

COUNCIL

5 December 2023

Commenced: 5.00pm

Terminated: 6.15pm

Present:

Councillors Affleck, Alam, Axford, Beardmore, Billington, Bowden, Bowerman, Boyle, Bray, Chadwick, Colbourne, Cooney, Costello, Dickinson, Drennan, Fairfoull, Feeley, Ferguson, Fitzpatrick, Glover, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Howarth, Jackson, Jones, Karim, Kitchen, Lane, Martin, McLaren, McNally, Mills, Naylor, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Ricci, Robinson, Roderick, N Sharif, T Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Tilbrook, Ward, Warrington and Wills

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Choksi and Gwynne

43. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor began by announcing, with great sadness, the recent loss of Basil Beeley, who represented Stalybridge South as an elected member from 2006 to 2018. Deepest sympathies were extended to his family.

The Civic Mayor made reference to the recent season of remembrance in November 2023 and informed Council that she had attended many ceremonies including an Armistice Day silence at Dukinfield Town Hall and the annual Civic Service and wreath-laying in Ashton-under-Lyne. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Betty Affleck, had attended many of the events held in Hyde.

The Civic Mayor announced that they had been present at the dedication of Kingsman Sean Dawson Way in Stalybridge, who was a former Buckton Vale and Copley Academy pupil who had tragically lost his life at 19 years old. His fellow soldiers from the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment described him as a 'true lion of England' and it was comforting to know that his name would live on in the borough, fulfilling the Council's pledge to honour fallen ex-service personnel.

The Civic Mayor commented that it had been a very busy time and they had entertained many people and groups in the Mayor's Parlour, who were a source of pride for Tameside, including Patrick Cashin, Wes Ninian and Reece Lindsay, members of the bin crew who had assisted an 84-year-old man in Mossley; Peter Rewko, who received an MBE in recognition of his tireless work for the Ukrainian community; members of Tameside Youth Council, and Florence, a delightful child who suffered from a rare life limiting degenerative condition and her mum, who had relentlessly raised funds for a better life for her. The Civic Mayor extended her well wishes to them all.

Other events the Civic Mayor had attended were outlined including, the very popular 'Fridays on the Square' event in Ashton and the Stalybridge 'Street Fest'; the judges' procession in Manchester marking the start of the legal year alongside the Chief Executive; Onward Homes' mental awareness day; Tameside Rotary's fashion show and the opening of the community Hub at Oasis Broadoak Academy, Ashton; the Amazing Ashton Awards and Diwali at two Temple's Mela celebrations.

Ceremonies attended included Independence Day for Nigeria, Spain, Turkey, and many others. A special mention was made to the Home-Start 25-year anniversary, Khush Amdid 25-year anniversary, St John's Ambulance awards evening and Diversity Matters volunteers' celebration, congratulations were wished on them all.

It was commented that a key feature of the work of the Civic Mayor was to raise money for their charity appeal and a Bollywood curry night fund-raiser at the award-winning Indian Plaza restaurant in Audenshaw had been organised by the Civic Mayor where an impressive £1,800 was

raised. Thanks were extended to all those who attended, and special thanks were given to Councillors Denise Ward and David McNally, who helped to organise the event and supplied Manchester United and Manchester City items for the raffle and auction.

Christmas events were highlighted and the Civic Mayor commented that her and her family's favourite event was the very popular lantern parade through the streets of Ashton. It was a magical, colourful, and spectacular family event, which drew huge crowds. Words relaying the message of peace and community spirit were spoken at the event and thanks extended to all those who took part or helped in its organisation. Other Christmas events comprised of light switch-ons and market fairs in Hattersley, Stalybridge and Mossley – both at the top and bottom and in Micklehurst – and Willow Wood Hospice's Lights of Love celebration.

The Civic Mayor reminded Council that she was a big advocate of children, and over the last few months, she had visited many schools including The Heys Primary School, Godley Primary School, Greenside Primary School in Droylsden, Broadoak Primary School, Buckton Vale Primary School, Yellow Day Nursery in Hyde, Mossley Hollins High School and Tameside College. She passed comment on the delightful children and mentioned their intriguing questions.

She informed Council that she had visited Ashton Central Mosque for a Macmillan Cancer Support Fundraiser and was pleased to announce that they were the winner of the best run mosque in the country in the recent British Beacon Mosque Awards for community engagement and positive change. She commended their work, which she had personal experience of, including yoga classes, a foodbank, scout groups and 250 school visits schools. She also congratulated and thanked her Chaplain, Imam Ghulam Moyhuddin who had won the most impactful Imam in the country. She bestowed praise on them and extended congratulations to them on behalf of the Council.

