

BOLTON COUNCIL

Members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held via Microsoft Teams Live Event on Wednesday next, 17th February, 2021 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 13th January 2021 (Section A).

2. Recommendations to Council

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

To approve or otherwise the recommendations of the Cabinet made at its meeting on 8th February, 2021, (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 copy of the motion to be moved at the Council).

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

To approve the proposals as detailed in the report in relation to the Local Council Tax Support Scheme with effect from 1st April, 2022.

3. Changes in Committee Membership and Appointments to Other Bodies

4. Committee Proceedings

To approve the proceedings of the following Committees:-

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)

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee (See Section F)

Health Overview and Adult Services Scrutiny Committee (See Section G)

6. Motions under Standing Order No.4

(a) Motion in the name of Councillor Peel –

Council notes that Bolton has suffered 10 years of swinging cuts, under the guise of austerity, that despite promises from successive Prime Ministers that austerity was “over”, that the cuts and subsequent damage to council services continued.

Council believes that the impact of the years of cuts has left this council exposed and vulnerable to an unforeseen crisis, and that our resilience to deal with such a crisis has been damaged. The “perfect storm” of the Covid Pandemic has now led to council finances being stretched to such an extent, that further heavy cuts will cause damage beyond repair for the foreseeable future.

Council notes that Covid related costs, both in year, and projected to future years are considerable, both in terms of loss in income, loss of projected future income, and additional demands of services, and cannot be easily quantified in the proposed 2021/23 budget.

Council notes that at the start of the Covid crisis, the Government promised to do all that it can to assist local councils and said that no local council would be out of pocket. Council now concludes that the Government has fundamentally failed to keep its promises and has failed the people of Bolton.

Council believes that the actions of the Government, in turning a blind eye, to the financial crisis in local government across the country is a dereliction of duty, and that in forcing elected members to a position of making over £35 million pounds of cuts to staff and services in a single financial year is immoral and wrong.

Council believes that the £3 million of additional Government resources for our council services is nothing short of an insult.

Council notes that a motion calling for the Government to assist Bolton Council budget setting, by allowing deficit budgets to be passed for a period of time, thus spreading the pain over several years, whilst allowing for the economy and therefore income levels at the council to improve, was passed unanimously. However, council is extremely disappointed that despite lobbying on this 'part solution' to the crisis, the Government has failed to formally respond to this motion.

Council maintains its position that the stringent and pedantic controls that central Government has placed on local councils requiring them to always set a balanced budget, even in times of a national crisis, are no longer fit for purpose, and that the Government needs to take urgent action to reform these strict rules.

Council, therefore regards the financial parameters around the 2021/23 budget to be wholly false, misleading

and short term in their nature, and that a long term financial settlement, that allows

A) additional Government funding, and

B) the ability to plan properly for the future, by allowing for deficit budgeting.

is the only viable solution to Bolton Councils financial problems.

(b) Motion in name of Councillor Sherrington –

This Council recognises and applauds the vital work that is being carried out by frontline care workers across Bolton, during the Covid 19 pandemic, looking after and protecting some of the most vulnerable people in our society.

Council is resolute in its view that decent care work cannot be done on the cheap, and that the Government should challenge the culture of low paid staff who often feel undervalued, by leading a new national strategy in investment in pay, training and support.

Council therefore calls upon the Government to invest £1.4 billion into care workers pay, meaning that these staff who serve a vital function in society receive a 'real Living Wage' of £9.30 per hour, outside of London and £10.75 in London.

(c) Motion in the name of Councillor Murray -

This Council expresses its serious concern about the issue of speeding cars and reckless driving within our Borough, which is continually leading to needless loss of life resulting in devastating damage to families and communities.

Council accepts that cuts to police budgets has led to a reduction in the ability for the police to effectively enforce speed restrictions. In addition, since the start of the Covid 19 pandemic, police resources have been further stretched.

Council notes that one method by which the issue of speeding cars can be tackled is to tap into the willingness of community groups to organise Community Speedwatch Initiatives, and notes the successful, but informal, pilot that has been operating in Ainsworth Lane, Tonge with the Haulgh Ward. Whilst accepting that CSI's are not a panacea to the problem, Council is nevertheless disappointed that in reply to a question from a member, the GM Neighbourhood Roads Policing Manager did not offer any reassurance of a full roll out of these initiatives.

Council believes that the issues raised by GM police can be solved in partnership with Bolton Council.

Accordingly, Council asks that early talks be opened between Officers of the Council, the Police and the GM Mayors Office in order to resolve any obstructions that are preventing the roll out of Community Speedwatch Initiatives.

(d) Motion in the name of Councillor McKeon –

That building on the decision of the Council to declare a Climate Emergency and the significant amount of work currently in train to make that declaration a reality, this Council expresses, in a vote, its support for the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill currently before the House of Commons. Furthermore, the Council agrees to contact the three MPs who represent the borough to urge them to support the bill.

Next year the UK is to co-host the 26th Climate Change Conference and thus has an opportunity to show leadership in combating what is possibly the greatest challenge humanity has ever faced. The evidence of the catastrophic effects of climate change is now too obvious to enumerate. The related ecological disaster is only too apparent with the decimation of species the most egregious example.

The objectives of the bill are to ensure that the UK plays it's fair and proper role in limiting global temperature rise to 1.5 degrees C and actively conserving the natural world by protecting and restoring the UK's ecosystems.

It also calls for a temporary Citizens Assembly to help the Government and Parliament to decide on the measures to include in the strategy necessary to achieve the objectives.

This Council, on behalf of the people of Bolton, who we represent, expresses its support for a bill which contains measures which are potentially lifesaving for ecosystems, species and humanity.

(e) Motion in the name of Councillor Hayes –

Council considers that the majority of members of Greater Manchester Police perform their duties with a high degree of dedication and professionalism and wishes to thank them for their work during such hard times.

Council recognises that Government cuts to the Greater Manchester Police budget of £215 million over 10 years, which resulted in cuts of 2,000 officers and 1,000 support staff, has inevitably led to a reduction in the standard of service provided to the residents of Greater

Manchester and Bolton. However, the recent report by the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) indicates that the performance of Greater Manchester Police is far worse than that of the majority of other forces. HMICFRS found that over 80,000 crimes had not been recorded in the year ending on 30th June and the force was placed in 'Special Measures'.

Council considers that the recent damning HMICFRS report indicates a serious lack of organisation and leadership in Greater Manchester police, for which senior officers must be held largely responsible.

Council notes however, that the role of Elected Mayor for Greater Manchester incorporates the responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner, with responsibility to ensure efficient and effective policing in the area. The existing Elected Mayor appointed a Deputy Mayor to carry out this role on his behalf. Council is concerned that despite warnings from HMICFRS in 2016, 2018 and earlier in 2020, no action appears to have been taken by either the Mayor or Deputy Mayor to deal with the very real concerns, and believes that they have seriously let down the residents of Bolton and Greater Manchester as a whole by their inactivity.

Council resolves to request that the Mayor prepares a detailed report to Bolton Council indicating the action plan to return policing in the Borough to an efficient and effective level.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. H. B.', is located at the bottom left of the page.

TONY OAKMAN
Chief Executive
Town Hall, Bolton

10th February, 2021

The proceedings of the Cabinet and Executive Cabinet Member Portfolio meetings from 11th January to 8th February, 2021 are included for information only in a separate volume, together with the minutes of the Chief Officers Appointments Panel.