



Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 12th November 2018 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House.

Present

Councillor M. Longhi (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillor P. Bott (Deputy Mayor)

“ B. Allen
“ A.J.A. Andrew
“ D.J. Barker
“ M.A. Bird
“ C. Bott
“ R. Burley
“ O. Butler
“ K. Chambers
“ B. Chattha
“ A.G. Clarke
“ S.J. Cooper
“ D. Coughlan
“ S.P. Coughlan
“ S.R. Craddock
“ C.U. Creaney
“ A. Ditta
“ S.K. Ditta
“ B.A. Douglas-Maul
“ K. Ferguson
“ M. Follows
“ J. Fitzpatrick
“ S.F. Fitzpatrick
“ N.Z. Gultasib
“ A.D. Harris
“ L.A. Harrison
“ A.J. Hicken
“ K. Hussain
“ D. James

Councillor L.D. Jeavons

“ C. Jones
“ T.J. Jukes
“ A. Kudhail
“ Mrs. R.A. Martin
“ J. Murray
“ A.A. Nawaz
“ M. Nazir
“ A.S. Nazir
“ G. Perry
“ L.J. Rattigan
“ W. Rasab
“ I.C. Robertson
“ J. Rochelle
“ E.B. Russell
“ S. Samra
“ H.S. Sarohi
“ K. Sears
“ I. Shires
“ G. Singh Sohal
“ M.A. Statham
“ C.D.D. Towe
“ A. Underhill
“ S. Wade
“ M. Ward
“ V.J. Waters
“ T.S. Wilson
“ R.V. Worrall
“ A. Young

49. **Apology**

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

50. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17th September 2018 copies having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as a correct record and signed.

51. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no items to be considered in private session.

53. **Mayor's announcements**

The Mayor placed on record his thanks to the organisers of the Remembrance Day parades and services held before and on Sunday 11th November throughout the borough. He also thanked those that participated, especially the contribution made by young people and schools.

54. **Petitions**

No petitions were submitted.

55. **Petition: Enforcement action with regard to the derelict Brown Jug, Short Heath**

A report was submitted.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised that members on Planning Committee may wish to be mindful of Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 (in relation to predetermination and bias) when debating the petition.

Councillor Cooper presented the petition stating that should the site be made available for development by Cavan Vets, it would create new jobs and include parking for customers.

Following deliberation by members it was **moved** by Councillor S. Coughlan, seconded by Councillor Jeavons and:

Resolved

That Cabinet consider the compulsory purchase of the former Brown Jug Sandbeds Road Short Heath.

56. Questions

(a) Location of Walsall market

Mr. P.E. Smith asked the following question of Councillor Andrew:

“Given that, in the opinion of many, the present location of Walsall Market gives rise to a cluttered eyesore effect that spoils the look of the Bridge/Park Street/Bradford Street area of the town centre as well as distracting from the shops and Sister Dora Statue that the stalls visually and awkwardly overpower and,

given that, apart from the problems facing the Saddler’s Centre, we now know that Debenhams might close, thus jeopardising the viability of the whole of the Old Square Shopping Centre, probably not helped in recent years by the re-location of the Market that was once on High Street, to which it directly linked, and further,

given that a proposed option for the new Walsall market operating from the Bridge/Park Street and Bradford Street, is on hold pending the new Town Centre Masterplan (ref: Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2018/19 – 2021/22 Appendix 6d),

Do you think it may still be possible, not to rule out the possibility of returning Walsall Market to its traditional location, where it stood for much of its 800 year history, namely the High Street, leading up to St. Matthews Church?”

Councillor Andrew replied as follows:

“As Mr Smith rightly identifies, the relocation of Walsall Market has been a long term aspiration for the Council with a dedicated capital budget to support this and enhanced public realm in the town centre. With the

benefit of a planning consent in 2015 the Council has worked with the Market Traders Association to facilitate temporary moves to support the delivery of other development and infrastructure projects in the town centre, and to prepare more detailed designs on the proposals to relocate the Market to an area within The Bridge which was demonstrated to be the preferred location by a range of stakeholders.

The Market Traders Association have engaged with the Council throughout and understand the complexities with delivering this project in an ever changing town centre; they continue to trade themselves in difficult economic conditions and recognise that enhancing the town centre as a whole will bring footfall and benefit to them.

Hence more recently they have supported this Council's position to 're-think' the town centre through the preparation of the commissioned Town Centre Masterplan. The Masterplan is being undertaken in partnership with stakeholders and is being led by external experts who are bringing their knowledge of town centre uses, and will consider some of the national challenges facing town centre high streets in the context of forming proposals for how Walsall Town Centre may evolve. The Market Traders Association are therefore in support of the masterplan considering the role and location of Walsall Market and wish to work with the consultants to determine how best the Market makes a contribution to the vitality of the town centre."

Mr. Smith asked the following supplementary question:

"Could you inform me how much has been put aside for the possible redevelopment of the market?"

Councillor Andrew replied:

"I haven't ruled out any possible options relating to the market or town centre as part of the town centre masterplan. There is a capital budget of £2 million allocated for the project within the Capital Programme."

