



STOCKPORT

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of the Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Stockport on 11 January 2024 at 6.00 pm.

PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Graham Greenhalgh) in the chair; Deputy Mayor (Councillor Kerry Waters); Councillors Geoff Abell, Shan Alexander, Jake Austin, Joe Barratt, Rosemary Barratt, Grace Baynham, Christine Carrigan, Asa Caton, Anna Charles-Jones, Angie Clark, Laura Clingan, Liz Crix, Dickie Davies, Will Dawson, Dean Fitzpatrick, Colin Foster, Helen Foster-Grime, James Frizzell, Sue Glithero, Graham Greenhalgh, Steve Gribbon, Yvonne Guariento, Dominic Hardwick, Helen Hibbert, Keith Holloway, Ian Hunter, Mark Hunter, Dallas Jones, Mark Jones, Jilly Julian, Gary Lawson, Colin MacAlister, Carole McCann, Jeremy Meal, Wendy Meikle, David Meller, Janet Mobbs, Tom Morrison, Ian Powney, Mark Roberts, Dena Ryness, David Sedgwick, Becky Senior, Will Sharp, Frankie Singleton, Lisa Smart, Charlie Stewart, Catherine Stuart, Leah Taylor, John Taylor, Aron Thornley, Claire Vibert, Karl Wardlaw, Kerry Waters, Pete West, Wendy Wild, David Wilson, Rachel Wise, Suzanne Wyatt, Alex Wynne 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 16 November 2023 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 Sir Tom Arnold, the former MP for Hazel Grove between 1974 and 1997 had passed away on 14 November 2023.

The Mayor invited all those present to stand in silence as a mark of respect.

The Mayor then reported that since the last Council Meeting, he had attended a number of events including ten remembrance day services. The Mayor further reported that he had attended 21 Christmas events including services, concerts and choir recitals.

Finally, the Mayor reported that the Mayor's Charity Ball would be held on 5 April 2024 to raise funds for Stockport Sea Cadets.

(iv) Declarations of Interest

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

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The following interests were declared:-

Personal Interests

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Interest</u>
David Wilson	Summons Item 8(ii) – ‘Motion – Israel, Gaza and the rest of Palestine as a member of ‘Stop Antisemitism’; ‘North West Friends of Israel’; and ‘Labour Friends of Israel’.
Matt Wynne	Summons item 8(i) – ‘ Motion – Local Government Funding Settlement’ as an employee of Manchester City Council.

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.

Five public questions were submitted as follows:-

- Relating to expanding access to plant-based foods.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) responded that agriculture and the food that we eat did play a big part in the carbon emissions that were generated. However, it was stated that it was important that in any endeavour you were able to community with you and the campaign outlined in the question went much further than simply promoting a climate friendly lifestyle. Councillor Roberts welcomed the fact that it was now easier than ever to be vegetarian or vegan, however, this needed to be a choice and not be forced on people as the plant-based treaty seemed to get very close to.

- Relating to housing issues at Hollywood Towers; the accountability of Stockport Homes; and the integration of newbuild Mayoral Development Corporation residential development within the Edgeley community.

Councillor Asa Caton responded that he had been involved in dealing with a number of issues at Hollywood Towers over the preceding twelve months and the matters raised by the questioner had been documented by Stockport Homes during various meetings with them over this period. Councillor Caton stated that when issues were sufficiently escalated, activity did often take place to try and address them, however it was stated that it should not require the involvement of councillors for Stockport Homes to rectify problems raised by residents.

Councillor Matt Wynne further responded that the three Edgeley ward councillors shared the concerns expressed by the questioner in relation to the management of Hollywood Towers by Stockport Homes. Particular issues were raised with regard to accountability, communication and responding promptly to building management problems. Councillor Wynne further stated that it was important that as development within the area of the Stockport Mayoral Development Corporation started to materialise, that this was fully

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integrated within the Edgeley community and that officers worked to ensure that investment in the Hollywood Towers area was secured through developer contributions.

- Relating to fly-tipping in Reddish and the measures being taken to address this.

