

COUNCIL

8 October 2019

Present: Councillor Kitchen (Chair), Councillors Affleck, Alam, Bowden, L Boyle, Bray, Cartey, Chadwick, Choksi, Cooney, Cooper, Dickinson, Drennan, Fairfoull, Feeley, J Fitzpatrick, P Fitzpatrick, Glover, Gosling, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, Hollinshead, J Homer, S Homer, Huntbach, Jackson, D Lane, J Lane, Lewis, Martin, McNally, Mills, Naylor, Newton, Owen, Patrick, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Robinson, Ryan, Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Ward, Warrington, R Welsh, Wild and Wills.

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Billington, Bowerman, Buglass, Ricci, Sidebottom and Taylor.

15 CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor extended the condolences of all Members to Councillor Peter Robinson on the recent loss of his wife to breast cancer.

The Civic Mayor paid tribute to William Egerton, a former deputy lieutenant of Greater Manchester whom had spent much of his life in local politics and served the people of Manchester in a number of roles including Lord Mayor.

The Civic Mayor was delighted to report that Dukinfield had been represented at the Queen's Award ceremony thanks to Youth Adventure Tameside. The charity has been providing Tameside youngsters with access to outdoor activities for the past 45 years and they were rewarded with the UK's highest honour for a volunteer group.

The Civic Mayor stated that in recent months the Civic Mayor had the privilege of attending many interesting events and to meet lots of fascinating people around the borough including Denton Carnival, Hyde Bangladeshi Welfare and Cultural Association's first Eid celebration, the Royal Exchange pop-up theatre launch in Stalybridge and Hyde's blue-light event. He also advised that he had recently accepted the challenge of taking part in a sponsored abseil on behalf of Tameside, Oldham and Glossop MIND, one of his chosen charities, at Hobson Moor Quarry, Mottram.

Finally, I had the pleasure of attending May Martin's 100th birthday celebration at Ashton House in Hyde where he got to meet a special lady and her lovely family and friends.

(Councillor Kitchen in the Chair)

16 MINUTES

It was moved by Councillor Warrington and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 23 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18 COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Leader set out the scale and scope of how decision made at the Council impacted on citizens lives. The Council was searching up and down the country for examples of best practice, and joining together with other local authorities to maintain and improve service delivery in the face of a decade of austerity. Over the past months this has led to two milestones, each of which had the potential to transform Tameside and its communities.

The Co-Operative Councils Innovation Network had ratified Tameside Council's application to become a Co-Operative Council. He explained that Tameside was now part of a growing and influential network of local authorities committed to developing a new relationship with citizens. The Co-Operative Councils Innovation Network was an organisation that embodies the values of the weavers and workers of Rochdale who founded the co-operative movement 150 years ago, and which had grown into a global organisation of 313 federations in 109 countries.

The Executive Leader stated that Tameside Council was now formally committed to the principles of the Co-Operative Councils Innovation Network, including championing fairness and equality, making decisions in a transparent way, taking responsibility for our actions and encouraging others to do so as well, working together and supporting each other in achieving a common goal, holding ourselves accountable to our stakeholders, recognising and welcoming different views, and believing in and acting within the principles of democracy and public engagement.

There were already a number of examples in Tameside where our commitment to co-operative values and principles can be clearly seen. Many of these were highlighted at Tameside's own Co-Operative Summit, which had recently been held in Dukinfield Town Hall. Council Officers were on hand to discuss the Tameside Digital Infrastructure Cooperative, which brought together the public and private sector to create and share new digital infrastructure. Further discussion was held on encouraging integration, understanding and mutual support between the local community and the armed services community through the Tameside Armed Services Covenant.

The Council was also supporting the Local Government Association's "Councils Can" campaign, joining together to call for a new relationship between local authorities and Westminster. The Campaign sought an end to austerity by giving local authorities the long-term and sustainable funding required to delivery services. Funding in Tameside had been cut in half since 2010, and it was predicted to fall further if the latest Spending Review was put into practice. However, the full cost of austerity was measured in the loss of ambition for the country. British councils were the most powerless form of sub-national government in the developed world. The second part of the "Councils Can" campaign made the case for devolution in England that, at the very least, matched the powers given to the Scottish government. This would give Councils the freedom to turbo-charge devolution in Greater Manchester, allowing powers to build new homes, secure children's future, improve the health and employment opportunities of residents, and create places where people want to live.

