

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, 26th June, 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 annual meeting of the Council held on 15th May, 2013 (Section A).

2. Statement from the three Leaders regarding Drummer Lee Rigby.

3. Policy Framework

Motion to be moved by Councillor Morris –

That the proposed published Allocations Plan and other submission documents be approved for submission to the Secretary of State ; that the recommendations in the report circulated to members be approved and that the Published Allocations Plan is a material consideration for development management purposes.

4. Changes in Committee Membership and Appointments to Other Bodies

5. Questions under Standing Order No. 9(a)

6. Questions under Standing Order No. 9(c)

7. Committee Proceedings

To approve the proceedings of the following Committees:-

Planning Committee (See Section B)

8. Scrutiny Committees

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

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

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

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

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (See Section F) (submitted for information only)

9. Items referred to Council from Scrutiny Committees

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

10. Motions under Standing Order No. 4

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

Council notes that 7 children and 2 adults have been killed by dogs since 2006, and 6,000 admissions to hospital are caused by dog attacks each year, leaving many victims scarred for life.

The Council believes that the current Government proposals on dangerous dogs do not go far enough. Council endorses and supports the campaign currently being undertaken by Bolton West MP, Julie Hilling, calling upon the Government to introduce tougher legislation on dangerous dogs.

Specifically, the Council urges the Government to:

- amend the law to cover attacks on people and animals on both private and public property;
- enforce Dog Control Orders;
- introduce Dog Control Notices giving the authorities the power to intervene; and
- introduce compulsory micro chipping of all dogs and to promote responsible dog ownership.”

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

The Council will remember that it passed a resolution on 17th April 2013 that urged the Government to immediately suspend the bedroom tax and to carry out an urgent review into its consequences.

Council acknowledges the reply received by the Minister for Welfare Reform, Lord Freud on the 3rd May, 2013 but expresses its concern that the Minister failed to address the areas of concerns outlined in the motion, particularly concerning the lack of availability of social housing stock.

Council therefore reiterates the following and would request that the Minister takes the time to respond to them -

1. That the number of people being forced to downsize from their homes far outweighs the number of available social housing, and that projections show that, even if no new applicants were offered a home, it would still take years for people to downsize; and
2. That there is growing evidence that social housing tenants are actually moving into the more expensive private rented sector and that, far from leading to a reduction of the benefits bill, the bedroom tax could lead to an overall rise in Housing Benefit payments.

Council also expresses its deep concern that as well as forcing households to uproot and move homes, the Government has paid little attention to the effect on children's education as many will be forced to make unwanted and unplanned moves to different schools, thus disrupting their school life and attainment.

In addition, Council further believes that the Government has failed to take into account the additional pressures on the budget for disabled adaptations, as disabled tenants are forced to move from adapted properties into smaller ones without adaptations, thus incurring unnecessary expenditure on new adaptations.

(c) Motion to be moved by Councillor S. Harkin:-

The Ministry of Justice (MOJ) is proposing to limit the number of providers who give advice under criminal

legal aid. A competitive tender exercise will require bids to be 17.5% below the current fee levels.

In Greater Manchester there will be 37 contracts and estimates suggest there are currently over 130 providers of criminal legal aid.

Bolton currently has seven providers of criminal legal aid and it is possible that none of these seven firms would be awarded a contract.

This Council therefore resolves to write to the Justice Secretary, requesting the following action:-

1. that plans to introduce price competitive tendering for the provision of criminal legal aid are immediately scrapped;
2. that plans to remove client choice are immediately scrapped;
3. that the MOJ look elsewhere for savings as opposed to cutting fees paid to criminal legal aid providers; and
4. that any reforms proposed by the MOJ are initially introduced by way of pilot schemes to test their feasibility.

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

This Council is disappointed that proposals to close Bolton Magistrates Court are being considered, and wishes to state its opposition to such proposals. The court is of great importance to the population of Bolton, providing as it does access to justice for all residents of the Town as well as many people from other areas.

We are concerned that the proposal for additional reductions within Bolton's Court cluster – which has already seen four courts reduced down to form just two

combined courts – will have a significant impact on Bolton residents, as well as the Town Centre.

As one of the largest towns in Greater Manchester, we feel that the retention of the Magistrates Court is important in maintaining an acceptable level of service for residents, who will otherwise be forced to travel considerable distances to attend alternative venues.

The Council is committed to campaigning for the Court to remain open so that it can continue to play an important role in the future of the Borough, and will work closely with our partners to achieve the right decision.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'S. R. Harriss'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending from the bottom of the 's'.

SEAN HARRISS
Chief Executive
Town Hall, Bolton

19th June, 2013

The proceedings of the Cabinet and Executive Cabinet Member Portfolio meetings from 29th April, 2013 to 17th June, 2013 are included for information only in a separate volume, together with the minutes of the Chief Officers Appointments Panel and the Health and Wellbeing Board.

