

**Minutes of the Meeting of
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council**

7th March, 2017 at 6.00pm
at the Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: The Mayor (Councillor Webb);
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Downing);

Councillors Allcock, Allen, Ashman, Bawa, Carmichael, Cherrington, Costigan, Crompton, S Crompton, K Davies, P Davies, S Davies, Y Davies, Dhallu, Eaves, Edis, Eling, Garrett, Gavan, E A Giles, E M Giles, Gill, Goult, Hackett, Hadley, Haque, Hartwell, Hevican, Hickey, L Horton, R Horton, D Hosell, S Hosell, P M Hughes, P Hughes, Dr Jaron, Jarvis, I Jones, O Jones, S Jones, Khatun, Lewis, Lloyd, Marshall, Meehan, Melia, Millard, Moore, Phillips, Piper, Rouf, Sandars, Shackleton, Shaeen, Sidhu, Tagger, Taylor, Tranter, Trow, Underhill and White.

Apologies: Councillors Ahmed, Dr T Crompton, Edwards, Frear, Hussain, Preece, B Price, R Price and Worsey.

21/17 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January, 2017 be confirmed as a correct record.

22/17 **Mayor's Announcements**

Details of Mayoral engagements since the last meeting of the Council had been circulated to members.

In particular, the Mayor made reference to the Holocaust Memorial Day, the Service of Administration of Justice and the VC Commemoration for Captain R E Phillips.

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Reference was also made to the Cadet evening she had attended at the Army Reserve Centre in West Bromwich.

The Mayor also wished to thank Holly aged 6 and Charlie aged 3, who had visited the Mayor's Parlour and made a donation to the Mayor's charities and also to Tipton Community Association and Tipton Civic Society for their support to the Mayor's charities.

The Mayor made a presentation of a certificate to Councillor R Horton, longest serving member since 1975, following his resignation from the Panel of the Valuation Tribunal Services after 29 years service.

23/17 **Petitions Under Standing Order No. 5**

No petitions were received under Standing Order No. 5.

24/17 **Questions Under Standing Order No. 6**

No questions were received under Standing Order No. 6.

25/17 **Budget 2017/18 to 2019/20**

The Leader of the Council presented details of the 2017/18 net expenditure level for the Council, based on the final Local Government financial settlement received on 20th February, 2017 and sought approval for the resultant Council Tax for 2017/18.

The Leader confirmed that the Council would be taking part in the 100% business rates retention pilot and the Department for Communities and Local Government had now published the 2017/18 figures as part of the final settlement, however, these were still based on the 50% scheme. The 2017/18 figure represented an increase in funding of £2.1m from the provisional settlement, as a result of the windfall from joining the business rates pilot. A share would be passed on to the Combined Authority, however, the amount was uncertain at present. An equivalent sum of £2.1m had been included within contingency until the figure was known. These changes were reflected within the budget forecasts for both expenditure and funding and a balanced budget continued to be achieved and reported for 2017/18.

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In the 2016/17 settlement, the Government had responded to rising costs in adult social care by giving local authorities the option to increase Council Tax by an additional 2% and by introducing a different version of the Better Care Fund from 2017/18. The Better Care Fund had been calculated on an assessment of need, less the amount assumed to be raised through the additional 2% Council Tax threshold. The clear implication of this was that local authorities who did not implement the additional 2% increase would have insufficient funds to deliver their adult social care responsibilities. It also represented a clear shift towards local Council Tax payers being responsible for funding adult social care services.

The 2017/18 final settlement included more flexibility for local authorities to bring forward the increase in Council Tax to cover adult social care costs, by implementing a 3% increase in 2017/18 and/or 2018/19. However, the total increase across 2017/18 to 2019/20 must not exceed 6%.

It was therefore proposed to increase Council Tax by 4.99% as follows:

	%
Sandwell MBC	1.99
Adult Social Care Precept	3.00
Total	4.99

This was within the referendum threshold.

The addition of precepts from the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority and the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner would result in a Band D Council Tax of £1,457.33.

