

COUNCIL

20 July 2021

Commenced: 5.00 pm

Terminated: 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Affleck, Billington, Bowden, Bowerman, Boyle, Bray, Cartey, Chadwick, Choksi, Cooney, Cooper, Costello, Dickinson, Fairfoull, J Fitzpatrick, P Fitzpatrick, Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Huntbach, Jackson, Jones, Kitchen (Chair), Lane, Lewis, McNally, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Patrick, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Ricci, Robinson, Ryan, N Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Ward, Warrington, R Welsh and Wills

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Alam, Drennan, Feeley, Gosling, Martin, Mills, Naylor and T Sharif

Councillor Kitchen, Chair of Council Business, in the Chair

14. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 25 May 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

16. CIVIC MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Civic Mayor began by announcing the sad death of former Councillor Charlie Meredith MBE, who was an Honorary Freeman of the Borough and had served as Mayor of Tameside and also Stalybridge, to which he was truly dedicated. Condolences were extended to his wife and family members and Members of the Council paid tribute to him.

The Civic Mayor stated that she was honoured to lead the minute's silence in memory of Dr Ron Hill MBE as his funeral cortege stopped at Dukinfield Town Hall. He brought credit to Tameside through his sporting and business achievements and would be greatly missed.

The Mayor congratulated three people from Tameside - Pauline Town, Councillor Vimal Choksi and Heather Shepherd - who had all been recognised in the Queen's Birthday Honours in addition to the Anthony Seddon Fund and Our Kids Eyes for receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

With the ongoing lifting of restrictions resulting from the pandemic the Civic Mayor and her Consort were pleased to have been able to support a variety of events including the Hyde Artisan Market, where they had a stall to raise money for their chosen charities, and Ashton's Artisan Market. They had attended a tree-planting in memory of the late Duke of Edinburgh at All Saints College, Dukinfield; the Hyde Market Car Show; the opening of the Reading Shed at Millbrook Primary School; the Peace Day Service at Hyde War Memorial, Werneth Low, and the long-awaited opening of the 4C Community Centre at Christ Church, Ashton. They had organised a 'Pour at

Four as part of NHS and Social Care Frontline Services Day, outside St Barnabas's Church in Hattersley, which was attended by 24 invited guests, and arranged for afternoon tea boxes to be delivered to residents living near-by in sheltered housing.

17. COMMUNICATIONS OR ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Executive Leader began by echoing the Civic Mayor's congratulations for the Tameside residents and organisations who had earned recognition in the Queen's Birthday Honours list and represented the greatest values and virtues of the borough. Congratulations were also bestowed upon the NHS staff and key workers who had been recipients of the George Cross as part of the celebrations to commemorate the 73rd anniversary of the founding of the National Health Service. It was hoped that the government's recognition of the work on the front lines during the pandemic would result in a well-deserved pay rise.

The Executive Leader paid her condolences to Tameside residents including Freeman of the Borough Ron Hill MBE, who sadly died in May, and former Civic Mayor Charles Meredith MBE, who sadly died in June. Their outstanding achievements and the impact and legacy they had left would live on.

The Executive Leader commended the England football team's heroic performance over the past month as they reached their first major final in a football tournament in 55 years. Despite losing in heart breaking circumstances at the last hurdle, this did not detract from the magnitude of their achievement nor the pride the majority of the country felt in them for getting so far. They had excelled both on and off the pitch representing a vision of England where everyone, regardless of race, sexuality, religion or wealth should be treated with dignity and respect.

It was extremely disheartening that a small but vocal minority chose to express abhorrent abuse online and display such hatred, with actions such as defacing the mural of Marcus Rashford, and that these words and actions were not immediately condemned by figures in the media and politicians. Much of this abuse had taken place via social media, which had highlighted that more powers were required to hold people to account who utilised these platforms; they needed to be held responsible for their words and actions and the authorities should be given the power to investigate and prosecute where necessary.

It was highlighted that this month had seen the latest, and hopefully the last, lifting of restrictions imposed due to the global pandemic that people had lived with for almost 18 months. Although the sacrifices people had made were beginning to bear fruition the infection rate in Tameside remained very high at a rate of 496.3 cases per 100,000 people. This was in part due to the highly transmissible Delta variant, believed to be up to 80% more transmissible than the previous dominant strains of the virus. This increase had unfortunately affected vital Council services, such as bin collections, due to staff having to self-isolate.

