

Minutes of Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

6th October 2020 at 6.00pm
On line virtual meeting

Present: Her Worship The Mayor Councillor Dr Jaron (in the Chair);

Councillors Ahmed, Akhtar, Akhter, Ali, Allcock, Allen, Ashman, Bawa, Bostan, Carmichael, Cherrington, Chidley, Costigan, Crompton, S Davies, Y Davies, Dhallu, Downing, Eaves, Edwards, Gavan, E M Giles, E A Giles, L Giles, G Gill, M Gill, Hackett, Hadley, Hartwell, Hevican, Horton, P M Hughes, P Hughes, M Hussain, Z Hussain, Jarvis, I Jones, O Jones, R Jones, S Jones, Kausar, Khatun, Mabena, McVittie, Melia, Millar, Millard, Moore, Padda, Phillips, Piper, Preece, Rollins, Rouf, Sandars, Shackleton, Shaeen, Simms, Singh, Tagger, Taylor, Underhill, Webb, White and Worsey.

Officers: David Stevens – Chief Executive;
Neil Cox – Director – Prevention and Protection;
Alison Knight – Executive Director – Neighbourhoods;
Rebecca Maher – Acting Section 151 Officer;
Lisa McNally – Director – Public Health;
Elaine Newsome – Service Manager – Democracy;
Sue Stanhope – Interim Director HR;
Suky Suthi-Nagra – Democratic Services Manager.
Surjit Tour – Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer.

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46/20 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M Y Hussain and Tranter.

The Mayor took the opportunity to wish Councillor Tranter a speedy recovery on behalf of the Council.

47/20 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2020 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48/20 **Mayor's Announcements**

The Mayor announced that she had conducted a number of media interviews for television and radio.

There would be no bonfire night celebrations this year, however, whilst there would be Christmas lights in towns, there would be no switching on celebration events.

49/20 **Reset and Recovery – Phase One Findings**

Council considered the activity undertaken in Phase One of the reset and recovery framework, the findings from this work and further detail on Phase Two activity.

On 6th May 2020, the Emergency Committee approved the Council's approach to the Recovery and Reset Plan. This set out the political, financial and social context within which the Council would need to plan its recovery.

Furthermore, at its meeting on 27th May 2020 the Emergency Committee endorsed the proposed framework for reset and recovery. The priority for Phase 1, the immediate post-crisis response, had been to move out of lockdown safely and ensure that flexibility was retained to respond to changes in the local infection rate to support the most vulnerable in our communities.

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To this end, the Council's Response Plan (as agreed on 27th March 2020) had been continually monitored at the Reset and Recovery Board and reviewed to provide assurance that the Council:

- continued to meet the objectives of the initial response plan;
- provided appropriate levels of response activity as restrictions have been lifted and operations scaled back;
- ensured flexibility in our response activity should we need to scale back up in event of local lockdown.

In response to questions from members, the Deputy Leader:-

- thanked Scrutiny Chairs for their scrutiny work in this area, the support was appreciated;
- confirmed that members would continue to receive regular updates;
- confirmed that the comments around mental health would be referred to the relevant Council/NHS services;
- appreciated that digital inclusion was difficult in some cases and the Council would continue to ensure that telephone systems were able to take calls;
- confirmed that SCVO had been dealing with volunteers and they could be asked to contact the group referred to.

50/20

Revised Senior Management Structure Proposals

Council received the recommendations of the Chief Officer Terms and Conditions Committee in respect of the senior management restructure proposal.

The Chief Officer Terms and Conditions Committee, on 1st July 2020, considered and recommended a senior management restructure which outlined a flatter management structure and reporting lines designed to meet the needs of the organisation as outlined in the Corporate Plan – Big Plans for a Great Place.

The proposal was considered and supported by the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board on 25th September 2020.

