

TRAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

25 JANUARY 2017

PRESENT

The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Mrs. Judith Ann Lloyd), in the Chair.

J. Coupe (Deputy Mayor)	M. Cornes	D. O'Sullivan
D. Acton	Mrs. P. Dixon	J.R. Reilly
S.B. Anstee	A. Duffield	Mrs J. Reilly
S.K. Anstee	Mrs. L. Evans	T. Ross
Dr. K. Barclay	N. Evans	B. Sharp
J. Baugh	T. Fishwick	B. Shaw
Miss L. Blackburn	M. Freeman	J. Smith
R. Bowker	P. Gratrix	E.W. Stennett
C. Boyes	Mrs. D.L. Haddad	S. Taylor
Mrs. A. Bruer-Morris	J. Harding	L. Walsh
Mrs. J.E. Brophy	D. Hopps	Mrs. V. Ward
B. Brotherton	M. Hyman	A. Western
D. Bunting	C. Hynes	D. Western
D. Butt	D. Jarman	M. Whetton
K. Carter	P. Lally	A. Williams
M. Cawdrey	J. Lamb	J.A. Wright
R. Chilton	A. Mitchell	M. Young
M. Cordingley	P. Myers	Mrs. P. Young

In attendance

Chief Executive	Ms. T. Grant
Deputy Chief Executive and Corporate Director Economic Growth, Environment and Infrastructure	Mrs. H. Jones
Corporate Director Transformation and Resources	Ms. J. Hyde
Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Ms. J. Le Fevre
Chief Finance Officer	Ms. N. Bishop
Head of Governance	Mr. P. Forrester
Public Relations Manager	Mrs. K. Dooley
Democratic Services Apprentice	Mr. R. Rea
Senior Democratic and Scrutiny Officer	Mr. I. Cockill

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. Adshead, J. Bennett, L. Dagnall, J. Holden, E. Malik, K. Procter, B. Rigby and M. Sephton.

50. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 30 November 2016 and the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 21 December 2016, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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51. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Former Councillor Ian Mullins

With sadness, the Mayor referred to the unexpected death of former Councillor Ian Mullins who died suddenly from what would appear to have been a massive heart attack on 7 January. Former Councillor Mullins represented the Hale and Hale Barns Wards as a Conservative Member from 2002 to 2008 and on behalf of the Council, the Mayor was to write to his family to convey condolences.

The Council stood for a moment's silence, as a mark of respect to its former friend and colleague.

(b) Her Majesty The Queen's New Year's Honours

The Mayor took the opportunity to recognise the local residents recently named in Her Majesty the Queen's New Year Honours List, namely:

Mr Ian Hamilton Munro of Altrincham awarded the citation of Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to Housing;

Mr Jon-Allan Butterworth of Sale and Ms Lora Marie Fachie of Timperley both awarded the citation of Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to cycling; and

Council Employee Mark Riddell, Service Manager for Permanence and Care Leavers, also awarded an MBE for services to children.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor had written to convey the Council's congratulations for their achievements and along with other recent recipients they would be invited to a reception at the Town Hall.

(c) Scrutiny Committee Update

Councillor M. Young, Chairman of Scrutiny reported that the Budget Scrutiny procedure had now been completed and the report passed to the Executive with the response now awaited.

(d) Health Scrutiny Committee Update

Councillor Harding, Chairman of Health Scrutiny Committee outlined developments in the Committee's work area since the last update to Council.

The Committee was continuing to monitor the Single Hospital Service and the project team were submitting the plans to NHS England to ensure that the plan was robust and in the best interests of the public. This was due to be completed by the summer with implementation of the plan scheduled to begin September 2017.

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Health Scrutiny had expressed some concerns about the recent Care Quality Commission Inspection of North West Ambulance Service (NWAS) and had previously expressed concern that Trafford had the slowest response times in Greater Manchester. Councillor Harding had requested a meeting with representatives of NWAS and the Committee Vice-Chairman as soon as possible.

Health Scrutiny Members had continued their work on the task and finish groups on End of Life and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing and the Committee continues to monitor the Integration Agenda and Devolution.

52. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Mayor reported that 3 questions had been received under Procedure Rule 10.2.

(a) Councillor Wright asked the following question for which he had given notice:

Could the Executive Member for Finance please confirm this Council's strategy to help and assist the 140 residents in this borough that have been affected by the government's reduction in the benefit cap? If the member could focus on their Discretionary Housing Payment policy for benefit cap claimants and the routes to employment that would be much appreciated. Could the member also confirm how many residents have actually met and been seen by the Council's chosen partner Shelter since the introduction of the benefit cap and can you also confirm if any financial contribution (and how much) has been made by this council to Shelter for this service.

(Note: Councillor Myers declared a personal interest being one of the Council's appointed representatives on the Trafford Housing Trust Board and remained in the meeting.)

Councillor Myers, Executive Member for Finance reported that Shelter had been engaged by the Council from November 2016 to provide support to those affected by the Benefit Cap. Shelter worked closely with the Stronger Families Team to ensure that customers received consistent advice and Shelter also worked with Trafford Housing Trust who had the most tenants affected. Key parts of the service delivery model included support to move closer to the labour market and gain employment and assistance to access in work benefits.

The ten largest Registered Social Landlords in Trafford, Adactus; Arcon; Contour; Equity; Great Places; Irwell Valley; Mosscares; Guinness-Northern Counties; Your Housing Group and Trafford Housing Trust, were notified of the tenants affected by the Cap so that they could provide support.

All affected applicants were to be seen by Shelter to ensure that the additional Discretionary Housing Payment funding was used efficiently and to ensure that the necessary support and guidance could be provided to help claimants work towards a longer term solution for the shortfall in housing costs.

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By 24 January 2017 Shelter had arranged 52 appointments but only 31 customers attended. Overall, 44 awards of Discretionary Housing Payment had been made. There were 28 Discretionary Housing Payment applications pending of which 17 appointments had been arranged with Shelter.

Shelter also provided a drop in session at the Partington Sure Start Centre to which all 27 customers affected in the Partington area were invited to attend but unfortunately nobody turned up.

Shelter had organised weekly sessions at Sale until the end of February 2017 with additional sessions at Stretford Children's Centre and Urmston Library.

Shelter had written, telephoned and sent text messages to everybody affected by the Benefit Cap and some had been contacted on more than one occasion. The good news was that the numbers of claimants attending at Shelter to take up the service was increasing. Claimants that had made Discretionary Housing Payments applications independently of Shelter were being informed that they needed to seek advice from Shelter before the claims were processed. The general feedback from Shelter was that Customers were finding the appointments very useful.

The Council had been awarded funding of £33,456 by the Department of Work and Pensions to support customers affected by the Benefit Cap and Shelter received a fee of approximately £150 per case for the support it provided.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Wright asked whether or not Discretionary Housing Payments were prioritised for those affected by the Benefit Cap, as on average in Trafford, residents were losing £64 per week out of Housing Benefit which could see rent arrears rise rapidly to high levels increasing the risk of homelessness, evictions and other associated problems.

Councillor Myers confirmed that payments were made at the discretion of the Council and to the most appropriate, acknowledging that people in severe rent arrears needed to be seen and prioritised and he believed that this was done. In context, the Benefit Cap in Trafford came in at £20,000 per couple and at £13,400 for a single person without children and the Executive Member considered this to be at a significantly high level.

(b) Councillor Mrs. Brophy asked the following question for which she had given notice:

Has the Council considered withdrawing from the Greater Manchester Special Framework in order to develop and promote local community developed plans instead of the top down plan which does not safeguard our green spaces, nor provide adequate affordable homes for Trafford?

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Sean Anstee indicated that he did not agree with the premise of the second part of the question and, therefore the short answer was no, the Council had not considered withdrawing from the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework (GMSF).

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As a supplementary question, Councillor Brophy, asked under what circumstances the Leader would think the Council should withdraw from the GMSF.

Councillor Sean Anstee referred to the debate on the Spatial Framework at the previous meeting on 21 December when there was a clear view that in order for Greater Manchester and Trafford to plan for growth and ensure that the consequences of not having a plan in place were avoided, the Council needed the ability to contribute through the GMSF consultation process. Citing the serious consequences of withdrawal, specifically, homes of multiple occupation; an extra strain on public services; an all-day 'rush hour'; an inability to control where development took place; a housing free for all; the inability to offer greater protection to green spaces than currently provided; an inability to respond to homelessness or the borough's young people and to provide the homes they deserved; the Leader commented that the position being put forward by Councillor Mrs. Brophy was not one his Group supported.

- (c) Councillor Cordingley asked the following question for which he had given notice:

We have heard a lot about using greenbelt, but what are measures are the council taking to identify and utilise brownfield sites for meeting the borough's housing development needs?

Councillor Sean Anstee, the Leader of the Council considered that the Council had a good track record of preparing for the delivery of sites from within the existing urban area with examples including Trafford Waters, Carrington, Alt-Air and Pomona. The Council was supportive of initiatives to bring forward brownfield sites for development to assist with urban renewal and regeneration of those areas.

The new Mayor of Greater Manchester would receive new enhanced compulsory purchase order powers to be exercised only with the consent of the host local authority which would assist with land assembly and scheme viability. In addition, the Greater Manchester Land Commission and Mayoral Development Corporations would help to bring forward brownfield sites across the borough and the city region. In addition, the Government had announced in the Autumn Statement a new £2.3 billion Infrastructure Fund to help unlock unviable brownfield sites and bring them forward for development. The fund would complement the Greater Manchester Housing Investment Fund which had already helped to release over 1500 previously stalled developments to get building started again.

The Leader of the Council believed there was a range of tools available to help bring forward brownfield sites through both the new powers the Combined Authority receives and the continued work on the Spatial Framework. The Spatial Framework would help to ensure that the Council met its obligations to have a supply of land to meet housing need over a 5 year period, would help to control where developers built and would offer greater protection over green belt and open spaces from speculative planning applications by landowners than was afforded at present.

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In view of the controversy surrounding Flixton fields and equally other areas throughout Greater Manchester, Councillor Cordingley asked as a supplementary question, how the Council could reassure the public that it was doing everything it could, and acknowledging that the Leader of the Council had just provided details of what the Council was doing, how could the public find the information to feel confident that it was always going to be brownfield first.

Councillor Sean Anstee recognised that over the coming months, as the Greater Manchester Spatial Strategy moved into its next reiteration, the Council needed to have an open conversation with its residents and the public across Greater Manchester and that the debate needed to be framed around the factual positions of what the Council was seeking to achieve. Referring to the answer given to Cllr Mrs. Brophy on the consequences of not having a Plan (Minute 52 (b) above) it was important to make it public and Members of the Council had a responsibility to inform.

The Leader considered the Spatial Framework critical for the future prosperity of Greater Manchester and for the ability to grow sustainably and avoid the consequences of not having a plan. It had generated significant interest and it was right to continue the discussions over the next few months. Naturally, people would want to identify sites in need of regeneration within the existing area first, however, Councillor Sean Anstee also appealed for Members to consider whether new powers might be called for in the Housing and Planning White Paper, when published, to enable the Council to be able to control the release of land and other activity.

53. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report advising Council of membership changes on Committees and Sub-Committees. The report also formally recorded that there had been a change to the political composition of the Council.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the following appointments to the membership of Committees and Sub-Committees be noted:

Scrutiny Committee – Councillor Nathan Evans
Public Protection Sub-Committee – Councillor Mrs. Haddad
Safety at Sports Grounds Sub-Committee – Councillor Cawdrey (as Vice-Chairman)
Licensing Committee – *one vacancy*

- (2) That the current composition of the political groups on the Council, as set out in the report be noted; and
- (3) That the Council notes that there will be no consequential change to the allocation of Committee places.

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54. EXTENSION OF SIX MONTH ATTENDANCE RULE

The Director of Legal and Democratic Services submitted a report requesting the Council to consider a waiver of the six-month rule under the Local Government Act 1972 and to excuse the non-attendance of Councillor Louise Dagnall at Council meetings for a further 6 months having regard to the circumstances of her absence from meetings.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That, having regard to the circumstances of the absence of Councillor Louise Dagnall from Council meetings, the requirements of Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, be waived and that an extension of 6 months from the date of the meeting be approved.
- (2) That the Council expresses its best wishes to Councillor Dagnall and wishes her a speedy recovery.

55. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2017/18 - PROPOSED CHANGES TO ALIGN WITH NATIONAL BENEFITS

A report submitted by the Executive Member for Finance and the Chief Finance Officer was considered summarising the Council Tax Support Scheme and the proposed changes which would align the assessment criteria of the scheme to those of the national benefits and then maintain this alignment for any further national welfare reform changes in the future.

The report which also summarised the feedback from the consultation which had been undertaken on the proposals had been recommended to Council by the Executive on 19 December 2016.

It was moved and seconded that the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme be approved.

Following a debate on the matter, the Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED: That the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme, as outlined in the report, be approved to align the Council Tax Support scheme assessment criteria with those of the national benefits.

56. 6-MONTH CORPORATE REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY - 1 APRIL TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2016

The Executive Member for Transformation and Resources submitted a report providing information on Council wide health and safety performance and trends in the workplace accidents. The report also provided a summary of other key developments in health and safety for the period 1 April to 30 September 2016.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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57. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - EDUCATION FUNDING

(Note: With the consent of the meeting, the mover altered the Motion for which notice had been given by amending the figure in the first paragraph to £0.8 million.)

It was moved and seconded that:

“The Government's long awaited announcement of its national funding formula is worse for Trafford than predicted, given that we we're already one of the lowest funded authorities in the country. We are now predicted to lose a further £0.8 million from schools funding.

Council is referred to the motion submitted by the Conservative Group in September last year in which it was agreed to write to the Government calling upon them to bring forward more quickly the commitment as stated in the Conservative Party manifesto to ensure fairer funding for schools. Sadly this appears to have been ignored, and what we have now is definitely not fairer funding for schools.

Council calls upon the Government to urgently correct this injustice. Of particular concern is the reduction in school budgets for primary schools in deprived areas and the reduction in budgets for all of our secondary schools - all at a time when schools are being asked to take on extra costs. Indeed, the recent announcement of the new school funding arrangements has even driven Conservative MPs to call the cuts unfair and shocking.

Council further recognises that no funding system for schools is fair unless funding levels are sufficient. The National Audit Office has already forecast an 8.5% cut across the board which will have terrible consequences for the quality of education being offered to our children.

Council therefore calls upon the Secretary of State for Education to insist that our schools are funded to a level where they can operate efficiently: Trafford parents, children and young people deserve no less.”

Following a debate on the matter, the Motion was agreed with the unanimous consent of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Government's long awaited announcement of its national funding formula is worse for Trafford than predicted, given that we we're already one of the lowest funded authorities in the country. We are now predicted to lose a further £0.8 million from schools funding.

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58. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - GREATER MANCHESTER HEALTH DEVOLUTION

It was moved and seconded that:

“This Council recognises the opportunities offered by devolution to Greater Manchester in terms of transport, housing, skills and health as well as in several other areas. However, Council also recognises that for DevoManc to be a success the project must be properly funded.

Council is therefore concerned by the continued underfunding of Greater Manchester's health and social care services. The British Medical Journal has stated that by 2021 the conurbation will have a health funding gap of some £2 billion, yet Greater Manchester has some of the worst health outcomes and most significant health inequalities in the country. Funding secured from NHS England's Transformation Fund is welcome but not been substantial enough to alleviate concerns.

In light of these issues, this Council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government highlighting that current health and social care funding in Greater Manchester is unsustainable and calling for a funding settlement for Greater Manchester's health and social care needs that addresses the £2 billion shortfall identified by health professionals.”

It was moved and seconded as an amendment that:

“This Council recognises the opportunities offered by devolution to Greater Manchester in terms of transport, housing, skills and health as well as in several other areas.

Council also recognises that for devolution to deliver, it must be accompanied by appropriate funding and freedom to take decisions locally

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that have a real impact on the wellbeing of our population and the efficiency of health and social care services.

The British Medical Journal has stated that by 2021 the conurbation will have a health funding gap of some £2 billion. Council welcomes the £0.5 billion of additional transformation funding allocated by the former Chancellor of the Exchequer to help Greater Manchester plan for its future, but recognises there remain ongoing pressures on revenue budgets.

This Council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government highlighting the current pressures facing health and social care funding in Greater Manchester and calling for a funding settlement and greater freedoms that will contribute towards meeting the £2 billion shortfall, working collaboratively towards a sustainable solution for our population.”

Following a debate on the matter and subject to clarification that “greater freedoms” referred to those expectations set out in the Memorandum of Understanding, the amendment was agreed with the general consent of the Council. The substantive Motion was consequently declared carried.

RESOLVED: That this Council recognises the opportunities offered by devolution to Greater Manchester in terms of transport, housing, skills and health as well as in several other areas.

Council also recognises that for devolution to deliver, it must be accompanied by appropriate funding and freedom to take decisions locally that have a real impact on the wellbeing of our population and the efficiency of health and social care services.

The British Medical Journal has stated that by 2021 the conurbation will have a health funding gap of some £2 billion. Council welcomes the £0.5 billion of additional transformation funding allocated by the former Chancellor of the Exchequer to help Greater Manchester plan for its future, but recognises there remain ongoing pressures on revenue budgets.

This Council calls upon the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Health and the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government highlighting the current pressures facing health and social care funding in Greater Manchester and calling for a funding settlement and greater freedoms, as outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding, that will contribute towards meeting the £2 billion shortfall, working collaboratively towards a sustainable solution for our population.

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59. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - WOMEN AGAINST STATE PENSION INEQUALITY (WASPI) CAMPAIGN

(Note: Councillor Mrs. Western, the Mover of the Motion, declared a personal interest in the matter since she was directly affected by the pension changes and remained in the meeting.)

Councillor A. Western also declared a personal interest as a result of his mother's interest.)

It was moved and seconded that:

“The Council calls upon the Government to reconsider transitional arrangements for women born on or after 6 April 1951, so that women do not live in hardship due to pension changes they were not told about until it was too late to make alternative arrangements.