The Civic Mayor concluded by thanking everyone for their support, with special thanks extended to the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Betty Affleck. She offered season's greetings and a happy, peaceful new year to all and was confident that 2024 would be another busy year as she strived to do her utmost to best represent Tameside and its residents.

Councillor Kitchen, Chair of Council Business, in the Chair

44. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull and

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 3 October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

45. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest submitted by Members of the Council.

46. COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Leader began by welcoming Members and officers of the Council, to the final meeting of Full Council for 2023, which he outlined had been another challenging and eventful year for Tameside and the country as a whole. In addition to the ongoing cost of living crisis, he commented that the financial sustainability of the entire local government sector was now in serious jeopardy with several council's forced to declare a Section 114 notice as a result of being unable to balance their budget, and it was unfortunately highly likely that other councils could join

them in the months ahead.

He stated that much of the focus in 2023 had been on taking a hard look at how to deliver vital services, in order to improve outcomes, manage demand and make every single penny count. He highlighted what this had meant in practice, covering both the achievements over the past year and the challenges, which needed to be addressed in the year to come.

The Executive Leader made reference to the ageing population; it was estimated that by 2030 the proportion of residents in Tameside aged 65 or over would double from 15.59% to over 30% and entrenched issues with poor health outcomes in many of the communities. He said that one of the most important responsibilities was ensuring that the elderly and vulnerable were given the opportunity to live in dignity and comfort.

He emphasised that fulfilling the new adult social care obligations under the White Paper and new CQC inspection regime, while simultaneously maintaining financial sustainability, would require radical and innovative approaches. Wherever possible, people would be given the tools in order to manage their own health and wellbeing, however, for those who required dedicated support, the focus would be on person-centred care and providing help at home wherever possible. This would keep choice, control and the means to lead an independent life firmly in the hands of service users. He said that in order to make these ambitions reality, a new Adult Social Care Strategy had been developed, laying out the key principles and priorities in a comprehensive strategic framework, which had been further complimented by a co-produced Carers Strategy and Ageing Well Strategy.

The Executive Leader informed Council that there had been a substantial investment into the service itself, including recruiting two new Heads of Service, creating an entirely new service area focusing on Safeguarding, Quality and Practice, and the development of a robust Transformation Programme coordinated and supported by a senior programme manager.

He highlighted that healthy life expectancy in Tameside was 1.5 years below the England average for men, and 5.7 years below the average for women. There were also significant health inequalities, driven by socio-economic disadvantage, within the borough, with residents in the most deprived areas living nearly a decade less than their counterparts in the least deprived areas.

The Executive Leader advised that one of the most serious challenges the Council had faced was the continuing improvement journey in Children's Services. He stated that whilst significant progress had been made, it was acknowledged that more needed to be done to bring vital services up to the level residents wanted and expected. This would need to be done in the face of significant demand with twice as many children in care than the national average, which reflected the poverty and neglect in Tameside communities.

He further advised that a new management team was in place to deliver the improvement journey, backed up by increased investment in the service, and the workforce in Children's Services was almost 10% bigger compared to 2019. He commented that the improvement effort was underpinned by a new Children and Young People's Plan released in August 2023, which had been co-produced with young people and was based around four over-arching priorities; Supported Families, Healthy Lives, Positive Lives and Building Skills for Life. Actions had been developed around these four themes, with progress being reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board through a comprehensive annual review. He said he was confident that the Council was now in a position to address once and for all the long-standing challenges in Children's Services and embed a transformational approach in how service users in adult social care received and interacted with support.

The Executive Leader was proud to announce that Tameside was one of the first local authorities in the country to establish a Family Hub and Best Start for Life offer, which would form the cornerstone of focus on Early Help, supporting children, young people and their families with the right interventions at the right time and in the right place to prevent issues from escalating.

Another area of focus was managing the difficult transition from childhood to adulthood. Along with two other pilot sites in Greater Manchester, Tameside was implementing an Adolescent Framework to encourage a more cohesive partnership approach and co-locate services that responded to and reduced the risk of extra-familial harm. This included Youth Justice, Complex Safeguarding, Sexual Health and the first SHIFT practice outside of London.

He informed Council that the cost of placements, impacted by high levels of inflation and demand, still constituted one of the biggest risks to the financial sustainability of Children's Services and the local authority as a whole. In order to address this, he said that the aim would be to increase rates of local foster recruitment and retention, which would not only reduce reliance on more expensive placement options but also allow children in foster care to maintain valuable links to their communities, family, friends and schools.

