

TRAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

31 JANUARY 2024

PRESENT

The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Dolores O'Sullivan), in the Chair.

A.M. Whyte	N. Evans	E.R. Parker
D. Acton	W. Frass	E. Patel
S. Adshead	S.J. Gilbert	R. Paul
J.M. Axford	J. Harding	T. Ross
Babar	B. Hartley	J. Slater
O.J. Baskerville	W. Hassan	H. K. Spencer
J. Bennett	E.L. Hirst	O. Sutton
J. Brophy	J. Holden	M.J. Taylor
B. Brotherton	F. Hornby	S. Taylor
D. Butt	C. Hynes	S. Thomas
G. Carter	D. Jarman	R. Thompson
K.G. Carter	D. Jerrome	L. Walsh
K. Chakraborty	W. Jones	M.J. Welton
G. Coggins	J. Leicester	D. Western
M. Cordingley	S.E. Lepori	M.P. Whetton
F. Cosby	J. Lloyd	A.J. Williams
Z.C. Deakin	S. Maitland	B.G. Winstanley
R. Duncan	M. Minnis	J.A. Wright
P. Eckersley	J.D. Newgrosh	S. Zhi
S. G. Ennis	T. O'Brien	

In attendance

Chief Executive	S. Todd
Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer	D. Sykes
Head of Legal and Governance	E. Malpas
Senior Governance Officer	I. Cockill

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S. J. Haughey, K. Procter and S. Procter.

47. MINUTES

The Mayor asked if the minutes could be agreed as an accurate record. Councillor Michael Taylor raised that his question regarding heating issues at Well Green Primary had not received a response. The Monitoring Officer responded that a response would be provided following the meeting.

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RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 22 November 2023, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

48. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Sir Tony Lloyd, MP, and Former Member of Parliament for Stretford

It was with regret that the Mayor referred to the recent passing of Sir Tony Lloyd, serving MP and husband to Councillor Judith Lloyd. Sir Tony had represented the Stretford Parliamentary Constituency between June 1983 and May 1997 having been elected three times. Prior to this, Sir Tony had served as a local Councillor on Trafford Council.

As a mark of respect to its former colleague, the Council stood for a moments silence in reflection of his memory.

(b) His Majesty the King's New Year's Honours

The Mayor took the opportunity to recognise those citizens and persons connected with Trafford who were named in His Majesty the King's New Years' Honours List, namely:

Mr. Michael George Eakin from Altrincham, awarded the Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to Music and to the community in Liverpool, Merseyside;

Miss Katie Gallagher from Urmston, awarded the OBE for services to Digital Technology Industry in the North-West;

Mr. Peter George Buchan from Sale, awarded the Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to the Nuclear Industry and to Young People;

Ms Amanda Chadwick from Partington, awarded the MBE for services to Children in Hospital;

Mr John Hubert Cox from Hale, awarded the MBE for services to Homeless People in Manchester;

Mr Nicholas Edward Johnson from Bowdon, awarded the MBE for services to the Business and Food Sectors;

Ms Jenny Tompson from Bowdon, awarded the MBE for services to the Business and Food Sectors;

Mr. Edward Everett from Sale, awarded the British Empire Medal for services to the Environment in Sale;

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Mr. Daniel Herman from Bowdon, awarded the British Empire Medal for services to Education and to Holocaust Awareness; and

Mr. William Ellis Nixon from Sale, awarded the British Empire Medal for services to Young People in the West Midlands.

The Council joined with the Mayor in conveying the Council's congratulations for their achievements and richly deserved recognition.

(c) The Leader of the Council's Announcements

Councillor Ross firstly paid tribute to Sir Tony Lloyd and recognised his service and impact on the Borough of Trafford.

Councillor Ross provided further a summary of the following Council activities since the previous meeting.

- Trafford had won the Keep it Local award at the Annual Locality Awards in Bristol, recognising the impact of Trafford's Community Hubs since 2020.
- In December, Councillor Ross had written to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities urging him to bring forward a fairer funding review.
- Councillor Ross had also written to the Chancellor of the Exchequer with a plea to keep the household support fund in place beyond the 31st March 2024, with the Council continuing to lobby the Government on this.
- In December, the first cyclops junction opened in the Borough to ensure better safety for pedestrian and cyclists.
- The Council had hosted the Greater Manchester Active Travel Commissioner, Dame Sarah Storey to show her the Council's progress with road and junction improvements across the Borough.
- The Leader and Deputy Leader had visited Altrincham Leisure Centre to see the progress being made in the multi-million-pound investment of the centre.
- The Leader had joined colleagues in Stretford to see the regeneration ongoing in the area.
- Community Safety Officers had secured, alongside the Legal team, several closure orders in properties across the Borough, helping to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.
- In November, the Waterside Arts hosted its first Prism Festival which had been a success.

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- The Annual Time to Shine Awards had also taken place recognising the work of Council staff and teams.
- Councillor Ross mentioned the current situation in Gaza and Israel and the effect it was having in Trafford. The Leader recognised the deep impact upon communities in Trafford and the Council's role in ensuring that communities were kept safe and felt safe. The Leader and Chief Executive had met with faith leaders over recent months to discuss how the Council could provide support.

(d) Scrutiny

Councillor Acton, Chair of Scrutiny Committee advised the Council that he had recently attended the Executive Committee and presented the Scrutiny response to the Council budget report, as well as a Task and Finish group report on Events at Old Trafford. The Council were informed that the Executive considered both reports and noted the recommendations of both. Scrutiny Committee members and Council officers were thanked for their contributions to both reports.

(e) Health Scrutiny

Councillor Butt, Chair of Health Scrutiny informed the Council of the items that were considered at the most recent Health Scrutiny Committee. This included an update on the Blue Badge service, and a CQC update for Adult Social Care.

49. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

That Mayor reported that ten questions had been received under Procedure Rule 10.2.

On the basis that the Mayor had asked for the responses to be circulated to all Councillors and published on the website, the Council consented to taking both the question and response as read and move on to the supplementary question in each case. Where a response was yet to be provided the relevant Executive Member would provide a response in the meeting. (Note: The questions and responses are available to view on the Council's website.)

- (a) Question 1 from Councillor Chakraborty regarding: a pelican crossing at the junction of Sinderland Road and A56.

Councillor Chakraborty asked as a supplementary question whether the Council could be certain that the crossing would be completed by the Summer when the schools finish. Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded Services did not have a timeline available but asked Councillor Chakraborty to liaise with the Executive Member and the Highways Manager following the meeting where a timeline will be provided.

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(b) Question 2 from Councillor Evans regarding: child protection.

Councillor Evans had not received a response to his question. Councillor K. Carter, Executive Member for Children and Young People responded in the meeting. The Executive Member informed Councillor Evans that Trafford Council had worked hard over the past four years to ensure that children at risk of sexual exploitation were safeguarded against effectively. This had included the establishment of the Vulnerable Adolescents Service. In response to Councillor Evans' question, the Executive Member responded that Greater Manchester Police (GMP) had two ongoing investigations. One was a non-recent investigation with three victims and one suspect with the file currently with the CPS awaiting a decision. The second was a non-recent investigation with three victims and two suspects which had been reopened, was ongoing and the file was to be submitted following an upcoming final investigation. The Executive Member referred to a final case which had recently been closed, and informed Councillor Evans that there was no current case investigation going on with any children in Trafford.

Councillor Evans asked as a supplementary question whether the Council had completed a thorough historical investigation into cases across both Trafford and Greater Manchester. The Executive Member responded that across Greater Manchester administrations, they were on their fourth inquiry. The first two had looked at historical sexual abuse, the third had looked specifically around what had happened in Rochdale, and the current one was looking at ensuring that all services were working together to prevent these issues happening again in the future.

(c) Question 3 from Councillor Duncan regarding: drug abuse in schools.

Councillor Duncan asked a supplementary question which can be viewed, along with the response, on the Council's website.

(d) Question 4 from Councillor Paul regarding: the Council's buy nothing new campaign.

Councillor Paul asked as a supplementary question whether Trafford Council would support a buy everything local campaign to support local shops and businesses. Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Highways, Environment and Traded Services responded that the Council could support initiatives like this but added that the purpose of the buy nothing new campaign was to encourage residents to visit local charity shops or reuse shops, keeping the money in the local economy, whilst also cutting down on waste.

(e) Question 5 from Councillor Coggins regarding: the Council's Commemorative policy.

Councillor Coggins had not received a response to their question. Councillor Hynes, Executive Member for Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage responded in the meeting. The Executive Member provided a lengthy response which included the following themes;

- Background and information to provide assurances as to the appropriateness of the policy creation;

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- The subsequent implementation of the policy; and
- The unusual circumstances in respect of the petition mentioned within the question.

Councillor Coggins asked as a supplementary question whether the hasty nature of this decision and some residents accusing the Council of double standards, if a delay to implementation of the policy would have been a more fair and consistent response to the humanitarian disaster in Gaza. Councillor Hynes responded that the response was not hasty. Reflections had been ongoing since November as the policy at the time did not cover certain eventualities. Following this, a review took place to formulate the new policy, with Councillor Ross speaking with the petitioner in December to ensure that residents were aware that the policy was under review to avoid residents perceiving that there was an imbalance or inconsistency within the Council. The Executive Member finished by saying that the Council was continuing to maintain community cohesion in this area.

(f) Question 6 from Councillor Evans regarding: schools' provision.

Councillor Evans had not had a response to his question. The Executive Member for Children and Young People provided a response in the meeting. Councillor K. Carter, Executive Member for Children and Young People expressed her issues with the question and provided statistics around the "reality of people living under the Conservative government." In response to Councillor Evans' question, the Executive Member responded that she had not met with any independent schools in Trafford to discuss a proposed Labour Party policy as she supported this policy and added that if any residents who had an issue with increased costs of independent schools, then they would be warmly welcomed into the state sector. Councillor Evans asked as a supplementary question why this was not being seen as a threat, as there were families who would struggle to send their children to independent schools and state school provision would be unable to absorb these children. The Executive Member for Children and Young People responded that these issues were considered and were ahead of the closing of Loretto Preparatory School. There were places available in Trafford state schools and the Executive Member said that if any future government or policy is introduced and any independent schools would like to discuss it, the Local Authority would be willing to do so.

(g) Question 7 from Councillor Spencer regarding: endangered macaque monkeys.

Councillor Rose Thompson, Executive Member for Communities and Safety responded to the question in the meeting, and the response can be viewed on the Council website.

Councillor Spencer asked a supplementary question, with the question and response available on the Council's website.

(h) Question 8 from Councillor Zhi regarding: one-way system on Gorsey Lane

Councillor Zhi asked as a supplementary question if the Council could provide a detailed explanation of the criteria that must be met to reverse the one-way

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system on Gorse Lane. Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Highways, Environment and Traded Services responded that residents had six months to raise concerns with the Council. If any of these were substantiated the Council had a further 12-months to implement any changes.

(i) Question 9 from Councillor Lepori regarding: BRSK Infrastructure rollout.

Councillor Lepori asked as a supplementary question if the Council could commit to monitoring BRSK communication methods and do better to inform residents more effectively ahead of planned works. Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Highways, Environment and Traded Services responded that unless they plan to cause an obstruction, the Council had no power to intervene with BRSK, with them merely having to notify local authorities of their intention a period before they did attend.

(j) Question 10 from Councillor Newgrosh regarding: takeover of Trafford Housing Trust by London and Quadrant (L&Q).

Councillor Newgrosh had not had a response to his question. Councillor Wright, Executive Member for Housing and Advice responded in the meeting. In relation to the question, Councillor Wright had contacted L&Q and read out the response in the meeting. This included the Sale Point service not being deemed value for money.

Councillor Newgrosh asked as a supplementary question given the less than stellar reputation of L&Q and the Council no longer holding a board position, like was held under Trafford Housing Trust, was the Council was less able to stand up for social housing tenants in the Borough. The Executive Member responded that the Council did have less influence over L&Q and was looking to organise an engagement session with L&Q and Councillors cross-party.

50. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COUNCIL, COMMITTEES AND OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED:

That Council notes that Councillor G. Carter was nominated and subsequently appointed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority as a substitute member to the GMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with effect from 15 December 2023, as a replacement for Councillor K. Procter.

51. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Councillor Harding, Executive Member for Finance, Change and Governance introduced and moved the report which set out proposals to enable the Council to comply with its statutory duty to review all Parliamentary polling districts and polling places and to review all Local Government polling districts and polling places at the same time.

Councillor Ross seconded the report and reserved the right to speak. Councillors Patel and Welton welcomed the report and the changes within their wards.

