



STOCKPORT

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of the Council Meeting held by way of a Remote Meeting on 22 October 2020 at 6.17 pm.

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Dean Fitzpatrick) in the chair; Deputy Mayor (Councillor Chris Gordon); Councillors Malcolm Allan, Lou Ankers, Paul Ankers, Brian Bagnall, Sheila Bailey, Grace Baynham, Laura Booth, Kate Butler, Anna Charles-Jones, Angie Clark, Laura Clingan, Christine Corris, Stuart Corris, Dickie Davies, Will Dawson, Tom Dowse, Roy Driver, Colin Foster, Helen Foster-Grime, Charles Gibson, Graham Greenhalgh, Steve Gribbon, Yvonne Guariento, Philip Harding, Keith Holloway, Linda Holt, Mark Hunter, Mike Hurleston, Colin MacAlister, Carole McCann, John McGahan, Tom McGee, Wendy Meikle, David Meller, Janet Mobbs, Tom Morrison, Adrian Nottingham, John Pantall, Amanda Peers, Iain Roberts, Mark Roberts, Dena Ryness, David Sedgwick, Becky Senior, Lisa Smart, Andy Sorton, Charlie Stewart, John Taylor, Aron Thornley, Alanna Vine, Lisa Walker, Kerry Waters, Mark Weldon, Jude Wells, Wendy Wild, David Wilson, Elise Wilson, John Wright, Suzanne Wyatt and Matt Wynne.

1. FORMALITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

(i) Minutes

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the Meeting of the Council held on 17 September 2020 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

(ii) Urgent Decisions

No urgent decisions were reported.

(iii) Mayor's Announcements

With deep regret, the Mayor reported that former councillor Kevin Dowling had passed away on 3 October 2020. It was stated that Mr Dowling had served as a councillor for the Marple North ward between 2011 and 2015.

Councillor Mark Hunter then paid tribute to the memory of Mr Dowling.

The Mayor invited all those present to observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect to the memory of Mr Dowling.

The Mayor then reported that it remained a difficult time for residents, businesses and local community groups due to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and that consequently the number of Mayor engagements had been limited. However, the Mayor stated that he had recently opened the new offices of TPD Wealth Management at The Three Shires, Great Underbank, Stockport. He further stated that he had been involved in the promotion of the One Stockport campaign and interviewed by the Stockport Talking Newspaper.

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Finally, the Mayor reported that he would shortly be launching a Just Giving page to more readily allow donations to the Mayor's nominated charity of Beacon Counselling to be received in a covid-safe way.

(iv) Declarations of Interest

Councillors and officers were invited to declare any interests which they had in any of the items on the agenda for the meeting.

The following interests were declared:-

Personal Interest

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Interest</u>
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Colin Foster	Summons Item 3(i) – 'Youth Justice Plan 2020-21' as a member of the Youth Justice Partnership Board.
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Disclosable Pecuniary Interest

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Interest</u>
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Andy Sorton	Summons Item 8(i) – 'Motion – 'Re-opening Stockport Central Library and transparency about any future closure plans' as his partner was as an employee of the Library Service and was currently based at Stockport Central Library.
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Councillor Sorton took no part in the discussion or vote on this item.

2. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

(i) Public Question Time

Members of the public were invited to put questions to the Mayor and councillors on matters within the powers and duties of the Council.

Ten public questions were submitted as follows:-

- Relating to the progress made towards achieving direct rail platform access from Woodsmoor Station to Stepping Hill Hospital as a greener travel alternative for staff and patients.

The Cabinet Member for Economy & Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) responded that the Council worked in partnership with Stepping Hill Hospital to explore alternative travel arrangements to and from the hospital site. It was stated that in partnership with the Foundation Trust, the Council procured the services of a civil engineering consultant group to carry out a high level feasibility study to explore the possibility of creating a direct path from Woodsmoor Station to the Stepping Hill Hospital site. The initial view, based on the superficial topographical features, was that such a path was possible and as a result, council officers engaged in a shared piece of work with Network Rail to explore this further.

