the discussion on this matter, It was **moved**, by Councillor Bird, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That Council procedure rules be suspended to enable the business of the meeting to be completed.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried and it was:

Resolved

This Council is faced with sustained past, present and future central Government cuts to the Council's budget which is costing jobs, forcing charges to rise including Council tax, closing down some services and adversely affecting many other public services. This austerity approach by the Government to the financing of local government is now having and is likely to continue to have, serious effects on front line services, with a disproportionate adverse effect on the already most disadvantaged sections of the Borough's community.

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85. Notice of motion – Housing and Planning Bill

Councillor Hicken having declared an interest in this matter left the room during consideration of the item.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor S. Coughlan and seconded by Councillor Nawaz:

This Council notes:

1. That the Housing and Planning Bill is currently being debated in Parliament, and if passed would threaten the provision of affordable homes for rent and buy through:
 - Forcing 'high-value' council homes to be sold on the open market!
 - Extending the right-to-buy to housing association tenants!
 - Undermining section 106 requirements on private developers to provide affordable homes.
2. That there is no commitment in the Bill that affordable homes will be replaced like-for-like in the local area:
 - That whilst measures to help First-time buyers are welcome, the 'starter homes' proposals in the Bill will be unaffordable to families and young people on ordinary incomes in most parts of the country!
 - Will not preserve the taxpayer investment! and will be built at the expense of genuinely-affordable homes to rent and buy.
3. That the Bill undermines localism by taking 32 new wide and open-ended powers for the secretary over councils and local communities, including the ability to override local plans, to mandate rents for social tenants, and to impose a levy on stock-holding councils, violating the terms of the housing revenue account self-financing deal.

4. That the Bill, whilst introducing some welcome measures to get to grips with rogue landlords, does not help with the high rents, poor conditions and insecurity affecting many of England's 11m private renters, including one in four families with children and does nothing to help arrest the recent rise in homelessness.

This Council resolves:

- To analyse and report on the likely impact of the forced sale of council homes, the extension of right-to-buy and the 'starter homes' requirement on the local availability of affordable homes
- To analyse and report on any further likely impacts of the Bill on the local area.
- To use this information to:
 - Support the Leader of the Council in writing to the secretary of state with our concerns about the Bill.
 - Set up an urgent meeting between the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive with the local members of Parliament to raise our concerns.
 - Make public our concerns, including by publishing the above information on the Council's website and promoting through the local press.

Amendment moved by Councillor I. Shires and duly seconded:

(1) That the following be added to the motion at paragraph 5:

“5. That the Bill also threatens to eat away at the democratic process which safeguards how our local communities are made, shifting power away from local authorities into the hands of the developers.”

(2) That the following be added to the second bullet point under “This Council resolves”

“in all its forms including proposed changes to the planning process”

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried.

Further **Amendment** moved by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor P. Bott:

That the following be added to the first paragraph in the third bullet point under “This Councils resolves”:

“but suggesting that the government not only instead consider the possibility of giving the right to buy with discounts to the tenants of private landlords.”

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared lost.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried and it was:

Resolved

This Council notes:

1. That the Housing and Planning Bill is currently being debated in Parliament, and if passed would threaten the provision of affordable homes for rent and buy through:
 - Forcing 'high-value' council homes to be sold on the open market!
 - Extending the right-to-buy to housing association tenants!
 - Undermining section 106 requirements on private developers to provide affordable homes.
2. That there is no commitment in the Bill that affordable homes will be replaced like-for-like in the local area:
 - That whilst measures to help First-time buyers are welcome, the 'starter homes' proposals in the Bill will be unaffordable to families and young people on ordinary incomes in most parts of the country!
 - Will not preserve the taxpayer investment! and will be built at the expense of genuinely-affordable homes to rent and buy.
3. That the Bill undermines localism by taking 32 new wide and open-ended powers for the secretary over councils and local communities, including the ability to override local plans, to mandate rents for social tenants, and to impose a levy on stock-holding councils, violating the terms of the housing revenue account self-financing deal.
4. That the Bill, whilst introducing some welcome measures to get to grips with rogue landlords, does not help with the high rents, poor conditions and insecurity affecting many of England's 11m private renters, including one in four families with children and does nothing to help arrest the recent rise in homelessness.
5. That the Bill also threatens to eat away at the democratic process which safeguards how our local communities are made, shifting power away from local authorities into the hands of the developers.”

This Council resolves:

- To analyse and report on the likely impact of the forced sale of council homes, the extension of right-to-buy and the 'starter homes' requirement on the local availability of affordable homes
- To analyse and report on any further likely impacts of the Bill on the local area in all its forms including proposed changes to the planning process.
- To use this information to:
 - Support the Leader of the Council in writing to the secretary of state with our concerns about the Bill.
 - Set up an urgent meeting between the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive with the local members of Parliament to raise our concerns.
 - Make public our concerns, including by publishing the above information on the Council's website and promoting through the local press.

86. **Notice of motion – Household waste collections**

The following motion notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Smith and seconded by Councillor P. Bott:

This Council notes the decision taken by the former administration in its budget announced in February 2015 to move from weekly to fortnightly collections of household waste in order to cut costs. It further notes, with regret the recent Cabinet decision of 16th December 2015 that confirms how the present administration will implement that decision, thus demonstrating an almost seamless approach by the past and present administrations in terms of moving from a weekly to a fortnightly collection of household waste.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared lost.

The meeting terminated at 10.05 p.m.

Mayor:

Date: