



# STOCKPORT

METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of the Council Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Stockport on 1 October 2024 at 6.00 pm.

## PRESENT

The Mayor (Councillor Suzanne Wyatt) in the chair; Deputy Mayor (Councillor Kerry Waters); Councillors Geoff Abell, Shan Alexander, Jake Austin, Joe Barratt, Rosemary Barratt, Grace Baynham, Jon Byrne, Christine Carrigan, Asa Caton, Anna Charles-Jones, Angie Clark, Laura Clingan, Liz Crix, Dickie Davies, Dean Fitzpatrick, Colin Foster, Helen Foster-Grime, James Frizzell, Sue Glithero, Graham Greenhalgh, Steve Gribbon, Dominic Hardwick, Helen Hibbert, Ian Hunter, Mark Hunter, Dallas Jones, Mark Jones, Jilly Julian, Gary Lawson, Colin MacAlister, Carole McCann, Holly McCormack, Jeremy Meal, Micheala Meikle, Wendy Meikle, David Meller, Mike Newman, Dan Oliver, Mark Roberts, Dena Ryness, David Sedgwick, Frankie Singleton, Catherine Stuart, Leah Taylor, John Taylor, Aron Thornley, Sue Thorpe, Claire Vibert, Karl Wardlaw, Pete West, Wendy Wild, David Wilson, Rachel Wise, Paul Wright and Alex Wynne.

## **1. FORMALITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### (i) Minutes

The Minutes (copies of which had been circulated) of the meeting of the Council held on 11 July 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

### (ii) Urgent Decisions

The Mayor reported that following consultation with her, the Chief Executive had taken urgent action under the constitution on 29 August 2024 to make appointments to the Greater Manchester Police, Fire and Crime Panel and the Greater Manchester Pension Fund Management Panel.

It was stated that the decision had been taken as urgent action to ensure that the Council had an appointed member in place should a meeting of the relevant bodies be convened in advance of this meeting of the Council Meeting.

RESOLVED – That the action be noted.

### (iii) Mayor's Announcements

With deep regret, the Mayor referred to the recent death of former councillor and mayor of the borough, Mrs Pam King. It was stated that Mrs King was first elected to the Council in 1996 representing the then Bramhall East ward. After a brief period away from the Council, Mrs King was re-elected in 2002 in the Cheadle Ward and then the Cheadle and Gatley Ward from 2004, before retiring from the Council in May 2015. She served as Mayor in 2008/09 and as Cabinet member for leisure between 2005 and 2007.

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The Leader of the Council (Councillor Mark Hunter) then paid tribute to the memory of Mrs King.

The Mayor then invited all those present to stand in silence as a mark of respect to the memory of Mrs King.

The Mayor then reported that since the last Council Meeting she had attended over 60 events which demonstrated the range and dedication of business and organisations in the borough.

### (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.

The following interests were declared:-

#### Personal Interests

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Interest</u>
Grace Baynham and Kawl Wardlaw	Summons Item 8(iv) – ‘Motion - Urgent funding to repair Stepping Hill Hospital and the provision of an additional town centre hospital facility’ as employees of Stockport NHS Foundation Trust.

## **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.

Four public questions were submitted as follows:-

- Relating to whether there was any evidence that the Greater Manchester Pension Fund was moving to divest from fossil fuels with specific targets and dates.

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) responded that she had recently attended a meeting of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund Advisory Panel and had not seen any evidence of a divestment from fossil fuels. Councillor Julian stated would continue to encourage from within and take forward the will of this Council in its motion from November 2022 that stated a commitment to creating a more transparent and environmentally responsible Greater Manchester Pension Fund.

- Relating to the attendance by local schoolchildren at the Council Meeting on 11 July 2024 in relation to the Schools’ Climate Assembly and whether they would be provided with information on the implications of net zero targets.

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The Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment (Councillor Mark Roberts) responded that he fundamentally disagreed with the questioner's position and that members from across the Council Chamber had been elected on platforms that including recognising, tackling and leading efforts against climate change. Councillor Roberts stated that he was proud that Stockport's young people were being educated to be responsible citizens that cared for their planet and the environment.