The Council calls upon the Government to make fair transitional state pension arrangements for all women born on or after 6 April 1951, who have unfairly borne the burden of the increase to the State Pension Age (SPA) with lack of appropriate notification. Hundreds of thousands of women had significant pension changes imposed on them by the Pensions Acts of 1995 and 2011 with little/no/personal notification of the changes. Some women had only two years notice of a six-year increase to their state pension age.

Many women born in the 1950's are living in hardship. Retirement plans have been shattered with devastating consequences. Many of these women are already out of the labour market, caring for elderly relatives, providing childcare for grandchildren, or suffer discrimination in the workplace so struggle to find employment. Women born in this decade are suffering financially. These women have worked hard, raised families and paid their tax and national insurance with the expectation that they would be financially secure when reaching 60. It is not the pension age itself that is in dispute - it is widely accepted that women and men should retire at the same time. The issue is that the rise in the women's state pension age has been too rapid and has happened without sufficient notice being given to the women affected, leaving women with no time to make alternative arrangements.”

Following a debate on the matter, the Motion was put to the vote and declared lost.

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60. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM ALCOHOL ADVERTISING

It was moved and seconded that:

“This Council notes:

- That alcohol can be enjoyed in a responsible way by adults;
- That alcohol can cause serious and fatal diseases, including several types of cancers; that the UK Chief Medical Officers' Alcohol Guidelines advise both men and women that it is safest not to drink regularly more than fourteen units per week, to keep health risks from drinking alcohol to a low level;
- That there are over 5000 alcohol-related hospital admissions every year in Trafford;
- That alcohol can only legally be purchased by adults over the age of 18;
- That the advertising of alcohol is designed to make products more appealing and in turn can appeal to children and young people;
- That the Science Committee of the European Alcohol and Health Forum concluded in 2009 that 'alcohol marketing increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to use alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol';
- That underage drinkers are more likely to be a victim of crime and those who get drunk at least once a month are twice as likely to commit a criminal offence as those who don't;
- That the recent Healthier Futures/Alcohol Health Alliance public opinion survey found 73% support in Greater Manchester for a 9 p.m. watershed for alcohol adverts on TV;
- That the recent public engagement campaign 'See What Sam Sees' by Healthier Futures, talked with over two hundred people across Greater Manchester and received overwhelming support for a 9 p.m. watershed from the Greater Manchester public

This Council believes:

- That it is the responsibility of all levels of government to try to ensure good public health in the population.

This Council resolves:

- To request the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, expressing these views and asking her to bring forward legislation to introduce a 9 p.m. watershed for the advertising of alcohol products on TV to protect children and young people from the influence of alcohol advertising;
- To continue to promote good health in our borough, to support the UK Chief Medical Officers' Alcohol Guidelines, and to protect children and adults from alcohol-related harm.”

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Following speeches in support, the Motion was agreed with the unanimous consent of the Council.

RESOLVED: That this Council notes:

- That alcohol can be enjoyed in a responsible way by adults;
- That alcohol can cause serious and fatal diseases, including several types of cancers; that the UK Chief Medical Officers' Alcohol Guidelines advise both men and women that it is safest not to drink regularly more than fourteen units per week, to keep health risks from drinking alcohol to a low level;
- That there are over 5000 alcohol-related hospital admissions every year in Trafford;
- That alcohol can only legally be purchased by adults over the age of 18;
- That the advertising of alcohol is designed to make products more appealing and in turn can appeal to children and young people;
- That the Science Committee of the European Alcohol and Health Forum concluded in 2009 that 'alcohol marketing increases the likelihood that adolescents will start to use alcohol, and to drink more if they are already using alcohol';
- That underage drinkers are more likely to be a victim of crime and those who get drunk at least once a month are twice as likely to commit a criminal offence as those who don't;
- That the recent Healthier Futures/Alcohol Health Alliance public opinion survey found 73% support in Greater Manchester for a 9 p.m. watershed for alcohol adverts on TV;
- That the recent public engagement campaign 'See What Sam Sees' by Healthier Futures, talked with over two hundred people across Greater Manchester and received overwhelming support for a 9 p.m. watershed from the Greater Manchester public

This Council believes:

- That it is the responsibility of all levels of government to try to ensure good public health in the population.

This Council resolves:

- To request the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, expressing these views and asking her to bring forward legislation to introduce a 9 p.m. watershed for the advertising of alcohol products on TV to protect children and young people from the influence of alcohol advertising;
- To continue to promote good health in our borough, to support the UK Chief Medical Officers' Alcohol Guidelines, and to protect children and adults from alcohol-related harm.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m. and finished at 8.54 p.m.