

TRAFFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

13 NOVEMBER 2013

PRESENT

The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Dylan Butt), in the Chair.

E.H. Malik	J. Coupe	D. Quayle
D. Acton	Mrs. P. Dixon	J.R. Reilly
S. Adshead	A. Duffield	Mrs. J. Reilly
S. Anstee	Mrs. L. Evans	B. Rigby
Dr. K. Barclay	T. Fishwick	T. Ross
J. Baugh	M. Freeman	B. Sharp
J. Bennett	P. Gratrix	J. Smith
Miss L. Blackburn	J. Harding	N. Taylor
R. Bowker	D. Higgins	S. Taylor
C. Boyes	J. Holden	L. Walsh
Mrs. A. Bruer-Morris	M. Hyman	Mrs. V. Ward
J. Brophy	C. Hynes	A. Western
B Brotherton	D. Jarman	D. Western
D. Bunting	P. Lally	M. Whetton
C. Candish	J. Lamb	Mrs. J. Wilkinson
R Chilton	J. Lloyd	A. Williams
M. Colledge	A. Mitchell	M. Young
Mrs. L. Cooke	P. Myers	Mrs. P. Young
M. Cordingley	D. O'Sullivan	
M. Cornes	K. Procter	

In attendance

Chief Executive	Ms. T. Grant
Corporate Director Economic Growth and Prosperity	Mrs. H. Jones
Corporate Director Environment Transport and Operations	Mr. P. Molyneux
Director of Legal and Democratic Services	Ms. J. Le Fevre
Director of Finance	Mr. I. Duncan
Director Service Development - Children, Family and Education	Mr. J. Pearce
Democratic Services Manager	Mr. P. Forrester
Democratic Services Officer	Mr. I. Cockill

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors I. Platt, B. Shaw and E.W. Stennett.

48. MINUTES

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on 18 September 2013 and the Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Council held on 14 October 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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49. ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Councillor Ken Weston

The Mayor referred with sadness to the recent death of former Mayor and serving Councillor, Ken Weston aged 70. Ken had been a loyal Broadheath Ward Councillor, since his election in 2000 and had been very proud to serve as the Borough's Mayor in 2010/11.

The Group Leaders conveyed condolences and recollected that Ken was a true gentleman with an abundance of character and a community person through and through.

The Council echoed these words and stood in silence, as a mark of respect and a tribute, to a dedicated colleague.

(b) Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Lloyd, Chairman of Health Scrutiny Committee reported on the outcome of the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee meeting with Manchester City Council on 22 October 2013. Councillor Lloyd stated that there was still a monitoring role for the Committee and it would be scrutinising the hospital accident and emergency figures early in 2014.

50. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

The Mayor reported that 2 questions had been received under Procedure Rule 10.2.

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

"Please can you detail to this meeting the negotiations undertaken with Elected Members of this Chamber, the Contractor, the Residents of Trafford, and User Groups, in arriving at the decision you have made to close Trafford Water Sports Centre? What assurances can you give that Sale Water Park will not now just fall into terminal decline?"

Councillor Coupe, Executive Member for Safe and Strong Communities responded by advising that the Council's approved budget for 2013/14 included an indicative proposal to review the funding arrangements for sport and leisure as a saving option for 2014/15. Negotiations with the Contractor had progressed since March 2013, to cease the index linked subsidy for water sports provision at Sale Water Park. The subsidy represented 73% of the income generated by the centre and the agreement was to be in place until 2020.

The Executive Member explained that as negotiations progressed it became apparent that without the subsidy the current contract was not deliverable and both parties decided it would be best to terminate the contract. Based on the

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business case, a formal decision to terminate the contract from 31 December 2013 was made, saving the Council £1.1 million over the next 6 years.

Officers wrote on 5 November to Ward Members and opposition spokespersons to inform them of the decision and provided a confidential briefing setting out the rationale behind the decision. Staff were informed on 6 November and letters were sent to all users on 8 November, informing them of the decision and asking them to contact the Council to discuss the matter further and in some cases renegotiate their contracts.

Councillor Coupe reported that funding of £48,000 had been retained so that the Council could maintain the Water Park once the contract had terminated and the £1.1 million saving would be delivered in addition to the annual maintenance funding. The Executive Member assured the Council that it was not the end for Sale Water Park but the end of a contract that was not sustainable. Some initial inquiries from interested parties wishing to remain anonymous at the moment had been received and he was happy to talk to any group or individual interested in working with the Council to continue to offer water sports at Sale Water Park.

Commenting upon the decision making process, Councillor Freeman asked as a supplementary question how this particular decision measured up to the principle that openness, honesty and transparency should be at the heart of all local government decisions. In response, Councillor Coupe asserted that the matter was decided in accordance with Council procedures. It had been impracticable to give 28 days' notice given the position regarding negotiations with the Contractor, since it only became evident that a formal decision would be required within this timescale and when taken it was deemed to be urgent in order to maximise savings.

