

Minutes of Council

**Tuesday, 13 June 2023 at 6.00 pm
at Council Chamber - Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

Present: His Worshipful The Mayor, Councillor Gavan (Chair);
Deputy Mayor, Councillor E M Giles;

Councillor K Allcock, M Allcock, Ashraf, Bhullar, Carmichael, Chambers, Chapman, Chidley, Choudhry, Crompton, Davies, Dhatt, Dunn, Fenton, Fisher, Fitzgerald, J Giles, L Giles, S Gill, W Gill, Hackett, Hemingway, Hinchliff, Hughes, Hussain, Jalil, Johnston, Kalebe-Nyamongo, Kaur, Khan, Khatun, Kordala, Lewis, Loan, Maycock, Mayo, Melia, Millard, Moore, Muflihi, Padda, Pall, Preece, Rahman, Randhawa, Rollins, Shaeen, J Singh, Smith, Taylor, Tipper, Tromans, Trumpeter, Uddin, Uppal, Webb, Weston, Wilkes, Williams and Younis.

Officers: 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; Kennedy Brown – Sergeant at Arms.

67 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Abrahams, Akpoteni, Anandou, Dhariwal, Hartwell, Kalari, Millar, Owen, Piper and N Singh.



68 **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were received.

69 **Minutes**

Resolved that the minutes of the extraordinary and ordinary meetings of Council held on 23 May 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

70 **Urgent Business**

There was one additional item of business which had been approved for inclusion by the Mayor – a question from Councillor Fisher to the Leader of the Council seeking an update on the ongoing bin strikes and what measures the Council were considering to reduce the impact of the strikes on residents. The matter was considered under Minute No. 73/23 below.

71 **Announcements**

The Mayor gave details of Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral engagements that had taken place.

72 **Petitions**

No petitions were received under Standing Order No, 5.

73 **Written Questions**

Questions received under Standing Order No. 6 were asked of the relevant members and responses received.

74 **Annual Report of the Corporate Parenting Board 2021-2023**

Council received the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021-23.

The report highlighted the Corporate Parenting Board's progress and achievements for children in care and care leavers throughout September 2021 to March 2023 where services had supported young people in adjusting to society's new normal post Covid-19.

75 Sandwell Council Improvement Plan

On 22 March 2022, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced an intervention package and a set of Directions to ensure the Council was able to comply with its best value duty under Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999. These Directions were in-part influenced by the Grant Thornton report following their Value for Money Governance Review of December 2021.

A single Improvement Plan was agreed by Council on 7 June 2022.

Under the Statutory Directions, the Council was required to report progress against the Improvement Plan to the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities every six-months following approval of the Plan. The first report was submitted in December 2022.

Cabinet considered the progress of the Improvement Plan on a quarterly basis and had received their quarterly progress report on 7 June.

The Leader outlined the progress that had been made in delivering the actions contained within the Improvement Plan and provided an update on Cabinet's recommendation to Council.

Resolved that the Improvement Plan Progress Reports, the Improvement Plan Annual Report and an accompanying letter be submitted to the Secretary of State for Levelling up, Housing and Communities to form the Council's six-monthly update on progress against the Improvement Plan.

76 Proposed Departure from the Development Plan at Forge Mill Farm, Forge Lane, West Bromwich

Planning Committee had granted conditional approval at its meeting held on 10 May 2023 in relation to planning application

DC/23/67838 (Proposed Phase 1 - Conversion and change of use of existing barn 1 into cafeteria and natural play area, proposed single storey building containing support facilities (toilets, kitchen, lobby and draft lobby, classroom, stores and plantroom). Phase 2 - Proposed single storey education block containing 2 no. (30/40 students) classrooms and cloakroom area) at Forge Mill Farm, Forge Lane, West Bromwich.

The site was currently a Green Belt allocation and the proposed development would infill a small section of the farm. It was necessary for the Council to consider whether or not to grant an exception to adopted policy to allow the application to proceed.

Resolved that approval be given to an exception to the Development Plan in respect of planning application DC/23/67838 (Proposed Phase 1 - Conversion and change of use of existing barn 1 into cafeteria and natural play area, proposed single storey building containing support facilities (toilets, kitchen, lobby and draft lobby, classroom, stores and plantroom). Phase 2 - Proposed single storey education block containing 2 no. (30/40 students) classrooms and cloakroom area) at Forge Mill Farm, Forge Lane, West Bromwich.

77 Section 41 of the Local Government Act 1985 Update - West Midlands Fire and Rescue Authority

Council received an update on the work of the Fire Authority from Councillor Jalil, 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.

78 Revisions to Appointments to Committees, Boards and Other Bodies

Council considered revisions to the appointments to committees, boards and other bodies.

Resolved that the revised appointments to committees, boards and other bodies, as set out at Appendix A, be approved.

79 To receive the minutes of Cabinet

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15 March 2023 were received.

80 To receive the minutes of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board

The minutes of the meeting of the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board held on 29 March 2023 were received.

81 To receive the minutes of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee held on 16 March 2023 were received.

82 Notices of Motion

The Council proceeded to consider the following motions received under Standing Order No. 7.

82/23 Anti Social Behaviour Plan

It was moved by Councillor W Gill and seconded by Councillor Dunn:-

“This Council recognises the impacts that antisocial behaviour has on our residents, businesses and communities.

This council welcomes the action taken by Government to announce the anti-social action plan and to make the West Midlands an area for hotspot policing.

And this Council resolves to invite the leader to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner to highlight the importance of this funding for our town centres and high streets and to work cooperatively with the Council’s partners to deliver this action plan in the coming weeks and months for local residents”.

In accordance with Standing Order No.12, Councillor Khatun moved the following amendment to the Motion, seconded by Councillor Uddin:-

“This Council recognises the impacts that anti-social behaviour has on our residents, businesses and communities.

This council welcomes the action taken by Government to announce the anti-social action plan and to make the West Midlands an area for hotspot policing. This council further welcomes the allocation of £110,000 over a two-year period with £55,000 being allocated towards staff costs for one hot spot area in Sandwell.

This Council resolves to invite the leader to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner, Simon Foster, to thank him for his partnership working that secured £110,000 pounds for the two-year pilot and to highlight the importance of regular funding for our town centres and high streets and to work co-operatively with the Council's partners to deliver the action plan in the coming weeks and months for local residents in the pilot area.

As policing and enforcement is extremely important to the people of Sandwell, this council further resolves, in the Leaders communication to ask that Simon Foster PCC is invited to respond to the council to outline how funding is allocated to the West Midlands as a combined authority and how this is apportioned to Sandwell".

The amendment was accepted, the amended motion was put to the vote and, having been carried, it was RESOLVED accordingly.

Meeting ended at 7.35pm
(Following adjournment between 6.47pm and 7.02pm)

Contact: democratic_services@sandwell.gov.uk