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RESOLVED:

That the Council;

- 1) Notes the outcome of the Local Authority's review of its polling districts and polling places;
- 2) Agrees the proposed relocations of polling places as detailed in the report and set out in Appendix A;
- 3) Agrees the proposed re-designation of polling districts as detailed in the report and as set out in Appendix B; and
- 4) Delegates authority to the Returning Officer to:

4.1) Make further necessary changes to polling places/polling stations that may occur before the elections on 2 May 2024. This includes making changes to any polling place, should it become unavailable, prior to the election – thus allowing the polling place to be changed without full Council approval.

**52. 6-MONTH CORPORATE REPORT ON HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING- 1
APRIL TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2023**

The Council received a report of the Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage providing information on Council wide health and safety performance and delivery. The report also provided a summary of other key developments in relation to health, safety, and wellbeing for the period 1 April – 30 September 2023.

Councillor Lepori asked if future reports could include the full RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) scale in the future so Councillors could see severity risk across all areas. The Deputy Leader responded that this could be included in future reports.

Councillor Welton thanked all public facing Council staff for the work they do amid concern over the number of incidences of violence and aggression recorded within the report.

Councillor Butt referred to table four, 2.2.4 in the report on community schools by audit type and score, asking if more detail could be provided on the headline figures on this topic in the future.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the Executive Member for Leisure, Arts, Culture and Heritage provide the full RIDDOR scale in future reports to Council.

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53. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP - DEBATE NOT HATE

The Motion set out on the Summons regarding Debate Not Hate was moved and seconded.

The first proposed Amendment was moved and seconded, as set out and published.

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

The second proposed Amendment was moved and seconded, as set out and published.

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

The substantive Motion was then put to the vote and declared carried.

RESOLVED:

This Council believes that:

- 1) Debating and disagreement is a fundamental part of a healthy democracy, and that this should always be done with respect;
- 2) It is a privilege to be elected to public office and comes with the responsibility of representing everyone, regardless of how they voted and anyone, regardless of their background or political affiliation, should feel safe to become a councillor and be proud to represent their community.

This Council notes that:

- 1) The Local Government Association (LGA) has amassed a considerable volume of evidence and personal accounts of the impact of abuse, intimidation, and aggression at a national level. The research showed that seven in 10 councillors reported experiencing abuse and intimidation over the last 12 months and councillors reported feeling that abuse is becoming more common and increasing in severity;
- 2) If left to continue, this negative and unacceptable behaviour can prevent elected members from representing the communities they serve, deter individuals from standing for election and undermine local democracy.

This Council further notes that:

- 1) The LGA has launched its "Debate Not Hate" campaign, which aims to raise public awareness of the role of councillors in their communities, encourage healthy debate and improve the responses and support for local politicians facing abuse and intimidation;

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- 2) This research outlines seven recommendations that Councils, the LGA, police forces, the Government and social media companies should take to improve the environment for current and prospective councillors, ranging from protecting privacy to creating a long-term culture change that de-normalises the abuse of politicians and other high-profile individuals;
- 3) This campaign has received support from across the political spectrum, as well as representatives from bodies such as the National Association of Local Councils, Compassion in Politics, the Local Government Information Unit and the National Hate Crime Awareness Week.

The Council resolves to:

- 1) Endorse the LGA Debate Not Hate campaign and call on all political groups to sign the public statement;
- 2) Support the LGA's proposal for a national working group to produce and implement an action plan that addresses the abuse and intimidation of elected members and candidates and ensures their safety while they fulfil their democratic roles;
- 3) Assess how it can take greater responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of its members, taking a proactive approach to preventing and handling abuse and intimidation and addressing the impacts of abuse on mental health and wellbeing.

Councillors agree to continually promote diversity and inclusion ahead of the next Local Elections and beyond, including diversity of thought.

54. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - CITY OF SANCTUARY

The Motion set out on the Summons regarding City of Sanctuary was moved and seconded.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council notes that:

- Trafford Council is proud of its rich history of welcoming and supporting all those seeking safety in our borough and is committed to continuing to uphold the principles of dignity, respect, and compassion towards all our residents.
- More and more men, women and children are being forced to flee from their homes due to conflict, war, persecution, human rights violations and the effects of the climate crisis.

