

Agenda Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, to be held on Tuesday, 12 October 2021 at 6.00 pm for the purpose of transacting the following business:-

The Mayor of Sandwell, Councillor M Hussain, in the Chair

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| 1 | To receive Apologies for Absence | 13 - 14 |
| 2 | Declarations of interests in any matters to be discussed at the meeting. | 15 - 16 |
| 3 | To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the ordinary and extraordinary meetings of Council held on 26 July 2021. | 17 - 32 |
| 4 | To consider any urgent business (with prior approval by the Mayor). | 33 - 34 |
| 5 | To receive announcements from the Mayor. | |
| 6 | To receive petitions under Standing Order No. 5. | 35 - 36 |
| 7 | To consider written questions under Standing Order No. 6 to:- | 37 - 38 |
| | (a) the Mayor; | |
| | (b) the Leader of the Council; | |



- (c) any other member of the Cabinet;
- (d) any person appointed to preside at a committee, sub-committee or panel;
- (e) the members of the Council nominated pursuant to Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1985, on the discharge of the functions of the following Joint Authorities:-
 - (i) West Midlands Combined Authority (the Leader);
 - (ii) West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority (Councillor C Padda);
 - (iii) Transport for the West Midlands (Councillor Akhter);
- (f) a nominated member appointed by the Council to the Board of Sandwell Leisure Trust;
- (g) a member of the Council who is, as a result of action taken by or on behalf of the Council, a member or director of any company.

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| 8 | Corporate Plan 2020-2025 - Refresh 2021 | 39 - 84 |
| | To consider the Corporate Plan 2020-2025 Refresh. | |
| 9 | Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1985 Update | 85 - 88 |
| | To receive updates from the Council's lead representatives on:- | |
| 9(a) | West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority | 89 - 94 |
| 9(b) | Transport for West Midlands | 95 - 118 |
| 9(c) | Police and Crime Panel | 119 - 122 |

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| 9(d) | West Midlands Combined Authority | 123 - 138 |
| 10 | Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 2020-21 | 139 - 150 |
| | To receive the annual report of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee 2020-21. | |
| 11 | Appointments to Vacancies on Committees, Boards and Other Bodies | 151 - 160 |
| | To consider any appointments required to vacancies on committees, boards and other bodies. | |
| 12 | Cabinet | 161 - 218 |
| | To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 and 21 July and 1 September 2021. | |
| 13 | Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board | 219 - 222 |
| | To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board held on 21 July 2021. | |
| 14 | Audit and Risk Assurance Committee | 223 - 246 |
| | To receive the minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 18 March, 24 June and 29 July 2021, and to consider the recommendations arising from the meeting. | |

15 **Notice of Motions**

To consider the following motions received under Standing Order No. 7:-

15(a) **Sandwell Herald**

Proposer: Councillor Abrahams

Seconder: Councillor Kalari

“This council resolves to discontinue the delivery of 'The Sandwell Herald', which is printed and delivered at a cost of over £42,000 per year. The council instead resolves to install 150 new litter bins a year in parks and high streets across the Borough.”

15(b) **Houses of Multiple Occupation**

Proposer: Councillor Henlan

Seconder: Councillor Chapman

“This Council recognises the difficulties of monitoring Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) of under 5 occupants due to the lack of any requirements for these to be registered with Local Authorities.

Further, This Council resolves to request The Cabinet Member for Housing to bring forward a report outlining the feasibility of an Additional Licensing Scheme for all HMOs within the Borough of Sandwell to run simultaneously alongside the Mandatory Licensing Scheme, pursuant to Section 56 of the Housing Act 2004 and to release the findings of this Report.”

15(c) **Walker Grange Care Home**

Proposer: Councillor Williams

Seconder: Councillor W Gill

“This council welcomes the public engagement and scrutiny activity regarding the ongoing consultation on the future of Walker Grange Care Home.

Walker Grange is a precious council care home for Tipton. For many families in Tipton, Walker Grange is fantastic option for them to put their elderly loved ones in a local care home. This is due to the expensive cost of private care homes. It currently has 22 residents, some of which have been there for over 20 years. The care home has proved over the last 29 years that it can provide safe and effective service for its residents. It was given a good report by the Care Quality Commission in January 2020, there report stated that Walker Grange is a well-lead, responsive, caring and safe provider.

It is reasonable for the consultation to result in Walker Grange being upgraded or remaining open in its current condition. It is unthinkable for many families in Tipton including the residents of Walker Grange that it could possibly be closed. In recognising the community value of this facility, this Council urges the leader and cabinet to reconsider and remove the option of closure for Walker Grange Care Home”.

15(d) **Cuts to Universal Credit**

Proposer: Councillor Bostan

Seconder: Councillor Piper

“This Council recognises how hard last eighteen months have been for the people of Sandwell during the pandemic. They have dealt with the uncertainty of a local economy put on hold, the hardship of tens of thousands of Sandwell’s residents either furloughed or out of work, and in some cases personal tragedy. Many are reliant on Universal Credit.

The announcement of this government's plans to cut Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit will be devastating for many people.

This Council deplores the fact that food bank usage in the borough is soaring, and recognises that the increase in fuel prices as we wind down into the colder months will add to pressures on household budgets. Emerging research by the Local Government Association has shown that this will force thousands of families into severe poverty.

This Council has endeavoured to shield residents from the full impact of the economic downturn in recent years, particularly in anticipation of the furlough scheme ending.

These measures include but are not limited to the following:

- An emergency food hub to feed our most vulnerable which supported thousands at the height of the pandemic.
- Free school meals for our most disadvantaged children and young people, a provision which continues despite the failure of the Conservative Government failed in its basic duty to feed Sandwell's children during school holidays amid the pandemic.
- 100 % council tax reduction scheme taking another significant burden off the shoulders of our most vulnerable, despite the huge financial challenges of ever-increasing cuts to our core grant from government.

Under Labour leadership, this Council has organised workfares across our towns supporting young people in to good jobs whilst working with our skills providers to help our residents affected by Covid-related redundancies, re-skill and train into alternative forms of employment.

In Sandwell, as of July 2021, there were 42,104 people claiming universal tax credits of which, 15,876 (38%) of people were in employment. 1,396 are aged between 16-19 and Sandwell

ranks the 7th highest with number of people claiming universal credit in all English metropolitan boroughs.

Research carried out by the Centre for Research in Social Policy at Loughborough University in a report called 'Local indicators of child poverty after housing costs, 2019/20' which covers the five-year period from 2014–15 to 2019–20 shows an increase of child poverty in the borough of around 7%.

Council recognises the limits of its abilities to mitigate the economic downturn for its most vulnerable residents and calls upon the government to step up to its duty to protect those most at risk.

Families most at risk of deepening poverty will not benefit from the increases because they are subject to the benefits cap. Migrants without recourse to public funds, many of whom work in industries hardest hit by the lockdown, have also been left out in the cold and millions of families reliant on the legacy benefit system did not receive the uplift channelled through Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit.

This Council resolves for the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, calling upon the Government to:

- Continue the £20-a-week increase to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit early contributions which was brought in to help households deal with the impact of COVID-19.
- Extend this to other benefit schemes to help residents who are most in financial need and have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic.
- Support Councils through better funding to help them up skill and retrain residents at risk of unemployment as furlough ends.”

Dated 4 October 2021



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Distribution

All Members of the Council

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