

TRAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

17 JULY 2024

PRESENT

The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Amy Whyte), in the Chair.

J. Brophy (Deputy Mayor)	W. Frass	J.D. Newgrosh
D. Acton	K Glenton	E.R. Parker
S. Adshead	L. Hancock	E. Patel
J.M. Axford	J. Harding	K. Procter
Babar	B. Hartley	S. Procter
O.J. Baskerville	W. Hassan	U. Savary
J. Bennett	S. J. Haughey	J. Slater
B. Brotherton	E.L. Hirst	H. K. Spencer
D. Butt	J. Holden	M.J. Taylor
G. Carter	F. Hornby	S. Taylor
K.G. Carter	C. Hynes	S. Thomas
G. Coggins	D. Jerrome	R. Thompson
G. Devlin	W. Jones	A.J. Williams
R. Duncan	J. Leicester	B.G. Winstanley
P. Eckersley	S.E. Lepori	J.A. Wright
S. G. Ennis	S. Maitland	S. Zhi
N. Evans	M. Minnis	

In attendance

Chief Executive	S. Todd
Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer	D. Sykes
Governance Manager	J. Addison
Senior Governance Officer	I. Cockill

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M. Cordingley, F. Cosby, Z.C. Deakin, S.J. Gilbert, D. Jarman, J. Lloyd, T. O'Brien, D.C. O'Sullivan, T. Ross, O. Sutton, M.J. Welton and D. Western.

18. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 22 May 2024, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- (2) That further to the Minutes, the Council notes the following subsequent changes to the Membership of Committees and outside bodies:
 - Councillor Hartley was appointed to Scrutiny Committee with effect from 12 June 2024.

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- Councillor Hirst was appointed to Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee with effect from 17 July 2024.
- Councillor Devlin replaced Councillor Hirst on Health Scrutiny Committee with effect from 17 July 2024.
- Cllr Haughey replaced Councillor Devlin on Employment Committee with effect from 17 July 2024.
- Councillor Devlin replaced Councillor Winstanley as the deputy on GMCA Health Scrutiny Committee with effect from 17 July 2024 .

19. ANNOUNCEMENTS

His Majesty the King's Birthday Honours

The Mayor took the opportunity to recognise Mrs Shalni Arora from Hale, who was awarded the citation of Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (OBE), in His Majesty the King's Birthday Honours List, for services to charity and Philanthropy.

The Mayor conveyed the Council's congratulations for such richly deserved recognition.

20. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Mayor reported that 7 questions had been received under Procedure Rule 10.2 and, on the basis that each question and response had been circulated, advised that these would be taken as read and that the meeting would proceed with the supplementary questions. (Note: The questions and responses are available to view on the Council's website.)

- (a) Question 1 from Councillor Eckersley re: driving and pedestrian safety conditions on South Downs Road

Asking a supplementary question, Councillor Eckersley sought confirmation as to whether the apparent short length of South Downs Road referred to in the question had been misunderstood and enquired, in which case, whether the measures proposed would potentially improve its position of being twenty fourth on the 20mph list of priorities.

In response, Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded Services advised that since the request was at an early stage a comprehensive list of measures needed could not be identified until a full assessment had been undertaken. In terms, of the length of highway concerned, the Executive Member asked Councillor Eckersley to provide the relevant detail so that he could provide clarity.

- (b) Question 2 from Councillor Brophy re: non-native plant species

Councillor Brophy believed that her points on only two of the three species being mentioned on the website and the inclusion of high edges in that section had not been addressed and as a supplementary question asked about the work the

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Council was doing with the Environment Agency and other agencies to prevent the spread of invasive plant species onto Trafford land.

Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded Services asked if Councillor Brophy could provide him with the locations on the website so that he could ensure the information made public was accessible, concise and not duplicated in any way and confirmed that the Council liaised with the Environment Agency on numerous matters and would check if Councillor Brophy had particular locations in mind.

(c) Question 3 from Councillor Duncan re: children crossing the Moss Lane/Harboro Road junction in Sale

As a supplementary question and mentioning that the matter was brought up in Council in 2022, Councillor Duncan asked if the Executive Member could please advise what safety measures had been implemented over the last two years in that regard.

Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded Services confirmed that a host of measures were implemented around schools and that the location mentioned in the question was on the consideration list for a crossing point. Councillor Duncan was welcome to provide more details on specifics for a more precise answer.