However, further detailed site surveys raised concerns in relation to the need to move several pieces of rail infrastructure and the potential presence of buried assets. There were further concerns in relation to the security of the proposed route and the impact on local residents whose land would sit adjacent to the proposed path. As a result, while it a path was technically feasible, the cost of the work and the impact on local residents meant that it was not considered to be an optimal solution.

It was confirmed that notwithstanding this, the Council continued to work with the rail industry to improve access such as the provision of wayfinding signage and alterations to the ramp that served the southbound platform.

Councillor Grace Baynham further responded that the provision of a pedestrian link between the station and the hospital site had been an aspiration of ward councillors for a number of years, and while the technical issues were recognised these were surmountable and ward councillors continued to view the provision of the path as a benefit to the local area.

- Relating to how plans for increases in housing in Stockport would increase demand on public services, including Stepping Hill Hospital and whether an assessment had been made of its effect on the local environment, including increased road traffic to the hospital site.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) responded that the Council had been working for some time with its partners in the Clinical Commissioning Group to assess the impact on the provision of healthcare of increased housing delivery across the borough. It was further stated that same was true with regard to education provision and other forms of community facilities which helped to create sustainable communities.

- Relating to whether the Council could explain why they were still putting forward the residents parking strategy update report when the pilot for this scheme (the Stepping Hill CPZ) was rejected by 95% of respondents.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) responded that the proposed parking scheme was due to be considered at the next meeting of the Cabinet. It was stated that the strategy document proposed the development of zonal parking schemes that could better utilise the resources within the council. However, it was stated that it was not proposed that there would be a standardised scheme that would be used in every locality.

- Relating to the time already taken to develop a proposed residents permit parking strategy, why the issue been kicked into the long grass again and how much longer would it be before the policy was considered by the Cabinet.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) responded that there were competing demands on the Council's resources at the current time, including the priority of responding to the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was stated that the report had been deferred at the last meeting of the Cabinet to allow for further consideration of the comments made by the Council's area committees, however it was anticipated that the strategy would be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting in December 2020.

The Chair of the Communities & Housing Scrutiny Committee (Councillor Mark Roberts) further responded that the scrutiny committee had made the request that area committees had the opportunity to comment on the proposed strategy. Councillor Roberts thanked officers for attending those meetings to present the report and members for the comments when it was considered at their local area committee.

Councillor Roberts expressed his disappointment that this engagement had been used as a reason to delay things further, and that the continued moratorium imposed on new parking schemes had made the situation being experienced by residents more difficult than it otherwise needed to have been.

Finally, Councillor Roberts reflected on the inclusion of a proposal in the original version of the strategy to provide councillors with free parking permits and that this was ill-advised and should have been removed as a proposal at an early stage.

- Relating to a previous commitment across Greater Manchester to provide more space for pedestrians and cyclists and what additional measures had been implemented in Stockport to achieve this.

The Cabinet Member for Economy & Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) responded that the Council was in the process of implementing a number of measures to improve walking and cycling routes. It was stated that audits had been conducted in the borough's district centres and measures to assist with social distancing and maintaining highway safety had now been brought forward including 20mph zones and traffic calming. Further work had been undertaken to extend the operational hours of bus lanes in certain areas to provide more protection for the cyclists using them in addition to the provision of temporary parallel cycle routes.

The Mayor then reported that he proposed to exercise his discretion under the constitution to group the next three questions as they each related to Stockport Central Library:-

- Relating to Stockport Central Library being a good-sized, purpose built facility in a good location and why the Council was trying to move the library facility, either on a temporary or permanent basis, and what evidence there was that the current facility was no longer fit for purpose.
- Relating to the fact that other library facilities had been successfully reopened and what barriers there were to reopening Stockport Central Library. Further, was the Council trying to keep Central Library closed pending a more permanent move into Merseyway.
- Relating to a response made by Councillor Butler to question asked at the Corporate, Resource Management & Governance Scrutiny Committee on 22 September where she stated "the consultation could have come across better as a phased approach to providing a library service and other elements in one go" and whether this meant the people have Stockport had been misled in this consultation.

The Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Devolution (Councillor Elise Wilson) responded that there was nothing intrinsically wrong or 'broken' with Central Library, but that the library facility could not currently be opened in adherence to the health and safety measures required to operate the facility in a covid-safe way. However, the Council recognised that it had a responsibility to continue to offer library services and that the current proposals were an honest attempt to try and address that problem.

Councillor Wilson stated that it remained a priority for the Council to preserve the Central Library building whilst it was not open and to ensure that it was appropriately maintained and cared for, and that the Council remained committed to consulting on its use should it decide to do anything else with the building; however at this stage there were no such plans.

The Cabinet Member for Citizen Focus & Engagement (Councillor Kate Butler) further responded that no one had been misled with regard to the One Stockport Hub proposals or on any future plans for Stockport Central Library. It was stated that when it became apparent that there was some confusion over whether it was proposed that services would be removed on a permanent basis, steps were taken to clarify that this was a temporary move and purely due to the challenges of providing library services in a covid-safe way at this time.

- Relating to whether the Council would give adequate notice of their intention to cut down trees together with the reasons so that local residents could express their views and have them taken into account.

The Cabinet Member for Sustainable Stockport (Councillor Sheila Bailey) responded that the Council managed approximately 1.3 million trees and that no trees were removed unless they were dead, dying, diseased, causing an actionable nuisance or had been agreed for removal through the planning process. It was stated that given the scale of the operation, it was not currently practicable for the Council to inform residents in advance about trees that were to be felled, however it was confirmed that no tree was felled unless there was a very good reason for doing so. Finally, Councillor Bailey stated that in the last four years, 2,750 new additional trees had been planted and over 1,700 replacement highway trees had also been planted.

(ii) Petitions and Presentations

Petitions

The Mayor reported on the receipt of two petitions as follows:-

- a petition signed by 1,490 local signatories asking the Council to not approve any expansion of the Bredbury Parkway industrial estate into the protected green space of the Tame Valley.
- a petition signed by 4,001 asking the Council to rescind the proposal to close and replace the Central Library with a much reduced library service located in the empty ex-Argos unit in the Merseyway.

The Cabinet Member for Citizen Focus & Engagement (Councillor Kate Butler) thanked residents for the submission of their petition in relation to Stockport Central Library and stated that the consultation could and should have been clearer that the proposal was in relation to library services and not the library building and that concerns over the building itself could have been addressed more explicitly. However, Councillor Butler maintained that the consultation remained legitimate and robust and that her overriding concern remained the safety of the public and library staff coupled with trying to provide a town centre library service as quickly as possible.

RESOLVED – That the petitions be referred to the Corporate Director (Place) and Deputy Chief Executive.

Presentations

No such arrangements had been made for the meeting.

(iii) Joint Authorities

(a) Greater Manchester Police and Crime Panel

Councillor Gribbon referred to the recruitment of new police officers and suggested that the figures that had been previously quoted were not accurate due to existing officers being on periods of leave or not on active duty, and it was queried whether any further information could be provided in relation to the numbers of officers who were currently not in active service.

Councillor Peers responded that she appreciated the concerns expressed and that she would provide a written response that would be circulated to all members of the Council.

(b) Greater Manchester Combined Authority

Councillor Smart commented on the failure to secure an agreement between the Mayor of Greater Manchester and central government on a package of support for businesses impacted by the movement into Tier 2. The government had subsequently made an announcement on the financial support that would be offered and it was queried whether that funding would be sufficient to meet the needs of Greater Manchester's economy, and if not what the size of the gap was.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Devolution (Councillor Elise Wilson) responded that at this stage the full details of what the package amounted to were not available and discussions were taking place to fully establish this.