(b) Councillor Acton asked the following question for which he had given notice:

“This Council is Aware there is high levels of pollution within the Davyhulme area, within the Air Quality Management Area (AQMA), around Junction 9/10 off the M60 Motorway. This fact is cause of deep concern to residents who live in this area, particularly so in light of more and more developments are planned within this location, which potentially will add to the pollution.

There are growing fears from residents that the pollution level has increased significantly in this area in recent times and residents are asking that this particular area be monitored. Therefore I would like to ask the Executive Member if he would agree to the monitoring of pollution directly within the AQMA as soon as possible, and make the findings public?”

In response to the question, Councillor Mitchell, Executive Member for Highways and Environment, informed the Council of the locations of the three automatic monitoring stations in Trafford. One measuring roadside pollution levels was located on the A56 Stretford, within the AQMA, another at Moss Park Junior School, Stretford was considered a site representative of background levels of pollution away from a major highway and a third at Wellacre Academy, Flixton has

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recently been installed to measure the impact of the new energy plant at Carrington.

The Executive Member recognised that recent planning applications for development in the Davyhulme area had caused some public concern regarding the potential cumulative impact on air quality. For that reason, it had been decided to commission a detailed study to assess the specific combined impact of existing and proposed developments on air quality in the Davyhulme area. The study would enable the on-going welfare of the residents of the area to be assured and assist in the Planning process so that the impact of any proposed developments can be fully assessed as well as informing developers of appropriate emission standards that must be met.

As a supplementary question, Councillor Acton sought clarification that the Council directly monitors pollutants within the AQMA. Councillor Mitchell verified that the Council continuously monitored across the 3 sites that bracketed the area and on that basis confirmed that it did.

51. DRAFT JOINT HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY

(Note: Councillor Mrs. Brophy declared a personal interest in this matter, insofar as it related to her employment by the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust, and remained in the meeting.)

The Executive Member for Community Health and Wellbeing submitted a report seeking approval of the draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. The draft strategy had been approved by the Executive and the Health and Wellbeing Board at their meetings held on 23 September 2013 and 1 October 2013, respectively.

RESOLVED: That the draft Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy be approved and formally incorporated into the Council's Policy Framework.

52. YEAR END CORPORATE REPORT ON HEALTH AND SAFETY - 1 APRIL 2012 TO 31 MARCH 2013

The Executive Member for Transformation and Resources submitted a report providing information on council-wide health and safety performance and trends in workplace accidents. The report also provided a summary of other key developments in health and safety over the 12-month period.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

53. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - SPENDING REVIEW

It was moved and seconded that:

"This Council:

Fully supports the open letter signed by 151 Council Leaders (43%) from all political parties to the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing concerns that

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further cuts to local government in the next spending review would have a devastating impact on services.

Notes that this letter was written before other Government announcements that the cut in Council core budgets would be £1 billion higher than assumed in the Spending Review for 2015/16, bringing the overall cut in Local Government core funding around £5.5 billion in the next two years, which is a cash cut of 21% and a real term cut of 25%.

Agrees with the letter that local government bore the brunt of cuts in previous spending reviews and for the sake of the public services understands that this cannot continue. For many Councils, new funding cuts in 2015/16 will lead to a significant reduction in, and in some cases even loss of, important local services while noting that in comparison Whitehall departments will have faced average reductions of just 12%. The resilience of Local Government cannot be stretched much further.

Urges the Government to listen to the Local Government Association letter and also to reconsider the distribution of cuts which has resulted in heavy cuts to many Local Authorities whilst some Councils in the wealthiest parts of the Country receive almost no cuts at all.

And will therefore, add its name to this letter as a late signatory to show the people of Trafford that the Council can tolerate no further cuts to funding and demands that local government finance must be put on a more sustainable footing.”

It was moved and seconded as an amendment that:

“This Council:

Recognises the open letter signed by 151 Council Leaders (43%) from all political parties to the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing concerns that further cuts to local government in the next spending review would have a detrimental impact on services;

Acknowledges that the economy is benefiting from the deficit reduction programme but contends that local government has reduced its expenditure significantly in comparison to central government departments and that further reductions of this scale are unsustainable;

And will therefore, continue to lobby the Department for Communities and Local Government for a fairer funding settlement for Trafford to show the people of our Borough that the Council can no longer tolerate further cuts to funding on the scale seen in recent years and demand that local government finance is put on a more sustainable footing.”

