

ITEM NO: 2

COUNCIL

14 July 2015

Commenced: 5.00pm

Terminated: 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor V Ricci (Civic Mayor)

Councillors Affleck, Bell, Bowden, Bowerman, Bray, Buckley, Cooney, Cooper, Dickinson, Downs, Drennan, Fairfoull, J. Fitzpatrick, P. Fitzpatrick, Fowler, Francis, Glover, Gwynne, Jackson, Kinsey, Kitchen, D Lane, J. Lane, McNally, I. Miah, R. Miah, Middleton, Patrick, Pearce, Peet, K. Quinn, S. Quinn, Robinson, Ryan, Shember-Critchley, Sidebottom, M. Smith, T. Smith, Taylor, F. Travis, L. Travis, Ward, Warrington, Welsh, White, Whitehead and Wild.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Bailey, Ballagher, Beeley, Cartey, A Holland, B Holland, Piddington, Reynolds and Sweeton.

Civic Mayor (Councillor V Ricci) in the Chair

19. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor informed Members that the two Tameside residents had been recognised in Her Majesty The Queen's Birthday Honours List. Mrs Ann Barlow from Ashton-under-Lyne had been awarded the British Empire Medal for her services as a Homewatch Co-ordinator and Mrs Jean Montgomery from Denton had been awarded the British Empire Medal for her services to the Cub and Scout movement in Reddish. Members joined the Civic Mayor in extending their sincere congratulations to Ann and Jean.

Councillor Kitchen, Chair of Council Business, in the Chair

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 19 May 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair of Council Business.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members at this meeting of the Council.

22. COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Councillor Taylor, the Deputy Executive Leader, announced that Ashton's award-winning market, already voted Britain's most popular market for the second year running, had now been named Britain's most coach-friendly shopping destination in the National Coach Tourism Awards organised by trade magazine Coach Monthly. This latest award again underlined the huge economic importance of Ashton Market to the borough and Councillor Taylor thanked the traders and staff for their ongoing drive and commitment and all the shoppers and visitors for their loyal support.

He also made reference to a full week of accreditation of the Customer Service Excellence Standard. The outcome of the Assessment was that the Council fulfilled the requirements of the Standard with 100% compliance, a huge achievement in itself but it also achieved compliance plus in 8 areas. The result demonstrated the innovation and delivery of service that was over and above what would normally be expected.

Councillor Robinson, the Executive Member for Transport and Land Use, made reference to the recent success of the Operations and Greenspace Team in the Local Government Chronicle Awards, which recognised the way the unit has managed to maintain and even improve the work it did despite cuts to its budget in excess of 50 per cent, made possible by a radical redesign. He also thanked the Council's Engineering Team for their commitment in ensuring the successful completion of the Tameside Pinch Point Scheme in Ashton-under-Lyne.

Councillor Travis, the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Health, commented on the Sky High Adventure facility at Active Medlock in Droylsden which, would be opening in early August. As well as providing an active day out for families from Tameside and beyond, the climbing centre would cater for schools, young people and adults with a disability or additional needs, corporate team building, youth groups and parties. She also highlighted the successful Stamford Park run, a free, weekly, timed 5km run in the Park with all levels of runners welcomed and encouraged to take part in this initiative. In addition, she advised on the Record Breakers Summer Reading Challenge where all children aged 5 – 11 years would be invited to sign up at Tameside Libraries to take part in the challenge to read 6 books over the summer months.

She was, however, disappointed to report on the Government's recent announcement that public health funding was to be cut, as part of wider measures designed to achieve £3bn in public sector savings. Investment in public health was already under pressure potentially leaving services and staffing levels unable to cope with rising need and reducing the Council's ability to continue with its planned programme of health initiatives that were making an impact in the Borough.

The Executive Leader made reference to the Government's recent 'stability' budget, the full details of which would not be known until the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn and that the Council had by far the biggest financial challenge it had ever faced. The budget report for the years 2015/16 and 2016/17 laid out the difficulties to be faced including savings of £38m to be found through the next two years. However, with the Government's announcement that it would be cutting £200m from local health spending across the country initial estimates suggest the Council would need to make a further £10m of savings this year and next.

There would be some tough and unpalatable decisions to be made with the scale of the cuts being faced and the Council would be exploring a detailed range of proposals. These included reducing staff numbers by a further 200 posts and reviewing staff terms and conditions, continuing to work with trade unions to find the least worst approach so that as many staff as possible could be protected. Other proposals being considered were reducing support for carers, people with learning disabilities and services to children and the elderly, reductions in street cleansing and the maintenance of parks, further cuts in libraries and cultural events, less money for roads and winter gritting and reductions in home to school transport as well as cuts to children's centres.

