

BOLTON COUNCIL

Members of the Council are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council to be held in the Council Chamber, 2nd Floor, Town Hall on Wednesday next, 24th November, 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 meetings of the Council held on 6th October, 2021 (Section A).

2. Constitution

Motion in the name of Councillor Cox –

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

3. Recommendation to Council

(a) Motion in the name of Councillor Cox –

That the changes to polling places and districts for May, 2022 elections, as detailed in the report now circulated, be approved.

(b) Motion in the name of Councillor Peel –

That the proposal to opt into the sector-led option through Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for five financial years from 1st April, 2023, as detailed in the report now circulated, be approved.

- 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)

Licensing and Environmental Regulation Committee
(See Section C)

- 8. Scrutiny Committees**

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

Corporate and External Issues Scrutiny Committee (See Section D)

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

Place Scrutiny Committee (See Section F)

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee (See Section G)

- 9. Motions under Standing Order No.4**

(a) Motion in the name of Councillor Silvester –

This Council believes that planning works best when developers and the local community work together to shape local areas and deliver necessary new homes.

This Council strongly disagrees with and criticises the Conservative Government's proposals to take away planning decisions from this Council and hand them to development boards appointed by Ministers in Whitehall. These new quangos are proposed to help zone areas for development. Residents living in areas zoned for growth would find that they no longer have an automatic right to object to individual planning applications on their own doorsteps; no right to object to oversized blocks at the end of the street; no right to object to concreting over precious green space, and no right to object to new developments that overburden local infrastructure such as roads, doctors' surgeries, schools or public transport.

This Council opposes such changes proposed by the Conservative Government and therefore calls upon the Secretary of State for Housing to protect the right of residents throughout the Metropolitan Borough of Bolton to object to individual planning applications.

(b) Motion in the name of Councillor Haworth –

The Council is extremely concerned that there is a government consultation in England on a plan to move the qualifying age for free prescriptions in England from 60 to 66 years of age. Subsequently, thousands of 60 to 66 year olds in the Bolton Borough, in receipt of prescriptions for medicines and health care products, would be affected by this change.

The pandemic has impacted health inequalities and wellbeing and it is imperative to avoid changes that will impact people's lives negatively going forward. If implemented, this change of people from 60 to 66 years for prescriptions for physical and mental health needs in Bolton could easily roll back progress made in the start to tackling health inequalities and increasing wellbeing here.

We ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Minister for Public Health and the Minister for Mental Health, outlining the Council's concern that the raising of prescription charges on people of 60 to 66 years of age in England will have a marked effect on already problematic health inequalities in the Bolton Borough.

We also call on our local Members of Parliament to support the Council motion and reject the plan to have 60 to 66 year olds pay prescription charges.

(c) Motion in the name of Councillor McMulkin -

Many people will have read in horror the events surrounding Sarah Everard's brutal murder; many will have been shocked by the events however for many women and those who work in women's aid organisations there was no sense of shock. The brutal attack and murder of women is a day-to-day occurrence that they deal with. Sarah's murder made front page news predominantly because the perpetrator was a serving police officer. Since the murder of Sarah Everard, more than 80 women have been killed - these women did not make the front page news.

Misogyny runs to the core of our society. We live in a society where women and girls are constantly subjected to inappropriate behaviour that is seen as the entitled right of men. Sexism is outlawed by the statute books and yet it is experienced by women on a daily basis.

The time for action is now. Each year, I attend a memorial walk in memory of the oldest known victim of domestic abuse, a young women named Ellen Strange, who was brutally murdered by her husband in 1761 on Holcombe Moor. Some 260 years later we wring our hands and prevaricate about change as each week more women are

murdered and subjected to abuse.

I therefore call upon the Council to take urgent action to:

1. Convene a Women's Forum by March 2022, which will include groups such as YES Matters, Endeavour, REIGN, GMP, TFGM, Bolton University to name but a few; and
2. Formulate and implement a strategy from the measures agreed by the Forum that would make our Borough a safer place for women and girls

(d) Motion in the name of Councillor Baines -

Council recognises the harmful impact of advertising on Children within the Borough in relation to Vaping products and will aim to support and promote a tobacco-free and Vape-free Borough in order to protect the current and future health, wellbeing and prosperity of children, families, and the wider community.