It was anticipated that infection rates, hospitalisations and sadly deaths would rise further as society, and the economy began to reopen. However, it was pleasing to see that the hugely successful local vaccination programme that continued to progress well had significantly reduced the link between infection and severe illness and death. In order to minimise the risk of infection, people were urged to continue to apply common sense, wash their hands regularly, be responsible when socialising and to wear facemasks on public transport and in public indoor spaces even though it was no longer a legal requirement. Residents were encouraged to get the second dose of the vaccination and there were a number of pop-up and drop-in centres located around the borough where people could receive their vaccination without an appointment or ID. Testing sites remained open in order to ensure new cases were tracked and close contacts traced.

It was reported that the findings of the Marmot Report had concluded that due to longstanding health inequalities the coronavirus mortality rate in Greater Manchester was 25% higher than England. The GM Inequalities Commission and the local Inequalities Reference Group had

undertaken work over the year at both a local and regional level and local public health teams had worked to address the worst of the inequalities that existed in health and social care services. It was imperative that society needed to protect the most vulnerable, deprived and those at risk and central government needed to recognise the scale of the problem and put funding in place to address it.

Possible solutions to address the findings of the Marmot Report were listed and included:-

- Access to physical and mental health services;
- Access to social care services;
- Ending zero hours contracts;
- Ending poverty wages;
- Investing in businesses and jobs within Tameside communities;
- Fixing the broken housing market;
- Protecting the shared environment; and
- Putting young people first.

The Executive Leader stated that the country as a whole had the necessary resources to fulfil these ambitions and it would be a tragedy if the opportunity that had arisen following the end of the pandemic to create an economy and a society for the people was not seized.

The continued progress of the Improvement Programme in Children's Services was detailed, however the impact of the pandemic, self-assessment and recent feedback from the Ofsted visit in May had made it clear that further improvements were required, in particular capacity issues within the service, which were reported as a major concern. High caseloads impacted the ability to recruit and retain social workers and capacity issues created a challenge for staff to carry out the work they needed to do at a quality they desired. Other areas of improvement were detailed and included access to sufficient and suitable placements, moving away from a focus on compliance and management oversight. Positive progress and the good work that had been carried out in areas such as the enhancement and improvement of partnership work with schools during the pandemic were highlighted.

The priority now was to build on the foundations to accelerate the work already undertaken and to further stabilise and improve the service as it continued to support children and families, whilst dealing with the impact of the pandemic. Seven Sustainability Projects, most of which had been completely or partially delivered, had been committed to and would be combined with a robust response to the Ofsted findings to provide a clear direction of travel for ongoing improvements. This would include a 16-point rapid improvement plan, investment in the capacity of social workers and personal advisors, establishing new brokerage, monitoring and commissioning functions and enhancing quality and performance. These efforts would be supported by the investment of an additional £461,000 in the service this year, and a further £504,000 in 2022. It would be the highest corporate priority the Council faced but the resources and personnel were already in place meaning movement could commence quickly. Every effort would be made to continue the improvement journey and do the very best for Tameside children and families.

Council Members were notified that at a meeting of the Executive Cabinet last month a report had been approved on the work necessary for the preparation of a Compulsory Purchase Order in regards to the Godley Green development. It was made clear that this did not mean consent was being sought to introduce Compulsory Purchase Orders. The intention was to hold discussions with landholders and to do everything possible to ensure agreements could be made via private treaty. If it became apparent that a Compulsory Purchase Order was necessary it had been agreed that a further report or resolution on the issue would be required and would need to satisfy a number of legal and financial tests.

It was explained that the plans for Godley Green Garden Village had been in the public domain for some time and many aspects had been altered in order to reflect feedback received from landowners and residents. Clarification had been provided on honest misinterpretation and deliberate misinformation had been challenged. The project was an exciting opportunity for

Tameside and would offer an ambitious and sustainable model of inclusive growth that would create new and thriving communities backed up with vital infrastructure and access to open greenspace. There had been an allocation of £10million from the Housing Infrastructure fund and if the development was not built Tameside would fall short of the government's mandated housing requirement and run the risk of a development "*free-for-all*". The choice had therefore been whether Godley Green would be built by the Council that put the interests of local people first or by a company that put profit first.

Council were informed that although Godley Green was the most ambitious project currently in the works to secure inclusive growth it was not the only one; investment was being made across the borough to create a brighter future for Tameside and its residents. Particular emphasis was being placed on town centres to help them recover from the pandemic and in the longer term to transform them into vibrant community and economic hubs they all had the potential to be.

It was reported that Hyde had been selected as 1 of 70 towns nationally to receive support from the government's High Street Task Force Programme, which would bring a range of expert organisations into the town centre to identify the area's strengths and challenges. Working closely with the Council, local businesses and residents to develop a plan of action to drive new investment and growth. This would be backed up by a range of support, including targeted expert consultancy, mentoring, workshops, access to local footfall data and training programmes. It was hoped that the lessons learnt in Hyde through this process would be able to be applied to other town centres with further ideas and projects rolled out.

In addition to town centre projects, Members were told that engagement with developers in regards to the future of the Lock Keeper's site in Droylsden was being sought. When combined with the site of the former library, which was scheduled for imminent demolition, the entire area could be released for the construction of high-quality residential space adjacent to the town centre. Also, the Executive Cabinet had signed off on significant expansions to a number of schools in the borough with a view to increasing pupil capacity before the beginning of the new academic year in September. The total cost was estimated at £2million and would ensure that the borough continued to have the space to meet rising demand for both mainstream and specialist education for Tameside's young people.

The Executive Leader concluded by reiterating that as Tameside emerged from the pandemic everyone needed to come together to ensure that the borough endured, adapted and prospered. Investment in the borough's town centres, housing, and making improvements to the help and services on offer to vulnerable children were evidence of this commitment. In order to create a lasting legacy as Ron Hill MBE and Charles Meredith MBE had done, Tameside would build back, fairer, greener and better.

18. 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.

19. MEETING OF EXECUTIVE CABINET

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of Executive Cabinet held on 28 April and 23 June 2021. It was moved by Councillor Warrington and seconded by Councillor Fairfoull that the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 28 April and 23 June 2021 be received.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 28 April and 23 June 2021 be received.

20. MEETING OF DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES WORKING GROUP

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of Democratic Processes Working Group held on 5 July 2021. It was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Warrington that the Minutes of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 5 July 2021 be received.

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Democratic Processes Working Group held on 5 July 2021 be received.

21. TAMESIDE ELECTORAL REVIEW - RESPONSE TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND (LGBCE) WARD PATTERNS AND WARD NAMES PROPOSAL

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Housing, Planning and Employment, which detailed Tameside Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) ward patterns and ward names proposal published on 1 June 2021.

Members were reminded that in June 2019 the LGBCE informed Tameside Council they would be undertaking an electoral review of Tameside. The last such review was concluded in 2004. At stage one of the review, which concluded in January 2021, the LGBCE proposed 57 councillors for Tameside. At the first part of stage two, a full borough wide ward patterns and ward names proposal was submitted to the LGBCE by Tameside Council. The LGBCE published their draft ward patterns and ward names proposal on 1 June 2021, which triggered ten weeks of public consultation that ended on 9 August 2021.

The report noted that the LGBCE ward pattern and names proposal was based in the greater part on the Tameside Council submission. As such Tameside Council broadly supported the proposal outlined by the LGBCE but with some areas of difference where amendments were suggested. Those amendments were based on the original Tameside Council submission of 1 April 2021 as a better balance of community identity and electoral equality informed by local knowledge and experience. The amendments were outlined in detail in the relevant sections of the report and included:-

- Droylsden East
- Audenshaw
- Denton West
- Stalybridge North
- Stalybridge South
- St. Peter's
- Ashton Waterloo
- Hyde Godley
- Hyde Newton
- Hyde Werneth

The report was supported by both the controlling group (the Labour Party) and the opposition (the Conservative party). At their meeting on 5 July 2021 the Democratic Processes Working Group endorsed the report and agreed it would be presented to Full Council for final sign off before submission to the LGBCE.

RESOLVED

- (i) That Council endorse the report outlining the Tameside Council response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England draft proposals; and**
- (ii) That Council agree the attached report be submitted to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England no later than 9 August 2021.**

22. PLACES FOR EVERYONE

Consideration was given to a report of the Executive Member, Housing, Planning and Employment, which recommended that Full Council approve the submission of Places for Everyone Plan to the Secretary of State following the period of public consultation.

Members were advised that in 2014, the Council had resolved to work collaboratively with those in Greater Manchester to jointly prepare a strategic planning document for the city region, the GMSF. It was explained that while recent decisions meant this was now a joint plan of nine boroughs, Places for Everyone 2021 was considered to have substantially the same effect as GMSF 2020, as previously presented to Members for consideration. It was proposed, therefore, to proceed to publish the plan at the next consultation stage, which represented a move towards the culmination of the plan making process, prior to submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination.