The 2012 Local Government Finance Act introduced changes to funding sources for local authorities. From April 2013, 50% of business rates could be retained locally (49% to the council and 1% allocated to the Fire and Rescue Authority). In order to protect authorities who would receive less under the new system, a business rates top up was provided to authorities to bring their funding up to a baseline level. From 2020/21 revenue support grant funding would cease, instead local authorities would be allowed to retain 100% of their business rates.

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Under a scheme announced as part of the final settlement, the Government had agreed to introduce a number of 100% business rate pilots which included councils in the combined authority areas of West of England and West Midlands piloting 100% rates retention, starting in 2017/18. The 2017/18 budget incorporated this change.

The education services grant would cease from September 2017 and transitional funding of £1.051m had been allocated to Sandwell to cover the period April to August 2017. The retained duties element of the grant (£0.830m) had been rolled into the schools block dedicated grant and schools were currently being consulted about retaining this funding centrally.

The school funding settlement was announced on 20th December, 2016 and confirmed that Sandwell's total grant allocation for 2017/18 was £305.57m, before academies recoupment.

Final 2017/18 allocations of New Homes Bonus were announced as part of the settlement; a total of £1.227bn for English local authorities which had been funded primarily through the top slicing of overall funding totals. Sandwell would receive £5.0m of New Homes Bonus in 2017/18, a reduction of £1.80m compared to the amount expected per the medium term financial strategy for 2016/17. However, the national reduction in the New Homes Bonus funding had been used to create an adult social care grant for 2017/18. Sandwell would receive £1.86m through this grant and therefore the overall impact was fiscally neutral.

The Housing Revenue Account was included as a separate business plan presented to Cabinet on 8th February, 2017. The account operated fully within its own resources meeting expenditure from income obtained from tenants' rents. The 2017/18 rent income was based on decisions taken by Cabinet on 7th December, 2016. The Government continued to retain some control over the maximum amount the Housing Revenue Account could borrow and the use of receipts derived from the sale of housing properties. The programme remained affordable for 2017/18.

The Local Government Act 2003 introduced a new statutory requirement for the Chief Financial Officer to comment on the robustness of the budgetary process and adequacy of the Council's reserves to meet any unforeseen liabilities.

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The estimated General Fund reserve balance as at 31st March, 2017 was £68.3m. After consideration of the Council's strategic risks, the forecast level of free balances at the end of 2016/17 was likely to be £11.1m, representing a decrease of £1.0m from the £12.1m of free balances held at the end of 2015/16. This represented 4.67% of net operating budget and was at a level which was deemed to be adequate in the medium term.

The Council's forecast earmarked reserves at the end of 2016/17 were likely to be in the region of £45.4m (currently £46.0m), this included £17.5m of projected surpluses generated by services as part of the multi-year budget planning process. These funds would be invested directly in services to mitigate the impact of central government funding reductions and also included £11.7m of one-off balances earmarked to meet potential one-off expenditure identified as part of the budget risk assessment. Reserves had also been earmarked to fund £11.9m of planned capital investment.

The indicative multi-year funding settlement included further significant reductions in Council budgets for the remainder of the Parliament. The Council would need to consider likely future downsizing costs that may be incurred in meeting these savings over the medium term.

Directorate business plans for the three years 2017/18 to 2019/20 were reported to Cabinet on 8th February, 2017. In accordance with the recommendations contained in that report, the business plans were presented to the Budget and Corporate Services Scrutiny Board for their consideration and comment. A meeting was also held on 15th February, 2017 to review business plan proposals with relevant Cabinet Members and senior officers.

Throughout the development of the Directorate business plans and savings proposals, an assessment had been undertaken of the equalities impact of each of the budgetary proposals and whether one particular group was disadvantaged as a result of the proposals. The emphasis had been to highlight the impact of all the proposals to ensure a full understanding was achieved by both officers and elected members.

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The Council continued to face an extremely challenging financial position with funding cuts to Local Government set to continue for the remainder of this Parliament.

