

Minutes of Council

**Tuesday, 23 May 2023 at 6.00 pm
at Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: His Worshipful The Mayor, Mr Richard Jones;

Councillors Abrahams, Akpoteni, K Allcock, Anandou, Ashraf, Bhullar, Carmichael, Chambers, Chapman, Chidley, Choudhry, Crompton, Davies, Dhariwal, Dhatt, Dunn, Fenton, Fisher, Fitzgerald, Gavan, E Giles, J Giles, L Giles, S Gill, Hackett, Hartwell, Hemingway, Hinchliff, Hughes, Hussain, Jalil, Johnston, Kalari, Kalebe-Nyamongo, Kaur, Khan, Khatun, Kordala, Lewis, Loan, Mayo, Melia, Millard, Moore, Muflihi, Owen, Padda, Pall, Piper, Preece, Rahman, Randhawa, Rollins, Shaeen, J Singh, N Singh, Smith, Taylor, Tipper, Tromans, Trumpeter, Uddin, Uppal, Webb, Weston, Wilkes, Williams and Younis

Also present: Shokat Lal – Chief Executive; Surjit Tour – Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer; Elaine Newsome – Services Manager – Democracy; Trisha Newton – Deputy Democratic Services Manager; Connor Robinson – Democratic Services Officer; John Swann – Democratic Services Officer; Ruth Darby – Senior Civic & Member Services Officer; Kennedy Brown – Sergeant at Arms.

(Outgoing Mayor Mr R Jones in the Chair)

56 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Allcock, Maycock and W Gill.



57 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

58 **Election of the Mayor**

Mr Richard Jones invited nominations for the office of Mayor of the Borough of Sandwell for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

Councillor Bill Gavan was nominated by Councillor Owen and Councillor Hackett seconded the nomination.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried and it was:

Resolved that Councillor Bill Gavan be elected to the Office of the Mayor of the Borough of Sandwell for the ensuing Municipal Year 2023/24.

Councillor Bill Gavan made the Declaration of Acceptance of Office required by law and was invested with the Mayoral chain and badge of office.

Councillor Gavan took the Chair and made his speech of acceptance. The Mayor announced that, during his term of office, his chosen charities would be Better Understanding of Dementia in Sandwell (BUDS) and Age UK.

The Mayor announced that his husband, Mr Adam Kennedy, would act as the Mayor Consort for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Mr Adam Kennedy was invested with the chain and badge of office of Mayor's Consort.

(His Worshipful the Mayor, Councillor Bill Gavan, in the Chair)

59 **Vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor**

Councillor Millard moved a vote of thanks to the retiring Mayor, Mr Richard Jones, on behalf of the Council, and Councillor Randhawa seconded the motion.

In response Mr Richard Jones thanked members of the Council for giving him the opportunity to represent the Borough as Mayor. Mr Jones also thanked his partner, Mr Richard McVittie as well as officers in members services.

60 Election of the Deputy Mayor

The Mayor invited nominations for the position of Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Sandwell for the 2023/24 Municipal Year.

Councillor Elaine Giles was nominated by Councillor Hughes and Councillor Allcock seconded the nomination.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried and it was

Resolved that Councillor Elaine Giles be elected to the position of Deputy Mayor of the Borough of Sandwell for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

Councillor Elaine Giles made and subscribed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office required by law and was invested with the chain and badge of office and made her speech of acceptance.

The Deputy Mayor announced that her daughter, Miss Elizabeth Giles, would act as the Deputy Mayoress Consort for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Miss Elizabeth Giles was invested with the chain and badge of office.

61 Vote of thanks to the retiring Deputy Mayor

Councillor J Giles moved a vote of thanks to the retiring Deputy Mayor, Councillor Jackie Taylor, on behalf of the Council, and Councillor Hartwell seconded the motion.

In response Councillor Jackie Taylor thanked members of the Council for giving her the opportunity to represent the Borough as Deputy Mayor.

Councillor Taylor thanked her husband Mr Taylor for his support over the past year and extended her best wishes to the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the year ahead.

