

## COUNCIL - 6 December 2022

### MINUTES

Present: The Mayor Cllr K Meeson and Councillors: A Adeyemo, M Allen, S Ashraf MBE, M Brain, A Burrow, J Butler, M Carthew, S Caudwell, Y Clements, I Courts, T Diccico, B Donnelly, A Feeney, S Gethen, D Gibbin, M Gough, K Grinsell, R Grinsell, B Groom, J Hamilton, K Hawkins, P Hogarth MBE, Mrs D Holl-Allen MBE, R Holt, D Howell, R Long, A Mackenzie, A Mackiewicz, K Macnaughton, M McCarthy, M McLoughlin, N Moses, J O'Nyons, M Parker, D Pinwell, W Qais, S Rymer, A Sandison, R Sexton, S Sheshabhattar, Mrs G Sleigh, R Sleigh OBE, K Thomas, J Tildesley and M Wilson

#### 1. APOLOGIES.

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hodgson, A Wilson and Ryan. Cllrs L McCarthy and Rebeiro with the Mayors permission joined the meeting remotely

#### 2. COUNCIL MINUTES

##### RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the two meetings held on 11 October 2022 be agreed subject to the following correction the removal of "of" after Queen and before Elizabeth on page 10, and correct spelling of Cllr Courts on the same page.

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

None received.

#### 4. PETITIONS

The following petition was submitted:

Cllr Thomas - Residents call upon the Council to co-ordinate measures with residents to tackle the infestation of rats in the back gardens of properties backing onto Richmond Road playing fields.

#### 5. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made a number of announcements which in summary included:

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**Christmas Donations** - As had become tradition at the December Council meeting the Mayor invited Members, as Corporate Parents, to make a Christmas donation to OVOS.

**Foster Carers** – The Mayor drew attention to the flyer on desks seeking Member support for the new online foster carer recruitment campaign.

**Pete Campbell**- The Mayor welcomed Pete Campbell as the new Director of Children Services' and Skills to his first Council meeting.

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

The Mayor advised that under Standing Order 9 one question had been received from Mr Richard Lloyd. Mr Lloyd presented his question:

*“Given the importance of the Balsall Common and Hampton-in-Arden HS2 Viaducts to residents, and the failure of HS2 Ltd to engage with the community, as mandated in the Parliamentary proceedings, beyond peripheral issues, it would be appreciated if the Council would set out its strategy for securing more attractive architectural design options, as offered for the Colne Valley in London, rather than the current cumbersome design.”*

Cllr Mackiewicz, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning and Housing responded to the question and undertook to provide Mr Lloyd with a written response.

The Mayor advised that under Standing Order 12 one deputation had been received from local residents Mr Freeman and Mr Maskell regarding speeding on Dovehouse Lane. Cllr Gibbin introduced them.

Cllr Hawkins, Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure responded to the deputation.

### 7. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 8 (30 MINUTES)

Cllr Rymer to Cllr K Grinsell Cabinet Member for Partnership's and Wellbeing

Is it acceptable to have Solihull Community Housing properties with doors that either don't lock, or won't open?

The Cabinet Member advised that Solihull Community Housing make every effort to ensure that doors in communal areas operate effectively at all times with opening and locking, always in good working order. It is not acceptable to have communal doors not working particularly as they are integral for building safety. Unfortunately, there are times when the doors break down. In such situations, there are occasions where the resolution to the break down requires a part to be supplied and this can sometimes cause a delay in the repair. We are aware of a particular low-rise block where this has happened recently, and action is being taken to sort the problem out.

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Cllr Rymer questioned whether it was acceptable to wait up to six months for a resolution. The Cabinet Member repeated that work was on going with the supplier to fix the problem. Cllr Rymer questioned what the plan was to deal with other blocks which faced the same problem. The Cabinet Member asked that Cllr Rymer provide the details he had so she could follow this up.

### Cllr Thomas to Cllr Gough Cabinet Member for Children and Education

Over the last year Solihull has welcomed a large number of families arriving from Hong Kong, with Solihull being the second most popular destination in the UK. The arrival of so many new families is putting pressure on our already full schools and students are being offered places at schools' miles away from their catchment areas. Although this has been acknowledged as a problem and a bus is being offered, it comes with a 1 hour plus journey time (including walking a substantial distance to the nearest stop), which is detrimental to the children's education and well-being, as well as depriving them of the opportunity to participate in after school activities. What steps are being taken to provide additional places within or close to their catchment areas for these pupils?