The Executive Leader made reference to the cost-of-living crisis and the first-hand accounts of Tameside residents experiencing the reality of poverty. In addition to the Poverty Truth Commission, he advised that the Council had launched a new Anti-Poverty Strategy at the start of the year, which was backed up by a comprehensive Needs Assessment. These documents brought together statistical data, resident's testimonies and other information to clearly lay out the challenges facing Tameside and what needed to be done to address them. Also, he said that the Council had joined a number of other councils across the country in voluntarily signing up for the socioeconomic duty, which compelled council's to deliver better outcomes for those experiencing poverty and other forms of socioeconomic disadvantage.

He highlighted that this complemented the Council's ambition of strengthening the local economy to better deliver high-wage and high-quality employment. He stated that Tameside had the lowest proportion of Living Wage jobs in Greater Manchester, and the share of high productivity and knowledge intensive sectors, such as Digital and Creative, and Business, Financial and Professional Services, was poor compared to the rest of the city region and the country as a whole. The Council's ambitions had been articulated through the Inclusive Growth Strategy, which set out a framework around boosting performance in key areas such as investment, employment, skills, productivity, transport, place, the digital economy and housing. The Strategy also closely reflected, and was designed to work in alignment with, wider Greater Manchester priorities such as Places for Everyone, the GM Local Industrial Strategy, 2040 Transport Plan and Digital Strategy.

He added there was a desire to invest in Tameside's town centres and the wider public realm, transforming them into local economic centres fit for the 21st century, and to line up investment and planning to make town centres the beating hearts of communities once again and fundamentally tackle the social and economic inequalities that had driven poverty, deprivation and need in the borough for too long. He advised that following submission of the planning application for the Godley Green Garden Village, the Secretary of State was satisfied that it did not require calling in for further consideration meaning that the plans for Godley Green would now move ahead, providing over 2,000 homes and associated infrastructure for generations of future Tameside residents to come.

The Executive Leader was pleased to announce that the Destination Denton project, which aimed to regenerate and promote the town's hospitality sector, had been provisionally awarded almost £17 million in Levelling Up funding. This was in addition to money that had already been allocated from previous rounds of the Levelling Up fund and other sources to infrastructure programmes such as the Ashton Mayoral Development Zone and Stalybridge Heritage Action Zone.

He emphasised that the Council had carefully listened to residents' concerns around anti-social behaviour and were in the process of finalising a new Anti-Social Behaviour policy to sit alongside the existing Community Safety Strategy and an over-arching Enforcement Strategy was also currently in development. This would be overseen by a strong Community Safety Partnership and ensure that Tameside was a safe, welcoming and tolerant place for everyone.

He stated that another important part of making sure Tameside was truly a place for everyone was

accounting for and taking action against the socioeconomic and health inequalities that many residents faced. He provided an example of disabled residents in Tameside still finding it more difficult to find employment than their non-disabled counterparts, with the disability employment gap standing at 29.1% as of 2022. He informed Council that the Equalities Strategy had been refreshed, including a review of adopted protected characteristics, the Equality Impact Assessment process and a specific look at how equalities data in services and systems was recorded. He said it was hoped that, when this was fully rolled out, it would give every resident the confidence that their particular circumstances and characteristics would be considered and respected in service delivery.

The Executive Leader reminded Council that in February 2020, the Council formally declared a climate emergency and had committed to reducing the borough's carbon impact to "net zero" by 2038, which was 12 years ahead of the UK Government's stated date of 2050. It had been acknowledged that this was an ambitious target but since then both a Local Area Energy Plan and a Low Climate and Environment Strategy and Action Plan had been successfully developed. He advised that this had been backed up with grant money through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to reduce the carbon footprint of 18 buildings in Tameside. However, more resources would be necessary in order to meet the goals, and throughout the next year any grants, investments and funding that would help take the fight to the climate crisis locally would be sought.

He concluded by saying that whilst complacency about the difficulties ahead was not an option, steps could be made forward into 2024 with confidence and purpose. There was an ongoing need to carefully balance investment in services where needed, ensuring they remained sustainable in the most hostile financial environment ever faced by local government. He said it was important to be clear on goals and priorities to justify them to residents and it was likely that difficult decisions would need to be taken at times, as they had been in the past. He stated that foundations had been laid in 2023, and in 2024 the process of building upon them for a new, better and fairer Tameside, a place that everyone would be proud to call home, must begin.

