

**BOLTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH**

**2021/2022**

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**23<sup>rd</sup> MARCH 2022**

Present - Councillors Mrs. Thomas (Mayor), Mrs. Fairclough (Deputy Mayor), Adia, Ayub, Bagnall, Bullock, Challender, Cowen, Cox, Donaghy, Eckersley-Fallon, Finney, Flitcroft, Galloway, Grant, Hartigan, Haworth, Hayes, Heslop, Hewitt, Hill, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Jiva, Khurram, McGeown, McKeon, McMulkin, Mistry, Morgan, Murray, Pattison, Peel, Radcliffe, Sanders, Sherrington, Silvester, Taylor-Burke, Veevers, Walsh, Warren, Weatherby, D. Wilkinson, T. Wilkinson, Wright and Zaman.

**75. VOTE OF THANKS TO MAYOR AND CONSORT**

It was moved by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor Peel and unanimously agreed -

That the cordial thanks of the Council be tendered to Madam Mayor (Councillor Linda Thomas) for the most able manner in which she has discharged the duties of her office during the past Municipal Year.

The Council also wish to record their appreciation of the graceful manner in which the Consort (Len Thomas) has assisted in many mayoral functions during this year of office.

**76. MINUTES**

The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2022 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

**77. COUNCIL'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION**

It as moved by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Fairclough and approved –

That the amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegation for 2021/2022, as circulated, be approved.

**78. QUESTIONS/COMMENTS UNDER STANDING ORDER 9(a)**

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

- (i) by Councillor Flitcroft relating to the Rock Hall Heritage Site in Farnworth

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (ii) by Councillor Bullock relating to Heritage Action Zone

The Deputy Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (iii) by Councillor Bullock relating to Urban Greenheart

The Deputy Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (iv) by Councillor Bullock relating to the Greater Manchester Clean Air Zone

The Executive Cabinet Member for Children's Services replied to this question.

- (v) by Councillor Heslop relating to fair funding for Farnworth

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regeneration replied to this question.

- (vi) by Councillor Silvester relating to residual waste

collections from blocks of flats

The Deputy Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (vii) by Councillor Grant relating to Great British Railway Headquarters

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (viii) by Councillor Hayes relating to Council policy on Covid Infections for Employees

The Chief Executive replied to this question.

- (ix) by Councillor Hayes relating to Robertsons Contract – Smithills Estate

The Deputy Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (x) by Councillor Ayub relating to a crossing guide from Long Lane and Bury Road junction

The Executive Cabinet Member for Children's Services replied to this question.

- (xi) by Councillor Jiva relating to City Status

The Chairman of the Corporate and External Issues Scrutiny Committee replied to this question.

- (xii) by Councillor D. Wilkinson relating to overgrown hedges

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regeneration replied to this question.

- (xiii) by Councillor D. Wilkinson relating to the SAMP Process

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regeneration replied to this question.

- (xiv) by Councillor D. Wilkinson relating to Westhoughton Library

The Deputy Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (xv) by Councillor Cowen relating to road traffic accidents/speed cameras

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regeneration replied to this question.

- (xvi) by Councillor Donaghy relating to Council lighting on Victoria Square

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (xvii) by Councillor McGeown relating to data from Driver Feedback Signs

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (xviii) by Councillor McGeown relating to Westhoughton Town Centre

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regeneration replied to this question.

- (xix) by Councillor D. Wilkinson relating to Hulton Park Estate

The Chairman of the Planning Committee replied to this question.

- (xx) by Councillor McGeown relating to gully grids

The Deputy Leader of the Council replied to this

question.

- (xxi) by Councillor Hayes relating to Woodstock Drive

The Executive Cabinet Member for Regeneration replied to this question.

- (xxii) by Councillor Eckersley-Fallon relating to traffic issues in Westhoughton

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (xxiii) by Councillor Eckersley-Fallon relating to energy bills rebate

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

- (xxiv) by Councillor Sanders relating to Farnworth Town Hall

The Leader of the Council replied to this question.

## **79. LICENSING AND ENVIROMENTAL REGULATION COMMITTEE**

It was moved by Councillor Flitcroft, seconded by Councillor Mrs. Fairclough and approved –

That the minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Licensing and Environmental Regulation Committee held on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2022 be approved.