(d) Question 4 from Councillor Ennis re: progress with delivery of the Baby-Box scheme

As a supplementary question, Councillor Ennis asked on funding whether the Executive Member could supply the anticipated cost to Trafford of a targeted baby-box of the kind detailed in the written response to the question and with fresh rounds of devolution talks promised that day in the King's Speech, would Councillor Slater talk to her opposite numbers across Greater Manchester about greater devolved health powers for the region, which would greatly help in delivering targeted interventions like the baby-box in the future.

On both points, Councillor Slater, the Executive Member for Healthy and Independent Lives agreed to take up matters and come back to Councillor Ennis as soon as possible.

(e) Question 5 from Councillor Minnis re: school non-attendance by children with additional needs

With tribunals either before and after Education, Health and Care Plans the only form of resolution, Councillor Minnis asked as a supplementary question how many tribunals Trafford had held in the last five years and how many had it lost.

Councillor K. Carter, Executive Member for Children and Young People indicated that she had not anticipated such a supplementary, therefore, did not have the information on tribunals and would undertake to respond in writing after the

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meeting. The Executive Member was aware that it was something Children and Young People's Scrutiny was going to consider.

- (f) Question 6 from Councillor Spencer re: a Memorandum of Understanding for Trafford's parks

As a supplementary question, Councillor Spencer asked what the Council's long-term plan was to increase the funding for Trafford's parks and green spaces.

Councillor Adshead, Executive Member for Highways, Environmental and Traded Services recognised that the financial situation and competing priorities meant resources were limited but through continued partnership working and links with the Friends of Park Groups, funding and grants could be secured.

- (g) Question 7 from Councillor Newgrosh re: the Council's Investment Management Board

Councillor Newgrosh was grateful for the detailed response provided and did not have a supplementary question.

21. CORPORATE PLAN 2024-27

The Council considered a joint report of the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, which provided a summary of the Council's new Corporate Plan and engagement.

(Note: During the debate on the report, the time being 7:33 p.m., the Mayor indicated that speeches on this matter would now be limited to a maximum of two minutes per speaker.)

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the new Corporate Plan be approved and adopted by the Council.
- (2) That the engagement and feedback undertaken to develop the plan, be noted.

22. REPORT OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL WORKING GROUP

The Executive Member for Finance and Governance presented a report of the Council's Constitutional Working Group (CWG), on the review it had undertaken and the recommendations it believed were required to amend the Council's Constitution to improve the quality and equality of debates at meetings due to an increase in the items being placed on the meeting agenda.

The CWG's proposals had been considered by the Standards Committee on 28 June 2024 and the Scrutiny Committee on 10 July 2024 and the recommendation from both the Committees were set out in the report before the Council.

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(Note: Following the introduction and moving of the report's recommendations, the time being 7:54 p.m., the Mayor indicated that speeches on this matter would now be limited to a maximum of two minutes per speaker.)

Following a debate on the matter, the CWG's recommendations were put to the vote and declared carried

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the current constitutional arrangements in respect of Council meetings, as detailed in the report, be noted.
- (2) That, noting the views of the Constitutional Working Group, the recommended constitutional changes proposed by the Standards Committee, as detailed in the report at section 6, be approved.
- (3) That, noting the views of the Standards Committee, the recommended constitutional change proposed by the Standards Committee, as detailed in the report at section 7.3, be approved.
- (4) That, noting the views of the Scrutiny Committee, the recommended constitutional change proposed by the Scrutiny Committee, as detailed in the report at section 8.3; be approved.
- (5) That the views of the Constitutional Working Group and Monitoring Officer detailed in section 9 of the report, be noted.
- (6) That the recommended constitutional changes proposed by the Constitutional Working Group, as detailed at section 9 of the report, be approved.
- (7) That authority be delegated to the Director of Legal and Governance and Monitoring Officer, to amend the constitution, petition scheme and any other relevant document in accordance with the recommendations set out in the report.

**23. ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL
2023/24**

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Accounts and Audit Committee submitted to the Council a report setting out the Committee's Annual Report for 2023/24. The Annual Report which had been presented to the Accounts and Audit Committee on 26 June 2024 summarised the work undertaken by the Committee during the year and its impact and also provided assurance to the Council on the fulfilment of the Committee's responsibilities.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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24. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LIBERAL DEMOCRATS GROUP - UPGRADING TRAFFORD'S BELISHA BEACONS

The Motion, as set out on the Summons on upgrading Trafford's Belisha Beacons, was moved and seconded.

An Amendment from the Green Party Group, as set out and published, was moved and seconded.

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

A second Amendment from the Labour Group, as set out and published, was moved and seconded.