The plan, alongside thematic policy content, identified three strategic sites in Tameside for growth and twelve sites for further protection as additions to the designated Green Belt. Alongside this, it also sought to provide the borough with an up to date housing target, the strategic context for the borough's Local Plan and updated development management policies to be used in the determination of planning applications.

Following clarification being sought, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the motion for determination by Members was to approve the submission of Places for Everyone Plan to the Secretary of State following the period of public consultation only.

Following consideration of the Motion, the Chair of Council Business announced that, in line with the rules set out in the constitution, he had received a request for a named vote from the following six Councillors; Councillors: Cooney, Fairfoull, Feeley, Ryan, Warrington and Wills.

The named vote was then taken as follows:

For the motion:

Councillors: Affleck, Billington, Bowden, Bowerman, Boyle, Bray, Cartey, Chadwick, Choksi, Cooney, Cooper, Costello, Dickinson, Fairfoull, J Fitzpatrick, P Fitzpatrick, Glover, Gwynne, A Holland, B Holland, J Homer, S Homer, Huntbach, Jackson, Jones, Kitchen, Lane, Lewis, McNally, Newton, North, Owen, Patel, Pearce, Quinn, Reid, Ricci, Robinson, Ryan, N. Sharif, M Smith, T Smith, Sweeton, Taylor, Ward, Warrington, Welsh and Wills.

Against the motion:

Patrick

RESOLVED

That Council approve submission of the Places for Everyone Publication Plan 2021 to the Secretary of State for examination following the period for representations.

23. NOTICES OF MOTION

MOTION A

Consideration was given to the following motion received in accordance with Standing Order 16.1, which was moved by Councillor Cooney and seconded by Councillor Lewis:-

That Tameside Council believes planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; and therefore calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to comment on individual planning applications.

This Council notes:-

- The Conservative Government's intention to change planning rules to benefit developers were set out in 'Planning for the Future' in 2020, and were immediately branded a 'Developer's Charter' by housing campaigners. The plans are due to return to Parliament after this year's local elections.
- The proposals have attracted widespread criticism – except from developers. President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Alan Jones, branded the white paper's proposals as "shameful", the Campaign to Protect Rural England voiced concerns about community involvement, and the housing charity Shelter expressed concern at the reforms' potential impact on social housing.
- The Conservative Party received £11 million in donations from developers in Boris Johnson's first year as Prime Minister and £891,000 from developers in the first three months of 2021 alone.
- The House of Commons has called on the Government to protect residents' right to retain a voice over planning applications, recognising that the best way to get necessary new homes built is to support communities, councils and developers to work in partnership.

This Council believes:-

- One aspect that has raised particular concern is the proposal to remove local residents' right to object to individual planning applications in their own neighbourhood.
- The current planning system is locally-led, with councils and the communities they represent given a say over the way their neighbourhoods develop.
- The 'Developer's Charter' proposals would take away the right of local people to comment or object to development in their area, instead allowing the Secretary of State to grant developers planning "permission in principle" without any local consultation on the application.
- These changes to the planning system would help developers avoid contributions for affordable housing, local infrastructure, and avoid existing standards on good quality design, allowing them to rack up hundreds of millions of pounds extra profit without building any more homes.

Following consideration of the Motion it was:-

RESOLVED

That Thameside Council believes planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes; and therefore calls on the Government to protect the right of communities to comment on individual planning applications.

This Council notes:-

- The Conservative Government's intention to change planning rules to benefit developers were set out in 'Planning for the Future' in 2020, and were immediately branded a 'Developer's Charter' by housing campaigners. The plans are due to return to Parliament after this year's local elections.
- The proposals have attracted widespread criticism – except from developers. President of the Royal Institute of British Architects, Alan Jones, branded the white paper's proposals as "shameful", the Campaign to Protect Rural England voiced concerns about community involvement, and the housing charity Shelter expressed concern at the reforms' potential impact on social housing.
- The Conservative Party received £11 million in donations from developers in Boris Johnson's first year as Prime Minister and £891,000 from developers in the first three months of 2021 alone.
- The House of Commons has called on the Government to protect residents' right to retain a voice over planning applications, recognising that the best way to get necessary new homes built is to support communities, councils and developers to work in partnership.