The Leader confirmed that:-

- Sandwell continued to have weekly refuse collections;
- all libraries remained open and were in fact providing more services and being used by more people;
- there had been an investment in parks with Sandwell having more green flag parks per head of population than any other local authority area in the UK;
- children's centres remained open;
- there were new leisure facilities, with some of the best leisure facilities in the country, and plans for further investment;
- services would be consolidated at a neighbourhood level to make efficiencies and improve service provision;
- highways continued to be repaired and gritted;
- there had been significant investment in street lighting;
- there would be continued investment in new house building;
- where there were charges in place these were set at a reasonable level to protect services rather than closing services.

The Leader thanked Cabinet Members, chief officers, service managers, scrutiny members and officers involved in the budget process and business plans.

In response to questions from members, the Leader responded as follows:-

- the Council Tax collection rate was consistently one of the best in the country, in excess of 98% for last year. The authority did pursue debt and did not write off debt, unless it was uncollectable or uneconomic to collect it. Assurances were given to residents who paid on time that those people who did not pay were pursued. With regard to business rates, this could be difficult, particularly in instances where companies had closed. However, it was important that these resources were brought in;

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- there had been a 1% rent reduction year on year which had impacted on local authorities' ability to invest in new housing provision, however, Sandwell had committed to a substantial programme of both new housing development and refurbishment with £70m investment in the programme for the coming financial year. Notwithstanding the obstacles by the Government, Sandwell would continue to provide the best possible programme.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, and Standing Order 12, the decision relating to Council Finances 2017/18 to 2019/20 was put to a named vote as follows:-

For:

Councillors Allcock, Allen, Ashman, Bawa, Carmichael, Cherrington, Costigan, Crompton, S Crompton, K Davies, P Davies, S Davies, Y Davies, Dhallu, Downing, Eaves, Edis, Eling, Garrett, Gavan, E A Giles, E M Giles, Gill, Goult, Hackett, Hadley, Haque, Hartwell, Hevican, Hickey, L Horton, R Horton, D Hosell, S Hosell, P M Hughes, P Hughes, Jarvis, I Jones, O Jones, S Jones, Khatun, Lewis, Lloyd, Marshall, Meehan, Melia, Millard, Moore, Phillips, Piper, Rouf, Sandars, Shackleton, Shaeen, Sidhu, Tagger, Taylor, Tranter, Trow, Underhill, Webb and White.

Against:

None.

Resolved:-

- (1) that the revised financial position and the forecast reserves for 2016/17 be noted;
- (2) that the Council's General Fund budget for 2017/18, as detailed in Appendix A to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (3) that the provisional budgets for 2017/18 to 2019/20, as outlined in Appendix A3 to the report now submitted, be approved;

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- (4) that the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision policy, together with Prudential Indicators, as outlined in Appendix C to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (5) that the Capital Programme 2017/18 to 2019/20, as set out in Appendix D and the Capital Strategy set out in Appendix E to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (6) that the supporting information on the robustness of the budget process and adequacy of the Council's reserves, as detailed in Appendix F to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (7) that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, as outlined in Appendix G to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (8) that it be noted that, at its meeting on 17th January 2017, the Council had approved the amount of 71,217.34 as its Council Tax base for the year 2017/2018 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992 made under Section 33 (5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992;
- (9) that the following amounts be calculated by the Council for the year 2017/2018 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:
 - (a) Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act; £1,002,638,227
 - (b) Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act; £911,220,497

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(c) Being the amount by which the aggregate at 12(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 12(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year; £91,417,730

(d) Being the amount at 12(c) above, all divided by the amount at 11 above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year; £1,283.64

(e) Valuation Bands

	£
A	855.76
B	998.39
C	1,141.02
D	1,283.64
E	1,568.90
F	1,854.15
G	2,139.41
H	2,567.29

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at 12(d) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the 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 Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands;

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- (10) that it be noted that for the year 2017/2018 the major precepting authorities have stated the following amounts in precepts 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:-

Valuation Bands	West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority £	Police & Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands £
A	38.09	77.70
B	44.44	90.65
C	50.79	103.60
D	57.14	116.55
E	69.84	142.45
F	82.53	168.35
G	95.23	194.25
H	114.28	233.10

- (11) that, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 12(e) and 13 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2017/2018 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Band	£
A	971.55
B	1,133.48
C	1,295.41
D	1,457.33
E	1,781.19
F	2,105.03
G	2,428.89
H	2,914.67

- (12) that the Chief Financial Officer be authorised to take any necessary action to collect revenues and disburse monies from the relevant accounts;

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- (13) that the requirements of any relevant legislation, to consider reports as a consequence of the approval of the Council's Finances 2017/2018 report, be dispensed with on the grounds that in the opinion of the Council the items are urgent.

