

Minutes of the **ORDINARY MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 17 April, 2023, at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Present

Councillor R. Martin (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillor B. Allen

“ A. Andrew
“ B. Bains
“ H. Bashir
“ M.A. Bird
“ C. Bott
“ P. Bott
“ R. Burley
“ S. Cheema
“ S.J. Cooper
“ C. Creaney
“ S.K. Ditta
“ S. Elson
“ G. Flint
“ M. Follows
“ N. Gandham
“ A. Garcha
“ N. Gultasib
“ A. Harris
“ L.A. Harrison
“ A.J. Hicken
“ I. Hussain
“ K. Hussain
“ S. Hussain

Councillor T. Jukes

“ P. Kaur
“ R. Larden
“ E. Lee
“ F. Mazhar
“ R. K Mehmi
“ K. Murphy
“ J. Murray
“ S. Nasreen
“ A.A. Nawaz
“ A. Nazir
“ K. Pedley
“ G. Perry
“ L.J. Rattigan
“ S. Samra
“ K. Sears
“ G. Singh Sohal
“ P. Smith
“ C.A. Statham
“ M.A. Statham
“ C.D.D. Towe
“ V.J. Waters
“ J. Whitehouse
“ T.S. Wilson
“ R.V. Worrall

66. **Apologies**

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillors Ali, Clarke, A. Hussain, James, Johal, Young and Underhill.

67. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February, 2023, a copy having been sent to each member of the Council, be deferred to the next meeting.

68. **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

There were no items in private session.

70. **Mayor's announcements**

The Mayor referred to the death of former Councillor Rochelle, a member of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council from 2002 to 2019. The Mayor and Councillors Bird, Nawaz, Smith, Murray and Wilson paid tribute to former Councillor Rochelle, following which it was **moved** by the Mayor, duly seconded that a resolution of appreciation and condolences be passed.

The Mayor thanked retiring Councillors Clarke, Creaney, James, Johal and Young for their services to the Council and the people of Walsall. Councillors Bird, Nawaz, Creaney, Cheema and Smith gave remarks of thanks.

The Mayor offered best wishes to those celebrating recent religious festivals.

Resolved

That this Council have heard with deep regret of the death of former Councillor Rochelle, a member of Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council from 2002 to 2019, 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.

71. **Petitions**

No petitions were submitted.

72. Questions

(a) From the public:

Mr. Rohim Uddin asked the following question:

The consultation on indicative changes to the National Planning Policy Framework closed on 2 March 2023. One proposed change is described as confirmation that the standard methodology is an advisory starting point for establishing a housing requirement. A footnote prioritises brownfield/under-utilised urban sites.

What is the view of Walsall Council of the effect of the proposed changes, together with the announcement in the recent budget of Central Government making money available to the region for regeneration of brownfield sites for affordable housing, upon formulating a local plan with focus on affordable housing on brownfield sites as opposed to executive homes on greenbelt sites?

Councillor Andrew gave the following response:

The Councils Planning Officers have submitted a detailed response to the consultation. The consultation does not propose any change at this stage to the standard method for calculation housing need. The government stated in the consultation that it will review the implications on the standard method of new household projections data based on the 2021 census, which is due to be published in 2024.

Proposed footnote 30 which states that brownfield and other underutilised urban sites should be prioritised related to the uplift in housing need that the standard method applies to those urban authorities in the top 20 but Walsall is not. As such, the proposed footnote would not directly apply to Walsall. Nevertheless, Walsall are continuing to seek to make as much use as possible of brownfield land to meet our housing needs, including through the Walsall local Plan which is beginning preparation.

Even with the welcome funding to be provided through the devolution deal however, the supply of brownfield is unlikely to be sufficient to meet Walsall's housing needs, either for affordable or other forms of housing. Any major housing site, whether on brownfield or Green Belt, would be required to include a proportion of affordable housing, and a mix of other types of housing to meet the needs of our residents.

Mr. Rohim Uddin asked the following supplementary question:

Do you agree that Walsall could do more to develop brownfield sites and protect valuable green belt locations?

Councillor Andrew responded as follows:-

Councillor Andrew highlighted several brownfield sites that were being remediated and developed into housing and employment land. He noted the

expense of remediating former industrial sites and reflected on plans in Willenhall to remediate a large brownfield area. He also reflected on the different housing needs of different part of the borough to meet the housing needs of local residents.

(b) From members of the Council: None

73. **Scrutiny Annual Report**

The Scrutiny Annual Report was presented to the Council.