The Cabinet Member advised that he had a detailed answer which he would share with Cllr Thomas, but in brief. Demand for places was significant and unprecedented. However, it doesn't just fall at the feet of one particular group, it's a combination of many factors. We had over 3000 in year applications in 2021 therefore the majority of schools at the start of the academic year were already full before the year even started so it leaves very little room for expansion throughout the year. Families are offered a school place as close to their home as humanly possible but with the high demand it's becoming more challenging. To meet demand secondary schools were accommodating pupils over and above their existing numbers through the Fair Access Panel. For September 2022 bulge classes have been added to years 7, 8 and 9 and that's circa 125 places, there's an additional 600 planned secondary school places available through the permanent expansion of Tudor Grange, Arden and Alderbrook, to meet the demand and two additional year 7 classes which have been identified for September 2023. Officer are looking to increase years 8 and 9. With regard to primary school places there are some vacancies in certain areas. 100 additional primary places have been made available through bulge classes.

### Cllr Caudwell to Cllr Mackiewicz Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Planning and Housing

Has solar mapping been conducted at a local or regional level, and if it has, where can we see it?

The Cabinet advised that Solar maps are widely available from a range of websites and I am happy to send you a UK wide one. My reading of the map means that we will get 2.4kWh/kWpeak in Solihull. That is to say that one KW solar panel will produce 2.4kWh of energy in day. Establishing the potential for

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renewable energy, including solar energy, is a key priority of the Low Carbon Energy Framework Project and is aligned with our Net Zero Action Plan.

Work to date has looked at renewable potential across the Borough. We have carried out two of three phases of a renewable energy feasibility study:

The first phase was a technology review – looking at the different technologies and determining those with the most potential for the Borough.

The second phase was to identify potential locations/sites where the Council has some influence, and which demonstrate some potential for renewable energy.

The third phase will look at financial and delivery considerations. Once this has been completed, I will consider a report on the findings at a decision session next year.

During this work we will determine the granular detail required for the solar mapping. At that point we will make a cost benefit decision whether we add it to our GIS system.

Cllr Caudwell referenced that Town Centre master plans were being brought forward now, and there was a lot of roof space and open space that could be used for solar supply and questioned whether this would be taken on board. The Cabinet Member confirmed that, that would be the case.

### Cllr Long to Cllr Hawkins Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

We are concerned about the safety and cleanliness of the water in our local rivers and watercourses. What is being done to protect local residents in Solihull from our local water company, Severn Trent Water, discharging raw sewage into our local rivers and watercourses?

The Cabinet Member advised that the discharge of sewage into rivers and watercourses by water companies is a matter that is enforced by the Environment Agency. Should issues of this sort be reported to the Council they are immediately reported through to the E.A., and members of the public can also do that and details of how to do that are publicised.

Cllr Long referenced a number of discharges into Solihull water courses and although recognising it was not a Council matter, questioned whether the Cabinet Member could write to Severn Trent Water asking them to address the problem. The Cabinet Member questioned the data Cllr Long was referring to, as he was not aware of any discharges into water courses in the Borough.

### Cllr Ashraf MBE to Cllr Hawkins Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

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In Shirley South there are roads on the former TRW site with inadequate lighting, parking problems and grounds maintenance that isn't done. The developer has not passed these roads over to the Council and left them unadopted, so what powers does the Council have to address these issues, as this isn't an isolated case?"

The Cabinet Member acknowledged that it could take some time for roads in new developments to be adopted. The Council won't adopt roads until they are safe and up to standard, and it's important that developers, and it is their responsibility, understand that roads need to be safe which would include lighting.

Cllr Ashraf sought assurance that as more development takes places households will not face the same problems going forward. The Cabinet Member advised that the Council not take responsibility for roads which were not up to standard, and incur the costs of this work, which was the responsibility of the developers.

### Cllr Adeyemo to Cllr Courts Leader of the Council

Prior to every local election, Council Groups are asked to sign an 'Election Compact' in which they commit to positive and respectful campaigning. I understand that this was the case prior to the 2022 local elections. Are these Elections Compacts active or enforceable outside of statutory election periods?