- Relating to the impact of development in the town centre on local residents and whether the Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing would agree to meet with local residents to discuss matters relating to regeneration and construction.

The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration & Housing (Councillor Colin MacAlister) responded that he appreciated some of the challenges that local residents faced. Councillor MacAlister stated that he was aware that residents had been in contact with developers who had responded to individual complaints. It was further stated that he had personally visited the area on two recent occasions to ensure that the issues being experienced by residents were not getting worse. Councillor MacAlister further stated that he would be happy to meet with local residents to discuss the matter in more detail.

- Relating to street cleaning and blocked gullies in Bramhall, Cheadle Hulme and Woodford.

The Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services (Councillor Grace Baynham) responded that he incredibly heavy rainfall experienced on earlier in the week caused river levels to rise all over the country and Stockport was no exception, with flood warnings in place into the evening and overnight. In addition, outdated main drainage systems managed by United Utilities were beyond their capacity, meaning roads could not adequately completely drain at peak periods. It was further stated that the Council had adopted a risk-based approach to highway gully cleansing in line with national guidance. An operational plan was developed which outlines the Council's priorities and was available on the Council's website. All gullies were cleaned on a routine cycle which for the majority of roads was every three years, but some routes are visited more frequently, particularly if there was a greater risk of flooding.

A further public question was submitted where the questioner was 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

#### Petition

One petition was submitted on behalf of the Friends of Bramley Close signed by 949 signatories requesting that the Council provide improved pedestrian access along Bramley Close, Bramhall to local facilities, especially for the disabled.

RESOLVED – That the petition be referred to the Director of Place Management and the Cabinet Member for Parks, Highways & Transport Services for a formal response.

#### Presentation – Greater Manchester Police

Assistant Chief Constable John Webster and Chief Superintendent Lewis Hughes attended the meeting and made a presentation and responded to questions in relation to policing issues within the Stockport area.

At the conclusion of the item, the Mayor expressed thanks Assistant Chief Constable John Webster and Chief Superintendent Lewis Hughes for their attendance and presentation.

(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) Children and Young People Plan 2024-27

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education (Councillor Wendy Meikle) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing a refreshed Children and Young People Plan 2024-2027 that the Stockport Family Partnership Board had collaborated to develop.

RESOLVED – That the Children and Young People Plan 2024-27 be approved and adopted.

(ii) Youth Justice Plan

The Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Education (Councillor Wendy Meikle) submitted the Youth Justice Plan for 2024/25 (copies of which had been circulated).

RESOLVED - That the Youth Justice Plan 2024/25 be approved and adopted.

(iii) Treasury Management Annual Report 2023/24

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the annual treasury report reviewing treasury management activities and the actual prudential and treasury indicators for 2023/24.

(1) That the actual 2023/24 prudential and treasury indicators in the report be approved.

(2) That the Annual Treasury Management Report for 2023/24 be noted.

#### **4. GENERAL BUSINESS**

##### **(i) Amendments to the Constitution**

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing proposals to make a number of amendments to the Constitution, including amendments to the Officer Scheme of delegations within the Officer Functions section of the Scheme of Delegation to realign some functions due to recent changes in roles and post holders; an amendment to the Individual Cabinet Member Functions; various amendments to the Proper Officer Appointments to reflect changes in job titles; and some typographical amendments to the Confidential Reporting (Whistleblowing) Policy.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the proposed amendments to the Constitution as detailed in the report.

##### **(ii) Allocation of Places on Committees in Accordance with the Proportionality Rules**

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) detailing the outcomes of a request submitted under Regulation 17(c)(i) of The Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 that the Council undertake a review of the allocation of seats to political groups.

RESOLVED – (1) That the composition of the Council and consequent allocation of seats to Political Groups on committees, as detailed in Section 3 of the report, be noted and approved.

