

BOLTON COUNCIL

Members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Bolton on Wednesday next, 28th August, 2013 at 7.00 p.m. 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 26th June, 2013 (Section A).

2. Policy Framework

Motion to be moved by the Executive Cabinet Member Environmental Services:-

That the 2013/14 Food Services Plan be approved.

3. Constitution

Motion to be moved by the Leader of the Council:-

That the quarterly report on Executive decisions made under the special urgency provisions of the Access to Information Regulations be noted.

4. Recommendation to Council

Motion to be moved by Councillor Greenhalgh –

That the Audit Committee confirms that the system of risk management in the Authority is adequate in identifying risks and allowing the Authority to understand the appropriate management of those risks and confirms that there are no areas of significant duplication or omission in the systems of governance in the Authority that have come to the Committee's attention and have not been adequately resolved.

- 5. Changes in Committee Membership and Appointments to Other Bodies**
- 6. Questions under Standing Order No. 9(a)**
- 7. Questions under Standing Order No. 9(c)**
- 8. Committee Proceedings**

To approve the proceedings of the following Committees:-

Planning Committee (See Section B)

Licensing and Environmental Regulation Committee
(See Section C)

9. Scrutiny Committees

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

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

Environmental Services Scrutiny Committee (See Section E) (to follow)

Children's Services and Culture Scrutiny Committee
(See Section F) (to follow)

Health Overview and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (See Section G) (submitted for information only)

10. Items referred to Council from Scrutiny Committees

To consider any motions referred to Council by a Scrutiny Committee.

11. Area Forums

To receive and consider the proceedings of the under mentioned Area Forums:-

Astley Bridge Area Forum

Bradshaw Area Forum

Brightmet Area Forum

Bromley Cross Area Forum

Crompton Area Forum

Great Lever Area Forum

Halliwell Area Forum

Harper Green Area Forum

Heaton and Lostock Area Forum

Hulton Area Forum

Kearsley Area Forum

Little Lever and Darcy Lever Area Forum

Rumworth Area Forum

Smithills Area Forum

Tonge with the Haulgh Area Forum

Two Towns Area Forum

12. Motions under Standing Order No. 4

(a) Motion to be moved by Councillor Mrs Thomas:-

The PM announced in 2010 that:-

“This Government will not cut this deficit in a way that hurts those we most need to help, that divides the country, or undermines the spirit and ethos of our public services”.

The reality sits in stark contrast to the promise as the cuts both in terms of grants to local authorities and individuals have in fact been focussed on some of the most deprived areas of the country, including Bolton. They have in fact further disadvantaged the worse off councils by diverting their funding to the better off councils. The holistic effect of the Government's policies on the Borough is causing untold damage and should be reversed.

Furthermore, this Council believes there is an alternative to its attack on public services – namely the levy of a financial transaction tax on the speculative activities that have accelerated the recent enrichment of the few to the detriment of the many. The Council therefore calls upon Government to enact the FTT and use the revenues from this measure to reverse on-going shrinkage in central grants to our Council, in

order for them to comply as a coalition with their stated intention to act with 'fairness'.

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

Council recognises that the national and international situation has led to massive reductions in public sector spending, and that this has disproportionately impacted on local government. In Bolton, this has meant reductions in the standard of service received by Council Tax payers and a considerable reduction in the numbers of employees.

Council believes that in these circumstances Councillors should also be seen to be making sacrifices, and instructs the Chief Executive to bring forward proposals to achieve a reduction in the number of Councillors and in the number of Special Responsibility Allowances paid at the earliest opportunity.

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

As austerity is set to continue under the current Government, with Local Authorities taking the disproportionate share of cuts across Whitehall departments, we can only expect more cuts to hit local services.

With this in mind, this Council feels that it is only appropriate that both we in Local Government, and national Government, look vigorously for savings so to protect the most vulnerable in our society.

Therefore, this Council asks that the Coalition re-investigate the missed opportunities they have had to reform our democratic procedures in national and local

government so that efficiencies can be found whilst protecting our democratic rights.

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

That this Council endorses the following principles when dealing with the Bedroom Tax:-

Bolton Council is committed to working with our social housing providers to protect tenants from the Bedroom Tax in the following ways:-

- proactively engaging with tenants and offering advice and assistance;
- preventing tenants from losing their homes through sensitive debt management and rent arrears procedures;
- identifying the need for and processing discretionary housing payments quickly; and
- adjusting allocations and letting policies to assist tenants who wish to downsize.

Bolton Council is also committed to protesting to the Government to repeal the Bedroom Tax by:-

- working with tenant organisations who call for the repeal of the Bedroom Tax;
- communicating the hidden costs and impracticalities of the Bedroom Tax;
- demonstrating to Government the unfairness of the Bedroom Tax; and
- working with the Government to provide alternative strategies to address housing shortages.

Consequently, a Policy Development Group will be convened to work through these proposals in greater detail.

Furthermore, this Council welcomes and endorses a 'no-homelessness' policy that has recently been adopted by the Bolton at Home Board, which is a new and innovative approach to dealing with Bedroom Tax arrears.

The policy will apply where the tenants' arrears are solely as a consequence of the bedroom tax. In these circumstances, and where the tenant has made every effort to engage with Bolton at Home, eviction proceedings will proceed but, before any possession warrant is executed, the tenant will receive a final one-off offer re-housing option in a property identified as meeting their housing needs.

This 'no homelessness' approach will provide a balanced and sustainable response to the need for Bedroom Tax arrears to be paid, but with the freedom from the fear that there will be homelessness as a consequence of unavoidable arrears.

Although the only long term solution to the Bedroom Tax is a repeal of the legislation, the no-homelessness policy could potentially provide a long term, sustainable and credible solution to the issue of unavoidable arrears as a result of the Bedroom Tax.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "S. R. Hamiss". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish underneath the name.

SEAN HARRISS
Chief Executive
Town Hall, Bolton

20th August, 2013

The proceedings of the Cabinet and Executive Cabinet Member Portfolio meetings from 1st July, 2013 to 20th August, 2013 are included for information only in a separate volume, together with the minutes of the Audit Committee, Chief Officers Appointments Panel and the Health and Wellbeing Board.