26/17

Annual Pay Policy Statement - 2017

The Localism Act 2011 required local authorities to prepare an annual Pay Policy Statement setting out their policies relating to the remuneration of their chief officers, the remuneration of their lowest-paid employees and the relationship between the pay of chief officers and that of other employees.

The Act determined that the Pay Policy Statement must cover a range of the authority's policies relating to the pay of Chief Officers including:-

- the level and elements of remuneration for each officer (including salary, bonuses, performance-related pay and benefits in kind);
- remuneration of chief officers on recruitment;
- increases and additions to remuneration; and
- the approach to the payment of chief officers on their ceasing to hold office under or to be employed by the authority.

Supplementary guidance had since added to and clarified the information required to be published, notably that the Council should be given the opportunity to consider proposals for "large salary packages in respect of a new appointment" and "large severance packages for staff leaving the organisation" and that the Council should state the thresholds at which it wished to require approval.

The guidance considered that £100,000 was an appropriate threshold.

Section 40 of the Localism Act required the Council to have regard to this guidance in the exercise of its functions under pay accountability provisions. The Council followed the spirit of the guidance, should particular circumstances dictate, and this approach had duly been reflected in the Pay Policy Statement.

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On 31st January, 2017 the pay level ratio within the Council between the lowest paid (full time equivalent) employee and the Chief Executive was 1:10.

Resolved that the Pay Policy Statement for 2017 be approved.

27/17

Report of the Lead Member for Transport

Councillor R Horton, the member nominated pursuant to Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1985 to report on the activities of the transport authority (Transport for West Midlands), presented an update on the work of the Authority.

Particular reference was made to:-

- **West Midlands Bus Alliance** had delivered significant improvements for passengers across the region. The Bus Alliance Board was now developing 50 key deliverables to meet the key objectives around increasing modal share and patronage, maintaining a high level of customer satisfaction for passengers, improving reliability and punctuality, investing in the local highway to improve journey speeds and improving air quality. One of the key deliverables was to deliver a series of Network Development Plans across the region which would describe how the network and associated infrastructure would change over a ten year period in reaction to changes in land use and policy in a specified geographical area;
- **M5 Oldbury Viaduct Works** – Transport for West Midlands were engaging with Highways England and the Council on the planned work to Oldbury Viaduct on the M5. Working with operators, a number of highways measures had been put forward to maintain service reliability and give buses a level of priority during the works. Options for further mitigation through the provision of temporary park and ride, marketing and promotional activities were also being considered;
- **Ticketing Initiatives** - National Express were trialling significantly reduced fares across a large part of the Sandwell and Dudley area. The promotion reduced day tickets to just £3 and weekly tickets to £11 in an attempt to encourage greater use of the local network;

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- **Service 126** - Working in partnership through the Alliance, National Express with Transport for West Midlands had delivered £4m of investment into the vehicle fleet on this service, on a key corridor in Sandwell, supported by investment in the passenger waiting facilities along the route;
- **Intu Merry Hill** - discussions were ongoing with Intu, the owners of Merry Hill Shopping Centre, regarding future development plans for the site. With the extension of the Metro to Merry Hill and Brierley Hill now being delivered through the HS2 Connectivity Package, work was taking place to ensure benefits were maximised and fully integrated with wider improvements to bus services and infrastructure, including a new bus station and improved connectivity to Brierley Hill and the Waterfront;
- **Rail Investment** – London Midland had introduced an enhanced service to Bescot Stadium station from December which had seen the frequency to the station increase to approximately three trains per hour from a previous half-hourly frequency. This was complemented by the project to improve the station environment and the link to the car park;
- **Park and Ride** - in July 2016 new contracts were introduced to provide grounds maintenance and cleaning at park and ride locations. Planned maintenance work continued to be delivered with further upgrades of CCTV, LED lighting and resurfacing work throughout the region. From November 2016, a new three year Considerate Parking contract was put in place, providing parking enforcement at all Transport for West Midlands park and ride locations. The project to improve the perception of safety and security at Bescot Stadium Park and Ride and pedestrian routes leading to the station had been delivered in partnership work between Centro/Transport for West Midlands, Sandwell Council and Highways England. An automatic number plate recognition trial had been a success and was being rolled out as part of a further trial at four new locations, including Rowley Regis;
- Transport for West Midlands was currently reviewing its programme for expanding park and ride provision and was seeking to identify the best approach for securing funding to support the programme recognising the role that Park and Ride could play in supporting rail, bus and tram expansion plans and wider network resilience plans. Options for expanding capacity at Sandwell and Dudley station were being specifically considered alongside other locations;