Councillor Smart further queried what the failure of these negotiations meant for the state of devolution across the United Kingdom, and in particular in Greater Manchester and whether the current arrangements were fit for purpose.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Devolution (Councillor Elise Wilson) responded that Greater Manchester had made more progress with regard to devolution than many other regions in England and that she supported further devolution to Greater Manchester.

Finally, Councillor Smart asked whether the Leader of the Council would push for Greater Manchester to be included in a pilot so that relatives of care home residents were considered as key workers to enable them to gain access to regular testing which would allow them to see their relatives in these settings.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Devolution (Councillor Elise Wilson) responded that she fully agreed with this proposal and that she would raise it at the Greater Manchester Covid Committee.

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Councillor Hunter stated the Liberal Democrat Group had consistently opposed the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework because of the damage they feared it would do to the borough's precious green spaces. Councillor Hunter further reported that Andrew Gwynne MP had recently put his name to a letter to the Leader of the Council, and asked whether he was right when he stated that "we can only imagine that you as a Leader do not have an adequate understanding of the site and the destruction this development will have to our shared border and beautiful countryside".

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Devolution (Councillor Elise Wilson) responded that she understood why people wanted to protect the environment and the green belt, but that the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework was a proposal that sought to balance the need to deliver jobs homes and the protection of the environment. Councillor Wilson stated that all of these factors were important and needed to be delivered, but getting the balance right would be difficult.

Councillor Hunter further asked whether the Leader of the Council would take on board the additional comments in the letter co-signed by Andrew Gwynne MP where it was stated that "we ask you to think again to put the future of our boroughs first and protect our precious green belt for generations to come".

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Devolution (Councillor Elise Wilson) stated that she was committed to the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework as it provided a positive step for Stockport to work together with its neighbours to deliver on jobs, housing and the environment. Councillor Wilson further stated that Andrew Gwynne was standing up for his constituents and what he believed was right.

Councillor Mike Hurleston asked for an update on the prospects of Manchester Airport and the exposure of the Council to risk in the lights of its past investments in the airport.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Devolution (Councillor Elise Wilson) stated that the aviation industry and been disproportionality affected by the current crisis and that the airport was not projected to recover to pre-covid levels until 2023/24. Councillor Wilson noted that there were a number of initiatives that it was hoped would mitigate against some of the impacts of the current restrictions such as improvements in testing and reductions in quarantine times. Councillor Wilson confirmed that she would respond in writing with further details in relation to the investments made by the Council in Manchester Airport Group.

Councillor Hurleston further asked if he could be provided with an update on the economic prospects for Greater Manchester and what impact Covid-19 may have on economic growth projections and the dynamic between Manchester's City Centre and the region's town centres.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Devolution (Councillor Elise Wilson) stated that the Greater Manchester Combined Authority received an economic update report to each of its meetings that provided the most up to date information which she would be happy to share with members as soon as it became available.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET

(i) Youth Justice Plan 2020-21

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services & Education (Councillor Colin Foster) submitted the Youth Justice Plan for 2020/21 (copies of which had been circulated).

RESOLVED – That the Youth Justice Plan 2020/21 be approved and adopted.

4. ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS RELATING TO COUNCILLORS CONDUCT IN 2019/20

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning & Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing an update on complaints received about the conduct of members during the 2019/20 municipal year.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

5. LEADER'S REPORT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

(i) Cabinet Business

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Devolution (Councillor Elise Wilson) reported that earlier this year society had been turned upside down by the arrival of the coronavirus pandemic and the government's response was to implement a national lockdown coupled with significant financial support measures. Following this period, track and trace measures had been implemented coupled with more financial assistance to help the country start to return to normality. Councillor Wilson stated that the Cabinet had been supportive of that approach and at all times had endeavoured to support and protect the people of Stockport. The North West was one of the areas to come of lockdown with higher rates of infection and as a consequence, from July Stockport had almost continuously been placed under additional measures and restrictions. Councillor Wilson stated that officers and health colleagues have been working to combat the rise.