(2) That it be noted that the Council has previously given approval to the adoption of alternative arrangements in respect of appointments to committees which are not strictly in accordance with proportionality under section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

(3) That Councillor Aron Thornley be appointed to replace Councillor Ian Powney on the Economy, Regeneration & Climate Change Scrutiny Committee.

(4) That Councillor Aron Thornley be appointed to replace Councillor Ian Hunter on the Planning & Highways Regulation Committee.

##### **(iii) Business Programme 2025/26**

The Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources (Councillor Jilly Julian) submitted a report (copies of which had been circulated) which set out the proposed Business Programme for 2025/26.

RESOLVED – That approval be given to the Business Programme for 2025/26.

#### **5. LEADER'S REPORT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME**

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### (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; and Finance & Resources made a report on the conduct of Cabinet business since the last Council Meeting.

### (ii) Questions

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Environment; and the Cabinet Members for Children Families & Education; Communities, Culture & Sport; Economy, Regeneration & Housing; 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 19 July and 18 September 2024 (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 – 6 August and 5 September 2024

Children & Families – 4 September 2024

Communities & Transport – 2 September 2024

Corporate, Resource Management & Governance – 3 September 2024

Economy, Regeneration & Climate Change – 18 July and 5 September 2024

## **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.

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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

Appointments – 10 July 2024

Audit – 17 July 2024

Health & Wellbeing Board – 17 July and 4 September 2024

Licensing, Environment & Safety – 10 July and 14 August 2024

Licensing, Environment & Safety Sub – 19 July, 13 August and 2 September 2024

Member – 1 July 2024

Planning & Highways Regulation – 9 July and 15 August 2024

Standards – 16 September 2024

#### Area Committees

Bramhall & Cheadle Hulme South – 1 August and 12 September 2024

Central Stockport – 1 August and 12 September 2024

Cheadle – 30 July and 10 September 2024

Heatons & Reddish – 29 July and 9 September 2024

Marple – 31 July and 11 September 2024

Stepping Hill – 30 July and 10 September 2024

Werneth – 29 July and 9 September 2024

#### Ward Committees and Area Sub-Committees

Brookfield Park Shiers Family Trust Sub-Committee – 25 July 2024

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

#### (i) Supporting Stockport residents through the ongoing cost of living crisis

The mover of the motion as printed in the Summons declined the invitation of the Mayor to do so.

The Mayor then declared that the motion fell for not having been moved.

#### (ii) Calling for a new threshold to determine Winter Fuel Payment eligibility

## Council Meeting - 1 October 2024

**MOVED AND SECONDED** - This Council meeting notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.

This Council Meeting is deeply concerned that many pensioners on lower and middle incomes will now not receive the payments:

- Across England and Wales the number of people eligible for winter fuel payments will fall by 10 million to only 1.5 million.
- In Stockport, 50,242 pensioners will be affected by the change, meaning 89.80% of Stockport's pensioners will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

This Council meeting believes that the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low – only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits, significantly below the living wage rate.

This Council meeting is also concerned by the low take up of pension credit, with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so. The Cabinet has already taken active steps to increase pension credit take up in recent years but recognises the role we must play to continue to increase awareness of benefits such as Pension Credit to encourage people to claim the support they are entitled to.

This Council meeting further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October with a further rise forecast for January which, combined by the removal of Winter Fuel Payments, will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

This Council meeting resolves to:

(1) Ask the Chief Executive to:

- write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and introduce a new, more reasonable threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel; Payments.
- Share this letter with the MPs for Cheadle, Hazel Grove and Stockport, asking them to give their formal support to halting the planned changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.

(2) Ask the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to:

- Commence a further, significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits and ensure residents know about the government's proposed change to the Winter Fuel Allowance, including the use of council noticeboards, social media, local press and targeted letters to those who may be eligible.
- Consider whether it will be possible to continue to offer the Warm Spaces scheme again this winter.

**AMENDMENT MOVED AND SECONDED** - This Council meeting notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.



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This Council meeting is also concerned by the low take up of pension credit, with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so. According to Policy in Practice, it is believed that over 3,300 Stockport residents are not claiming this support despite being eligible for it.

This council has already taken active steps to increase pension credit take up in recent years but recognises the role we must play to continue to increase awareness of benefits such as Pension Credit to encourage people to claim the support they are entitled to.

This Council meeting further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October with a further rise forecast for January.

This Council meeting resolves to:

(1) Ask the Chief Executive to:

- Write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to call for the Government to identify those pensioners who are eligible for pension credit and make the process easier. The council should then write to those who are eligible to encourage take-up. Council will also take the opportunity to acknowledge the extension of the Household Support Scheme, which gives councils flexibility in terms of how it is spent to support cost of living pressures.
- Share this letter with the MPs for Cheadle, Hazel Grove and Stockport, asking them to give their formal support to ensuring the Government does everything it can to contact those eligible for Pension Credit.

(2) Ask the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to:

- Commence a further, significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits and ensure residents know about the government's proposed change to the Winter Fuel Allowance, including the use of council noticeboards, social media, local press and targeted letters to those who may be eligible.
- Consider whether it will be possible to continue to offer the Warm Spaces scheme again this winter.

(3) Inform the Cabinet that it is the view of this Council Meeting that it amends the Stockport Household Support Fund delivery plan to explicitly protect Stockport's most vulnerable pensioners through this winter period. This support should be provided in alignment with our trusted partners to ensure nobody falls through the cracks. It should also build on the work already done to support Pension Credit uptake through the Cost of Living Hub. Support for vulnerable pensioners should be easily accessible for those without computer access.

(4) Ask the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to Consider and look to replicate the work of Milton Keynes City Council, which will provide a new local threshold to determine winter fuel payment eligibility for those above the Pension Credit threshold, using the Household Support Fund. This could be set so those earning 1p-£1000 a year over the Pension Credit threshold can receive energy vouchers to go towards their energy costs.

For the amendment 27, against 30.

AMENDMENT NOT CARRIED

It was then

RESOLVED – (34 for, 23 abstentions) This Council meeting notes the recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal winter fuel payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits.

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- In Stockport, 50,242 pensioners will be affected by the change, meaning 89.80% of Stockport's pensioners will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards.

This Council meeting believes that the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low – only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for pension credits, significantly below the living wage rate.

This Council meeting is also concerned by the low take up of pension credit, with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so. The Cabinet has already taken active steps to increase pension credit take up in recent years but recognises the role we must play to continue to increase awareness of benefits such as Pension Credit to encourage people to claim the support they are entitled to.

This Council meeting further notes that the Energy Price Cap is due to rise by 10% in October with a further rise forecast for January which, combined by the removal of Winter Fuel Payments, will push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

This Council meeting resolves to:

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- Share this letter with the MPs for Cheadle, Hazel Grove and Stockport, asking them to give their formal support to halting the planned changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility.

(2) Ask the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources to:

- Commence a further, significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of pension credits and ensure residents know about the government's proposed change to the Winter Fuel Allowance, including the use of council noticeboards, social media, local press and targeted letters to those who may be eligible.
- Consider whether it will be possible to continue to offer the Warm Spaces scheme again this winter.

### (iii) Review of Fire Safety in Stockport Homes in Light of Grenfell Report

RESOLVED - This Council notes the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower on 14th June 2017, which claimed 72 lives and left hundreds more affected, including survivors, families, and members of the wider community.

It acknowledges the findings of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report which revealed serious failings of governance and oversight across multiple organisations, including the government, who were trusted with the responsibility to properly regulate and enforce safety standards, but ultimately failed those they were tasked to protect.

In responding to the tragedy, this Council is grateful to the late Cllr Sheila Bailey for her incredible leadership following the tragic events of the Grenfell Tower Fire. She oversaw the swiftest possible action to ensure the safety of high-rise residents in Stockport, including a comprehensive upgrade to the sprinkler systems.