Background

Smoking remains the biggest cause of preventable death and a significant indicator of inequalities in the UK. Eradicating smoking is highlighted as a prominent issue in the 2019 NHS long term plan

The Council receives guidance from NICE and what was PHE (now the OHID - Office for Health Improvement and Disparities) on vaping as a quit aid. There is increasingly robust evidence of their effective use in driving smoking rates down. However, people who use vaping products should be supported to use regulated nicotine products and to ultimately stop smoking and vaping completely.

Some products would seem to be designed in such

a way to entice children and young people to take up vaping (using bubble gum, gummy- bear and other similar flavourings).

This introduces a dependency on nicotine at a young age, via a route of administration which is not in itself without harm. Additionally, it creates an additional economic burden which given that smoking rates are highest amongst our most economically deprived neighbourhoods is felt most acutely by those who are least well off.

Council acknowledges its share of responsibility to try to ensure good public health in the population by:

1. Protecting children and young people against advertising and against the sale of products designed to entice young people to use nicotine products (either tobacco and/or vaping)
2. Promoting Smoke free environments which will also include the absence of second-hand vape, including playgrounds and other outdoor and indoor venues

Further, that Council should seek to:

- Actively promote a wider understanding of the impact of vaping on children and young people.
- Work with retailers to encourage them to challenge buyers of vaping products for proof of age, if there is any doubt that they are under the age of 18.
- Ask national government to do more to prevent the marketing of vaping products which are targeted towards young people.

(e) Motion in the name of Councillor Heslop -

At the full council meeting of 6th October, Cllr Paul Heslop asked a question about traffic management at Remembrance Sunday events that aimed to establish how much the council will be billed in respect of Bolton Town Centre along with the other outlying towns in the borough.

Information received since suggested that whilst Bolton's Remembrance Sunday event is being financially supported by the Council, the other towns in this borough are not receiving the same financial support for their towns' Remembrance Day events and that the events organisers – usually ex-servicemen and ex-servicewomen – must pay for their own traffic management.

This Council agrees that all Remembrance Sunday Events - at every cenotaph/war memorial in this borough - are of equal importance. This Council also agrees that the cost of traffic management in the other towns in this borough should not fall upon the event organisers. This Council requests that a PDG is called to consider what options there are for supporting these other events.

(f) Motion in the name of Councillor Challender –

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS), which funds much of the debt advice provision in Bolton, is recommissioning services at present.

The recommissioning process is changing how independent, quality assured, community-based debt services will be delivered from 1 April 2022, with more than a 50% reduction in face-to-face provision for residents. Contracts for future debt advice services are currently based on pre-pandemic estimates of demand.

Demand for debt advice has increased sharply in recent months. The recent removal of the Universal Credit uplift, the ending of the Government's furlough scheme, rising energy prices, and the end of the moratorium on evictions will all contribute to a challenging winter for many local residents.

This Council is concerned that focusing on the provision of remotely delivered services at the expense of accessible, locally provided, face-to-face debt advice will adversely affect many local residents. This includes:

- Vulnerable people (who for example, may be suffering from addictions, victims of domestic abuse, and those who are at risk or are homeless.)
- People with poor mental health.
- Digitally excluded people.
- People with low levels of literacy.
- Non-English speakers.
- Those with complex cases.

This Council believes that:

- Good quality, accessible, face-to-face debt advice cannot be replicated remotely. To do so inhibits the ability to focus on place-based and locality-based partnership initiatives.
- The recommissioning of debt advice services should be suspended for minimum of twelve months to allow independent research to be carried out into future demand.
- Funding for face-to-face community-based debt advice should be increased, not reduced, enabling the most vulnerable to access the support they need.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions outlining the Council's concerns

about the impact of the planned significant reduction in face-to-face debt advice, and to call for the recommissioning of debt advice services to be delayed for at least twelve months.

- Write to all three local Members of Parliament, asking them to support the content of this motion and requesting that they in turn contact the DWP to reject the move away from face-to-face debt advice.

S. Johnson

SUE JOHNSON
Acting Chief Executive
Town Hall, Bolton

17th November, 2021

The proceedings of the Executive Cabinet Member Portfolio meetings from 4th October to 19th October, 2021, together with the Chief Officers Appointments Panel, are included for information only in a separate volume.