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

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RESOLVED: That this Council:

Recognises the open letter signed by 151 Council Leaders (43%) from all political parties to the Chancellor of the Exchequer expressing concerns that further cuts to local government in the next spending review would have a detrimental impact on services;

Acknowledges that the economy is benefiting from the deficit reduction programme but contends that local government has reduced its expenditure significantly in comparison to central government departments and that further reductions of this scale are unsustainable;

And will therefore, continue to lobby the Department for Communities and Local Government for a fairer funding settlement for Trafford to show the people of our Borough that the Council can no longer tolerate further cuts to funding on the scale seen in recent years and demand that local government finance is put on a more sustainable footing.

54. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - URMSTON POST OFFICE

It was moved and seconded that:

“This Council notes the plan to close and franchise the existing Crown Post Office in Urmston. This will mean:-

- The downgrading of vital services to the community.
- The loss of dedicated highly skilled, knowledgeable workers.
- A detrimental impact on local businesses.

These plans run contrary to the wishes of local people and will be seriously detrimental for the community and especially elderly residents. Along with the privatisation of the postal service, this will have a negative effect upon the current excellent provision provided to the Urmston population.

Therefore this Council calls on the Government to listen to people of Urmston and the surrounding area and reverse plans to close and franchise the current Urmston Post Office.”

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

55. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - ROBIN HOOD TAX

(Note: Councillors Anstee and Bunting each declared personal interests in this matter due to their employment in the financial services sector and remained in the meeting during its consideration;

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Councillor Mitchell declared a personal interest, being the Council's appointed representative on the Greater Manchester Pensions Fund Management Panel and also remained in the meeting.)

It was moved and seconded that:

"This Council notes with dismay the Government agreed Austerity Measures which will result in the Council cutting its budget by around £140 million between the years 2010/2015. Already the cuts have resulted in devastating many services in Trafford which has led to the closure of Children Centres, Day Care Centre, Elderly People Homes, Mobile Library, and massive cuts to Libraries, Youth and Children services, Care for the Elderly and People with Disabilities, Road repairs, street cleaning and much more.

The blame for the global financial crash and economic crisis lies largely at the door of the banks, therefore they must be part of the solution.

The Council calls on the Government to:-

Follow the lead of the 11 European Nations including Germany, France, Italy and Spain who are moving ahead with a "Financial Transaction Tax" on shares, bonds, foreign currency and derivatives. This is estimated to raise in the region of £20 billion a year for Britain; and

For the revenue to be used to help pay off the National debt and to help Councils to provide improved services, particularly for Elderly People and People with Disabilities, Children and Young People, Libraries, the maintenance of our roads and to create jobs and prosperity for our Towns and Communities."

(Note: Proceeding to the debate on the Motion, the time being 8.25 p.m., the Mayor indicated that the length of speeches on this item would be restricted to 2 minutes per speaker. With the time being 8.37 p.m., the Mayor further reduced speeches to 1 minute.)

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

56. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE LABOUR GROUP - LEGAL AID

It was moved and seconded that:

"The Council is concerned that since 2010 Trafford Legal Aid (TLA is a not for profit legal advice service based in Trafford) has had its budget cut by the Government from £200,000 to £50,000.

The £200,000 funding enabled TLA to provide free legal advice and representation services in Trafford and surrounding areas in Housing and Homelessness, Immigration, Asylum and Employment.

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However, since April 2013 the following is not funded and out of scope, Employment, Discrimination, Housing and all Immigration except where it relates to detention, violence and trafficking.

There is an increased need for legal advice and representation, particularly because of the Welfare Reforms taking place this year. No other organisation in Trafford provides legal advice and representation to residents of Trafford on the matters that are now out of scope.

Clearly there is a real need in Trafford for the Trafford Law Centre (TLC) services to be able to advise and represent some of the most vulnerable people.

In light of the above we call on the Council Executive to consider carefully the "Spot Purchasing" proposals submitted by TLC to Trafford Council, with a view to consulting TLC and bringing a report back to Council which outlines a way forward to provide vulnerable Trafford residents with advice services which have recently been taken out of scope."

Following speeches of support, the Motion was unanimously agreed by the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Council is concerned that since 2010 Trafford Legal Aid (TLA is a not for profit legal advice service based in Trafford) has had its budget cut by the Government from £200,000 to £50,000.

The £200,000 funding enabled TLA to provide free legal advice and representation services in Trafford and surrounding areas in Housing and Homelessness, Immigration, Asylum and Employment.

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Clearly there is a real need in Trafford for the Trafford Law Centre (TLC) services to be able to advise and represent some of the most vulnerable people.

In light of the above we call on the Council Executive to consider carefully the "Spot Purchasing" proposals submitted by TLC to Trafford Council, with a view to consulting TLC and bringing a report back to Council which outlines a way forward to provide vulnerable Trafford residents with advice services which have recently been taken out of scope.

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57. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP - AN IMPROVING ECONOMY IN GREATER MANCHESTER

(Note: Councillor Walsh declared a personal interest in this item, insofar as it related to his employment with Royal Mail and remained in the meeting.)