He announced the launch of a public consultation exercise which would take place over the summer months on where these cuts might have to fall and made reference to last year's Big Conversation on the Budget which showed that communities wanted to be involved in the future of their services. Tameside was the only Council in Greater Manchester to increase council tax for this financial year and although it was not an easy decision, the Council engaged with its residents to explain why it was necessary and that every penny would be going to support front line services as promised.

The Executive Leader went on to share some good news to share and was pleased to announce two significant milestones in the Vision Tameside Project. The topping-out ceremony took place in mid-June for the new Clarendon Sixth Form College on course to open in the autumn and the

process of moving Council staff out of the current administration centre into new locations across the Borough had been completed.

In conclusion, he stated that the financial savings challenge was enormous, the hard work was just beginning and the next few years would test the Council in a way that was never thought possible. Although there were no easy solutions he was clear that the Council would be working with its staff, the trade unions and communities to act quickly to make necessary changes to achieve a balanced budget.

23. COUNCIL BIG CONVERSATION

The Chair reported that a question had been received from Mr L Billington as follows:

“Why does the Council require a Chair of Council Business being paid £11,269 per year to chair roughly five or six full council meetings a year when other boroughs have the mayor chair full council meetings.”

The Executive Leader responded that the Council Members' Allowances were set in accordance with the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003. Under the Regulations, Members' Allowances were determined by an Independent Remuneration Panel which, regularly reviewed who received an allowance and how much and set the level. The Independent Panel had reviewed on a number of occasions allowances paid to Members and believed that the allowance paid to the Chair of Council Business was entirely justified. The question suggested that the Chair of Council Business received an allowance solely for Chairing Council meetings, this was far from being the case. In addition to his normal duties as Councillor, the Chair of Council Business was also responsible for, amongst other things:

- To be a Member of the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Steering Group;
- To Chair meetings of the Employment Appeals Panel;
- Attend meetings of the Executive Board and Cabinet;
- Serve as a Member of the Overview (Audit) Panel;
- To lead on new member induction, member training and support;
- To act as mentor to newly elected Councillors;
- Upholding and promoting the Council's Constitution;
- To have oversight of the operation of the Mayoral function and to advise the Civic Mayor on the operation of the Mayoral Protocol.

Additionally, this role was independently considered as part of the Corporate Performance Assessments undertaken by the Audit Commission when the Council was awarded one of the highest scores nationally for corporate governance.

24. MEETING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of Executive Cabinet held on 24 June 2015. It was moved by Councillor K. Quinn, seconded by Councillor J. Fitzpatrick and:

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 24 June 2015 be received.

25. LOCAL PENSIONS BOARD TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader and Executive Director (Governance and Resources) advising that under the Local Government Pension Scheme (Amendment)

(Governance) Regulations 2015, administering authorities were required to establish their local pension boards prior to 1 April 2015.

The report explained that the role of the local pensions board was to assist the administering authority in its role as a scheme manager of the Local Government Pension Scheme. The Greater Manchester Pension Fund (GMPF) Local Board (the 'Board') was established at the Full Council meeting on 24 February 2015 and held its first meeting on 16 April 2015, well in advance of the deadline of 1 August 2015 when Local Boards were required to be fully operational.

The Regulations required local boards to comprise an equal number of employer and scheme member representatives, with at least 4 members in total. The GMPF Local Board was established with a '2+2' structure to facilitate the Local Board being quickly established and operational and to ensure capacity and knowledge and understanding requirements were met.

The intention had been to increase the size of the Local Board as its work programme evolved and expanded and the Local Board's Terms of Reference stated that the size of the Local Board would be reviewed periodically. The existing members of the GMPF and the GMPF Management Panel were supportive of moving to an expanded structure with effect from September which would increase the range of skills and experience on the Local Board.

It was moved by Councillor K Quinn, seconded by Councillor Taylor and:

RESOLVED

- (i) That the membership of the GMPF Local Board be increased to 5 member representatives and 5 employer representatives.**
- (ii) That the revised Terms of Reference for the Local Board as appended to the report be agreed.**
- (iii) That the additional Local Board members be appointed as set out in paragraphs 8 to 13 of the Terms of Reference.**

26. MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL BODIES

It was moved by Councillor K Quinn, seconded by Councillor Taylor and:

RESOLVED

- (i) That Councillor Kinsey replace Councillor Jackson as Deputy Chair of the Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel;**
- (ii) That Councillor Shember-Critchley be taken off the Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel.**
- (iii) That Council notes the appointment of Tony Lloyd to the role of Interim Mayor for Greater Manchester for the period June 2015-May 2017 following a successful interview process, to allow the role of Interim Mayor to be fully integrated into the decision making process of the GMCA and AGMA, to agree to GMCA becoming a full member of AGMA in its own right.**

27. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION – EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Leader and Executive Director (Governance and Resources) informing Members of the changes required under the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015. The Regulations required the Council to change its Constitution to amend the disciplinary process for the statutory positions of Head of Paid Service, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer. The Regulations provided that before a decision was taken to dismiss any of the three Statutory Officers, the Council must appoint a special panel and must take into account the Panel's views. In the case of a proposed disciplinary action against any one of the three statutory officers; namely Head of Paid Service, Monitoring

Officer and Section 151 Officer, the Council is required to invite at least two independent persons who have been appointed for the purposes of the Members' conduct regime under section 28(7) of the Localism Act 2011 to form part of that 'independent panel', and must include in that invitation any of its 'independent persons'.

RESOLVED

That the implementation of the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 be noted and the Council's Employment Procedure Rules be amended as detailed in section 1.5 of the report together with any other necessary amendments to affect the same.

28. NOTICE OF MOTION

Consideration was given to the following motion received in accordance with Standing Order 16.1, which was proposed by Councillor K. Quinn and seconded by Councillor Robinson:

"That this Council believes that the announced suspension of electrification works to the Transpennine railway line is a betrayal of Tory manifesto promises to the North of England.

Electrification was meant to bring improved and more efficient services between Manchester, Leeds and the wider area with six trains every hour between Leeds, Huddersfield, Manchester and journey times as quick as 43 minutes between Leeds and Manchester.

It is estimated that this work would have produced up to 20,000 to 30,000 private sector jobs across the North. Journey time reductions would also enhance the economic competitiveness of the North and allow Northern businesses to recruit from a wider pool of talent.

Locally, faster and more efficient electric trains would underpin improved opportunities for services stopping at Stalybridge, Ashton and potentially Guide Bridge.

Nowhere is the North/South divide more apparent than in the area of funding for transport infrastructure. In total, 92% of all of the money released for this purpose by the government has been spent in London and the South East.

While Northerners continue to be packed into second-hand carriages on creaking lines, the £14.5 billion of capital expenditure allocated to Crossrail alone is nine times more than the amount earmarked for all the rail projects in the North West, North East and Yorkshire combined. The Secretary of State for Transport has also announced that yet more London-centric railway work will remain the top priority for this government.

If the government is sincere about creating their "Northern Powerhouse" rather than a 'Northern Poorhouse', then they need to stop the Northern Powercut and put serious and fair investment in quicker and better railway connections between the great cities of the North to achieve that economically sustainable Northern Power House.

The Council strongly urges that electrification of the Transpennine line is recommenced as an immediate priority, and that our local Members of Parliament be asked to strongly press this issue for our constituents in Parliament."

The following amendment was proposed by Councillor Dickinson and seconded by Councillor Bell:

"This Council believes that the announced pause of electrification works to the Transpennine railway line is not in the immediate interests of the North of England.

It is estimated that this work would have produced up to 20,000 to 30,000 private sector jobs across the North. Journey time reductions would also enhance the economic competitiveness of the North and allow Northern businesses to recruit from a wider pool of talent.

Locally, faster and more efficient electric trains would underpin improved opportunities for services stopping at Stalybridge, Ashton and potentially Guide Bridge.

Council is concerned at the level of infrastructure spending in London and the South East compared to that in the North, and calls on Government to ensure that infrastructure schemes in the North are committed to and prioritised to generate maximum economic benefit.

This Council believes that if the Northern Powerhouse ambition is to be realised, it needs to be matched with commensurate transport infrastructure investment to help connect our great Northern cities.

The Council strongly urges that electrification of the Transpennine line is recommended as an immediate priority, and that our local Members of Parliament be asked to strongly press this issue for our constituents in Parliament.”

Upon being put to the vote the amendment was rejected and the original motion was put to vote and it was –

RESOLVED

That this Council believes that the announced suspension of electrification works to the Transpennine railway line is a betrayal of Tory manifesto promises to the North of England.

Electrification was meant to bring improved and more efficient services between Manchester, Leeds and the wider area with six trains every hour between Leeds, Huddersfield, Manchester and journey times as quick as 43 minutes between Leeds and Manchester.

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If the government is sincere about creating their “Northern Powerhouse” rather than a ‘Northern Poorhouse’, then they need to stop the Northern Powercut and put serious and fair investment in quicker and better railway connections between the great cities of the North to achieve that economically sustainable Northern Power House.

The Council strongly urges that electrification of the Transpennine line is recommended as an immediate priority, and that our local Members of Parliament be asked to strongly press this issue for our constituents in Parliament.

29. QUESTIONS

The Chair reported no questions had been received in accordance with Standing Order 17.2.

30. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items of business for consideration at this meeting.

CHAIR