Following a debate on the matter, the second Amendment was put to the vote and was carried unanimously. The substantive Motion was then put to the vote and was also carried unanimously.

RESOLVED: That, July 2024 marks exactly 90 years since Liberal MP and Minister for Transport, Leslie Hore Belisha, passed the Road Safety Act of 1934. One of the measures in this Act, to cut the huge number of fatalities on British roads, was the introduction of the now-familiar yellow beacons either side of zebra crossings.

In 2024, newer technology is available to make Belisha Beacons more effective on our busy streets.

This Council notes:

- Road safety continues to be a significant concern for our residents – especially for children making their way to the schools in our Borough each day.
- Belisha Beacons clearly mark the crossing points when it is dark, but when the sun is strong in the summer, or at a low angle mid-afternoon in the spring or autumn, the effect of the Beacons flashing virtually disappears in strong light.
- Therefore, at precisely the time children are using the crossing – the Beacons become very ineffective at alerting drivers to the fact they are approaching a zebra crossing at certain times of year.
- This issue is particularly pertinent on streets with an East-West orientation that catch direct sunlight at a low-angle.

This Council believes:

- The solution to the problem of Belisha Beacons disappearing in bright sunlight are the new-style Belisha Beacons with an 'LED halo'.

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- The 'LED halo' Beacons provide a semi-circular ring of bright yellow LED lights that are still visible in strong daylight, alerting drivers they are approaching a zebra crossing.
- Many new-style Beacons can be seen in supermarket car-parks already, where they are clearly more effective than the old-style Beacons. However, Trafford Council has not adopted this design for the Borough's roads.

This Council further notes:

- Following initial conversations in Autumn 2023 between Timperley Councillors and Trafford Highways, there is a successful trial of the new-style Belisha Beacons in Timperley for the zebra crossing outside St Hugh's School.
- More recently, Trafford Highways have told Councillors that the particular product being trialled in Timperley North is:

"very simple to install as there is no requirement to dig down into the ground".

This Council further believes:

- School children in all parts of Trafford should benefit from the added safety of Belisha Beacons that are more visible to drivers.
- Cost, as ever, remains a difficulty, so a phased approach to replacement will be necessary; ensuring when old-style Beacons fail or are damaged, they are replaced with new-style Beacons.

This Council resolves to:

- Phase out the old-style Belisha Beacons when they fail and upgrade them to the new-style 'LED halo' Belisha Beacons.
- Prioritise them on a Health and Safety basis as they are best used where low sun is a visibility risk.

Note: the installation of upgrades to zebras with the 'halo' LED has been trialled and is seen as a positive approach to improving visibility of zebras. For this reason there is now a programme of zebra upgrades on a phased approach already included in the current years capital programme. Therefore the issues highlighted in the motion have already been recognised and being addressed.

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25. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE GREEN PARTY GROUP - COST OF LIVING: REDUCE BILLS AND TACKLE POVERTY

The Motion, as set out on the Summons on Cost of Living: Reduce Bills and Tackle Poverty, was moved and seconded.

The proposed Amendment from the Liberal Democrats Group, which had been set out and published, was withdrawn.

The Amendment from the Labour Group, as set out and published, was moved and seconded.

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

RESOLVED: This Council notes that the Cost-of-Living crisis is not over.

Between April 2022 and April 2024 the cost of a basic weekly food basket has increased by 25%.

Whilst energy bills were set to fall by 7% from July the Ofgem price cap is expected to rise again by around 10% in October, meaning bills stay 50-60% above pre-crisis levels.

We further note that bills could have already been lowered through an adequate programme of home insulation in line with net zero commitments. Rents in the private housing sector, where many of the most vulnerable households live, have continued to increase at a rate above headline inflation.

This Council calls on the new Government to:

- Abolish the two-child benefit cap as soon as government finances allow.
- Consider extending and increasing the Household Support Fund or any potential equivalent or replacement as an interim measure, enabling councils to help those in the most need throughout this coming winter.
- Rapidly end no fault evictions.
- Review the social housing decarbonisation fund so that it is more accessible for all local authorities and social housing providers to maximise their work to shift to cleaner and cheaper energy in homes.
- As part of the Warm Homes Plan in the Labour Party manifesto, bring forward mechanisms for homeowners to more easily access finance to decarbonise heating and reduce energy costs; and for private tenants to also benefit from the new government's plan for all private rented sector homes to meet minimum energy efficiency standards by 2030.

The meeting commenced at 7.02 p.m. and finished at 8.47 p.m.