Councillor Wilson stated that it had become clear that the national tools had not been sufficient to bring down the infection rate, and at a Greater Manchester level it had been considered that a better route would be through devolved test trace, isolate and compliance, coupled with support for those most affected should they contract Covid-19.

Councillor Wilson reported that the leaders of the ten Greater Manchester councils had entered into discussions with the government in relation to these matters as it was felt that Tier 3 restrictions would not have as much impact as the proposals put forward by Greater Manchester. However, it was clear that the government wanted to maintain its current policy and as a result, Greater Manchester entered into negotiations over the appropriate tier and which financial package was needed to support businesses and residents.

Greater Manchester returned with a fully costed evidence-based package of proposals that would have supported residents and businesses throughout the difficult weeks ahead within Tier 3 restrictions, however the government rejected that offer and imposed Tier 3 on Greater Manchester without a support package confirmed. It had subsequently

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become clear that the £60 million offer of support from the government had been based on a formula that they didn't wish to deviate from, and in the light of that and the potential hardship faced by businesses and residents, the Labour leaders made a decision to accept the government funding offer.

It was confirmed that talks were ongoing, but as soon as any details were known, Councillor Wilson undertook to share this members of the Council.

Finally, Councillor Wilson then reported that she was disappointed that the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework proposals were not able to be considered by the Council Meeting this evening, and that members had received an email with an updated timetable.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning & Governance (Councillor Tom McGee) reported that he had previously stated his aim that the Council wouldn't need to engage in an emergency budget because of the implications and the impact on services, staff and residents. Councillor McGee stated that the Council had received a number of grants from the government including infection control grants, hardship funds and the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund that had bolstered the Council's position for this financial year. Further funding would also become available once the borough entered Tier 3 restrictions. Councillor McGee further outlined the range of support that the Council was offering to communities in Stockport through this difficult time.

Councillor McGee stated that while the Council's financial position was relatively stable for the current financial year, there remained concerns about the future with regard to demographic changes and further loss of income coupled with increased expenditure that would mean careful consideration would need to be given to the use of reserves, grants, council tax revenue and savings for the next financial year.

The Cabinet Member for Citizen Focus & Engagement (Councillor Kate Butler) reported that NK Theatre Arts based at Romiley Forum, Rising Stars North West and Stockport Plaza had recently benefited from rounds one and two of the Arts Council's Cultural Recovery Fund.

Councillor Butler then reported on the activities that had taken place during the recent 'Get Online Week' and thanked all those that had taken part and those who had contributed to making the week a success.

Councillor Butler referred to the digitalstockport.info website and the call out for more individuals and organisations to join the digital inclusion alliance with a particular focus on recruiting as many community groups as possible.

Finally,, Councillor Butler reported on the work to restore library services in a Covid-safe manner. It was stated that a small number of libraries were currently in operation and it was hoped to open a couple more before the end of the year.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Family Services & Education (Councillor Colin Foster) reported that one of the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic had been an increase in the number of children taken into care, with 79 cases in the period between 23 march and early June 2020. It was stated that for the same period in 2019, there had been 49 children taken into care marking a significant increase.

Councillor Foster then reported on the situation in local schools and that following the full reopening of schools in September, once a pupil had been asked to self-isolate, the whole bubble was also required to do so which meant that in some cases significant numbers of pupils were being sent home for two weeks. While this was still happening on occasion, a more targeted approach was being taken with the schools. The Education Team with support from public health colleagues have been able to develop their own test and trace which meant that only contacts were having to be isolated.

Councillor Foster then referred to the current financial position of local schools and that in recent times it had been regular for schools to predict potential in-year deficits on their budgets that had been mitigated using reserves. These were now declining in total and the current situation was that 65 out of 93 maintained schools had projected in-year deficits. However, this position had now been compounded because of the additional expenditure that schools were incurring because of the Covid-19 crisis for which little central government funding had been made available.