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- **WorkWise** – between 1st April, 2016 and 31st January, 2017 over 4,000 unemployed jobseekers (409 in Sandwell) had been supported with finding, starting and staying in work with free ticketing for interviews and job starts;
- **Education** – 66 education sites had continued to receive support. Of these, thirteen sites were in Sandwell, including Wood Green Academy, RSA Academy, The Phoenix Collegiate, Sandwell Academy, Health Futures UTC, Sandwell College and Stuart Bathurst. Schools were also encouraged to sign up to Modeshift STARS, a national schools awards scheme recognising schools that demonstrated excellence in supporting cycling, walking and other forms of sustainable travel. In 2016 two of the Smarter Network Smarter Choices engaged Sandwell schools, RSA Academy and Phoenix Collegiate, achieved their Bronze Modeshift STARS accreditation;
- **Safety and Security** – the Safer Travel Partnership was responsible for delivering the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioners Local Transport Policing Plan. The key objectives of this plan continued to be to reduce crime and improve passenger perception of personal safety. To this end, crime on the region's bus network had continued to reduce. The year to date figure for April 2016 to January 2017 showed a further overall reduction of 2%. Similarly the trend over the last eight years had been one of reducing crime on the Sandwell's buses;
- **Bus Stations**
 - Cradley Heath Interchange had been working with Intu, the owner of Merry Hill Shopping Centre, to promote services in the area. Work was also underway with the Council to investigate highway measures on Forge Lane, outside the Interchange, to prevent motorists parking on the highway preventing safe access and egress to the site;
 - investigations were underway with regard to a refurbishment project for the public toilets at West Bromwich to improve the customer experience. This was currently planned to be delivered in 2017/18;
 - work had been undertaken with the Council to introduce traffic enforcement procedures in New Street, West Bromwich, adjacent to the bus station. This introduction had seen positive results, significantly reducing traffic build up in the area.

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In response to concerns regarding parking problems at Cradley Heath Station, Councillor R Horton confirmed that penalty charge notices were being issued. During the motorway works consideration was being given to use of the Council car park to alleviate the situation. Work was also underway with the Combined Authority in relation to provision of new decked car parks and charging for parking.

With regard to the Sandwell and Dudley ticket zone boundaries, Councillor R Horton confirmed that discussions had taken place with Councillor Moore and this matter was being investigated further as complaints had been received that some parts of Sandwell could not receive the discounted ticket prices. Concerns had also been raised with regard to the manner in which consultation had taken place and this matter would also be investigated.

28/17

Update from the Council's Representative on the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel

The Council's representative on the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel, Councillor Gill, provided members with an update on the work undertaken by the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel.

The Panel had a dual role to both support and scrutinise the work of the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Panel acted as a critical friend on behalf of West Midlands residents and had a number of statutory tasks:-

- to scrutinise and comment on the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan;
- to scrutinise and make a recommendation on the policing precept and budget for policing;
- to review the Commissioner's Annual Report;
- to hold confirmation hearings before the Commissioner made certain key appointments;
- to handle complaints about the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, referring serious complaints to the Independent Police Complaints Commission.

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The Panel had met twice since September 2016.

