

# COUNCIL - 13 April 2021

## MINUTES

Present: The Mayor Councillor Davis in the Chair  
Councillors: A Adeyemo, M Allen, K Allsopp, S Ashraf MBE, K Blunt, M Brain, J Burn, J Butler, C Buxton-Sait, S Caudwell, D Cole, I Courts, T Diccico, J Fairburn, M Gough, K Grinsell, R Grinsell, B Groom, J Hamilton, K Hawkins, A Hodgson, T Hodgson, P Hogarth MBE, Mrs D Holl-Allen MBE, R Holt, D Howell, A Mackenzie, A Mackiewicz, K Macnaughton, L McCarthy, M McLoughlin, K Meeson, F Nash, M Parker, J Potts, W Qais, A Rebeiro, T Richards OBE, A Rolf, J Ryan, R Sexton, G Slater, R Sleigh OBE, K Thomas, P Thomas, J Tildesley, Mrs K Wild, C Williams and M Wilson

### 1. APOLOGIES.

No apologies were received.

### 2. COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were presented for approval.

#### **RESOLVED**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021 were approved.

### 3. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY OR CONFLICTING INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS

Councillor Mackiewicz made a declaration of interest as a Director of AMPA Associates Ltd which provided contracts procured by Solihull Council.

Councillor Adeyemo made a declaration of interest as he was employed by a company which provided insurance to HS2 Ltd.

### 4. PETITIONS

Councillor Rolf submitted a petition on behalf of local residents which requested that Planning Committee reject application PL/2021/00189/PPFL.

Councillor Diccico submitted a petition on behalf of local residents which requested HS2 Ltd build a continuous haul route along the trace of the HS2 line instead of through Balsall Common and Berkswell.

Councillor McCarthy resubmitted a petition on behalf of Elmdon residents which opposed the potential relocation of the HWRC to Damson Parkway.

### 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor's Announcements

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Councillor Tildesley, Mrs Tildesley and Mrs Hammond had been recognised by the Police and Crime Commissioner for their efforts to prevent Mrs Hammond's car being stolen, in which Councillor Tildesley was injured in the process.

Maria Demosthenous had won the EPAT UK National Children's Champion Award for 2020. EPAT is a national charity which campaign to raise awareness of child exploitation and the award recognises Ms Demosthenous' outstanding commitment to victims of child trafficking.

### Leader's Announcement

Solihull Council had acquired ownership of the Mell Square holding company, which included the ground lease interests and freeholds of a number of key commercial town centre properties. This would help to retain the vital role of the town centre with a vibrant retail sector and dynamic leisure offer. It would also enable the Town Centre masterplan to be delivered.

### Deputy Leader's and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Announcement

An update was provided on the local health situation in relation to COVID-19.

## **6. QUESTIONS AND DEPUTATIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 9 AND 12**

No questions or deputations were received.

## **7. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8**

### Councillor Wilson to Councillor K Grinsell, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

"What is the turnaround time for housing maintenance query submitted via the Solihull Community Housing (SCH) 'Out of Hours' service?"

The Cabinet Member explained that SCH out of hours service was provided by a contact centre called Orbis, for residents who may have issues outside of business hours. The following statistics were provided:

- 97% of calls were answered by Orbis
- 87% of calls were answered within 30 seconds
- The average wait time was 2 minutes
- The longest wait time was 21 minutes.

At the point of escalation from Orbis to the SCH out of hours Duty Manager, the response time for an out of hours operative to attend a property was two hours. This tended to be dependent on the number of calls the engineer had at that time.

Councillor Wilson flagged an incident at Pembroke House, where a resident suffered a heating failure and was unable to speak to the service for five hours. Councillor Wilson asked what the appropriate waiting time should be for someone in this position.

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The Cabinet Member responded that there had been a fluctuations in performance for this service as a result of COVID-19 which had impacted on the workforce. However, the mentioned issue should have been flagged and was not an appropriate time to wait. The contract was to be reviewed annually. Councillor Wilson would share details of the incident with the Cabinet Member outside of the meeting.