This Council believes:

- The tragedy at Grenfell was not just the result of individual mistakes but reflects systemic issues in the governance and regulation of the construction industry.
- That the introduction of commercial interests into the building control system conflicts with the role of being a trusted regulator that acts in the public interest.
- That all social housing tenants deserve to live in safe, secure, and dignified conditions, and should have their concerns and requests for improvements listened and responded to in a timely manner.
- That lessons from Grenfell must be fully acted upon in order to prevent such a disaster from ever happening again.

This Council resolves to:

(1) Urge the government to implement the recommendations of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry Phase 2 report, including the proposal to have all regulatory functions in the construction industry be exercised by a single independent body, headed by a Chief Construction Regulator, reporting to a single Secretary of State.

(2) Recommended that the Cabinet agree to review fire safety in all council-owned housing stock and work with housing associations to ensure they are fully compliant with the latest

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safety regulations set out within the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023, the Building Safety Act 2022 and the Fire Safety Act 2021.

(3) Ensure that clear communication is provided to residents living in council-owned housing stock to reassure them of the proactive steps being taken to protect their safety and ensure clear guidance is provided on what to do in case of a fire.

(4) Ensure that clear communication is provided to residents living in council-owned housing stock in relation to their rights, including their right to be heard by their landlord on issues affecting the safety, condition, and management of their housing, as well as their right to make a complaint where there is a cause for concern and for these complaints to be dealt with promptly and respectfully.

(iv) Urgent funding to repair Stepping Hill Hospital and the provision of an additional town centre hospital facility

MOVED AND SECONDED - This council meeting notes with great regret the poor condition of the building at Stepping Hill Hospital which have led to incidents of collapsing roofs and the need to postpone or move various clinics and other hospital activity, to the inconvenience of staff and patients and reducing the hospital's ability to serve local residents, following decades of insufficient funding to maintain its estate.

This council meeting further notes the need for additional health care capacity, especially in the town centre, which would require the building of an additional hospital facility.

This council meeting therefore resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Health, asking him to:

- Agree to visit Stepping Hill Hospital and the proposed site for an additional hospital facility in the town centre along with the three MPs covering our borough;
- Agree urgently to fund the repairs needed at Stepping Hill to return the site to full capacity in a safe condition; and
- Consider funding the building of an additional hospital facility in Stockport town centre to deliver the additional healthcare capacity our residents need.

AMENDMENT MOVED AND SECONDED - This council meeting notes with great regret the poor condition of the building at Stepping Hill Hospital, which has led to incidents of collapsing roofs and the need to postpone or relocate various clinics and other hospital activities, causing inconvenience to staff and patients and reducing the hospital's ability to effectively serve local residents. These issues follow decades of insufficient funding to maintain the hospital's estate.

This council meeting further notes the need for additional healthcare capacity, particularly in the town centre, which would necessitate the construction of an additional hospital facility.

This council meeting therefore acknowledges the new Secretary of State's commitment to fund repairs at Stepping Hill Hospital. However, it stresses the cross-party consensus that exists about the urgent need to prioritise and expedite these improvements, as well as to address the wider healthcare capacity needs of the area.

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- Agree to visit Stepping Hill Hospital and the proposed site for an additional hospital facility in the town centre, along with the three MPs covering our borough;
- Urgently fund the necessary repairs at Stepping Hill Hospital to restore the site to full capacity in a safe condition
- Consider funding the construction of an additional hospital facility in Stockport town centre to meet the healthcare capacity needs of local residents.

### AMENDMENT CARRIED

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

RESOLVED - This council meeting notes with great regret the poor condition of the building at Stepping Hill Hospital, which has led to incidents of collapsing roofs and the need to postpone or relocate various clinics and other hospital activities, causing inconvenience to staff and patients and reducing the hospital's ability to effectively serve local residents. These issues follow decades of insufficient funding to maintain the hospital's estate.

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- Consider funding the construction of an additional hospital facility in Stockport town centre to meet the healthcare capacity needs of local residents.

The meeting closed at 9.17 pm