Councillor Murray highlighted the work of the Councils Overview and Scrutiny Committees and thanked Members, Partners, Officers and Democratic Services for their support during the year. Councillor Nawaz added his thanks.

It was **moved** by Councillor Murray, seconded by Councillor Nawaz:

Resolved

That the Scrutiny Annual Report be noted.

74. **Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report**

The Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report was presented to Council.

Councillor Elson highlighted the work of the Board and thanked Members, Partners, Children and Young People and Democratic Services. Councillor Jukes spoke in favour of the report.

It was **moved** by Councillor Elson, seconded by Councillor Bird:

Resolved

That the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report be noted.

75. **Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education – Constitution**

The meeting considered a suggested amendment to the constitution for the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE).

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

Resolved:

That:

1. an amendment to the constitution of SACRE, to include two voting representatives for people with non-religious worldwide affiliation or beliefs not represented by any other membership Group so long as the non-religious

belief is analogous (similar or equivalent) to a religious belief, within category A, be approved, and;

2. one vacancy be filled by a Humanist representative as an application has been made, on a permanent basis and the other be made available to another secular belief, subject to application.

76. **Recommendations of Licensing and Safety Committee – Gambling Act 2005 – Policy and Statement of Principles**

It was **moved** by Councillor Gandham and seconded by Councillor Cooper:

Resolved:

That:

1. the revised Statement of Principles for the period 2023/26 be approved and adopted;
2. it be agreed that the Licensing Service, as part of its ongoing desire to protect the health of the communities of Walsall, work with partners, both internal and external, to raise the profile of organisations, charities and services that can assist those who may suffer harm because of gambling.

77. **Annual Audit Report**

Councillor Singh-Sohal introduced the Annual Audit Report and highlighted its work in the last year. In doing so he thanked independent chair, Andy Green, for his valuable work.

It was **moved** by Councillor Singh-Sohal and seconded by Councillor Bird:

Resolved:

The Annual Audit Report be noted.

78. **Portfolio Holder Briefing**

Customer

Councillor Bird, on behalf of Councillor Ali, Portfolio Holder for Customer, gave a presentation.

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

Clean and Green

Councillor Murphy, the Portfolio Holder for Clean and Green gave a presentation.

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

79. **Notice of Motion – Defibrillators and bleed kits**

The following notice of motion was **moved** by Councillor Perry and seconded by Councillor Bird:

This Council recognises the importance of having defibrillators and bleed kits accessible, especially in public spaces, sports grounds and Government funded facilities.

This Council understands the role that it has in facilitating the delivery of new defibrillators and bleed kits across our Borough in collaboration with the voluntary and community sector, businesses and partner organisations.

This Council acknowledges the benefits of the rollout of defibrillators by the Government to all state-funded schools that currently don't have one, with over 20,000 expected to be delivered by the end of the academic year to 18,000 schools.

This Council commits to working with the local community to find suitable places to place defibrillators, acknowledging that they are most effective within 3 minutes of a person collapsing.

This Council, therefore, resolves to commission a report into the accessibility of defibrillators and bleed kits in Walsall and take any steps necessary to ensure that there is a defibrillator and bleed kit within a 3-minute radius of our local centres and high-streets including a campaign of improved public awareness of where these are and how to use them as well.

Councillors Perry, Bird, Nawaz, Kaur Hicken, Cheema and Worrall spoke in favour of the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 8.18 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 8.31 p.m.

Councillor Perry gave a right of reply.

Prior to the vote being taken a named vote was requested by over five members of the meeting. The voting being recorded as follows:

For the Motion - 44	Against the motion- No members	Abstained – No members
Cllr: “ B. Allen “ A. Andrew “ M.A. Bird “ R. Martin “ S.J. Cooper “ S. Elson “ K. Ferguson “ G. Flint		

“	M. Follows		
“	A. Garcha		
“	A. Harris		
“	L.A. Harrison		
“	A.J. Hicken		
“	I. Hussain		
“	P. Kaur		
“	R. Larden		
“	E. Lee		
“	K. Murphy		
“	J. Murray		
“	K. Pedley		
“	G. Perry		
“	L.J. Rattigan		
“	K. Sears		
“	G. Singh-Sohal		
“	P. Smith		
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“	R. K Mehmi		
“	S. Nasreen		
“	A.A. Nawaz		
“	A. Nazir		
“	R.V. Worrall		

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At this point in the meeting, the Council sat as charitable trustees. When considering the following item Council procedure rules did not apply.

80. **Annual Report of Barr Beacon Trust Management Committee**

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

Resolved:

That the work of the Management Committee be noted.

The meeting terminated at 8.41 p.m.

Mayor:

Date: