

Bolton Council

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

14th February 2024

SUMMONS AND AGENDA



BOLTON COUNCIL

Members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held on Wednesday next, 14th February, 2024 at 7.00 p.m. in the Council Chamber when the following business is proposed to be transacted: -

1. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 17th January 2024 (Section A).

2. Recommendations to Council

(a) Motion to be moved by Councillor Peel:-

To approve the Local Council Tax Support Scheme for the financial year 2024/2025, as now circulated.

(b) Motion to be moved by Councillor Peel:-

To approve the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief Scheme and the general Discretionary Relief Framework 2024/2025, as now circulated.

(c) Motion to be moved by Councillor Peel:-

To approve or otherwise the recommendations of the Cabinet made at its meeting on 5th February, 2024, (see Section C) relating to the fixing of the budget, the setting of the Council Tax and the determination of associated financial matters (see Section B for a copy of the motion to be moved at the Council meeting).

3. Changes in Committee Membership and Appointments to Other Bodies

4. Committee Proceedings

To approve the proceedings of the following Committee:-

Planning Committee (See Section D)

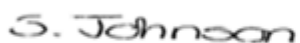
5. Scrutiny Committees

To receive and consider the proceedings of the undermentioned Scrutiny Committees:-

Corporate and External Issues Scrutiny Committee (See Section E) (to follow)

Health Overview and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (See Section F)

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee (See Section G)



SUE JOHNSON
Chief Executive
Town Hall, Bolton

7th February, 2024

The proceedings of the Cabinet and the Executive Cabinet Member Portfolio meetings from 8th January to 17th January, 2024 are included for information only in a separate volume.

BOLTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH

2023/2024

17TH JANUARY 2024

Present – Councillors Ali, Atcha, N. Ayub, Bamforth, Barnard, Bullock, Chadwick, Connor, Cowen, Cox, Dean, Donaghy, Mrs. Fairclough, Fielding, Flitcroft, Galloway, Grant, Haworth, Hayes, Hon, Iqbal, Jiva, Aalaina Khan, Amjid Khan, Khurram, Livesey, Maher, McGeown, Mistry, Moller, Morgan, Morris, Morrissey, Mort, Muslim, Newall, Patel, Peel, Price, Priest, Rigby, Sanders, Shaikh, Silvester, Taylor, Mrs. Thomas, Tighe, Veevers, Walsh, Warren, Webb, T. Wilkinson, Williamson and Wright.

84. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

It was moved by Councillor Peel, seconded by Councillor Cox and agreed –

That in the absence of the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Donaghy be appointed Chairman for the purposes of this Council meeting only.

Councillor Donaghy here took the Chair.

85. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 29th November, 2023 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

86. SCHEME OF DELEGATION

It was moved by Councillor Peel, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Thomas and agreed –

That the Council's Scheme of Delegation for 2023/2024, as now circulated, be approved.

87. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 9(a)

The following questions were asked under Standing Order 9(a) –

- (i) by Councillor Bamforth relating to Forcer Protocol

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (ii) by Councillor Bamforth relating to parking by taxi drivers

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services and Property replied to this question.

- (iii) by Councillor Fielding relating to the Household Support Fund

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (iv) by Councillor Newall relating to the welfare of dogs

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services and Property replied to this question.

- (v) by Councillor Morrissey relating to 'good' rating for Adult Social Care Home Reablement Services

The Executive Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing replied to this question.

- (vi) by Councillor Taylor relating to an update on special projects

The Executive Cabinet Member for Culture replied to this question.

A3

- (vii) by Councillor Maher relating to Section 106 monies

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (viii) by Councillor Veevers relating to clean air zones

The Executive Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment replied to this question.

- (ix) by Councillor Dean relating to places awarded special status

The Executive Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment replied to this question.

- (x) by Councillor Dean relating to restoration of Hall' i'th Wood

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services and Property replied to this question.

- (xi) by Councillor Priest relating to costs associated with bus lane enforcement

The Executive Cabinet Member for Transport, Housing and Highways replied to this question.

- (xii) by Councillor Hayes relating to communication of refuse bin collections over the Christmas/New Year period

The Executive Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment replied to this question.

- (xiii) by Councillor Hayes relating to the decision regarding the NCP Contract

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

A4

- (xiv) by Councillor Veevers relating to the crossing at the junctions of Chorley Old Road with Moorside Avenue and New Hall Lane

The Executive Cabinet Member for Transport, Housing and Highways replied to this question.

- (xv) by Councillor Veevers relating to speed control and enforcement cameras

The Executive Cabinet Member for Transport, Housing and Highways replied to this question.

- (xvi) by Councillor McGeown relating to car parking in Westhoughton Town Centre

The Executive Cabinet Member for Transport, Housing and Highways replied to this question.

- (xvii) by Councillor Ali relating to fines for fly tipping offences

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services and Property replied to this question.

- (xviii) by Councillor Maher relating to ambulances queuing at Royal Bolton Hospital

The Executive Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing replied to this question.

- (xix) by Councillor Mort relating to a reduction of council spending on half empty buildings

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services and Property replied to this question.

- (xx) by Councillor Webb relating to the Council's HGV Fleet

The Executive Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment replied to this question.

- (xxi) by Councillor Priest relating to Safer Streets Fund

The Executive Cabinet Member for Transport, Housing and Highways replied to this question.

- (xxii) by Councillor Mrs. Fairclough relating to Bins for Boys

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services and Property replied to this question.

- (xxiii) by Councillor Tighe relating to fly tipping

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services and Property replied to this question.

- (xxiv) by Councillor Tighe relating to Westhoughton Town Hall

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services and Property replied to this question.

- (xxv) by Councillor Galloway relating to the collection of green bins over the Christmas holidays

The Executive Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment replied to this question.

- (xxvi) by Councillor Muslim relating to the Council's bin fleet

The Executive Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment replied to this question.

- (xxvii) by Councillor T. Wilkinson relating to Sunday Service at Kearsley and Moses Gate train stations

The Executive Cabinet Member for Transport, Housing and Highways replied to this question.

(xxviii) by Councillor Walsh relating to the headline in The Sun Newspaper

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

88. PLANNING COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Walsh, seconded by Councillor Mistry and agreed –

That the minutes of the proceedings of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 7th December 2023 and 4th January 2024 be approved.

89. LICENSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Fielding, seconded by Councillor Chadwick and agreed –

That the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Licensing and Environmental Regulation Committee held on 21st November 2023 be approved.

90. SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Warren, seconded by Councillor Maher and agreed –

That the minutes of the meeting of the following Committees be approved:-

Corporate and External Issues Scrutiny Committee – 18th December 2023

Health Overview and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committees – 12th December 2023

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 4th December 2023

Place Scrutiny Committee – 6th December 2023

91. MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 4 – PLAY SPACE WITHIN PARKS IN BOLTON

It was moved by Councillor Warren and seconded by Councillor Grant -

Play is for all.

The creation of accessible and inclusive play space within our parks is essential.

Disability and equality legislation highlight the duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure that play is for all.

The United Nations Convention on the Right of a Child state that every disabled child and young person has the right to a full life and active participation in the community. Every child has the right to rest, play and leisure and to participate freely.

Parks are the centre of our communities and should be accessible for all.

I have been contacted by parents of disabled children in Brightmet who have asked why the parks in Bolton are not inclusive for their children to play.

This motion seeks for a Policy Development Group to be formed to assess the inclusivity and accessibility of our parks and play equipment and to put policies in place which would mean that any replacement of equipment would be with equipment that is inclusive to all.

The Motion was then put to the vote when the voting was as follows:-

For the Motion, 54 viz:

Councillors Ali, Atcha, N. Ayub, Bamforth, Barnard, Bullock, Chadwick, Connor, Cowen, Cox, Dean, Donaghy, Mrs. Fairclough, Fielding, Flitcroft, Galloway, Grant, Haworth, Hayes, Hon, Iqbal, Jiva, Aalaina Khan, Amjid Khan, Khurram, Livesey, Maher, McGeown, Mistry, Moller, Morgan, Morris, Morrisey, Mort, Muslim, Newall, Patel, Peel, Price, Priest, Rigby, Sanders, Shaikh, Silvester, Taylor, Mrs. Thomas, Tighe, Veevers, Walsh, Warren, Webb, T. Wilkinson, Williamson and Wright.

Against the Motion, 0

Abstained, 0

Whereupon, the motion was declared carried.

92. MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 4 – DIGITAL SWITCHOVER

It was moved by Councillor Haworth and seconded by Councillor Peel -

A digital switchover is due to be completed by the end of 2025 in the UK - The landline dies in 2025. People in the Bolton borough need to know how to stay connected in a post landline future. Straplans that are promoted by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport are;

- Get ready for the digital switchover now.
- Help residents find out what they need to do in the UK transition from analogue to digital landlines.
- Help residents find out what the retirement of analogue phone lines, also known as the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), means for them.

This is raised as a serious issue by the Local Government Association. One example the LGA raises is chronically ill, disabled, old and vulnerable people who are living their lives depending on telecare from local government. Bolton has some really good digital connection but we have many citizens who are left behind. Any parts of the borough that have poor quality digital coverage need to be considered.

In the borough there are family members who have personal telecare products. There are people who use payment terminals that rely on analogue. There are stair lifts and also lifts in blocks of flats that rely on the PSTN. There are residents very reliant on their landline telephone. Also affected will be; falls alarms, motion detectors and community alarms. Residents in social housing are concerned about failing out-dated, hard-wired warden call systems.

Whilst the digital switchover is a free service we know that digital affordability is a real issue for many residents. Another matter raised by the LGA is the horrendous risk of scamming crime in this issue.

This Council believes that the government should be more concerned about the safety and the security of citizens and the liability councils are taking on for the digital switchover.

This Council calls on the government to take more responsibility and reverse its lack of support for local councils who are facing the completion of the digital switchover.

The Motion was then put to the vote when the voting was as follows:-

For the Motion, 54 viz:

Councillors Ali, Atcha, N. Ayub, Bamforth, Barnard, Bullock, Chadwick, Connor, Cowen, Cox, Dean, Donaghy, Mrs. Fairclough, Fielding, Flitcroft, Galloway, Grant, Haworth, Hayes, Hon, Iqbal, Jiva, Aalaina Khan, Amjid Khan, Khurram, Livesey, Maher, McGeown, Mistry, Moller,

Morgan, Morris, Morrisey, Mort, Muslim, Newall, Patel, Peel, Price, Priest, Rigby, Sanders, Shaikh, Silvester, Taylor, Mrs. Thomas, Tighe, Veevers, Walsh, Warren, Webb, T. Wilkinson, Williamson and Wright.

Against the Motion, 0

Abstained, 0

Whereupon, the motion was declared carried.

93. MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 4 – INSOURCING OF SERVICES

It was moved by Councillor Morrisey and seconded by Councillor Patel -

Council notes that there is a growing phenomenon of insourcing across local government within the UK. This is being driven by an increasing awareness within local government of the value of council services in supporting local economies and businesses, providing better services for residents and business, and directing resources more cohesively to where they are needed.

Council believes that the case can be made that insourcing services:

- Is cheaper in the long run and is better able to deliver efficiencies
Gives greater scope to improve performance against benchmarked services
- Delivers greater flexibility and integration with existing services
- Provides better and more secure employment and leads to stronger local supply chains
- Is more democratically accountable, transparent and enhances local control of service delivery

Council therefore agrees:

- To systematically review each existing outsourced contract as it approaches expiration.
- That reviews be undertaken in a timeframe that means proper consideration can be given to insourcing well in advance of the date before contract renewal decisions need to be made to ensure that full consideration can be given to the potential cost/efficiency/performance/quality/democratic accountability benefits of insourcing
- That insourcing should be considered when assessing the future of any outsourced contract. Insourcing should be included as a favoured option and should be genuinely and robustly considered
- To properly evaluate how insourcing can be used to support local economies, and the environment, through jobs, skills, supply chain management and local spend. This should be evaluated when insourcing is considered and fairly weighted on any options appraisal.
- Insourcing should be viewed as a form of innovation in both service delivery and resource allocation. Insourcing planning should encompass immediate operational continuity alongside longer term plans for service improvements which align to local needs and strategic objectives.
- That Trade Union engagement and involvement in reviews are both helpful and essential

The Motion was then put to the vote when the voting was as follows:-

For the Motion, 37 viz:

Councillors Ali, Atcha, N. Ayub, Bamforth, Barnard, Chadwick, Donaghy, Fielding, Flitcroft, Haworth, Hayes, Hon, Iqbal, Jiva, Aalaina Khan, Amjid Khan, Khurram, Livesey, Maher, McGeown, Mistry, Morris, Morrisey, Mort, Newall, Patel, Peel, Price, Priest, Sanders, Shaikh,

A12

Silvester, Taylor, Mrs. Thomas, Veevers, T. Wilkinson and Wright.

Against the Motion, 17 viz:

Councillors Bullock, Connor, Cowen, Cox, Dean, Mrs. Fairclough, Galloway, Grant, Moller, Morgan, Muslim, Rigby, Tighe, Walsh, Warren, Webb and Williamson.

Abstained, 0

Whereupon, the motion was declared carried.

At this point in the meeting, the Chief Executive advised that, due to the time, no further motions would be debated this evening and, therefore, the Mayor asked if the mover of the motion wished for their motion to be voted on without debate, defer to the next meeting or withdraw it from the summons.

94. MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 4 – COERCIVE CONTROL

Councillor Newall deferred her motion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

(The meeting started at 7.00 p.m. and finished at 10.30 p.m.)

DRAFT SUBSTANTIVE COUNCIL TAX RESOLUTION

- (i) That the following recommendations of the Cabinet on 5th February 2024 be approved:-
- (a) The Council be recommended to approve the Budget for 2024/25
- (b) That the Council Tax for 2024/25 be increased by 4.99% comprising
- The Adult Social Care Precept at 2.00%
 - The general levy at 2.99%
- (c) The Council be recommended to approve the Capital Programme and Strategy for 2024/25
- (d) The Council be recommended to approve the Investment and Prudential Indicators and Treasury Strategies 2024/25 to 2026/27
- (ii) It be noted that on 4th December 2023 the Cabinet calculated
- (a) the Council Tax Base 2024/25 for the whole Council area as 80,001 (item T in the formula in Section 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the “Act”); and
- (b) for dwellings in those parts of its area to which a Parish precept relates as:

Parish Councils

The Parish of Blackrod	1,989	Band D equivalent
The Parish of Horwich	7,634	Band D equivalent
The Parish of Westhoughton	8,993	Band D Equivalent

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year 2024/25 for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (iii) Calculate that the Council Tax requirement for the Council’s own purposes for 2024/25 (excluding Parish precepts) is £141,749,772.
- (iv) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2024/25 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Act.

- (a) £303,602,796 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by Parish Councils.
- (b) £161,343,000 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £142,259,796 being the amount by which the aggregate at (iv)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at (iv)(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its Council Tax requirement for the year. (Item R in the formula in Section 31B of the Act).
- (d) £1,778.23 being the amount at (iv)(c) above (Item R), all divided by Item T ((ii)(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including Parish precepts).
- (e) £510,024 being the aggregate amount of all special items (Parish precepts) referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act, each individual parish precept being:
- | | |
|--------------|----------|
| Blackrod | £78,810 |
| Horwich | £274,990 |
| Westhoughton | £156,224 |
- (f) £1,771.85 being the amount at (iv)(d) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (iv)(e) above by Item T (ii)(a) above), calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no Parish precept relates.
- (g) Part of the Council's Area
- | | |
|------------------------|-----------|
| Parish of Blackrod | £1,811.47 |
| Parish of Horwich | £1,807.87 |
| Parish of Westhoughton | £1,789.22 |

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned at (e) above divided in each case by the amount at (ii) above,

calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(i) Part of the Council's Area

Valuation bands	Parish of Blackrod	Parish of Horwich	Parish of Westhoughton	All other parts of the Council's area
A	£1,207.63	£1,205.23	£1,192.80	£1,181.22
B	£1,408.94	£1,406.14	£1,391.63	£1,378.12
C	£1,610.18	£1,606.98	£1,590.40	£1,574.96
D	£1,811.47	£1,807.87	£1,789.22	£1,771.85
E	£2,214.00	£2,209.60	£2,186.81	£2,165.58
F	£2,616.58	£2,611.38	£2,584.44	£2,559.35
G	£3,019.10	£3,013.10	£2,982.02	£2,953.07
H	£3,622.94	£3,615.74	£3,578.44	£3,543.70

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (f) and (g) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands

- (v) That it be noted that for the year 2024/25 the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and the Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services) have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Valuation Bands	<u>Precepting Authority</u>	
	Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services)	Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept
A	£75.30	£170.86
B	£87.85	£199.34
C	£100.40	£227.82
D	£112.95	£256.30
E	£138.05	£313.25
F	£163.15	£370.21

G	£188.25	£427.16
H	£225.90	£512.60

(vi) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (iv), (f), (i), and (v), the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2024/25 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

(i) Part of the Council's Area

Valuation bands	Parish of Blackrod	Parish of Horwich	Parish of Westhoughton	All other parts of the Council's area
A	£1,453.79	£1,451.39	£1,438.96	£1,427.38
B	£1,696.13	£1,693.33	£1,678.82	£1,665.31
C	£1,938.40	£1,935.20	£1,918.62	£1,903.18
D	£2,180.72	£2,177.12	£2,158.47	£2,141.10
E	£2,665.30	£2,660.90	£2,638.11	£2,616.88
F	£3,149.94	£3,144.74	£3,117.80	£3,092.71
G	£3,634.51	£3,628.51	£3,597.43	£3,568.48
H	£4,361.44	£4,354.24	£4,316.94	£4,282.20

(vii) That the Council's basic amount of Council Tax for 2024/25 at an increase of 4.99% is not excessive in accordance with principles approved under Section 52ZB Local Government Finance Act 1992.

(viii) That the Borough Treasurer be delegated authority to collect revenues and disburse monies from the relevant accounts.

(ix) That it be noted that the Government have set a National Non-Domestic Rate of 49.9p in the pound for small businesses and 54.6p in the pound for larger businesses for the financial year 2024/25.

(x) That the Council's current policy in respect of discretionary relief for charitable organisations, as approved by the Cabinet on the 5th February 2024, be reaffirmed and that the Borough Treasurer be delegated authority to determine applications for such relief.

(xi) That War Disablement Pensions and War Widows' Pensions be disregarded for the purposes of the Council Tax Support Scheme.

(xii) That Council approves the following definition for the 'minimum occupancy period' for Council Tax Discount Class C properties, to apply from 1st April 2024:

“For the purposes of Discount Class C, in considering whether a dwelling has been vacant for any period, any one period, not exceeding six weeks, during which it was not vacant shall be disregarded”.

(xiii) That the minutes of the proceedings of the undermentioned Scrutiny Committee regarding their consideration on the budget be noted:-

Corporate and External Issues Scrutiny Committee

8th February 2024

B6

NOTES

C1

EXTRACT

THE CABINET

MEETING, 5TH FEBRUARY, 2024

Councillor Zaman	Regeneration
Councillor N. Ayub	Culture
Councillor Donaghy	Children's Services
Councillor Silvester	Climate Change and Environment
Councillor Khurram	Transport, Highways and Housing
Councillor Jiva	Stronger Communities
Councillor Haworth	Regulatory Services and Property

Other Members in Attendance

Councillor Chadwick
Councillor Mistry
Councillor Mort
Councillor Cox
Councillor Mrs. Fairclough
Councillor Morgan
Councillor Warren
Councillor Grant
Councillor Hayes
Councillor Sanders

Officers

Ms. S. Johnson	Chief Executive
Mr. L. Fallows	Director of Corporate Resources
Mr. T. Glennon	Borough Treasurer
Ms. H. Gorman	Borough Solicitor
Mr. J. Dyson	Director of Place
Ms. R. Tanner	Director of Adult Services, Communities and Integration

Mr. G. Parker	Assistant Director – Environment and Regulatory Services
Mr. P. Rimmer	Assistant Director Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services
Mrs. V. Ridge	Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Fielding, Peel and Mrs. Thomas.

Councillor Zaman in the Chair.

27. MINUTES

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8th January, 2024 were circulated and signed as a correct record.

28. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

The minutes of the meeting of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority held on 15th December, 2023 were submitted for information.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

29. BUSINESS RATES RETAIL RELIEF SCHEME 2024-2025

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which sought member's approval for the implementation of the Retail Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief Scheme and the amendment to the General Discretionary Relief Framework.

Members were advised that, in the Autumn Statement 2023, the Chancellor announced the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) scheme would be extended for a fifth year into 2024-2025 and would retain the existing scope and provide eligible properties with 75% relief, up to a cap of £110,000 per business. It was explained that this relief was to be

implemented as part of the 2024/2025 annual billing process and there were currently around 500 businesses in receipt of this relief and all businesses would be notified about the relief as part of the annual billing process to ensure that any that had not applied for the relief last year were aware of the help available.

The report also explained that Section 47(7) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 prevented billing authorities from making the decision to award discretionary relief more than six months after the end of the relevant financial year. However, the introduction of temporary reliefs highlighted an anomaly where a business or not for profit organisation could be prevented from receiving relief simply because their rates assessment could be backdated but the relief could not.

To address this, the Government had used The Non-Domestic Rating Act 2023 to remove the restriction and, as a result, the Council needed to ensure its own discretionary relief framework clarified whether awards could be backdated. It was therefore proposed that Bolton Council would continue with the same backdating rules that had been in place since the 1988 Act but would now allow the ability to backdate an award in circumstances where the ratepayer was unable to make a claim at the time through no fault of their own.

In terms of finance, members were advised that the reliefs were fully funded by Government and there were no financial implications for the Council.

Resolved – That the Cabinet recommend to Council –

(i) That the Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief scheme, as set out in the report, be approved.

(ii) That the proposed amendment to the general Discretionary Relief Framework, as set out in the report, be approved.

30. BUDGET REPORT 2024-2025

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report which provided members with the following:-

- The forecasted financial position for 2024/2025;
- The consolidation of service budgets to provide the Council's overall 2024/2025 budget;
- Options to inform Council Tax setting for 2024/2025; and
- The Financial Arrangements account for 2024/2025.

Members were informed that the Local Government Settlement for 2024/2025 was a one-year settlement with no commitment on actual local government funding from 2025/2026 onwards, other than confirming that after this Spending Review period, planned departmental resource spending would continue to grow at 1% a year on average in real terms, however, there was expected to be real-term cuts for unprotected local government services over the lifetime of the next parliament under current plans. The key points to note for the 2024/2025 settlement were detailed in the report.

The report also advised that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 which came into force towards the end of October, 2023 reduced the qualifying period over which a Council Tax premium in respect of Long Term Empty Property (LTE) properties could be charged from 2 years to 1 year and permitted implementation of the LTE premium from 1st April, 2024 on the proviso that the decision was taken before the start of the financial year. The Act also reduced the qualifying period over which a Council Tax premium in respect of Second Homes (SH) properties could be charged from 2 years to 1 year and provided for the SH premium to be implemented from 1st April, 2025 on the proviso the decision was taken before 1st April, 2024. In view of this, the 2024/2025 budget contained the following assumptions:-

- The introduction of a Long Term Empty Property (LTE) premium with effect from 1st April, 2024 and inclusion of £0.6 million into the budget to reflect this; and

C5

- The introduction of the Second Homes (SH) premium with effect from 1st April, 2025.

In terms of the savings programme for 2024-2025, members were advised that given the considerable financial uncertainty, both nationally and locally, it was proposed that a one-year budget be presented to Council for approval in February, 2024 and this would comprise of the use of reserves to balance the budget which would mean that unachieved savings would be rolled forward into the 2025/2026 budget cycle.

In addition, to achieve a balanced budget it was proposed to include savings targets of £8.6 million and these cuts were allocated departmentally as follows:-

Directorate	Allocation £'000s
	£'000
Adults and Housing	4,000
Children's	1,021
Public Health	477
Place	862
Chief Executive's and Corporate	2,284
Total	8,644

The report also outlined a number of financial pressures which impacted on the current financial year and 2024/2025.

Members were also reminded that the Council has had to find significant savings over the last twelve years which totalled around £224 million by the end of 2023/2024 with a further £8.6 million to be found in 2024/2025. It was also stated that beyond 2023/2024 there were some key funding issues yet to be confirmed which could impact further on the Council which were as follows:-

- Fair Funding Review (FFR) – as part of the 2016/2017 finance settlement it was announced that there would be an FFR of authorities' funding needs, initially to be implemented in 2019/2020. This was subsequently deferred by one year to 2020/2021 and the Brexit debate

pushed this further back to 2021/2022. However, the Covid-19 pandemic had pushed this back further to 2023/2024 and the Government had now confirmed that FFR would not happen during the lifetime of the current parliament; and

- Business Rates – As part of the Greater Manchester Trailblazer devolution agreement, the Government had announced that GM authorities would continue to retain 100% of business rates locally for the next 10 years. Furthermore, the business rates reset initially intended to be implemented in 2021/2022 had also been deferred until at least 2025/2026. As a result, this made forecasting business rates beyond 2023/2024 extremely difficult to do. In addition, it was not possible to project what the council could receive in some form of re-distributed grant from any potentially available funds.

The report also provided an updated expenditure forecast for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026. This forecast was based on the assumption that Council Tax would increase by 2.00% for Adult Social Care and 2.99% for the general levy for 2024/2025. It was explained that the level of Council Tax would be determined by the Council at its meeting on 14th February, 2024 following a recommendation from the Cabinet.

In terms of reserves, the council estimated its reserves balance to be £172 million at the end of 2023/2024 excluding the DSG and Collection Fund balances and details of this were provided in the report. Appendix E to the report also provided some information of the implications of not holding these reserves.

Currently it was estimated that available balances as at 31st March, 2024 would be £10.66 million and the Borough Treasurer's recommended, as a minimum, balances of £10 million or higher should be maintained based upon his understanding of the risks and financial issues facing the Council over the next three years and the proposals around the budget, as identified in the report.

C7

The individual parish precepts were also detailed in the report and as required by the Local Government Finance Act 1982 these needed to be added to Bolton's budget requirement.

With regard to the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services), it was explained that this was set by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The proposed increases in the Mayoral Precepts, which were still to be confirmed, were as follows:-

- For the Mayoral General (including Fire Services) a £5/4.63% increase; and
- £13/5.34% increase for the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept.

It was stated that should the final decisions of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority be different, this would be reported to members at the Council meeting.

In terms of setting the Council Tax, it was explained that based upon the Adult Social Care precept being set at 2.00% for 2024/2025 plus a 2.99% general levy increase for Council Tax for Bolton Council for 2024/2025 (i.e. excluding Parish and Mayoral precepts) this was the equivalent to an additional £1.08 per week for Band A properties which were more than 44% of the overall tax base. A Draft Substantive Council Tax Resolution was set out in Appendix H to the report.

The relevant Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken and was detailed in Appendix I to the report.

The Deputy Leader of the Council also circulated a paper which put forward the following, viz:-

That in respect of the one-off returned funds from Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority reserves totalling £1.2 million the Cabinet recommends to the Council the following:-

- £600,000 be allocated to Ward Councillors on an equal basis (£30,000 per ward);

- £600,000 be allocated to schemes across the Borough that aim to improve community safety, enhance children's play areas and improve the environment and a Policy Development Group be set up to agree on the details of these schemes.

Resolved – That the Cabinet recommend to Council:-

- (i) The budget for 2024/2025 as set out in the Budget Report.**
- (ii) That, in respect of the one-off returned funds from Greater Manchester Waste Disposal Authority reserves totalling £1.2 million, £600,000 be allocated to Ward Councillors on an equal basis (£30,000 per ward) and £600,000 be allocated to schemes across the Borough that aim to improve community safety, enhance children's play areas and improve the environment and that a Policy Development Group be set up to agree on the details of these schemes.**
- (iii) That the Council Tax for 2024/2025 be increased by 4.99% represented by a 2.00% increase for Adult Social Care and a 2.99% general increase.**
- (iv) That the Council Tax figures included in the report for the Mayoral Police and Crime Commissioner Precept and Mayoral General Precept (including Fire Services) are the recommended provisional amounts pending their formal approval.**
- (v) The Retail Hospitality and Leisure Business Rates Relief Scheme and the general Discretionary Relief Framework for 2024/2025.**
- (vi) That the Empty Homes Property Premium comes into effect from April, 2024.**
- (vii) That the Second Homes Premium comes into effect from April, 2025**

**31. CORPORATE CAPITAL AND ONE-OFF FUNDING
2024-2027**

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that proposed a Capital Strategy, Corporate Capital and Revenue

Programme, a Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy and Capital Prudential Indicators for the next three years.

Members were advised that from 2019/2020 CIPFA's Prudential Code required local authorities to produce a capital strategy to demonstrate that capital expenditure and investment decisions were taken in line with service objectives and took account of stewardship, value for money, prudence, sustainability and affordability.

The Capital Strategy was a key document for the Council and formed part of the authority's integrated revenue, capital and balance sheet planning. It provided a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contributed to the provision of services and provided an overview of how associated risk was managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It also included an overview of the governance processes for approval and monitoring of capital expenditure. Appendix 1 to the report detailed the Capital Strategy for 2024-2027.

Members were advised that the significant reductions in the Council's revenue budget had meant that the maximisation of capital funding had become a vital part of ensuring the Council could continue to pursue its key objectives. In recent years, capital monies had been allocated to support the strategic road network across the Borough and to enable the developments in the town centre. The current funding position for 2023-2024 onwards was as follows:-

	Current Capital Programme 2023-2027
	£m
Corporate Supported Borrowing	41.3
Corporate Revenue	3.1
Corporate Capital Receipts	9.3
Service Supported Borrowing	0.3
Service Revenue	29.4
Government Grants	91.1

C10

Other Contributions	25.2
Total	199.7

As part of the appraisal of the capital programme the proposals had been assessed for their anticipated impact on the Council's VAT recovery position.

Full VAT recovery was only permitted where less than 5% of VAT recovered related to activities which were exempt from VAT (largely land transactions, paid for education, markets and cremation). Where the 5% limit was exceeded no VAT recovery on VAT exempt activity was permitted unless the 7 year average was below 5%.

Members were advised that if the proposed programme was approved the exempt input tax proportion was estimated as follows:-

	%
2023/2024	4.12
2024/2025	1.64
2025/2026	1.78
2026/2027	1.83

The detailed calculations were set out in Appendix 3 to the report. The 7 year average was 2.96% and was therefore within the HMRC limits.

The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) Regulations 2008 required the basis on which the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) was calculated for future years to be approved by Council. This was the amount Councils were required to set aside for debt repayment each year.

The report also provided details in relation to Capital Prudential Indicators.

Resolved – That, subject to Council's approval:-

(i) The Capital Strategy for 2024/2027 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

- (ii) The Corporate Programme (Capital and Revenue one-off schemes) for 2024-2027, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be approved.**
- (iii) The Minimum Revenue Provision policy as set out in section 3.4 of the report be approved.**
- (iv) The Capital Prudential Indicators as set out in Section 3.5 of the report be approved.**

32. TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGIES FOR 2024/2025 TO 2027/2028

The Director of Corporate Resources submitted a report that outlined the Council's prudential indicators for 2024/2025 to 2027/2028 and set out the expected treasury operations for this period.

The report fulfilled two key legislative requirements:-

- a) The treasury management strategy statement which set out how the Council's treasury service would support the capital programme, the day to day treasury management and the limitations on activity through treasury prudential indicators; and
- b) The investment strategy which set out the Council's criteria for choosing investment counterparties and limiting exposure to the risk of loss. This strategy was in accordance with the CLG Investment Guidance.

Resolved – That, subject to the approval of Council, the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/2025 to 2027/2028 and the treasury limits on activity contained within this report; the Authorised Limit Prudential Indicator and the Investment Strategy 2024/2025 contained in the treasury management strategy be approved.

C12

NOTES

PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING, 4th JANUARY, 2024

Present – Councillors Walsh (Chairman), Mistry (Vice-Chairman), Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Galloway, Grant, Hayes (as deputy for Councillor D. Wilkinson), Iqbal, Morgan, Morris, Morrisey, Mort, Peel (as deputy for Councillor Newall), Sanders, Shaikh and Taylor

Councillor Walsh in the Chair

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dean, Newall, Priest and D. Wilkinson

22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Committee held on 7th December, 2023 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

23. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Under the approved delegation arrangements, the Committee considered various planning applications, as set out in the report submitted by the Director of Place, for permission to undertake developments, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act.

The following Councillors declared interests in the undermentioned items of business:-

Member of Council	Application Number	Nature of Interest
Councillors Morrisey and Shaikh	16833/23	They have been involved in pre-application discussions. They withdrew from the meeting during the consideration and

D2

		determination of the application and took no part in the proceedings or voting thereon.
--	--	---

Members of the public addressed the Committee in respect of the following applications:

16851/23 16465/23 16952/23
 17273/23 16833/23

Resolved – That the various planning applications submitted by the Director of Place be dealt with, as follows:

Application Number	Proposal and Location	Decision
16851/23	Change of use from residential to dwelling house to (use Class C3) to residential care home (use Class C2) at 19 Shrewsbury Road	<p>Approved, subject to conditions, as recommended in the report.</p> <p>A motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Members voting for the motion (16):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Galloway, Grant, Iqbal, Mistry, Morgan, Morris, Morrissey, Mort, Peel, Sanders, Shaikh, Taylor and Walsh.</p> <p>Members voting against the motion (1):</p>

		<p>Councillor Hayes.</p> <p>The motion was carried.</p>
16465/23	<p>Erection of part two storey/part single storey extensions at rear and sides together with front porch and rear dormer at both 199 and 201 Paulhan Street</p>	<p>Deferred for further information.</p> <p>A motion to defer the application for further information, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Members voting for the motion (17):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Galloway, Grant, Hayes, Iqbal, Mistry, Morgan, Morris, Morrissey, Mort, Peel, Sanders, Shaikh, Taylor and Walsh.</p> <p>The motion was carried.</p>
16952/23	<p>Change of use of a health centre (Class E1) to a special school (Class F1) together with extension of the boundary fence to the road frontage at Little Lever Health Centre, Mytham Road, Little Lever</p>	<p>Approved, subject to conditions, as recommended in the report.</p> <p>A motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Members voting for the motion (17):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Galloway, Grant, Hayes, Iqbal, Mistry, Morgan, Morris, Morrissey,</p>

		<p>Mort, Peel, Sanders, Shaikh, Taylor and Walsh.</p> <p>The motion was carried.</p>
16833/23	<p>Demolition of existing bungalow and erection of 1 dwelling house and detached outbuilding at 876 Plodder Lane</p>	<p>Approved, subject to conditions, and removal of permitted development rights.</p> <p>There are similar proposals in the local area and the scale of the proposed new dwelling is comparable to the scale of adjacent properties. Members considered that these factors outweighed the harm by way of inappropriateness and any other harm.</p> <p>A motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, and removal of permitted development rights, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Members voting for the motion (15):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Galloway, Grant, Hayes, Iqbal, Mistry, Morgan, Morris, Mort, Peel, Sanders, Taylor and Walsh.</p> <p>The motion was carried.</p>

17273/23	Erection of a two-storey rear extension together with a rear dormer at 59 Randal Street. Resubmission of application numbered 16117/23.	<p>Approved, subject to conditions.</p> <p>The proposed extension is required to meet the medical needs of the applicant.</p> <p>A motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Members voting for the motion (13):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Bamforth, Grant, Hayes, Iqbal, Mistry, Morris, Morrissey, Mort, Peel, Sanders, Shaikh and Taylor.</p> <p>Members voting against the motion (4):</p> <p>Councillors Connor, Galloway, Morgan and Walsh.</p> <p>The motion was carried.</p>
----------	--	---

24. PLANNING APPEAL DECISIONS

The Director of Place submitted a report which informed the Committee of the outcome of various planning appeals between 29th November and 19th December, 2024.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

(The meeting started at 2.00pm and finished at 3.50pm)

PLANNING COMMITTEE

MEETING, 1ST FEBRUARY, 2024

Present – Councillors Walsh (Chairman), Mistry (Vice-Chairman), Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Dean, Donaghy (as deputy for Councillor Morris), Galloway, Grant, Iqbal, Morgan, Morrisey, Mort, Newall, Priest, Sanders, Taylor and D. Wilkinson

Councillor Walsh in the Chair

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Morris and Shaikh

25. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Committee held on 4th January, 2024 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

26. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Under the approved delegation arrangements, the Committee considered various planning applications, as set out in the report submitted by the Director of Place, for permission to undertake developments, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act.

The following Councillors declared interests in the undermentioned items of business:-

Member of Council	Application Number	Nature of Interest
Councillor Mort	17137/23	She is a member of the Bolton at Home Board. She withdrew from the meeting during the consideration and

D7

		determination of the application and took no part in the proceedings or voting thereon.
Councillor Taylor	17137/23	She is employed by Bolton at Home. She withdrew from the meeting during the consideration and determination of the application and took no part in the proceedings or voting thereon.
Councillor Iqbal	16465/23	He has been involved in discussions with the applicant. He withdrew from the meeting during the consideration and determination of the application and took no part in the proceedings or voting thereon.

Councillor Tighe, in his capacity as Ward Councillor, addressed the meeting in respect of application numbered 13356/22

Councillor Zaman, in his capacity as Ward Councillor, addressed the meeting in respect of application numbered 16744/23

Members of the public addressed the Committee in respect of the following applications:

16465/23
13356/22

17272/23
12231/21

17137/23
16744/23

Resolved – That the various planning applications submitted by the Director of Place be dealt with, as follows:

Application Number	Proposal and Location	Decision
12231/21	Demolition of Gilnow Service Station and erection of three-storey community centre/madrassa together with 4 additional parking spaces at Gilnow Service Station, Gilnow Road	<p>Approved, subject to conditions, as recommended in the report.</p> <p>A motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Members voting for the motion (18):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Dean, Donaghy, Galloway, Grant, Iqbal, Mistry, Morgan, Morrissey, Mort, Newall, Priest, Sanders, Taylor, Walsh and D. Wilkinson</p>
17137/23	Variation of conditions 10 (landscape delivery and management scheme) and 20 (approved plans) on application 12097/21 at the former Moor Lane Bus Station site, Moor Lane	<p>Approved, subject to conditions, as recommended in the report.</p> <p>A motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Members voting for the motion (11):</p>

		<p>Councillors Ali, Connor, Dean, Donaghy, Galloway, Iqbal, Mistry, Morgan, Morrissey, Newall and Walsh</p> <p>Members voting against the motion (5):</p> <p>Councillors Bamforth, Grant, Priest, Sanders and D. Wilkinson</p>
17272/23	Erection of a single storey detached 3-bedroom dwelling to garden of Moor House, Grange Road, Bromley Cross	<p>Approved, subject to conditions.</p> <p>Members considered that the proposal would not have a detrimental impact on the openness of the Green Belt, would not constitute urban sprawl, is development within the curtilage of the existing property, the proposed dwelling is of exceptional design and very special circumstances exist.</p> <p>A motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Members voting for the motion (15):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Connor, Dean, Donaghy, Galloway, Iqbal, Mistry, Morgan, Morrissey, Mort, Newall, Priest, Sanders, Taylor and</p>

		<p>D. Wilkinson</p> <p>Members voting against the motion (3):</p> <p>Councillors Bamforth, Grant and Walsh</p>
16744/23	<p>Demolition of outbuildings, erection of a part three storey/part single storey extension to front, side and rear together with balconies to front and side elevations, alterations to windows, new entrance gates and landscaping works at Park House, Laurel Street</p>	<p>Approved, subject to conditions.</p> <p>Members considered that the proposal would assist in the refurbishment/regeneration of the building, bringing it back into use, conserving and enhancing the building and retain the asset complying with Core Strategy policies CG3 and RA1.</p> <p>A motion to refuse the application was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Whereupon an amendment to approve the application, subject to conditions, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Whereupon an amendment to defer the application for further information, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>The first amendment to approve the application, subject to conditions, was</p>

		<p>put to the vote.</p> <p>Members voting for the first amendment (11):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Donaghy, Grant, Iqbal, Mistry, Morrissey, Mort, Newall and Taylor</p> <p>Members voting against the first amendment (6):</p> <p>Councillors Galloway, Morgan, Priest, Sanders, Walsh and D. Wilkinson.</p> <p>The first amendment was declared carried and became the substantive motion.</p> <p>The substantive motion was then put to the vote.</p> <p>Members voting for the substantive motion (11):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Donaghy, Grant, Iqbal, Mistry, Morrissey, Mort, Newall and Taylor.</p> <p>Members voting against the substantive motion (6):</p> <p>Councillors Galloway, Morgan, Priest, Sanders, Walsh and D. Wilkinson</p>
--	--	--

16465/23	Erection of part two storey/part single storey extensions at rear and sides together with front porch and rear dormers and raising of ridge height at both 199 and 201 Paulhan Street	<p>Approved, subject to conditions.</p> <p>Members considered that the proposed extensions would not out of keeping with the character and appearance of surrounding area or have a detrimental impact on the living conditions of existing/ future residents and complied with Core Strategy policies CG3 and CG4 together with guidance within the House Extension Supplementary Planning Document.</p> <p>A motion to approve the application, subject to conditions, was moved and seconded.</p> <p>Members voting for the motion (16):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Bamforth, Connor, Dean, Donaghy, Galloway, Grant, Mistry, Morgan, Morrissey, Mort, Newall, Priest, Sanders, Taylor and D. Wilkinson.</p> <p>Members voting against the motion (1):</p> <p>Councillor Walsh</p>
----------	---	--

13356/22	Siting and installation of a battery energy system (BESS) together with associated works on land at Slack Lane, Westhoughton	<p>Refused</p> <p>Members considered that the proposed development would represent inappropriate development of 'Other Protected Open Land' in that it would not fall within any of the categories listed within Bolton's Allocations Plan Policy CG6AP and would adversely affect the openness, character and appearance of the site and the wider area. The benefits associated with the proposed development would not outweigh this recognised harm. In addition, the proposed development by virtue of its scale, design, size and siting would result in an incongruous feature detrimental to the visual amenities of the wider setting/character of the application site, result in the loss of open land which is well used by local residents and wildlife and result in no net gain for biodiversity, contrary to Bolton's Core Strategy Policies CG1, CG3 and OA3.</p> <p>A motion to refuse the application was moved and seconded.</p>
----------	--	--

D14

		<p>Members voting for the motion (17):</p> <p>Councillors Ali, Connor, Dean, Donaghy, Galloway, Grant, Iqbal, Mistry, Morgan, Morrissey, Mort, Newall, Priest, Sanders, Taylor, Walsh and D. Wilkinson</p>
--	--	--

(The meeting started at 2.00pm and finished at 5.30pm)

**HEALTH OVERVIEW AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 31ST JANUARY, 2024

Present – Councillors Veevers (Chairman), Morgan (Vice-Chairman), Ali, Atcha, Barnard, Cowen, Hon, Alaina Khan, Moller, Morrissey, Newall, Patel, Rotheram, Shaikh and Wright.

Lay Members

- Ms. A. Gallagher - Bolton and District Pensioners
Association
Ms. A. Schenk - Health Watch Bolton

Also in attendance

- Councillor Peel - Leader of the Council (as deputy for Councillor Mrs Thomas, Executive Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing.
- Ms. L. Donkin - Director of Public Health
- Ms. R. Tanner - Director of Adults, Communities and Integration
- Mr. N. Smith - Safeguarding Independent Chair
- Ms. K. Cassidy - Assistant Director Population Health and Health Care
- Ms. M. Savania - Public Health Specialist
- Ms. A. Marie- - Population Health and Prevention Strategic Lead
- Mr. I. D. Mulholland - Deputy Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Taylor-Burke, McGeown and Sanders and Mrs. Thomas as Executive Cabinet Member and Ms. Fiona Noden, Chief Executive, Bolton FT.

Councillor Veevers in the Chair.

22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of a meeting of the Committee held on 12th December, 2023 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be agreed and signed as a correct record.

23. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME, 2023/24

The Committee received a report which set out the current work programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

Resolved – That the work programme be approved.

24. BOLTON SAFEGUARDING ANNUAL REPORT

The Committee received the Bolton Safeguarding Annual Report and a presentation was given by Mr. Neil Smith, the Independent Chair and from Ms. Rachel Tanner, Director of Adults, Communities and Integration.

Members were reminded that the Care Act, 2014 stipulated that the safeguarding board was a statutory requirement. In Bolton the Board was committed to ensuring that every adult at risk and their carer's were safe, well, able to meet their full potential and live happy, healthy and independent lives.

The Committee was appraised of the core duties and the Board structure.

The Strategic Priorities for 2022-23 were around domestic abuse and violence, reducing the prevalence of self-neglect inclusive of hoarding and raising the profile of safeguarding in

Bolton. The meeting was also informed of the difference that has been made.

The Committee was also informed that during 2022-23 adult social care received 1,594 safeguarding concerns which represented an increase of 105 concerns compared to 2021-22. Information concerning demographics was also provided and the largest two areas related to those over 85 and those between 75 and 84.

Members were also informed of the various types of abuse by percentage with neglect and acts of omission and physical abuse being the top two.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- What were the things that allowed us to progress;
- Were there geographical areas of the Borough where safeguarding was more prevalent;
- The referrals in the last year and outcomes of these.

Resolved – That Mr Neil Smith and Ms. Rachel Tanner be thanked for the report and presentation and that the position be noted.

25. ACTIVE LIVES STRATEGY

Ms. Lynn Donkin, Director of Public Health and Ms. Anne-Marie Carr, Population Health and Prevention Strategic Lead gave a joint presentation on the Active Lives Strategy.

Members were advised of why active lives mattered in terms of it supported the 2030 vision, health, could help tackle inequalities, helped address climate change issues and increased prosperity. The Strategy was developed using the latest national evidence and by aligning local priorities with the national Sport England Strategy and the regional GM Moving Strategy.

The Meeting was also advised of the various objectives which included to support people to move more and develop a more

active daily life and to increase the amount of family time spent being active together.

Members were also advised of the creation of six delivery groups which had met over the last twelve months and also the plans for the next period.

In conclusion, Members were advised of the, Let's Keep Bolton Moving portal for wellbeing at neighbourhood level and also the Share point site in terms of the partnership approach.

Members in their discussions referred to –

- Life expectancy in Bolton and the data looked at regarding the strategy;
- How to get people to move more;
- Since Covid, people were more tied to their homes and there were barriers for people accessing services e.g., those on a limited budget and the cost of transport,
- Children being active at primary schools;
- The Active Bolton web site;
- How people got to school and the social aspect and length of lunch times; and
- The deficit of community spaces.

Resolved – That Ms. Lyn Donkin and Ms. Anne-Marie Carr be thanked for their detailed and informative presentation and that the position be noted.

26. MENTAL WELLBING INCLUDING YOUNG PEOPLE

Ms. Lynn Donkin, Director of Public Health and Ms. Munisha Savania, Public Health Specialist gave a presentation on mental health and wellbeing in Bolton – a Public Health update.

By way of background information, the Committee was informed of the local picture of mental health in Bolton. It was estimated that 42,389 people aged over 16 (15%) had a diagnosed common mental health disorder, with an estimated prevalence of 13.6% for children aged 5 to 16 years. Bolton had a higher proportion of patients with sever mental illness

than the average for England. Bolton also ranked the 34th most deprived local authority in the country.

Members were advised of the health developments and responsibilities across the system in terms of the key public led work and the related partner-led workstreams.

The meeting was also advised that Bolton's Active Connected Prosperous Board had signed up to the National Prevention Concordat for Better Mental Health in December, 2022. The Concordat promoted evidence -based planning and commissioning to increase the impact on reducing health inequalities.

Members were also informed of matters around the Population Mental Wellbeing and Suicide Prevention Programme which aimed to support partners to work together across the system. Also highlighted were statistics in relation to Bolton adverse childhood experiences which increase the risk of mental illness. 11% of Bolton residents had four or more ACE's.

Furthermore, Bolton ACE's / Trauma informed practice workstream for 2022 to 2025 was referred to which was a system approach based on shared understanding of ACE's and implications for social, health and wellbeing outcomes across life course.

In conclusion, the meeting was informed of matters concerning the Suicide Prevention Strategy and its development in Bolton.

There was a multi-agency approach to prevention and the Strategy was on track for delivery in March, 2024.

Most suicides were by men (73%) and most occurred at home. Most were by white British ethnicity. Overall, twice as many of those who died lived in the most disadvantaged areas of Bolton than the least disadvantaged.

In the latest three year period there were 83 deaths from suicide amongst Bolton residents. There had been a downward

trend in Bolton in recent years, with rates similar to the national average.

Members in their deliberations referred to-

- The chatty bench roll out and livery;
- Housing issue and mental health;
- Suicide attempts and reasons why;
- Bolton at Home empty properties;
- Inquests and any coroner recommendations; and
- Mental health engagement ion the work place.

Resolved – That Ms. Lynn Donkin and Ms. Munisha Savania be thanked for their detailed and informative presentation and that the position be noted.

27. MEMBERS BUSINESS

The Committee received the minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee :-

- (i) Executive Cabinet Member Adults, Health and Wellbeing held on 22nd January, 2024.

Resolved – That the minutes be noted.

(The meeting stared at 6.00pm and finished at 7.45pm)

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 29TH JANUARY, 2024

Present – Councillors Grant (Chairman), Rigby (Vice-Chairman), Barnard, Connor, Galloway, Hon, Alaina Khan, Livesey, Meehan, Mort, Patel, Shaikh, Taylor-Burke, Taylor (as deputy for Councillor Morrisey), Walsh (as deputy for Councillor Dean) and T. Wilkinson

Co-Opted Members

None

Also in attendance

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Councillor Donaghy | - Executive Cabinet Member – Children's Services |
| Ms B. Brown | - Director of Children's Services |
| Mr P. Rankin | - Deputy Director of Children's Services |
| Ms G. Whitehead | - Assistant Director – Inclusive Education and Learning |
| Ms S. Bruce | - Assistant Director – Children's Social Care and Early Help |
| Ms T. Minshull | - Assistant Director – Social Care and Public Health Commissioning |
| Ms S. Cornwell | - Head of Service for Children with SEND |
| Mr J. Cooke | - Head of Complex Safeguarding and Youth Justice |
| Mrs. V. Ridge | - Democratic Services Manager |

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Amjid Khan, Maher, McGeown and Morrisey.

Councillor Grant in the Chair

22. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved – That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 4th December, 2023 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

23. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Borough Solicitor submitted the Committee Work Programme for 2023/24 which had been formulated following the informal meeting of this Committee held on 21st June, 2023.

The Programme would guide the work of the Committee over the course of the Municipal Year.

Resolved – That the 2023/24 Committee Work Programme, as now submitted, be noted.

24. INSPECTION UPDATES - CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE, JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTIONS (EARLY HELP AND SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE), AREA SEND, YOUTH JUSTICE

Ms Brown, Ms Whitehead, Ms Bruce and Ms Cornwell gave a joint presentation on the various statutory Inspections undertaken in Bolton relating to Children's Services.

Members were informed that the ILACS Framework (Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services) was a system of inspections that included focused visits which looked at a specific cohort of children, standard and short inspections and Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI)

The inspections focused on the effectiveness of local authority services and arrangements to help and protect children, the experiences and progress of children in care wherever they lived, the arrangements for permanence for children who were looked after (including adoption) and the experiences and progress of care leavers.

G3

Bolton had received a short inspection in September, 2023 and was judged 'Good'. This had followed a full inspection in May, 2018 when Bolton had also been judged 'Good'. Outcomes from the recent inspection were being built into Business Planning processes.

The presentation outlined the timescales involved in notice being received by the Department of an inspection, length of time on site, the number of inspectors and the categories of judgements that could be made.

With regard to JTAI Inspections, members were advised that although these fell under the ILACS Framework, they had their own guidance and framework for each deep dive theme. Such previous themes had included children experiencing abuse and neglect, children living with domestic abuse, child sexual abuse in the family environment, children's mental health, identification of initial need and risk, criminal exploitation and Early Help. The current JTAI inspection programme was focused on serious youth violence, full details of which were provided.

In relation to the JTAI outcomes for 2023, Bolton had received a 'Good' judgement for:

- the impact of Leaders on social work practice with children and families;
- the experiences and progress of children in care;
- the experiences and progress of care leavers; and
- overall effectiveness.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection had been judged as requiring improvement.

The overall ILACS 2023 Inspection had shown that Bolton was doing well in the following areas :

- children's voices were central in planning and for many children carefully targeted work was making a positive difference to their lives;

G4

- many families were benefitting from a broad range of services, including specialist drug, alcohol and mental health support – and there was also a broad range of help for children exposed to domestic abuse, including targeted work;
- children were being supported to remain with their families when it was safe to do so - the edge of care service provided a wide range of effective, intensive support to children, families and foster carers;
- social workers are able to speak with authority about their children, demonstrating a clear understanding of their lives, worries and needs;
- children at risk of sexual and criminal exploitation were receiving an effective response from the Dedicated Complex Safeguarding Team which helped to keep children safer;
- plans for children in care were reviewed effectively by independent reviewing officers who had strong oversight of children's plans through visiting children and liaising with social workers;
- children's participation was a strength in Bolton - children in care groups had a strong influence on shaping services in Bolton and had regular and meaningful access to senior managers and politicians; and
- senior leaders were committed to ensuring that children's voices were heard and use their experiences to shape services - leaders actively sought opportunities to create positive experiences for children and young people.