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services (Councillor Grace Baynham) responded that the Council was aware of the meat being dumped at a number of locations around the South Reddish and Heaton Chapel area and that its contractors had cleaned up the affected areas as quickly as possible. Door-to-door enquiries had been made and local CCTV coverage was being assessed to try to identify those responsible. The Council has also worked with colleagues and partner agencies including the police, Natural England and the National Food Crime Unit at Defra.

- Relating to the potential for the area to the rear of St Matthews Terrace, Edgeley into a paid-for car park.

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services (Councillor Grace Baynham) responded that as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan, proposals had been put forward to look at those car parks that were currently free of charge and whether it was viable to turn them into paid-for car parks. This work was at a very early stage, however the issues raised by the questioner would be considered as part of the assessment process.

- Relating to whether the Council would consider new testimonies relating to its 2019 declaration of a climate emergency and accelerated net zero policy.

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) responded that the Council remained guided by the science on this matter and that if the international consensus changed, then the Council would re-examine its position. However, it was stated that the questioner had not provided a compelling argument to change the current approach.

Four further public questions were submitted where the questioners were not in attendance at the meeting and, in accordance with the Code of Practice, the Chief Executive was requested to respond to the questioners in writing.

(ii) Petitions and Presentations

There were no petitions or presentations.

(iii) Joint Authorities

(a) Greater Manchester Police, Crime & Fire Panel

There were no questions in relation to the business of the Greater Manchester Police, Crime & Fire Panel.

(b) Greater Manchester Combined Authority

There were no questions in relation to the business of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, the Greater Manchester Bee Network Committee or the Greater Manchester Waste & Recycling Committee.

3. POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET

(i) Youth Justice Plan 2023-24

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education (Councillor Wendy Meikle) submitted the Youth Justice Plan for 2023/24 (copies of which had been circulated).

RESOLVED - That the Youth Justice Plan 2023/24 be approved and adopted.

(ii) Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy Mid-Year Review Report 2023/24

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) providing a mid-year review of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy for 2023/24.

RESOLVED – (1) That the report and the treasury activity in the first half of the financial year be noted.

(2) That the revised interest rate forecasts for PWLB rates over the short and medium term which would drive the Council's long-term borrowing strategies going forward, be noted.

(iii) Business Rates and Council Tax Discounts Annual Review

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the annual review of the local scheme of discounts and exemptions which are available in respect of Business Rates and Council Tax.

RESOLVED - That approval be given to the following in respect of the Council Tax and Business rates Discounts and Exemptions:-

(1) That the CASC top-up scheme be continued for the financial year 2024-25, enabling CASCs to achieve 100% relief from non-domestic rates, provided they meet the qualifying criteria at Appendix 2.

(2) That charity relief remains limited to the 80% mandatory relief for the financial year 2024-25.

(3) That rural rate relief continues to be limited to 50% mandatory relief for the financial year 2024-25 and should any village shops be established in the future then additional discretionary relief should be awarded up to 100%.

(4) That the 50% discount and qualifying criteria for not-for-profit organisations be maintained for the financial year 2024-25.

(5) That the local scheme for large businesses which are new to the Borough or those undergoing significant expansion in the Borough be continued for 2024-25.

(6) That the continuation of a case-by-case approach for business rates discounts where exceptional circumstances exist be continued for 2024-25. It is unlikely that exceptional

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circumstances relief would be awarded to an organisation which was in receipt of support from the council, either grant funded or commissioned.

(7) That the current rules for backdating or making a variation to discretionary rate relief awards as described at paras 3.10.4 and 3.10.5 will continue for 2024-25.

(8) That the council continues to no longer offer a Council Tax discount in respect of unoccupied properties for 2024-25, except for class E & F dwellings where 100% relief is awarded.

(9) That the maximum Council Tax premium charges continue to be applied in respect of class A, C & D dwellings (empty and unfurnished properties) at the rates shown at para 4.1.8 for 2024-25.

(10) That the timeframe for which a premium should be charged on long-term empty properties, is reduced from two years to one year, from 1 April 2024.

(11) That a premium charge of 100% is applied on class B dwellings (empty and furnished properties, which include second homes) from 1 April 2025.

(12) That any Council Tax liability for care leavers up to the age of 25 be reduced to zero for 2024-25.

(13) That Stockport's Council Tax Support scheme is maintained for the financial year 2024-25 as detailed at Appendix 5.

(14) That the Council Tax discretionary fund is set at £0.385m for 2024-25, supporting customers facing financial difficulty, with no alternative means.

(15) That delegation is given to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to review and adjust the Council Tax discretionary fund during 2024-25 capped at a total fund of £0.500m if required, to support the council's cost-of-living response.

(16) That the council's discretionary support policy for help with rent and Council Tax costs at Appendix 6 is endorsed for 2024-25.

(17) That delegation is given to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to consider any subsequent government announcements that impact on Business Rates and Council Tax reductions for 2024-25, and to decide what changes should be made aligned to legislation.

(18) That approval be given to the setting of the Council's 2024-25 Council Tax Taxbase at 98,396.6 Band D equivalent dwellings.

(iv) Referendum and Adoption of Marple Neighbourhood Plan

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Climate Change submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) setting out the key progress on the Marple Neighbourhood Plan and the next stages in the process before it formally became part of the development plan for Stockport, including a proposal for the Marple Neighbourhood Plan to be put to a public referendum.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the Marple Neighbourhood Plan going to referendum, and for that plan to form part of the development plan for Stockport in the event that it received majority support at that subsequent referendum.

4. GENERAL BUSINESS

(i) Membership of the Health & Wellbeing Board

RESOLVED - That approval be given to the amendment of the Terms of Reference of the Health & Wellbeing Board to make provision for the inclusion of a representative of Sector3 within the Membership of the Board to represent the wider Voluntary, Community, Faith-based and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) Sector in Stockport.

(ii) Appointment of Local Returning Officer

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the requirement for the Council to appoint an officer of the Council to be the Local Returning Officer for the election of a Combined Authority Mayor.

RESOLVED – That Caroline Simpson be appointed as the Local Returning Officer for Stockport Council for Combined Authority Mayoral elections.

5. LEADER'S REPORT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

(i) Cabinet Business

The Leader of the Council; the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment; and the Cabinet Members for Children, Families & Education; Economy, Regeneration & Housing; Finance & Resources; and Parks, Highways & Transport Services made a report on the conduct of Cabinet business since the last Council Meeting.

(ii) Questions

The Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Members for Communities, Culture & Sport; Economy, Regeneration & Housing; Finance & Resources; and Parks, Highways & Transport Services 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 Cabinet held 5 December 2023 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 – 23 November 2023

Children & Families – 22 November 2023

Communities & Transport – 20 November 2023

Corporate, Resource Management & Governance – 21 November 2023

Economy, Regeneration & Climate Change – 23 November 2023

7. ORDINARY AND AREA COMMITTEES

(i) To receive a report from the Chairs of the Planning & Highways Regulation and Licensing, Environment & Safety Committees on the conduct of their business since the last Council Meeting.

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 Committee – 15 November 2023

Health & Wellbeing Board – 29 November 2023

Licensing, Environment & Safety 8 November and 13 December 2023

Licensing, Environment & Safety Sub – 29 November and 4 December 2023

Planning & Highways Regulation – 9 November and 14 December 2023

Area Committees

Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South – 30 November 2023

Central Stockport – 30 November 2023

Cheadle – 28 November 2023

Heatons & Reddish – 27 November 2023

Marple – 29 November 2023

Stepping Hill – 28 November 2023

Werneth – 27 November 2023

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

(i) Local Government Funding Settlement

RESOLVED - This council meeting notes with concern the indicative Local Government Settlement recently announced by the Conservative Government. Yet again this Conservative Government is planning to pass the buck, meaning that local residents may be burdened with higher Council Tax bills, while at the same time receiving reduced services.

(ii) Israel, Gaza and the rest of Palestine

In accordance with the provisions of Council Meeting Procedure Rule 14.7 (Alteration of Motion) at the request of the mover of the motion the Council Meeting gave its consent to the alteration of the motion as tabled to incorporate an alteration which had been published and circulated in advance of the meeting.