The Cabinet Member for Economy & Regeneration (Councillor David Meller) reported that he had recently attended a discussion with other cabinet members and local businesses to hear about the impact of Covid-19 on those businesses and in particular on the hospitality sector.

Councillor Meller then stated that he hoped to be able to make some positive announcements in the near future in relation to the RedRock and Stockport Exchange Phase 3 developments. It was further stated that he was involved in dialogue with Capital & Centric about their intentions for the future development of Weir Mill. Councillor Meller also referred to the work being carried out by Hall & Co in for the redevelopment of a number of underused sites in the Underbanks area and stated that a consultation was taking place that closed on 11 November 2020 in relation to the public's views of the Underbanks area as it currently was.

Councillor Meller reported on two ongoing engagement exercises that were taking place with regard to Active Neighbourhood proposals for Romiley and the Heatons which had received 2,650 and 7,201 responses already.

The Cabinet Member for Inclusive Neighbourhoods (Councillor Amanda Peers) reported that with regard to local policing, while it had been busy, it had not been overwhelmingly so with many issues related to anti-social behaviour and public disorder with licensed premises and Covid breaches of which there had been approximately 80 reports a week. Officers continued to try and balance enforcement of the covid regulations against competing crime and disorder priorities. Greater Manchester Police were working closely with Council colleagues and the new pandemic response team was meeting regularly and were well prepared for the further changes in restrictions.

Councillor Peers reported on the recent publication of the Annual Report which outlines the functions, activity and progress in meeting the police and crime objectives in the Mayor's Police and Crime Plan. The report provided a wide range of information including some of the challenges faced as a result of Covid, information on recruitment and allocation of officers and support staff as well a financial information.

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Councillor Peers then reported on work taking place at a Greater Manchester and local level to support those who may be at risk of losing their job or having a reduction in hours. It was stated that Stockport Jobs Match had evolved into a well-used resource that linked people with jobs, training and employment support.

Finally, Councillor Peers referred to the Stockport Fairtrade Group and reminded members that Stockport was a Fairtrade Town and supported the use of Fairtrade products where possible. It was stated that while the Annual Fairtrade Event would not be able to take place this year, there was a plan for trades to sell their products online and Councillor Peers urged all members to 'like' the Stockport Fairtrade Facebook page.

The Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Adult Care & Health (Councillor Jude Wells) reported that on the current covid infection rate in Stockport that had risen exponentially recently and was now at around 300 per 100,000. Work was taking place with the Public Health and Adult Care departments to support communities to address this. Councillor Wells reiterated the importance of public health messaging around hand washing, social distancing and the wearing of face masks.

Councillor Wells reported on the positive work taking place in care homes, including a survey undertaken to understand what testing regime was right for them, and the response indicated that up to 98% of staff were being tested at the moment. It was further reported that with regard to the annual flu vaccination programme, 69% of residents in the over-65 group had been vaccinated compared to 61% at the same time in the previous year.

Finally, Councillor Wells reported that the annual Star Awards were due to be held remotely in November. It was stated that the Awards aimed to recognise the work of the provider sector and was organised by the Council in conjunction with the Clinical Commissioning Group.

(ii) Questions

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Devolution; the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Resources, Commissioning & Governance; and the Cabinet Members for Citizen Focus & Engagement, Children, Family Services & Education, Economy & Regeneration, Inclusive Neighbourhoods and Sustainable Stockport answered questions and responded to comments relating to the business of the Cabinet in accordance with Council Meeting Procedure Rule 11.

(iii) Minutes

The Mayor declared the Minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 28 September and 6 October 2020 (copies of which had been circulated) and the record of executive decisions taken (copies of which were circulated) since the last meeting of the Council to be duly received.

6. SCRUTINY

(i) Scrutiny Business

There were no reports from the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees on the conduct of their business since the last Council Meeting.

(ii) Questions

There were no questions relating to the business of the Scrutiny Committees in accordance with Council Meeting Procedure Rule 11.