## **80. MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 4 – UNLOCKING OUR HIGH STREETS**

It was moved by Councillor Silvester and seconded by Councillor Zaman -

This Council believes that healthy high streets throughout the Bolton Borough are essential for community cohesion, civic pride, employment, shopping, services and leisure. But many

shops and businesses were struggling even before the Covid pandemic: high street retail employment fell in more than three-quarters of local authorities between 2015 and 2018 according to the Office of National Statistics and more than half of all UK consumers were shopping online before the pandemic.

This Council notes that retail is among the sectors most affected by the coronavirus pandemic, and retail workers have been on the frontline of the crisis throughout. The almost complete shutdown of non-essential shops between March and June 2020 has hit businesses hard, and the need for social distancing has changed the way many businesses operate, reducing footfall. The pandemic has accelerated what, in many cases, has been a longer trend of lower footfall and changing shopping habits. As the Portas Review a decade ago acknowledged, the form and function of many high streets needs to radically change if they are to adapt and survive.

This Council welcomes the willingness of Government to acknowledge the problems and come forward with initiatives in response to these challenges such as the furlough scheme, the Covid support business loans, and the High Street Taskforce. However, as the Treasury Select Committee stated in 2019, the current system of Business Rates places an unfair burden on “bricks and mortar” businesses compared to online retailers, and the Business Rate system needs radical overhaul. The announcements in the Budget, though welcome, fall short of what is required: small changes to revaluation cycles and temporary discounts simply tinker around the edges, and will not deliver the support that local high streets need and deserve.

This Council resolves to:

Write to the Government to urge it to scrap business rates and replace them with a system which is fit for purpose and which levels the playing field between bricks and mortar businesses and online retail giants.

Campaign to devolve funds like the Towns Fund, Levelling Up

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Fund, UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other national funding pots, to give local communities, councils and regions the ultimate say in how it is spent in their area.

Explore what local action can be taken to revive our high streets and town centres including facilitating a public meeting involving the Bolton Civic Trust and other stakeholders to discuss the plans for the redevelopment of Bolton Town Centre.

Make full use of s215 planning enforcement powers where empty units are attracting antisocial behaviour or creating an eyesore on the high street – and name and shame those premises which don't do their bit and are regularly subject to enforcement.

Proactively contact landlords of vacant premises (and work with Chambers of Commerce, Landlord Associations and BID managers) to explore meanwhile use options and/or encourage alternative rental models (e.g. turnover rather than market rent) to enable new co-operatives, SMEs, social enterprises and community businesses to open their doors on the high street.

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

### For the Motion, 43 viz:

Councillors Adia, Ayub, Bagnall, Bullock, Challender, Cowen, Cox, Donaghy, Eckersley-Fallon, Mrs. Fairclough, Finney, Flitcroft, Galloway, Grant, Hartigan, Haworth, Heslop, Hewitt, Hill, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Jiva, Khurram, McGeown, McMulkin, Mistry, Morgan, Murray, Pattison, Peel, Radcliffe, Sanders, Sherrington, Silvester, Taylor-Burke, Veevers, Walsh, Warren, Weatherby, D. Wilkinson, T. Wilkinson, Wright and Zaman.

### Against the Motion, 0

### Abstained, 0

Whereupon, the motion was declared carried.

### **81. MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 4 – ENERGY PRICE CAP**

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

Council deplores the decision by the Government Agency Ofcom to raise the Energy Price Cap by around £700 from April 2022: a decision that will affect more than 22 million customers. Council sees the help proposed so far by the Government as woefully inadequate, amounting to a £150 one off payment, and a further 'loan' of £200. Council believes that this excessive increase in bills will directly lead to an increase in the hardship already suffered by many people in this borough, and worse still, will lead to many vulnerable people being too afraid to heat their homes.

Council therefore calls upon the Government to:

- A. Agree with the independent proposals by Ecotricity to remove the VAT element on energy bills for all customers who use up to 3KW per annum, and to further explore a grading system of VAT on fuel use over 3KW per annum, based upon the amount of energy used.
- B. To hold a public inquiry into all possible solutions to the energy crisis.
- C. For the Government to intervene directly by subsidising energy prices in the same way that it does to farming and train fares, among others.