MOVED AND SECONDED - This Council:

- Expresses deep sympathy for all those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine. To those in the Borough of Stockport who have been affected by this conflict we offer our support in this difficult time.
- Condemns the murder of Israeli civilians, the taking of hostages by Hamas and subsequent death and destruction in Gaza. Believes that the urgent priority must be to stop the deaths and suffering of any more civilians in Gaza, Israel and the rest of Palestine.
- Hopes for an immediate further release of all hostages and release of Palestinian prisoners held without charge and an immediate permanent ceasefire to allow more aid and the possibility of a peaceful resolution.
- Believes the tragic recent events in Israel, Gaza and Palestine must not be allowed to divide our communities in Stockport.
- Believes Jews, Muslims and people of all faiths and none should feel safe in our Borough.
- Condemns the increase in anti-Semitic and Islamophobic violence and abuse in the UK and believes all forms of racism have no place in our Borough.

The Council resolves to:

- (i) explore how the Council can better support and facilitate events for people of all faiths and none, where they can come together and express solidarity and sadness in response to these events.

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- (ii) offer appropriate support to any local resident who needs our assistance as a result of these violent events.
- (iii) stand ready to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by these events.

The Council also resolves to ask all Group Leaders to write to the Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs to call on the UK Government to press all parties to agree:

- (i) to an urgent permanent ceasefire in Gaza, Israel and the rest of Palestine and to make every effort to resume the peace process;
- (ii) to guarantee that international humanitarian law is upheld and that civilians are protected in accordance with those laws;
- (iii) to ensure that civilians have access to humanitarian support, including unfettered access to medical supplies, food, electricity, other fuel and water.

AMENDMENT MOVED AND SECONDED - This Council:

- Expresses deep sympathy for all those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine. To those in the Borough of Stockport who have been affected by this conflict we offer our support in this difficult time.
- Condemns the murder of Israeli civilians, the taking of hostages by Hamas and subsequent death and destruction in Gaza. Believes that the urgent priority must be to stop the deaths and suffering of any more civilians in Gaza, Israel and the rest of Palestine.
- Condemns the sexual violence perpetrated by Hamas on 7 October and on female hostages still held in captivity
- Hopes for an immediate further release of all hostages and release of Palestinian prisoners held without charge and an immediate permanent ceasefire to allow more aid and the possibility of a peaceful resolution.
- Believes that the only credible basis for long-term peace is the delivery of a Palestinian state alongside a safe and secure Israel.
- Believes the tragic recent events in Israel, Gaza and Palestine must not be allowed to divide our communities in Stockport.
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- (i) to an urgent permanent, bilateral ceasefire in Gaza, Israel and the rest of Palestine and to make every effort to resume the peace process;
- (ii) to guarantee that international humanitarian law is upheld and that civilians are protected in accordance with those laws;
- (iii) To allow the Red Cross immediate access to hostages in Gaza, in order to provide urgent medical aid to the elderly, the sick and the wounded and to ensure all civilians have access to humanitarian support, including unfettered access to medical supplies, food, electricity, other fuel and water.
- (iv) Calls on the UK Government to do all in its powers to support those that are committed to a permanent peace and a 2-state solution.

AMENDMENT CARRIED

The motion, as amended, was then put as the substantive motion and it was

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- Condemns the murder of Israeli civilians, the taking of hostages by Hamas and subsequent death and destruction in Gaza. Believes that the urgent priority must be to stop the deaths and suffering of any more civilians in Gaza, Israel and the rest of Palestine.
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- (ii) to guarantee that international humanitarian law is upheld and that civilians are protected in accordance with those laws;
- (iii) To allow the Red Cross immediate access to hostages in Gaza, in order to provide urgent medical aid to the elderly, the sick and the wounded and to ensure all civilians have access to humanitarian support, including unfettered access to medical supplies, food, electricity, other fuel and water.
- (iv) Calls on the UK Government to do all in its powers to support those that are committed to a permanent peace and a 2-state solution.

The meeting closed at 9.15 pm