

**Tameside Council
Elected Member
Annual Report of Activities 2020/21**

Councillor Name: George Jones

Ward Name: Denton West

Participation at Council Meetings and Panels

I have sat on a number of different Panels this municipal year including Carbon & Waste Reduction, Planning, Place & External Relations Scrutiny, Full Council and West Strategic Neighbourhood Forum. I have attended all of the scheduled meetings for these panels.

Carbon & Waste Reduction Panel: The panel has focused this year on the effects of the Coronavirus pandemic on our climate, particularly during the lockdowns and the new way of working that has had to be adopted. We have assessed the possible impacts these significant changes will have on our environment and the way in which we tackle climate change during our recovery and beyond. Presentations have included updates on the cycling and walking agenda, green homes grants, local authority retrofit bids, regular waste collection updates and the LED streetlight replacement scheme. I've been pleased to see the authority making good progress against our agreed action plans and being successful in securing external funding.

Speakers Panel (Planning): Planning has considered many planning applications this year and I have been able to ask questions and challenge officers, supporters and objectors to ensure I can make an informed decision on each application. It's been encouraging to see the continued investment coming into the borough despite the pandemic.

Place & External Relations Scrutiny Panel: Scrutiny has had a clear focus this year on monitoring the economic impact the pandemic is continuing to have on our local economy. The panel has taken a particular interest in ensuring that as much support is put in place as possible to help businesses to ensure they get through this period and that they bounce back during our economic recovery. I have also been able to sit on a working group looking at the proposed Inclusive Growth Strategy which I'm glad to see has been adopted. Alongside, monitoring the economy, the panel has also taken the opportunity to challenge Officers from Greater Manchester Police following the release of the HMIC report. I look forward to seeing vast improvements made to the force so that the public can have confidence in our police.

Full Council: I regularly contribute to discussions and debates that take place on a range of issues across the council chamber. We've received some personal and incredibly important motions this year which have highlighted issues around domestic abuse and free school meals to name a few. I'm proud to have supported these motions and bring attention to these issues.

West Strategic Neighbourhood Forum: Neighbourhood Forums this year have focused on the support the council has been providing to elderly and vulnerable members of our communities throughout the pandemic. The work of the Community Champions has been a regular item on the agenda and to see the work they have done in our communities has been fantastic. They have been crucial in sharing out public information and working with marginalised groups across the borough, I'm proud to be part of the scheme.

Constituency Work and Local Issues

I've spent as much of my first year as possible getting to know my constituents, our community groups and local businesses. I have liaised with many constituents on casework, addressing concerns that they have from potholes, overgrowth, missed waste collections, planning issues and personal challenges to name a few. I always try to provide a speedy response and a quick resolution to casework that I receive. We've got so many brilliant community groups in Denton West that I have worked with addressing issues that they are having and also supporting their future plans, expanding their offers and the reach they have within the community. I'm always glad to see that local businesses in the ward are thriving and well supported. Despite the strain they have been under during lockdown, many have turned their hand and adapted. I've been proud over the last two years to join the local MP in celebrating and recognising the work of our local businesses through his business awards.

I am always more than happy to take up casework on behalf of residents or to support local businesses and community groups, just get in touch!

Members Advice Surgeries

Unfortunately, due to COVID restrictions, the Denton West Councillors have been unable to hold our weekly surgery at the Denton West Community Centre. However, we have been able to communicate with our residents in different ways including via phone calls, emails, post and social media.

Since the relaxation of some restrictions, from the 8th March, we have run weekly doorstep surgeries which have been really successful. I've thoroughly enjoyed being able to interact with residents in person again.

Training and Development

I have attended a number of Member Development Sessions throughout the year. I've thoroughly enjoyed the information sessions on transport and the climate change agenda. I've found all the training sessions to be useful and informative, allowing me to communicate with residents effectively and understanding the full facts. They have certainly allowed me to gain a more rounded view of issues and policy proposals.

Achievements during the Year

My first year on the council hasn't gone quite the way I was expecting but that's what I enjoy about this role, tackling problems head on and doing everything I can to support my community. Throughout the pandemic that has meant ensuring that residents who are shielding receive food parcels and get their medicines delivered. It has also involved ensuring that welfare checks are carried out on residents where concerns have been raised. Equally though the way that the Denton West community has pulled together has been heartening to see.

One of my standout achievements this year has been the successful campaign that the Denton West Councillors coordinated to ensure that a Dane Bank to Denton link via bus was reinstated following Stagecoach scrapping this vital link on its 205 service. In recent weeks I

have seen first hand how important this link has been for the residents I represent.

Any other comments

Its been the honour of my life to serve my home community on Tameside Council over the last year and a half. I hope I will be able to continue that service after May! If I can support any of my constituents in anyway, please don't hesitate to contact me.