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

For the Motion, 26 viz:

Councillors Ayub, Bagnall, Challender, Donaghy, Flitcroft, Grant, Haworth, Heslop, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Jiva, Khurram, McGeown, McMulkin, Mistry, Murray, Pattison, Peel,



Sanders, Silvester, Veevers, Weatherby, D. Wilkinson,  
T. Wilkinson, Wright and Zaman.

Against the Motion, 0

Abstained, 14 viz:

Councillors Bullock, Cowen, Cox, Mrs. Fairclough, Finney,  
Galloway, Hartigan, Hewitt, Hill, Morgan, Radcliffe, Taylor-  
Burke, Walsh and Warren.

Whereupon, the motion was declared carried.

## **82. MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 4 – COST OF LIVING RISES**

It was moved by Councillor Veevers and seconded by Councillor Hayes -

Council notes with concern that inflation has risen to its highest point for 10 years and that further increases to the cost of power, fuel, food and other consumer goods and to fares for public transport are likely to mean more rises.

Council also notes that this is happening at a time when real incomes are being reduced by increases to National Insurance, below inflation pay rises, cuts to Universal Credit and ending or suspension of the 'triple lock' safeguarding for state pensions. This will have a proportionately greater impact on those on low or medium incomes.

Council believes that Government must take urgent action to reduce the impacts on those who cannot afford it and spread the cost to those at the top of the earnings scale and Companies that have largely avoided paying a fair level of taxation.

Council resolves to make these views known to appropriate levels of Government and ask the Borough's MPs to support these moves to reduce the impact on the majority of Bolton's inhabitants.

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

For the Motion, 28 viz:

Councillors Ayub, Bagnall, Challender, Donaghy, Flitcroft, Grant, Haworth, Hayes, Heslop, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Jiva, Khurram, McGeown, McMulkin, Mistry, Murray, Pattison, Peel, Sanders, Sherrington, Silvester, Veevers, Weatherby, D. Wilkinson, T. Wilkinson, Wright and Zaman.

Against the Motion, 0

Abstained, 14 viz:

Councillors Cowen, Cox, Eckersley-Fallon, Mrs. Fairclough, Finney, Galloway, Hartigan, Hewitt, Hill, Morgan, Radcliffe, Taylor-Burke, Walsh and Warren.

Whereupon, the motion was declared carried.

**83. MOTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 4 –  
RENOUNCING OF RUSSIAN DONATIONS**

It was moved by Councillor D. Wilkinson and seconded by Councillor McGeown -

Council recognises the out pouring of sympathy for the Ukrainian people from the individuals, churches, schools and businesses from across the communities of Bolton and the country in providing donations both of goods, supplies and money.

That council supports the economic sanctions imposed on Russia and the oligarchs to help the Ukrainian people in their fight for freedom but calls upon all individuals and organisations which have received political donations from questionable Russian sources to donate such monies to charities which support the Ukrainian people.

It is now unacceptable for the sake of transparency and for British democracy for those organisations and individuals to retain those Russian monies.

That council calls upon the borough's MP's to support the renouncing of Russian donations.

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

For the Motion, 42 viz:

Councillors Ayub, Bagnall, Challender, Cowen, Cox, Donaghy, Eckersley-Fallon, Mrs. Fairclough, Finney, Flitcroft, Galloway, Grant, Hartigan, Haworth, Hayes, Heslop, Hewitt, Hill, Ibrahim, Iqbal, Jiva, Khurram, McGeown, McMulkin, Mistry, Morgan, Murray, Pattison, Peel, Radcliffe, Sanders, Sherrington, Silvester, Taylor-Burke, Veevers, Walsh, Warren, Weatherby, D. Wilkinson, T. Wilkinson, Wright and Zaman.

Against the Motion, 1 viz:

Councillor Bullock.

Abstained, 0

Whereupon, the motion was declared carried.

(The meeting started at 7.00 p.m. and finished at 10.20 p.m.)