(iii) Minutes

The Mayor declared the Minutes of the following Scrutiny Committees (copies of which had been circulated with the Summons) to be duly received:-

Adult Social Care & Health – 24 September 2020
Children & Families – 23 September 2020
Communities & Housing – 21 September 2020
Corporate, Resource Management & Governance – 22 September 2020
Economy & Regeneration – 24 September 2020
Scrutiny Co-ordination – 5 October 2020

7. ORDINARY AND AREA COMMITTEES

(i) Regulatory Business

There were no reports from the Chairs of the Planning and Highways Regulation, Licensing, Environment and Safety or Audit Committees on the conduct of their business since the last Council Meeting.

(ii) Questions

There were no questions relating to the business of the Ordinary, Area and Ward Committees in accordance with Council Meeting Procedure Rule 11.

(iii) Minutes

The Mayor declared the Minutes of the following Ordinary and Area Committees (copies of which had been circulated with the Summons) to be duly received:-

Ordinary Committees

Audit – 9 September 2020
Health & Wellbeing Board – 23 September 2020
Licensing, Environment & Safety – 9 September 2020
Licensing, Environment & Safety Sub – 8 October 2020
Planning & Highways Regulation – 10 September 2020

Area Committees

Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South – 1 October 2020
Central Stockport – 1 October 2020
Cheadle – 29 September 2020
Heatons & Reddish – 30 September 2020
Marple – 30 September 2020

Stepping Hill – 29 September 2020

Werneth – 28 September 2020

8. MOTIONS - NOTICE OF WHICH HAVE BEEN GIVEN UNDER COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURE RULE 12

- (i) Re-opening Stockport Central Library and transparency about any future closure plans

MOVED AND SECONDED - This council meeting notes:

- that Stockport Central Library is currently closed due to COVID and the need for social distancing; and
- the mixed messages coming from the Cabinet regarding whether there are plans for this closure to become permanent, arising from the recent consultation on opening the One Stockport Hub in Merseyway.

This council meeting further notes that the much-loved Stockport Central Library:

- was built during 1913 and 1914, following a Carnegie endowment totalling £15,000, equivalent to over £1.2m today; this amount was 50% higher than the original offer, following a design submission by Bradshaw, Gass and Hope in Bolton that the Carnegie Assessor determined was worthy of a “premium”, subject to Stockport funding and building a branch library elsewhere in the town for £2,000 (£161k today); and
- the building was given Grade II listing in April 2017 as “a good example of civic architecture”, with “a strong, well-proportioned composition”, “a mature example of free-Classicism”, and “as a good example of a Carnegie library” with a “prominent contribution to the streetscape, and group-value with other listed civic buildings in close proximity”.

This council meeting welcomes recent clarification that there are no current plans to permanently cease library services from the Central Library, but notes no long term assurance has been given about possible future use of this important site and shares residents’ concerns that the library may not re-open.

Notwithstanding the warm words said about the architectural importance of the building by the Cabinet, and accepting that provision may need to be interrupted at present due to COVID, this council meeting believes that a commitment is needed for the provision of publically-accessible library services to continue in our Central Library unless and until any alternative plans are made public and there has been a proper and transparent public consultation.

This council meeting therefore resolves:

- to re-open Stockport Central Library as soon as social distancing restrictions have been removed; and
- not to permanently close or remove library services from Stockport Central Library unless and until there has been a proper public consultation that makes this intention clear and sets out the alternative plans for the building so that Stockport residents can have their say.

AMENDMENT MOVED AND SECONDED - This council meeting notes that the much-loved Stockport Central Library:

- is currently closed due to COVID and the need for social distancing;
- was built during 1913 and 1914, following a Carnegie endowment totalling £15,000, equivalent to over £1.2m today;
- this amount was 50% higher than the original offer, following a design submission by Bradshaw, Gass and Hope in Bolton that the Carnegie Assessor determined was worthy of a “premium”, subject to Stockport funding and building a branch library elsewhere in the town for £2,000 (£161k today); and
- the building was given Grade II listing in April 2017 as “a good example of civic architecture”, with “a strong, well-proportioned composition”, “a mature example of free-Classicism”, and “as a good example of a Carnegie library” with a “prominent contribution to the streetscape, and group-value with other listed civic buildings in close proximity”.