47. COUNCIL BIG CONVERSATION

The Chair reported that there were no questions submitted by members of the public in accordance with Standing Orders 31.12 and 31.13.

48. MEETING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings of Executive Cabinet held on 25 October and 22 November 2023.

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull and it was

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meetings of the Executive Cabinet held on 25 October and 22 November 2023 be received.

49. MEETING OF OVERVIEW PANEL

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Overview Panel held on 21 November 2023.

It was moved by Councillor M. Smith and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull and it was:

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of the Overview Panel held on 21 November 2023 be

received.

50. MEETING OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meetings of the Standards Committee held on 7 November 2023.

It was moved by Councillor McNally and seconded by Councillor Kitchen and it was:

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meetings of the Standards Committee held on 7 November 2023 be received.

51. DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 20 November 2023.

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull and it was:

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 20 November 2023 be received.

52. CONSTITUTION REVIEW

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive, which set out proposed changes to the Council Constitution.

It was reported that the Local Government Act 2000, as amended, required a local authority operating executive arrangements to prepare and keep up-to-date a Constitution. The Monitoring Officer was required to monitor and review the operation of the Constitution on an on-going basis, and, where necessary, bring forward amendments to the Council. Although specific elements of the Constitution had been reviewed and amended, the Constitution as a whole had not been comprehensively reviewed for a number of years. It was also timely to ensure that the Constitution was fit for purpose prior to LGA peer review and to ensure that the Constitution reflected organisation and legislative changes.

The Constitution set out the basic principles that were especially important to the way that the Council works and the fundamentals of how the local authority operated. The current structure of the Tameside Council Constitution was outlined in the report and Members were reminded that certain sections: Financial Regulations, Contract Standing Orders and Members Code of Conduct had been reviewed and agreed by Council in recent years, therefore there was no need for those to be revisited other than a check that they still reflected current organisational and legal requirements. In addition, minor changes to the Constitution, to reflect changes in Council officer structure and changes in legislation requiring changes to delegations, had been made. There had also been various minor changes to ensure that the Constitution reflected current organisational and legislative requirements.

It was reported that no changes were proposed to Part 1 of the Constitution. A table of proposed changes to Part 2 – Articles of the Constitution and Part 3a – Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation, were appended to the report and included amendments and new sections adding to Part 3a: D (Resources). Also appended to the report were proposed changes to Part 3d Appointment of Statutory and Proper Officers.

Other proposed changes were outlined in the report and included an amendment to a section in Part 4 – Procedural Rules relating to Part 4f – Budget and Policy Framework. The Standards Committee endorsement of Part 5 – Standards of Conduct and Ethics at their meeting held on 7 November 2023 was noted. It was further noted that there were no planned changes to Part 6 – Members Allowance Scheme or Part 7 – Management Structure.

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull and:

RESOLVED

- (i) That the changes to Part 3a: Terms of Reference and Scheme of Delegation, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be approved;
- (ii) That Members note the intention to review sub-delegations by Directors and ensure recorded.
- (iii) That the updated Part 3d - Statutory and Proper Officers be noted as set out in Appendix 2.
- (iv) That the proposed changes to Part 4f: Budget and Policy Framework set out in Article 4 be approved.
- (v) That Part 5 Standards of Conduct and Ethics – Standards Committee endorsement of current contents and view that need to be better understood by Members and Officers be noted.

53. APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull and it was:

RESOLVED

That pursuant to Section 5 of the Local Government & Housing Act 1989, Linda Comstive, Interim Borough Solicitor / Assistant Director Legal Services, be appointed as the Monitoring Officer with immediate effect until a permanent appointment is made to exercise the delegated functions and responsibilities in the Council's Constitution.

54. MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL BODIES

It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull and it was:

RESOLVED

- (i) That following his appointment to the Executive Cabinet, Councillor Naylor be removed from membership of the Audit Panel, Overview Panel and Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group;
- (ii) That Councillor Naylor replace Councillor Sweeton on the Health and Wellbeing Board;
- (iii) That Councillor Naylor be appointed to the GMCA Employment Skills and Work Executive Member Forum;
- (iv) That Councillor Fitzpatrick be appointed as Chair of the Audit Panel and the Overview Panel;
- (v) That Councillor Pearce be appointed as Chair of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group;
- (vi) That Councillor Colbourne replace Councillor Billington on the GM Pension Fund; and
- (vii) That Councillor M Smith replace Councillor Jones on the GM Pension Fund.

55. QUESTIONS

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

56. URGENT ITEMS

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

CHAIR