(b) Electric vehicles and charging points

Councillor Hicken asked the following question of Councillor Andrew:

"Could the portfolio holder inform me of what the Council is doing to support owners of electric vehicles and what measures the Council is taking to improve access to electric vehicle charging points?"

Councillor Andrew replied as follows:

"Through the planning process, the Council already requires all new residential and commercial developments to have electric charging points provision and includes the necessary specifications, to enable many of the variable charging systems and cars to be accommodated.

To further understand the barriers our residents and businesses perceive to converting to using an electric vehicle and the demand for on street residential charging points, Walsall along with the wider Black Country has recently undertaken a region wide consultation exercise. Feedback from this consultation is currently being evaluated and will be used to further shape our strategy to support the uptake of electric vehicles.

With the support of our Public Health colleagues, a small budget has been identified to install 2 charging points in Walsall town centre before the end of this financial year.

To further improve access to publicly available electric vehicle charging points, Cabinet has already approved the principle of providing charging points on Walsall Town Centre pay and display car parks with the provision of free parking for the duration of the charging period.

Funding to install a wider network of electric vehicle charging points remains challenging and whilst there are a number of grants available, a minimum of 25% local contribution has to be found.

Work is ongoing with the wider Black Country, Black Country LEP and Transport for West Midlands with a view to submitting a bid, by 23 November 2018, to the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) that is designed to support the shift towards a low carbon economy.”

57. Recommendation of Cabinet

Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2018-2019

The report to Cabinet on 24th October 2018 was submitted.

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

Resolved

That the Food Law Enforcement Service Plan for 2018/19 be approved and adopted.

58. Annual scrutiny report 2017/18

The annual scrutiny report was submitted.

Councillor Murray presented the report.

Resolved

That the Annual Scrutiny report for the 2017/18 municipal year be noted.

59. Review of Polling Districts and Places 2018

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

Resolved

That the Acting Returning Officer's proposed changes to polling districts and polling places, contained in Appendix A to this report, be approved.

60. Portfolio holder briefings

(a) Clean and green

A report was submitted.

Councillor Harrison, portfolio holder for clean and green gave a presentation.

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

(b) Children's and health and wellbeing

A report was submitted.

Councillor Wilson, portfolio holder for children's and health and wellbeing gave a presentation.

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

61. Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee

(a) Change in membership

The Council noted that Councillor Samra had replaced Councillor Kudhail on the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year.

(b) **Appointment of Chairman**

The Conservative Group nominated Councillor Statham and the Labour Group nominated Councillor Nawaz to serve as Chair of the Committee. Further to a point of clarity raised by the Leader of the Council regarding the appointment process, the Monitoring Officer sought a short adjournment.

Council then adjourned from 7.30 p.m. and reconvened at 7.40 p.m.

Upon reconvening, Councillor S. Coughlan reported that should Council appoint Councillor Nawaz as Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee he would resign as Vice Chair. This would leave a vacancy for the Vice Chair position to be filled by a representative of the Conservative Group.

The Leader of the Council duly nominated Councillor Statham as Vice Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved

- (1) That Councillor Nawaz be appointed Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and vacate the position of Vice Chair; and;
- (2) That Councillor Statham be appointed Vice-Chair of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

62. **West Midlands Combined Authority Audit Committee**

The Council noted that Councillor Waters had replaced Councillor Craddock as the Council's representative on the Audit Committee of the West Midlands Combined Authority for the remainder of the municipal year.

63. **Notice of motion – Midland Metro**

A report was submitted.

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

Resolved

That this Council notes the headlines in the Express & Star from 23 October 2015:

“Walsall and Black Country Metro tram link declared dead”

Followed by comments attributed to Councillor Adrian Andrew that stated:

It's pretty clear we're not going to get the 5Ws tram link. The Metro scheme was designed more than two decades ago but it's just too expensive and comes at a time when local authorities and public bodies no longer have access to that level of funding."

Further, this Council notes that recently the Government have financially supported the Metro extension to Brierley Hill in Dudley.

This Council calls on our Cabinet with their executive powers to use all opportunities at its disposal, such as the Association of Black Country Authorities, the Black Country LEP, WMCA, and the Metro Mayor to secure funding to extend the Metro system from Wolverhampton, via Wednesfield (New Cross Hospital) and Willenhall to Walsall.

64. Notice of motion – Electric vehicle charging scheme

A report was submitted.

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

Resolved

That from 1 January 2019 all new housing, new or replacement domestic garages and business/commercial planning applications to Walsall Council include the provision of an "electric vehicle charging scheme"; and that any such scheme would not become binding on the applicant unless included by the local planning authority as a condition of any planning permission granted.

65. Notice of motion – Unlawful encampments

A report was submitted.

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

Resolved

That this Council notes the ground-breaking work undertaken during the period May 2016 and May 2018 to secure legal injunctions on 24 named sites regarding unlawful encampments.

Furthermore, this Council notes that following dialogue between local MPs a debate was initiated in Parliament to seek the inclusion of new laws to support not only Walsall but all local authorities in combating unlawful encampments.

Further, this Council instructs officers to seek support from our judicial system to an overall borough wide injunction on unlawful encampments and individuals that break the law to gain access to sites that are in public ownership.

The meeting terminated at 8.30 p.m.