### Councillor K Thomas to Councillor Mackiewicz, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning and Housing

“Like many councils, we have declared a climate emergency and the early working group sessions are indicating the scale of the change required. This level of change will require substantial investment. What national or regional funding is being made available to enable us to deliver the required change and what percentage/actions of our targeted improvement is this expected to deliver?”

In response the Cabinet Member highlighted that the Net Zero Action Plan Green Paper had recently been published, which would flag what activities would be required to achieve net zero. Some funding had been secured for this already from the West Midlands Combined Authority, Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP and the government. The Council would continue to identify and pursue funding opportunities from both private and public sources when they become available.

Councillor Thomas requested further information about future funding streams.

The Cabinet Member explained that there were a number of schemes that would look to access future funding. This would be from a variety of sources. It was flagged that they had already raised £11.1mill in the first year, and more funding would be available moving forward.

### Councillor Wilson to Councillor Rolf, Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities

“Data collected by the Don’t Trash our Future campaign has revealed there is a 37% fall in FPNs issues by Councils nationally. 85% of people see rubbish as the main issue that blights their area, and Solihull is no different. We issued no FPNs in 2020, compared to 78 in 2019. What are the Cabinet Member’s plans to address the littering and fly-tipping epidemic in our Borough, so that we are ready for the eyes of the world to be upon us next year for the Commonwealth Games?”

The Cabinet Member confirmed that a number of approaches had been developed to reduce the impact of litter within Solihull. These included a new litter patrolling and enforcement contract which had been put out to tender and was expected to commence in October. They would target areas where the demand was greatest through education, support to local initiatives and enforcement. It was recognised that visible patrols was an effective deterrent to littering. Additional anti-dog fouling and litter signage would be purchased for areas of concerns. Officer had worked with community representatives from Knowle to respond to additional litter pressures as a result of the COVID-19

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pandemic. Officers would continue to monitor this as the Commonwealth Games approached. It was also acknowledged the work that local volunteer litter groups had undertaken to support the Borough.

Councillor Wilson noted that a lot of littering and fly tipping was being reported by residents but not collected. He then asked what the key performance indicators for the removal of fly tipping, and requested whether more preventative measures could be introduced in hotspot areas.

The Cabinet Member stated they would provide Councillor Wilson with the key performance indicators in a written response. They asked Members to continue to report instances of fly tipping and littering, and if they felt it had not been actioned, to directly raise with the Cabinet Member.

### Councillor K Thomas to Councillor Mackiewicz, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning and Housing

"The current waiting times for a SCH property is minimum 128 weeks for a 2-bed (Band B) and maximum 309 weeks for 4-bed (Band C2). The Council Plan says "increase the supply of housing especially affordable and social housing." How many additional social houses are we planning to deliver in the coming year and in the next 5 years to tackle this unacceptable waiting time?"

The Cabinet Member explained that SCH had a range of indicative waiting times for different housing need priority and the size of a property which would be publically accessible. There were no minimum wait times as the question suggests. It was acknowledged that there was a need to increase the supply of social rented housing in the Borough and the Council was committed to increasing this. For the financial year 2021/22, it was forecast that 80 additional social rented homes would be provided, and for the five year period April 2022 until March 2027, it was forecasted that an additional 687 social rented homes would be provided.

Councillor Thomas asked what the impact of the additional properties would be on the waiting times.

The Cabinet Member clarified that the stock of social rented housing continued to increase and the Local Plan would help to deliver social rented housing as well as shared ownership accommodation.

### Councillor Caudwell to Councillor Hawkins, Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways

"In a similar vein to Cllr Wilson's question, we've all been out and about much more recently and a common issue across all seventeen wards I'm picking up on is around litter bin emptying, which doesn't seem to be happening enough. I've heard residents in Knowle are even considering buying and installing their own litter bins, which can't be right. It's clear to me we need either more bins, or more frequent collections. Does the Cabinet Member acknowledge this specific issue, and what can be done about it in the short term?"

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The Cabinet Member explained that during the COVID-19 pandemic, this issue had become a national issue, as levels of littering had fluctuated throughout the pandemic. This would continue to be monitored, particularly to understand specific problem areas. Resources had been increased to provide more litter picking and litter bin emptying equipment when needed. Further information was requested in relation to the comment about Knowle.

Councillor Caudwell asked whether a neighbourhood which requested additional litter bins would be provided them by the Council. The Cabinet Member responded that there had been additional resources included for the cleansing teams to respond to the pressures, with a focus on hot spot areas. Recent budgets had included additional funds to ensure that the local environment was well maintained.

### Councillor Adeyemo to Councillor Hawkins, Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways

“Bearing in mind the high volume of complaints about traffic congestion and parking around Olton School at pick-up and drop-off times, what is the Cabinet Member doing to resolve the situation for residents around the area, for whom the situation has become intolerable?”

The Cabinet Member highlighted that the number of complaints about traffic congestion at Olton School was similar to many other schools within the Borough. To respond to these complaints, Council Civil Park Enforcement Officers and local neighbourhood policing teams would engage in these localities when resources permit. The current traffic problems around schools were understood to be related to the current COVID-19 situation, and was likely to ease as restrictions were lifted. Also, at Olton School, there were additional parking pressures caused by construction traffic and developments in the area. The Cabinet Member reiterated that they would continue to monitor the situation and would consider additional measures if deemed appropriate. Members were encouraged to liaise with the school.

Councillor Adeyemo queried what long term plan would be implemented to prevent further traffic problems once the Olton primary unit merged with the junior unit at the Chapel Field Site.

The Cabinet Member stated that this would be subject to a future Planning Committee and requested Members raise concerns at this forum. They also suggested that Members work with School Governors to help educate pupils and parents about road safety and safe parking.

### **8. COUNCIL TOPIC OF DEBATE**

There was no topic of debate.

### **9. NOTICE OF MOTION**

There was no notice of motion.

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### 10. REPORT FROM THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - THE COUNCIL PLAN UPDATE 2020 - 2025

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Courts presented the updates to the Council Plan for Council approval.

Members raised a number of questions and sought clarification on a number of points, which the Leader responded to.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the updates to the Council Plan 2020-2025 be approved.

### 11. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

The following recommendations from Committees were considered by Council

#### **Governance Committee 24 March 2021**

#### **Minute 4 Financial Regulations – 2021/22 Update (page 149)**

The Chairman of the Governance Committee invited Members to consider the above report and the recommendations to Council.

#### **RESOLVED**

Council approved the revised Financial Regulations and other associated guidance documents as set out in Appendices A-C to the report with the revised Regulations to be enforced from April 2021.

#### **Minute 6 New Code of Conduct for Elected and Co-Opted Members (page 150)**

The Chairman of the Governance Committee invited Members to consider the above report and the recommendations to Council.

#### **RESOLVED**

Council approved the adoption of the Local Government Association Model Code of Conduct as set out in the Appendix to the report with effect from the start of the 2021/22 Municipal Year, subject to paragraph 10.2 being amended to read "I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality within 28 days of its receipt".

#### **Minute 7 Independent Remuneration Panel Review of Special Responsibility Allowances for Minority Group Leaders (page 150)**

The Chairman of the Governance Committee invited Members to consider the above report and the recommendations to Council.

#### **RESOLVED**

Council approved that no change be made to the existing Scheme of Members' Allowances.

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### Minute 8 Update to Constitutional Standing Orders (page 150)

The Chairman of the Governance Committee invited Members to consider the above report and the recommendations to Council.

#### **RESOLVED**

Council approved that Standing Order 38 be amended to include the following:

- Appeals Panel (appointed by Governance Committee) – 3 Members
- Remuneration Committee – 7 Members of the Council and a co-opted non-voting independent member

## 12. REPORTS FROM CABINET

### Councillor Courts – Leader of the Council

The Leader advised Council of the decisions taken at the Cabinet meetings on 11 February, 11 March and 8 April 2021 and provided a summary of the meetings and activities he had been involved in on behalf of Solihull and the West Midlands.

Councillor Caudwell asked whether the new proposed multi-story car park on the UK Central site would continue to have bus stops 700 metres from the terminal. The Leader advised that they were still in the planning phase for the allocation and distribution of transport links at the site.

Councillor Adeyemo and Councillor McCarthy sought confirmation that the Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) would not be located at Damson Parkway. The Leader highlighted that the Local Plan required land use allocation which would not mean that the land would be developed for that purpose. There remained a lease on the current site of the HWRC and would not support its location to Damson Parkway.

### Councillor Sleigh – Cabinet Member for Resources

The Cabinet Member advised Council of the decisions taken at the decision session on 23 February 2021. They also congratulated Maria Demosthenous for their EPAT UK National Children's Champion Award for 2020.

### Councillor Rolf – Cabinet Member for Stronger and Safer Communities

The Cabinet Member advised Council of the decisions taken at the decision session on 23 February 2021.

Councillor Cole asked how long it would be until the smaller libraries in the Borough would reopen. The Cabinet Member stated that a written response with a breakdown of when all libraries were due to reopen would be circulated to Councillor Cole.

### Councillor Mackiewicz – Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning and Housing

The Cabinet Member advised Council of the decisions taken at the decision session on 1 March 2021.

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Councillor Kathryn Thomas asked whether it would be possible to get an additional report provided for future full Council meetings from the Climate Change Commission to oversee the output the Commission's meetings and activities. The Cabinet Member explained that the intention for the Committee would liaise with the Cabinet Member and Opposition Spokespersons, as well as present a report to full Council. It was not expected to present a report to every meeting.

Councillor Adeyemo queried about the Wildlife Ways work which had taken place on Hobbs Moat Road, which did not match the quality of other locations. The Cabinet Member refuted that it was not the same quality as other locations, and noted there were a number of factors which impacted the growth of agricultural work. A full response would be provided by Officers to Councillor Adeyemo.

### Councillor Meeson – Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills

The Cabinet Member advised Council of the decisions taken at the decision sessions on 22 February and 29 March 2021.

### Councillor Hawkins – Cabinet Member for Environment and Highways

The Cabinet Member advised Council of the decisions taken at the decision sessions on 16 February and 17 March 2021.

### Councillor K Grinsell – Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health

The Cabinet Member advised Council of the decisions taken at the decision sessions on 15 February and 30 March 2021.

### Councillor Richards – Cabinet Member for Growth and Infrastructure

The Cabinet Member advised Council of the decisions taken at the decision session on 4 March 2021.

### Councillor Tildesley – Cabinet Member for Leisure, Tourism and Sport

The Cabinet Member advised Council of the decisions taken at the decision session on 15 March 2021.

Councillor Adeyemo asked whether the tennis courts at Olton Jubilee Park and Elmdon Park could be considered for refurbishment by the Council if they are asked of locations where businesses could fulfil their social corporate responsibility. The Cabinet Member explained he would look into this if Councillor Adeyemo provided more information.

Councillor Caudwell sought clarity that the outdoor facilities at Council leisure facilities had reopened. The Cabinet Member responded that additional work would need to take place at North Solihull Leisure Centre, and would respond in writing about the facilities that had reopened at Tudor Grange Leisure Centre.

## 13. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY BOARDS

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The minutes of the following Scrutiny Board were presented for information:

- Health and Adult Social Care (17 February and 22 March 2021)
- Resources and Delivering Value (8 February and 8 March 2021)
- Children's Services, Education and Skills (10 March 2021)
- Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services (16 March 2021)

### **14. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

The minutes of the following Committees were presented for information:

- HS2 Implementation Advisory Group (1 March 2021)
- Audit Committee (10 February and 15 March 2021)
- Governance Committee (24 March 2021)

### **15. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

The following minutes of the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee were presented for information:

- 2 November 2020
- 23 November 2020
- 11 December 2020
- 11 January 2021

### **16. QUESTIONS BY LEADERS OF POLITICAL GROUPS UNDER SO5 (2) (T)**

No questions were received.

### **17. CHIEF EXECUTIVE URGENT MATTERS**

The Chief Executive highlighted that he would attend a service alongside the Mayor to celebrate the life of the Duke of Edinburgh on behalf of Solihull Council.

### **18. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS**

That, pursuant to Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting for the remainder of the business to be transacted, on the grounds that there would be disclosure to them of exempt information in terms of paragraph 3 of Part 9 of Schedule 12A to the said Act.

### **19. PRIVATE MINUTES**

The following private minutes were received for information:

- Audit Committee (10 February and 15 March 2021)
- Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board (8 March 2021)

The meeting finished at 7.40 pm