This Council believes that:

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- Current Government laws undermine internationally recognised rights for people fleeing war and persecution to seek safety and have created a hostile environment for refugees which is cruel and divisive, causing harm and distress to some of the most vulnerable people.
- Those fleeing violence and persecution flourish and contribute to their new country when given comprehensive and well-co-ordinated support within their new host communities to empower them to rebuild their lives, and should always be treated with dignity and respect, housed as our neighbours, and given support to integrate into our communities.
- Becoming a member of the national network of City of Sanctuary Councils will build on, support and enhance the Council's work in creating a culture of welcome, inclusion and empowerment for people seeking sanctuary in collaboration with organisations such as the Hub in Altrincham, which is supporting occupants of the Britannia Ashley Hotel in Hale, Rehoboth for Families, and St John's Centre.

This Council resolves to:

- 1) Sign up to the City of Sanctuary membership pledge to become a non-awarded member of the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network, agreeing to work towards a City of Sanctuary Local Authority Award with the aim of becoming a recognised Council of Sanctuary, thereby influencing and offering inspiration to other Local Authorities and committing to recognising and raising awareness of the positive contribution that people seeking sanctuary make to our borough.
- 2) Work together with the members of the Local Authority Network to influence government policy, challenging the current hostile approach, defending the human right to seek safety, and encouraging and enabling social change.
- 3) Develop an action plan to embed the concept of sanctuary across council services and the wider community.
- 4) Continue to work in partnership with community and voluntary organisations and those with lived experience, and continue to enable and empower people seeking sanctuary to lead at all levels of the network and the community.

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55. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING

The motion set out on the Summons regarding Local Government Funding was moved and seconded.

The Amendment was moved and seconded, as set out and published.

Following a debate on the matter, the Amendment was put to the vote and was declared lost. The Motion was then put to the voted and was carried.

RESOLVED:

The Council notes that:

- 1) A Fair Funding Review for local government was first promised by the government in 2016 but has still not been delivered and there is no indication of when it will be.
- 2) In 2015, the government set out plans to reset business rates baselines for council in 2020, but this has still not happened.
- 3) The government's Autumn Statement in November 2023 failed to provide any new funding for local councils, meaning there is a £4 billion funding gap facing councils just to maintain current services.
- 4) Almost one in five council leaders and chief executives in England surveyed by the Local Government Association think it is very or fairly likely that they will need to issue a section 114 notice this year or next.
- 5) The provisional Local Government Finance settlement announced by the government on 18 December 2023 assumes that all councils will increase their council tax by the maximum allowed in 2024/25, following the same assumption used in previous years.
- 6) For the last six years, the government has only issued one-year settlements which makes it difficult for councils to plan their future financial sustainability.
- 7) Responding to the settlement, the Local Government Association noted that it "does not provide enough funding to meet the severe cost and demand pressures which have left councils of all political colours and types warning of the serious challenges they face to set balanced budgets next year."
- 8) More than 40 Conservative Members of Parliament have signed a letter to the Prime Minister, warning they are "exceptionally concerned" that their local Councils are facing financial crisis.

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The Council further notes that:

- 1) Trafford is one of the 20 worst funded councils in the country, one of the lowest spending councils and its council tax levels are the second lowest in Greater Manchester. The Institute for Fiscal Studies identified Trafford as the lowest funded local authority compared to 150 similar authorities, meaning it receives £11 million less each year on average than similar authorities.
- 2) Since 2010, Trafford has suffered a 60% real terms reduction in its budget and had to close budget gaps totalling £288 million.
- 3) Between 2010-15, when the Conservatives led the council, council tax in Trafford was frozen. This has meant the council has £15 million less in income each year.
- 4) Increases in demand for adult social care and children's services, high levels of inflation and increases in the National Living Wage are costing the council around £12 million each year. Increases in council tax, business rates indexation and certain grants only provide around £6 million each year, meaning the council budget has an underlying structural deficit, where it has to find £6 million of savings every year just to stand still.

This Council resolves to:

- 1) Launch a public campaign alongside other Greater Manchester authorities:
 - a) calling on the Government to fix the broken system of local government finance and give Trafford a fair funding settlement;
 - b) highlighting the cuts made to Trafford Council's budget, despite increases in council tax and the increasing demand for key services;
 - c) to highlight what the Council and residents can do to support reducing costs and demands on local services.
- 2) Ask the Leader or Chief Executive to write to our Trafford Members of Parliament and Greater Manchester Mayor requesting that:
 - a) they support our campaign, lobby Ministers, and publicly call on the government to deliver a fair funding settlement for Trafford; and
 - b) they reply to indicate their position to the Council.

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The meeting commenced at 7.00pm and finished at 9.29pm.