At a special meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority the Leaders of the Greater Manchester city region approved a consultation on bringing bus services back into public control. The successful creation of a London-style bus network in Greater Manchester would mean more regular bus services, with more affordable fares, at a better cost for local taxpayers. The bus consultation was due to go live on 14 October 2019.

Whilst having transformative and comprehensive ambitions, they must sit side-by-side with continuing to deliver the vital day-to-day services that residents depended upon. Tameside's successes were being recognised. At the end of September the Greater Manchester Pension Fund – the largest local government pension scheme in the country – won an award at the prestigious LAPF Investment Awards for their achievements in making sure that the fund's members and stakeholders were kept fully informed and engaged. The Council's customer service team built upon their record of success in their annual Customer Service Excellence assessment by not only maintaining their ten areas of compliance-plus from last year, but adding an additional five areas

where they were judged to have gone above and beyond the standards required. The Council and the CCG were also shortlisted in the Health Service Journal awards in recognition of their success in improving the standard of health care offered to armed forces veterans, and encouraging over 50% of our GPs practices to sign up to the Armed Forces Covenant. The new joint service centre and vocational education hub, Tameside One, had been shortlisted for the Greater Manchester Chamber's Building of the Year.

The Council had been awarded £100,000 from the British Property Federation to develop a master plan for the regeneration of Hyde town centre, and Stalybridge had been awarded a share of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's £95 million Historic High Street fund.

The Executive Leader informed Council that partnership with Sport England to use over £760,000 of grant funding would increase the levels of physical activity of residents, with a particular focus on young people, the unemployed and those at risk of developing long-term health conditions.

The Executive Leader reflected on events in summer across the borough. This included welcoming the Tour of Britain, the country's most prestigious cycling race, to Tameside. As the competing riders worked their way through the borough, beginning at Werneth Low and leaving through Mossley, they saw first-hand the incredible decorations and bunting designed and which had been put up by residents, community groups and businesses.

In the recent GCSE result obtained in the borough, 63% of the borough's high school pupils achieved a standard pass of Grade 4 and above in both English and Maths GCSEs – up from 62% last year – while 40% achieved a strong pass of Grade 5 and above. Our three A-Level providers; Ashton Sixth Form College, Audenshaw School and Clarendon Sixth Form, also continued their strong record of successes.

19 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.

20 MEETING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of Executive Cabinet held on 21 August and 30 September 2019. It was moved by Councillor Warrington and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 21 August and 30 September 2019 be received.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 21 August and 30 September 2019, be received.

21 MEETING OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Processes Working Group held on 30 September 2019. It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Warrington that the Minutes of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 30 September 2019 be received.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 30 September 2019 be received.

22 MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL BODIES

The Chair reported that there were no changes to membership of Council bodies.

23 NOTICES OF MOTION

Motion A

Consideration was given to the following motion received in accordance with Standing Order 16.1 which was proposed by Councillor J. Homer and seconded by Councillor Cooney.

That this Council recognises that due to high house prices and the lack of sufficient social housing, the proportion of people renting privately in the UK has doubled since 2004; half of 18-35s, 1 in 4 families with children, and growing numbers of older people now live in privately rented homes.

Most of England's 11 million renters are on tenancies with fixed terms of six months or a year; after this period has ended, landlords can evict their tenants with just two months' notice, without giving them a reason. These 'no fault evictions' were introduced under section 21 of the 1988 Housing Act; before this, renters had much greater security and it was difficult for landlords to evict tenants who paid the rent on time and looked after the property.

Evictions are the number one cause of homelessness. 80% of evictions are on no-fault grounds, and 63% of private renters who were forced to move in 2016 were evicted not due to any fault of their own but because the landlord wanted to sell or use the property.

Insecurity harms quality of life for tenants, with private renters less likely than either owners or people in council housing to say they know lots of people in their local area, but more worried that they will have to move within the next year. The threat of being evicted also gives landlords huge power over tenants, who may decide not to complain about disrepair, big rent increases or other problems in case they are kicked out.

In Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden (among other countries), tenancies are indefinite, meaning blameless tenants cannot be evicted from their homes.

In 2017, the Scottish government made tenancies indefinite and banned no-fault evictions under the terms of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016.

This Council believes:

Abolishing section 21 would help to make renting more secure, improve standards, increase tenant confidence and ultimately contribute towards making renting a viable long-term alternative to home ownership or social rent for the millions who currently cannot access either.

This Council resolves to request that the Chief Executive write to our Members of Parliament requesting them to publicly state their support for the abolition of section 21 and make it a manifesto commitment.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was declared to be carried and it was

RESOLVED

That this Council recognises that due to high house prices and the lack of sufficient social housing, the proportion of people renting privately in the UK has doubled since 2004; half of 18-35s, 1 in 4 families with children, and growing numbers of older people now live in privately rented homes.

Most of England's 11 million renters are on tenancies with fixed terms of six months or a year; after this period has ended, landlords can evict their tenants with just two months' notice, without giving them a reason. These 'no fault evictions' were introduced under section 21 of the 1988 Housing Act; before this, renters had much greater security and it was difficult for landlords to evict tenants who paid the rent on time and looked after the property.

Evictions are the number one cause of homelessness. 80% of evictions are on no-fault grounds, and 63% of private renters who were forced to move in 2016 were evicted not due to any fault of their own but because the landlord wanted to sell or use the property.

Insecurity harms quality of life for tenants, with private renters less likely than either owners or people in council housing to say they know lots of people in their local area, but more worried that they will have to move within the next year. The threat of being evicted also gives landlords huge power over tenants, who may decide not to complain about disrepair, big rent increases or other problems in case they are kicked out.

In Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden (among other countries), tenancies are indefinite, meaning blameless tenants cannot be evicted from their homes.

In 2017, the Scottish government made tenancies indefinite and banned no-fault evictions under the terms of the Private Housing (Tenancies) (Scotland) Act 2016.

This Council believes:

Abolishing section 21 would help to make renting more secure, improve standards, increase tenant confidence and ultimately contribute towards making renting a viable long-term alternative to home ownership or social rent for the millions who currently cannot access either.

This Council resolves to request that the Chief Executive write to our Members of Parliament requesting them to publicly state their support for the abolition of section 21 and make it a manifesto commitment.

Motion B

Consideration was given to the following motion received in accordance with Standing Order 16.1 which was proposed by Councillor Fairfoull and seconded by Councillor Cooper.

This Council wants to be able to offer young people leaving care the widest choice of accommodation and is concerned that current benefit rules and regulations are limiting options for care leavers as a result because of the unintended consequences of regulations for housing allowances and resolves to write to the Minister for the Department for Work and Pensions asking for the following changes to be made:

Removal of the "spare room subsidy" for all care leavers up to 25 in the socially rented sector as this regulation has the unintended consequences of limiting care leavers to renting one bedroomed properties from social landlords. There is limited availability and they are not always in areas where young people leaving care have connections and want to live.

Extend the Local Housing Allowance exemption up to 25 years of age. Care leavers up to 21 are entitled to claim Local Housing Allowance up to the 1 bedroomed rate. However, once the care leaver turns 22 the care leaver is only entitled to the Shared Room Rate which is significantly less. This change will bring the regulation in line with the age of care leavers this authority has corporate parental responsibility for from 21 years to 25 years.

Upon being put to the vote the motion was declared to be carried and it was therefore

RESOLVED

This Council wants to be able to offer young people leaving care the widest choice of accommodation and is concerned that current benefit rules and regulations are limiting options for care leavers as a result because of the unintended consequences of regulations for housing allowances and resolves to write to the Minister for the Department for Work and Pensions asking for the following changes to be made:

Removal of the “spare room subsidy” for all care leavers up to 25 in the socially rented sector as this regulation has the unintended consequences of limiting care leavers to renting one bedroomed properties from social landlords. There is limited availability and they are not always in areas where young people leaving care have connections and want to live.

Extend the Local Housing Allowance exemption up to 25 years of age. Care leavers up to 21 are entitled to claim Local Housing Allowance up to the 1 bedroomed rate. However, once the care leaver turns 22 the care leaver is only entitled to the Shared Room Rate which is significantly less. This change will bring the regulation in line with the age of care leavers this authority has corporate parental responsibility for from 21 years to 25 years.

24 QUESTIONS

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

25 URGENT ITEMS

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