In November, the main item on the agenda was to consider progress made by the Police and Crime Commissioner and other key partners towards implementing the recommendations in the Panel's scrutiny inquiry report Tackling Female Genital Mutilation in the West Midlands. The original report was published in June 2015 and contained recommendations for the Police and Crime Commissioner and partner agencies. The report led to the establishment of a West Midlands Regional Taskforce. The Panel discussed a number of issues, including the need for Clinical Commissioning Groups and other health organisations to be involved as community safety officers; the disappointing lack of prosecutions; community champions and the involvement of the education sector. It was agreed that progress was being made and that there were some very innovative approaches.

The panel also considered a report from the Police and Crime Commissioner his oversight role in police complaints, the effectiveness of the police complaints and appeals monitoring and the proposed changes set out in the Policing and Crime Bill.

In January, the meeting focused on the proposed inquiry into the wider criminal justice system and the Police and Crime Commissioner's role within it. There were a wide range of partnerships or areas of partnership that could be considered, so it was suggested that the Panel focussed on those areas where most value could be added. Members settled on a focus on youth offending and how partner agencies were working together to reduce offending.

The Panel had also been updated on a range of matters including bike crime, the recruitment of police staff and the efforts being made to increase the diversity of the police force and the forthcoming summit on unauthorised encampments.

29/17

Minutes and Policy/Strategic Recommendations of the Cabinet

The Council received the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 11th January and 8th and 22nd February 2017.

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In response to a question regarding the unauthorised encampments protocol, Councillor Moore stressed the requirement for a partnership approach and co-operation of the Police. Councillor Moore would provide updates as the matter progressed, however, the process was far more robust than previously. High risk sites were being secured by a variety of measures, there were also legal proceedings against named individuals and injunctions would be sought. A new post had also been created to co-ordinate the Council's response to unauthorised encampments and fly-tipping. A report would be brought to Cabinet and Planning Committee with regard to a transient site which would allow police to use section 62 powers, which they could not currently use. It was considered that a well managed site would give an additional tool to reduce unauthorised encampments, which was costing the authority around £400,000 per year.

In response to a question regarding the apprenticeship levy, Councillor Trow confirmed that the Council was liable to pay the apprenticeship levy and there would need to be around 205 apprenticeships in total. Provision for this levy was included within the budget. The Council had a track record in terms of apprenticeships and this new levy would be taken as an opportunity to get the maximum for young people and staff.

The Council considered the recommendations of the Cabinet on the following matters of strategic significance:-

29/17(a) **New Senior Management Structure – Spring 2017**

Resolved:-

- (1) that the establishment of the senior management structure be approved as follows:-

Deletion and removal from the establishment of the following Chief Officer posts:-

- Director – Neighbourhoods (vacant);
- Director – Governance (vacant);
- Director - Commercial and Business Transformation (vacant);
- Assistant Chief Executive (vacant);

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Creation and establishment of the following Chief Officer posts:-

- Executive Director – Neighbourhoods;
- Director – Housing and Communities;
- Executive Director – Resources;
- Director – Monitoring Officer;

Re-designation of the following Chief Officer Posts:-

- Director – Regeneration and the Economy to become Director – Regeneration and Planning;
- Chief Operating Officer – Adult Social Care (temporary) to become Director – Prevention and Protection (permanent);
- Director – Education (temporary) to become Director – Education, Skills and Employment (permanent);

Re-naming of the following Chief Officer posts:-

- Director – Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing renamed as Executive Director – Adult Social Care, Health and Wellbeing;
- Director of Children's Services re-named as Executive Director of Children's Services;

- (2) that the Head of Governance be authorised to make any necessary changes to the Council's Constitution.

30/17

Summary of Matters Considered at the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board

The Chair of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Board, Councillor P Hughes, presented the summary of matters considered at the meeting of the Board held on 15th February, 2017.

No questions were asked of the Chair of the Board.

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31/17

Summary of Matters Considered at the Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Board

The Chair of the Children’s Services and Education Scrutiny Board, Councillor Underhill, presented the summary of matters considered at the meeting of the Board held on 6th February, 2017.

No questions were asked of the Chair of the Board.