Areas for improvement included:

- reducing inconsistencies in the quality of some assessments and plans, including safety planning;
- improving the tracking and timely decision making for children in pre-proceedings;
- increasing the capacity of the safeguarding social work teams to improve quality of practice, including reducing reliance on agency social workers;
- improving outcomes for some children subject to child protection planning to avoid repeat planning;

G5

- increasing and improving the quality of audit activity across the system; and
- increasing the capacity and choice of stable homes for care leavers.

The presentation then went on to focus on the Local Area SEND Inspection Framework.

The Inspection provided an independent, external evaluation of the effectiveness of the local area partnership arrangements for children and young people with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and where appropriate, recommended what the local area partnership should do to improve the arrangements.

The scope of the Inspection covered 0 - 25 years, those receiving SEN Support and Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), children and young people who lived in Bolton, including those who attended an education setting or received services outside of the Authority's geographical boundaries in addition to the Authority's commissioning and oversight of Alternative Provision (AP) for all children and young people who attended, not only those with SEND.

Full details of the Inspection process and timescales were outlined together with details of the different types of inspections, as follows:

- Full inspection – evaluate and report on the impact of the local area partnership's arrangements for CYP with SEND – the local area would be asked to update and publish their Strategic Plan and a priority action plan if areas had been identified for priority action - at least once every 5 years;
- monitoring inspections – evaluate and report on progress in areas where areas for priority action had been identified at full inspection or at the discretion of Ofsted and CQC where serious concerns had been identified;
- engagement meetings usually annually between Ofsted and CQC and representatives of the local area partnership to review the Self-Evaluation Framework and

action plan and discuss challenges and how these were being addressed; and

- SEND thematic visits to a sample of areas to investigate a particular aspect of the SEND system in depth and to aggregate insights and share learning nationally.

Members were informed of the inspection outcomes and evaluation criteria, including Alternative Provision.

To date, the following inspections had taken place:

- 20 inspection reports had been published and 6 were waiting to be published
- 7 have had an inspection outcome stating that local area partnership's SEND arrangements typically led to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND;
- 8 had an inspection outcome stating that the local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND; and
- 5 had an inspection outcome stating that there were widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND.

A Greater Manchester thematic analysis of inspection reports emerging from the inspections published to date had revealed the following key issues:

- co-production with CYP with SEND and their families
- early and accurate identification of need
- health pathways and support, particularly waiting times;
- local area leadership
- education and inclusion, notably inclusion in mainstream settings, alternative provision and rates of suspension and exclusion;
- assessment and planning, use of data to establish, advance and monitor priorities and outcomes; and
- preparation for adulthood.

Following the presentation, members made the undermentioned comments and observations:

- the use of agency staff to bring caseloads down to more manageable levels had given Safeguarding officers some of their capacity back;
- the timescales involved in getting a SEND diagnosis and the associated costs – it was acknowledged that diagnosis was a lengthy process and that supportive measures were put in place prior to a formal diagnosis being obtained and that schools received monies to fund this which were topped up by the Local Authority depending on need; and
- the use of Alternative Provision outside of Bolton and capacity issues – the Department was working hard to extend provision by various means including the use of vacant buildings and via the dynamic purchasing framework which encouraged care providers into Bolton – although demand was still increasing and out of borough provision was still required.

Resolved – That Ms Brown, Ms Whitehead, Ms Bruce and Ms Cornwell be thanked for their informative presentations.

25. COMPLEX SAFEGUARDING AND YOUTH JUSTICE

Mr J. Cooke gave a presentation on Complex Safeguarding and Youth Justice in Bolton and outlined the current inspection process and outcomes.

Members were informed that His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) was the Youth Justice equivalent of Ofsted. In 2022, there had been a Full Inspection of the Service which had been rated overall as 'Good'. Resettlement had separately been rated as 'Outstanding'

In 2023, a Pilot Site thematic inspection of Youth Remands had taken place. There had been no ratings but HMIP had commented that Bolton remained a "solid, well performing Service" with many areas highlighted as demonstrating effective practice.

The presentation went on to discuss Complex Safeguarding and its impact and effectiveness. The following was highlighted:

- the Complex Safeguarding Team (CST) assisted in the safeguarding and investigation of concerns around any form of child exploitation;
- it was overseen by the multi-agency Bolton Children Safeguarding Partnership (BSCP);
- impact and effectiveness was monitored through several indicators; namely:
 - increase in investigations linked to child exploitation
 - increase in use of civil and other ancillary orders against perpetrators.
 - reduced risk for the most vulnerable children
 - all statutory partners and relevant agencies deliver exploitation awareness training to identified staff
 - increased disruption activity
 - increased use of NRM
 - positive feedback from children, their families and communities
 - reduced number of children repeatedly reported as missing.

The presentation went on to outline the inspections of Complex Safeguarding.

In 2022, the BSCP and Key Agencies had been the subject of a Scrutiny and Assurance exercise. This had demonstrated that several areas were working well including timely identification of exploitation indicators and subsequent referrals into the specialist team.

In 2023, a Greater Manchester Complex Safeguarding Peer Review had resulted in the following key areas of strength:

- strong partnerships and multi agency approaches
- health services involved;

G9

- good evidence of listening to young people and their needs and identifying the most appropriate person to support them;
- good examples of working directly with parents;
- good management oversight;
- good use of resources to address online harm and exploitation;
- good examples of the Complex Safeguarding workers and Statutory Social worker working effectively together.

The 2023 Complex Safeguarding Ofsted report had identified that children at risk of exploitation in Bolton received an effective response through the dedicated team.

In addition:

- alignment and interconnectivity with Youth Justice had been recognised as an area of strength with reference to the additional resources/interventions/information sharing which had been achieved;
- protected caseloads allowed for genuine and trusted relationships to be made with the child – making sure the contextual risks had, at least, been reduced and therefore the child was safer;
- the Working to Increase Safety In Exploitation Assessment Tool was thorough, strength based and evidenced that risk and harm were regularly monitored.

The presentation also highlighted the following Complex Safeguarding updates 2023/24:

- the Complex Safeguarding Team now had a dedicated police team following a previous merge;
- an increase in disruption activities – strategically led via the Child Exploitation Disruption Action Meeting;
- referrals into the Team had increased over the last 12 months with an approximately even split of criminal/sexual exploitation and boys/girls;
- a slight increase in the criminal exploitation of girls

G10

- the commissioning of a bespoke mentoring programme delivered by City Wall to support transition to adult services;
- a focus on improving information and intelligence sharing across the Partnership and with other agencies;
- awareness/training delivery plan in place – specific topic includes National Referral Mechanism;
- Independent Child Trafficking Guardianship, use of Modern Slavery Act (2015) and use of Section 45 defence and non-victim blaming language; and
- National Referral Mechanism – significant increase in the number of referrals made.

Members were also informed of the partnership working in place in relation to Complex Safeguarding and Youth Justice and that the key outcome of recent inspections in 2022/23 had found that all scrutiny and assurance processes across the Service had strong and effective partnerships in place. Following the presentation, members made the undermentioned comments/observation:

- the good working relationships between Bolton, Greater Manchester Police and the GM Complex Safeguarding Hub on cross boundary issues.

Resolved – That Mr Cooke be thanked for his informative presentation.

26. MEMBERS BUSINESS

The Committee received the minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- the Executive Cabinet Member for Children's Services held on 9th January, 2024

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 7.00pm)