62 Minutes of the Previous Meetings of Council

Resolved that the minutes of the extraordinary and ordinary meetings of Council held on 28 March 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63 Executive Appointments

- (1) that the names of persons appointed by the Leader of the Council to the position of Deputy Leader (Statutory) and as a Cabinet Member be noted;
- (2) that the Executive Portfolios, as determined by the Leader of the Council and their assignment to the Deputy Leader and each Cabinet Member, as follows, be noted:-
 - i. Councillor Bob Piper as Statutory Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources;
 - ii. Councillor Suzanne Hartwell as Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care;
 - iii. Councillor Simon Hackett as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Education;
 - iv. Councillor Syeda Khatun as Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities;
 - v. Councillor Danny Millard as Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways;
 - vi. Councillor Laura Rollins as Cabinet Member for Housing and Built Environment;
 - vii. Councillor Charn Singh Padda as Cabinet Member for Leisure and Tourism;
 - viii. Councillor Peter Hughes as Cabinet Member for Regeneration and WMCA.

- (3) that the executive appointments as set out in Appendix A be approved.

64 Political Balance, Appointment to Committees, Boards and Other Fora 2023/24 and updates to the Council's Constitution

In accordance with the requirements of its Constitution, the Council considered proposals relating to the identification of the bodies it wished to carry out its function as a local authority and terms of reference for those bodies.

Consideration was given to the nominations to committees, boards and other fora which had been received from all political groups.

Resolved:-

- (1) that, taking into account proportionality, the constitution of committees, board and other fora for 2023/24 be approved;
- (2) that the appointments of members and co-opted members to the positions, committees, boards and other fora established by the Council, as set out in Appendix B, be approved;
- (3) that, in accordance with the provisions of the Localism Act 2011, one nomination from each of the Church of England Diocese and Roman Catholic Archdiocese and two nominations for Parent Governor representatives to serve as non-elected members on the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board be invited, with voting rights conferred only on any matter with regard to education, whether in respect of schools or wider educational issues;
- (4) that the programme of meetings for the 2022-23 municipal year be approved;
- (5) that the term of office for Mr Michael Ager, Independent Member for the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee, be extended for a four-year period expiring at the Annual Meeting of Council in 2027;

- (6) that the changes to the Council's Constitution be approved in respect of:-
- Part 4 - Scrutiny Procedure Rules/Article 2a - Councillor Call for Action;
 - Revised Terms of Reference for Corporate Parenting Board and Health and Wellbeing Board;
 - Revised job role for the Performance Champion – Cleaner and Greener Communities.

65 Appointment of Representatives to Other Bodies

Consideration was given to the appointment or nomination of representatives to serve on outside bodies for the Municipal Year 2023/24.

Resolved that the appointments to outside/other bodies, as detailed in Appendix C, be approved.

66 Independent Remuneration Panel Review on Members' Allowances Scheme

Consideration was given to the report and recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel in respect of the Members Allowance Scheme 2023-27.

It was moved and seconded by the Leader and Deputy Leader that the administration had concluded that it could not accept any increase in the levels of the allowances proposed and it was therefore proposed to freeze the majority of the existing scheme of member allowances at the current value. However, the following recommendations of the Panel were proposed for approval:-

- maintaining the one special responsibility allowance rule, so that a Member cannot receive more than one SRA;
- the recommended reduction in the Deputy Leader Special Responsibility Allowance to 75% of the Leader's Allowance;
- the proposed removal of both the broadband and paperless working allowances;
- the proposed qualification of the appointment of a Cabinet Member to chair the Joint Consultative Panel Chair, which was also extended to the Chair of the Land and Asset Management Committee.

In addition, it was recommended that the Council did not accept the indexed increase in the basic allowance in line with the staff pay award.

In relation to the wider recommendations made by the Independent Remuneration Panel, the Governance and Constitution Review Committee would undertake a review as part of its work programme in the current municipal year.

Resolved that:-

- (1) the one special responsibility allowance rule, so that a Member cannot receive more than one SRA, be maintained;
- (2) the Deputy Leader special responsibility allowance be reduced to 75% of the Leader's Allowance;
- (3) the reduction from two West Bromwich Vice Chairs to one;
- (4) the reduction in Performance Champions from six to five;
- (5) the broadband and paperless working allowances be removed from the Members' Allowance Scheme;
- (6) the Chair of the Joint Consultation Panel will be a qualified appointment of a Cabinet Member;
- (7) the Chair of the Land & Asset Management Committee will be a qualified appointment of a Cabinet Member;
- (8) there will be no indexed increase in the basic allowance in line with the staff pay award from April 2022;
- (9) the Governance and Constitution Review Committee will undertake a further review of the recommendations of the Independent Review Panel and submit a report to a future meeting.

Meeting ended at 6.55pm

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