32/17

Summary of Matters Considered at the Community Safety, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Board

The Chair of the Community Safety, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Board, Councillor Crompton, presented the summary of matters considered at the meeting of the Board held on 8th February, 2017.

No questions were asked of the Chair of the Board.

33/17

Summary of Matters Considered at the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board

The Chair of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board, Councillor Y Davies, presented the summary of matters considered at the meeting of the Board held on 16th February, 2017.

No questions were asked of the Chair of the Board.

34/17

Summary of Matters Considered at the Leisure, Culture and the Third Sector Scrutiny Board

The Vice Chair of the Leisure, Culture and the Third Sector Scrutiny Board, Councillor Hevican, presented the summary of matters considered at the meeting of the Board held on 13th February, 2017.

In response to a question regarding damage to grassed verges and similar areas, the Vice Chair undertook to refer the matter back to the Scrutiny Board for consideration.

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35/17 **Minutes of the Audit Committee**

The Chair of the Audit Committee, Councillor Sidhu, presented the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 26th January, 2017.

No questions were asked of the Chair.

36/17 **Appointment of a Local Returning Officer for the West Midlands Mayoral Election**

Following the implementation of the West Midlands Combined Authority in 2016, there would be an election for a West Midlands Mayor on 4th May 2017. The arrangements for the election were covered by the draft Combined Authorities (Mayoral Elections) Order 2017.

Section 6(1) of the Order required the combined authority to appoint one of its officers, or one of the officers of a constituent council, to be the combined authority returning officer for the election. At its board meeting on 20th January, the Combined Authority appointed the Chief Executive of Birmingham City Council to the role. This was in line with the normal practice for co-ordinating West Midland wide elections.

The Combined Authority Returning Officer would have responsibility for the co-ordination of the mayoral election across the seven metropolitan areas in the West Midlands.

Each of the seven councils must in turn appoint its own Local Returning Officer, responsible for the delivery of the election in his or her area. Section 5 of the Mayoral Order conferred the functions in relation to the area of a constituent council on the person who was for the time being the returning officer for the area of that council by virtue of section 35 (returning officers: local elections) of the Representation of the People Act 1983. The Chief Executive was the Sandwell Returning Officer for the purposes of the 1983 Act.

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Resolved that the designation of the Chief Executive of Sandwell MBC as the returning officer for all elections within the Sandwell area by virtue of Section 35 (returning officers: local elections) of the Representation of the People Act 1983 be reaffirmed, to include elections to the office of Mayor of the West Midlands in 2017 and subsequent mayoral electoral years.

37/17 **Appointment to Committees**

At its meeting on 19th July 2016, Council gave consideration to the committees, boards and other fora for the 2016/17 Municipal Year and the appointment of members to those bodies and the positions to be held.

Due to a conflict of interest, the Council was invited to nominate a replacement member to the Select Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Resolved that Councillor Tranter be appointed to the Select Committee for Leisure Provision for the remainder of the 2016/17 Municipal Year.

38/17 **Notice of Motion – Response**

The Council regularly considered notices of motion submitted by members under Standing Order No. 7.

On 17th January 2017, the Council had supported a motion calling upon the Government to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for women born on or after 6 April 1951 who had unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age.

Details were provided of a response which had been received by John Spellar MP from Damian Green MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

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The response stated that the last Government accelerated the timetable at which changes to the retirement age occurred because of increases in longevity which meant that public finances had to be protected in order to maintain the viability of the State Pension over the longer term.

A change limiting the increase in State Pension age under the 2011 Act in any individual case to 18 months had already been made during the passage of the Act and under the 2014 Act there were changes in other parts of the pension system that ensured that when women did start to receive their pension they did better on average than under the pre-2016 pension system.

There was no prospect of introducing further mitigations at this stage, some mitigations were in place and going further than this could not be justified given the underlying imperative must be to focus public resources on those most in need.

Resolved that the response to the approved motion in relation to the state pension arrangements be received.

(The meeting ended at 7.26pm)

Contact Officer: Trisha Newton Democratic Services Unit 0121 569 3193

This meeting was webcast live and is available to view on the Council's website (<http://sandwell.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>).