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Resolved that:-

- (1) the recommendations of the Chief Officer Terms and Conditions Committee taken on 1st July 2020, in relation to the Senior Management Structure of the Council, be approved;
- (2) the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer be authorised to make administrative amendments to the Council's Constitution in accordance with the resulting required changes arising from the senior management review.

51/20

Proposals to Depart from the Local Plan at Land at West Bromwich Street, Oldbury

At the meeting of Planning Committee, held on 8th July 2020, consideration was given to planning application DC/20/64152 which sought approval for 152 no. 2,3,4 bedroom dwellings and 82 no.1 and 2 bedroom apartments together with associated roads, car parking, open space and associated works at land at West Bromwich Street, Oldbury.

Planning Committee approved the planning application with conditions subject to the application being referred to Full Council as a departure from the approved development plan.

There had been numerous approvals for mixed use developments, however, none had been brought forward for development. The residential development of the site was supported as it would bring a long term, highly visible, vacant and derelict site into active use. Residential redevelopment was considered an appropriate alternative use of the site.

The site was allocated for mixed use purposes (retail and leisure) within the Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document and it was, therefore, necessary for the Council to consider whether or not to grant a departure to its adopted policy to allow the application to proceed.

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Resolved that an exception to the local development plan be allowed in respect of planning application DC/20/64152 (Proposed Development of 152 No. 2,3,4 bedroom dwellings and 82 No.1 and 2 bedroom apartments together with associated roads, car parking, open space and associated works).

52/20 **Proposals to Depart from the Local Plan at Princes Foundry, Bradleys Lane, Tipton**

At the meeting of Planning Committee, held on the 10th June 2020, consideration was given to planning application DC/19/63745 which sought approval for a proposed new unit and open storage bays.

Planning Committee approved the planning application with conditions, subject to the application being referred to Full Council as a departure from the approved Development Plan.

The site was currently allocated for housing within the Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document and it was, therefore, necessary for the Council to consider whether or not to grant an exception to its policy to allow the application to proceed.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economic Growth confirmed:-

- that the furnace was not increasing in size, the application would result in a cleaner, tidier site with overall improvement to the appearance of the site;
- there was a risk that the business would move elsewhere as there was nowhere else to locate the site in Sandwell;
- no objections had been received from the Environment Agency.

Resolved that an exception to the local development plan be allowed in respect of planning application DC/19/63745 (Proposed new unit and open storage bays at Princes Foundry, Bradleys Lane, Tipton, DY4 9EZ).

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53/20 **Climate Change Strategy**

Approval was sought to the Climate Change Strategy which included ambitious targets for the Council to become carbon neutral by 2030 and for the borough to be carbon neutral by 2041.

An implementation programme based upon the Strategy's Action Plan would be produced to include indicative costs for implementing the Action Plan over the next five years.

The Strategy was considered and approved by Cabinet at its meeting on 12th August 2020.

In response to a question regarding removal of trees, the Deputy Leader gave assurance that in addition to the commitment given by the Council to plant 5,000 trees over the next ten years, additional trees would also be planted.

Resolved that the Climate Change Strategy (2020-2041) be approved.

54/20 **West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority**

Council received an update on the work of the Fire Authority from Councillor Edwards, the member nominated pursuant to Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1985, to report on the activities of the West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority.

55/20 **Transport for West Midlands**

Council received an update on the work of the Transport Authority from Councillor Akhter, the member nominated pursuant to Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1985, to report on the activities of Transport for West Midlands.

56/20 **West Midlands Police and Crime Panel**

Council received an update on the work undertaken by the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel from Councillor R Jones, the Council's substitute representative on the Panel.

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57/20 **West Midlands Combined Authority**

Council received an update on the work undertaken by the West Midlands Combined Authority from the Deputy Leader of the Council.

58/20 **Appointments to Committees, Boards and Outside Bodies**

Consideration of revisions to appointments to committees, boards and other bodies was deferred to a future meeting.

(The meeting ended at 7.26pm)

This meeting was broadcast live and is available to view by clicking on the link

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