This Council believes:-

- One aspect that has raised particular concern is the proposal to remove local residents' right to object to individual planning applications in their own neighbourhood.
- The current planning system is locally-led, with councils and the communities they represent given a say over the way their neighbourhoods develop.
- The 'Developer's Charter' proposals would take away the right of local people to comment or object to development in their area, instead allowing the Secretary of State to grant developers planning "permission in principle" without any local consultation on the application.
- These changes to the planning system would help developers avoid contributions for affordable housing, local infrastructure, and avoid existing standards on good quality design, allowing them to rack up hundreds of millions of pounds extra profit without building any more homes.

That this Council:-

- (i) Fight to ensure that Tameside residents do not lose their right to a fair say over future developments in our streets and our communities; and
- (ii) To ask the Chief Executive to write to Secretary of State and the Tameside Members of Parliament to express the Council's belief that the 'Developer's Charter' does not represent the best interests of our local residents.

24. QUESTIONS

Councillor Huntbach raised a question under Standing Order 17.2 as follows:-

I note and appreciate the work being done by officers on what is now called the Low Carbon and Environment strategy and associated action plan.

This Council declared a Climate Emergency requiring urgent action, back in February 2020. At Executive Cabinet of 2 November 2020, minutes of a Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel meeting of 9 September 2020 were considered. I quote from those minutes:-

'The intention was that the Strategy and Action Plan would be formalised in February or March of 2021.'

At Executive Cabinet of 16 December 2020 minutes of a Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel meeting of 18 November 2020 were considered. I quote from those minutes:-

'It was anticipated that the Strategy and Action Plan would be finalised during the early summer of 2021.'

At Executive Cabinet of 28 April 20/21 minutes of a Carbon and Waste Reduction Panel meeting of 17 March 2021 were considered. I quote from those minutes:-

'...the first draft of the Low Carbon Strategy is almost complete'.

At the last meeting of the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group on 16 June 2021, I quote:-

'.... the strategy is currently in draft status...'

We are now past mid-summer, and no strategy or action plan has yet appeared.

As a matter of urgency, would the Environment and Climate Emergency Working Group, and Council, commit to finalising both a strategy and action plan by the next meeting of full Council?

In response, Councillor Gwynne stated:-

The Environment Strategy is of major importance and needs to be right. We have had a new senior officer join Tameside who wanted to review the document and so the plan will be finalised and put through the democratic process as quickly as is practically possible.

Councillor Chadwick raised a question under Standing Order 17.2 as follows:-

I would like to ask the Executive Member for Operations and Neighbourhoods why the Council have failed to prosecute a single person for fly tipping since 2017?

In response, Councillor Gwynne stated:-

“Failed to Prosecute” suggests that Cllr Chadwick does not think that we take incidents of fly tipping across our borough seriously. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have crews out every day picking up fly tipping, and where we have evidence we take action against those responsible. Since 2017, this has taken the following methods:

- Letters sent (2017-2021) – 990
- Statutory Notices (2017-2021) - 262
- FPNs issued (2017-2021) – 1006

These measures are a proportionate response to our residents that think it acceptable to dump their unwanted waste, when they can just as easily drive to the local Household Waste Recycling Centre and deposit it there. And for those that pay someone they found on Facebook to do a tip run, who then dump it, they are liable also. Fixed Penalty Notices (otherwise referred to as FPNs) are the most appropriate legal route for the vast majority of fly tipping incidents within the borough and these are routinely issued.

FPNs, according to the gov.uk website is not an appropriate sanction for waste operators illegally dumping, repeat offenders or those responsible for large scale fly tipping or tipping hazardous waste. Any prosecution of these offences must be in line with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, and as these actions are often carried out regionally by criminals who use false plates on their vehicles, never tip the same location twice and chose remote locations, often on private land there is little evidence to link the waste to a perpetrator, certainly not enough to take them to court.

Large tipping occurrences and hazardous waste tipping are reported to the Environment Agency to coordinate and prosecute, as they have the resources and powers to do so and Cllr Chadwick is advised to direct his next FOI to them.

The vast majority of our residents dispose of their waste responsibly and there are a wide range of options available to resident to ensure safe and convenient disposal of household and bulky waste. If using a waste carrier to dispose for you I urge all residents to check the license number provided to be sure that the operator will correctly dispose of your waste. Where we have sound a robust evidence we do not shy away from enforcement and prosecution.

We ask that residents to alert us to where they see blatant criminality and encourage all residents to dispose of their waste responsibly. We always investigate and enforce where we have the evidence.

25. URGENT ITEMS

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

CHAIR