This council meeting further notes:

- the extraordinary circumstances created by the covid-19 pandemic that has seen library and book usage fall to 15% of pre covid demand and PC usage to 23%;
- the widespread operational challenges in delivering services in a covid secure manner, which has resulted in 11 fte library staff being redeployed to the contact centre to manage Test and Trace calls and library calls and emails;
- that recruitment is currently underway for a number of vacant library posts; and
- the prior acknowledgement of the outstanding job our front line and key workers have done to deliver services in such difficult circumstances

This council further recognises:

- the council’s commitment to not close a single library over the past decade despite having to make over £120 million worth of budget reductions;
- this administration’s commitment to maintaining libraries services; and
- the council’s ambitions to align public service provision within economic regeneration

This council meeting therefore resolves:

- not to permanently close or remove library services from Stockport Central Library unless and until there has been a proper public consultation that makes this intention clear and sets out the alternative plans for both the library services and the building so that Stockport residents can have their say.

9. COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURE RULE 9 (DURATION OF MEETING)COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURE RULE 9 (DURATION OF MEETING)

At this stage in the proceedings (10.00 pm) the Mayor informed the Council Meeting that the provisions of Council Meeting Procedure Rule 9.1 (Duration of Meeting) would be invoked unless the Council Meeting wished the meeting to continue.

RESOLVED – (57 for, 4 against) That the provisions of Council Meeting Procedure Rule 9.1 relating to the duration of (Council) meetings be duly invoked.

10. MOTIONS - NOTICE OF WHICH HAVE BEEN GIVEN UNDER COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURE RULE 12 (continued)

- (i) Re-opening Stockport Central Library and transparency about any future closure plans (continued)

Upon the amendment being put to the vote:-

For the amendment 25, against 35, abstentions 1.

AMENDMENT NOT CARRIED

The original motion was then put to the vote and it was

RESOLVED – (37 for, 24 abstentions) This council meeting notes:

- that Stockport Central Library is currently closed due to COVID and the need for social distancing; and
- the mixed messages coming from the Cabinet regarding whether there are plans for this closure to become permanent, arising from the recent consultation on opening the One Stockport Hub in Merseyway.

This council meeting further notes that the much-loved Stockport Central Library:

- was built during 1913 and 1914, following a Carnegie endowment totalling £15,000, equivalent to over £1.2m today; this amount was 50% higher than the original offer, following a design submission by Bradshaw, Gass and Hope in Bolton that the Carnegie Assessor determined was worthy of a “premium”, subject to Stockport funding and building a branch library elsewhere in the town for £2,000 (£161k today); and
- the building was given Grade II listing in April 2017 as “a good example of civic architecture”, with “a strong, well-proportioned composition”, “a mature example of free-Classicism”, and “as a good example of a Carnegie library” with a “prominent contribution to the streetscape, and group-value with other listed civic buildings in close proximity”.

This council meeting welcomes recent clarification that there are no current plans to permanently cease library services from the Central Library, but notes no long term assurance has been given about possible future use of this important site and shares residents’ concerns that the library may not re-open.

Notwithstanding the warm words said about the architectural importance of the building by the Cabinet, and accepting that provision may need to be interrupted at present due to COVID, this council meeting believes that a commitment is needed for the provision of publically-accessible library services to continue in our Central Library unless and until any alternative plans are made public and there has been a proper and transparent public consultation.

Council Meeting - 22 October 2020

This council meeting therefore resolves:

- to re-open Stockport Central Library as soon as social distancing restrictions have been removed; and
- not to permanently close or remove library services from Stockport Central Library unless and until there has been a proper public consultation that makes this intention clear and sets out the alternative plans for the building so that Stockport residents can have their say.

The meeting closed at 11.10 pm