It was moved and seconded that:

“The Council welcomes the overall positive news contained within the October 2013 Manchester Monitor Quarterly Report published by New Economy Manchester, in particular that unemployment and crime is falling and levels of business activity increasing.

The Council notes:

1. The number of Job Seekers Allowance claimants fell by 9.9% on the same period last year.
2. That airport passengers increased by 4.3% since May 2012.
3. That 47% of Greater Manchester firms reported higher levels of activity in Quarter 2 2013 when compared to Quarter 1.
4. That overall crime fell by 8.8% since August 2012.

Therefore, the Council considers that the report evidences that the policy pursued by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Conservative led Coalition Government to deal with the deficit and control public spending is working, and that as the national economy continues to recover from Labour’s appalling financial mismanagement, Greater Manchester too is able to feel the benefit.”

(Note: Proceeding to the debate on the Motion, the time being 8.52 p.m., the Mayor indicated that the length of speeches on this item would be restricted to 1 minute per speaker).

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

RESOLVED: That the Council welcomes the overall positive news contained within the October 2013 Manchester Monitor Quarterly Report published by New Economy Manchester, in particular that unemployment and crime is falling and levels of business activity increasing.

The Council notes:

1. The number of Job Seekers Allowance claimants fell by 9.9% on the same period last year.
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Therefore, the Council considers that the report evidences that the policy pursued by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Conservative led Coalition Government to deal with the deficit and control public spending is working, and that as the national economy continues to recover from Labour's appalling financial mismanagement, Greater Manchester too is able to feel the benefit.

58. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP - ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2012/13

It was moved and seconded that:

"The Council welcomes the content of the Annual Audit Letter 2012/13.

In particular, the Council is pleased to receive a Value for Money sign off from Grant Thornton that indicates that proper arrangements were in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2013.

Further, the Council is pleased with the comments received from the Auditor that it has strong aspects of financial resilience, and applies a disciplined and structured approach to identifying savings. In providing the letter, the Auditor praised the Council's approach to transformation identifying that it grasped the nettle about the need for transformation before many others, recognising that traditional efficiency measures on their own would not be enough.

Consequently, the Council wishes to place on record its gratitude to all members of staff who contribute to the successful financial management of the Council."

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

RESOLVED: That the Council welcomes the content of the Annual Audit Letter 2012/13.

In particular, the Council is pleased to receive a Value for Money sign off from Grant Thornton that indicates that proper arrangements were in place to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2013.

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Consequently, the Council wishes to place on record its gratitude to all members of staff who contribute to the successful financial management of the Council.

59. MOTION SUBMITTED BY THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP - DOMESTIC ABUSE

It was moved and seconded that:

“Council notes that domestic abuse affects every community in Trafford: rich or poor, white or black, old or young, gay or straight.

Over the past 12 months, Greater Manchester Police dealt with 3,097 cases of domestic abuse in Trafford.

This represents the tip of the iceberg. It is estimated that one in four women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their life. It doesn't just affect women – 13% of the victims who report domestic abuse to police in Trafford are men. Domestic violence isn't just physical – many people suffer serious emotional turmoil at the hands of abusive partners.

Council notes that help and advice is available to victims of domestic abuse – and those who fear their friends or loved ones may be victims – at the www.endthefear.co.uk website.

This Council resolves:

- to make a stand against domestic abuse.
- to work with the Police and Crime Commissioner, Greater Manchester Police, the NHS, housing associations, other agencies and – most importantly of all – local communities across Trafford to make clear that domestic abuse in all its forms is unacceptable.
- to do all we can to encourage people to report domestic abuse to the police.
- to instruct the Chief Executive to report back by April 2014 on progress made by this local authority and partner agencies to improve and enhance services provided to victims of domestic abuse.

The Council agrees to sign up to the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner's promise to “say no to domestic abuse” at www.gmpcc.org.uk/endthefear and encourage as many Trafford residents as possible to do the same.”

(Note: Proceeding to the debate on the Motion, the time being 9.24 p.m., the Mayor indicated that the length of speeches on this item would be restricted to 1 minute per speaker).

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Following the debate, the Motion was put to the vote and was unanimously carried.

RESOLVED: That Council notes that domestic abuse affects every community in Trafford: rich or poor, white or black, old or young, gay or straight.

Over the past 12 months, Greater Manchester Police dealt with 3,097 cases of domestic abuse in Trafford.

This represents the tip of the iceberg. It is estimated that one in four women will experience domestic abuse at some point in their life. It doesn't just affect women – 13% of the victims who report domestic abuse to police in Trafford are men. Domestic violence isn't just physical – many people suffer serious emotional turmoil at the hands of abusive partners.

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The meeting commenced at 7.06 p.m. and finished at 9.28 p.m.