The Leader confirmed that the Election Compact that was signed each year before the elections was a statement of our commitment to fairness and equality and promoting good relations throughout our election campaigns. It is a voluntary statement setting out the best practice standards and principles we expect of all those involved in campaigning. As Political Group Leaders, by signing the Compact we undertake to ensure that any alleged breach is properly investigated by our political parties. However, there are no formal powers of enforcement available.

Cllr Adeyemo questioned whether the Leader thought it was right for representatives of the Conservative party to report private and inaccurate details of his private life, when conducting surveys? The Leader advised that Cllr Adeyemo should take the matter up with the relevant political organisation, as bringing this matter up at Council was inappropriate.

Cllr Adeyemo questioned whether the Leader felt the behaviour was in accordance with the Member Code of Conduct. The Leader advised that the protocol says this should be taken through the political channels.

### Cllr Allen to Cllr Hawkins Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

Do we have a strategy for tackling graffiti, which differentiates it from the street-art put on cabinets in Shirley, and are there any sanctions that can be used where private properties or commercial premises fail to remove graffiti?

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The Cabinet Member acknowledged the sterling work done by Councillors and the community to have graffiti removed. Graffiti is covered by the Council's Environmental Crime Strategy and the Council is working with our private contractors as much as we can. However, it is important to recognise that the graffiti on private land has not always had the same response. In the new year partners will be invited to a summit where a resolution can be drawn up re graffiti on private land.

Cllr Allen advised that telecommunications boxes were a particular target and at a recent Planning Committee meeting, it was suggested that there should be a condition where boxes should be painted with anti-graffiti paint. Could this be taken forward? The Cabinet Member agreed this could be raised at the summit.

Cllr Allen questioned who was responsible for cleaning private fences, but in alley ways? The Cabinet Member advised this was another example of something which could be examined further so a uniformed response could be designed for private property.

### 8. COUNCIL TOPIC OF DEBATE

No topic of debate was received.

### 9. NOTICE OF MOTION

No motion was received.

### 10. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

Cllr B Grinsell the Vice-Chairman moved the recommendation from Governance Committee 24 November 2022 Minute 9 Appointment to an Outside Body – George Fentham Hampton in Arden Endowed Charity and the Educational Foundation of George Fentham.

#### **RESOLVED:**

That Full Council confirm the reappointment of Ms Josephine Oswald to the George Fentham Hampton-in-Arden Endowed Charity and the Educational Foundation of George Fentham for a four-year term 2022-2026.

### 11. REPORTS FROM CABINET

The Council received a summary of decisions, reports and dealt with any subsequent questions in relation to the following Cabinet Portfolios:

#### Leader of the Council and Lead Member for the Economy

The Leader presented his report, there were no questions.

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### Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Partnerships and Wellbeing

The Deputy Leader presented her report, there were questions relating to work the Council was doing on 'Well Paid Work', how other Wards could be considered for future schemes similar to the Shirley Utility Box scheme, what work the Council was doing to reduce residents reliance on having to access third party partners during the Cost of Living Crisis, communications the Council was providing to residents on what Mental Health and Debt Advice services would be available over the festive period and finally what data the Council had collected on the impact on the Household Support Fund and residents reliance on using foodbanks.

### Cabinet Member for Resources

The Cabinet Member presented his report, there no questions.

### Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities and Leisure

The Cabinet Member presented her report, there was a question concerning the water temperature at Tudor Grange pool being too cold and what data was being collected as part of the exercise referral schemes and Good Boost.

### Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Climate Change Planning and Housing

The Cabinet Member presented his report, there were questions relating to the potential date of submission to the Secretary of State and on the consultation on the Local Plan, whether the Council would be supporting the Planning Committee's decision to refuse the redevelopment of the former Morrisons site in Shirley and whether there was an overprovision of care home/retirement living properties in Shirley.

### Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Children and Education

The Cabinet Member presented his report. There was question relating to whether more detail could be given in the reports in the future due to the difficulties the service was facing.

### Cabinet Portfolio for Environment and Infrastructure

The Cabinet Member presented his report. Members welcomed the introduction of Average Speed Check Cameras in the borough.

### Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member presented his report. Members asked questions relating to the statistics on suicide in the Borough and what the Council were doing differently to tackle this issue and changes to Adult Social Care following the Autumn Statement.

**12. SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT**

The Chairman of the Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board introduced the report which was for information only. Councillors reiterated the role of Scrutiny Members, Chairman and the role it plays in holding the Executive to account, queried the minute style and commented generally on the content of the report.

**RESOLVED**

That the report be received for information.

**13. MINUTES OF SCRUTINY BOARDS**

The minutes of the Scrutiny Boards were presented for information. Questions related to the work of the Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board and whether the recent allegations in the media could be covered by the Board and whether any further work would be done following the motion on the Cost-of-Living Crisis being heard at Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board.

- a) Resources and Delivering Value Scrutiny Board 3 October and 7 November
- b) Children's Services, Education and Skills Scrutiny Board 1 November and 9 November
- c) Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board 22 September
- d) Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board 16 November
- e) Economic Development and Managed Growth Scrutiny Board 17 November

**RESOLVED**

The minutes of the Scrutiny Boards were received for information only.

**14. MINUTES OF COMMITTEES**

The minutes of the following Committees were presented for information.

- a) Audit Committee 14 November
- b) HS2 Implementation Advisory Group 21 November
- c) Governance Committee 24 November

**RESOLVED**

The minutes of the Council's Committees were received for information only.

**15. JOINT ARRANGEMENTS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS**

The minutes of the meeting were presented for information. There was a question on whether more detail could be provided in the minutes to reflect what happened in the meeting and how long it took for the minutes of the



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Committee to be presented to the Council. Cllr M McCarthy, as the Council's representative on the Committee advised he would pick this with West Midlands Combined Authority.

### **RESOLVED**

The minutes of the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee 5 September were received for information only.

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

Cllr Kathryn Thomas – Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats

What is the Council's position on raising awareness of Strep A given the deaths of Children in the Country?

The Cabinet Member for Health & Social Care informed Cllr Thomas there was a number of communications coming from the Council both directly to the public and schools around this issue.

### **17. CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT**

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the report seeking the appointment of four Councillors to the Corporate Parenting Board. There were five nominations received and Council agreed to appoint five members.

### **RESOLVED**

That Cllrs L McCarthy, B Groom, D Gibbin S Gethen and A Rebeiro be appointed to the Corporate Parenting Board.

### **18. CHIEF EXECUTIVE URGENT MATTERS**

The Deputy Chief Executive had no Urgent Matters to present.

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

Cllr Sheshabhattar to Cllr Howell Cabinet Member for Communities and Leisure

Residents and Councillors reporting issues to Solihull Connect are seeing service requests closed before any action is taken. The only exception to this is in relation to lighting. Can you explain why other service areas aren't following the same process so that logged issues are dealt with after one report.

The Cabinet Member advised that the request should only be closed when the service has been completed, and or the scheduled completion date has been noted. Unfortunately, this process is not always followed by all service areas consistently which can cause repeat contact and effort. The Connect Service is therefore currently working with service delivery teams, and ICT, to develop the customer management system to stop this issue occurring and ensure that all service requests move to progress update status with the details included before the request can be closed

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### Cllr Sheshabhattar to Cllr Hawkins Cabinet Member for Environment & Infrastructure

The street-care schedule for leaf sweeping doesn't appear to be followed, and new streets that are added aren't getting swept, as the build-up of leaves in areas shows. What is happening to address this issue?

The Cabinet Member advised that he was not aware of any issues with the leafing schedule and all new street requests for leafing raised by Members have been added to the schedule. However, I would be happy to raise any specific areas of concern with Officers if Cllr Sheshabhattar could email me the relevant details.

### Cllr Rymer to Cllr Hawkins Cabinet Member for Environment and Infrastructure

Bollards and double yellow lines need reinstating for safety outside Bishop Wilson School, so can the Cabinet Member confirm when this will happen?

The Cabinet Member advised that the bollards had been reinstated, the yellow lines were weather dependent and is programmed shortly.

Cllr Rymer advised that the bollards had not been done. Cllr Hawkins advised he would look further into this matter, as Officers had assured him the bollards had been reinstated.

## 20. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

### **RESOLVED**

That, pursuant of 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.

## 21. PRIVATE MINUTES

### **RESOLVED**

The private minutes of the Audit Committee and Stronger Communities and Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Board were presented for information only.

7.37 pm