

COUNCIL

Thursday, 25 March 2021

PRESENT – The Mayor, Councillors Ali, Allen, Baldwin, Bartch, Bell, Boddy, Dr. Chou, Clarke, Cossins, Crudass, Crumbie, Mrs Culley, Curry, Donoghue, Dulston, Durham, Harker, Haszeldine, Heslop, Holroyd, Howell, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Johnson, B Jones, Mrs D Jones, Keir, Laing, Layton, Lee, Lister, Lucas, Marshall, McCollom, Mills, K Nicholson, M Nicholson, Preston, Renton, A J Scott, Mrs H Scott, Snedker, Tait, Tostevin, Wallis and Wright.

APOLOGIES – Councillors Newall and Paley.

62 **MINUTES - TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THIS COUNCIL HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2021 AND 18 FEBRUARY 2021**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Council held on 28 January 2021 and 18 February 2021.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Minutes of the meeting of this Council held on 28 January 2021, be approved as a correct record; and

(b) That the Minutes of the meeting of this Council held on 18 February 2021, be approved as a correct record, with the exception that it be noted that Councillor Bell's non-attendance, and subsequent apologies were tendered, following connectivity issues which prevented Councillor Bell from attending the 'virtual' meeting.

63 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

64 **SEALING.**

Presented – The Register showing the documents which had been sealed since the last meeting of Council.

65 **ANNOUNCEMENTS.**

Death in Service - The Mayor reported on the Death in Service of Reece Williams, who had sadly passed away on the 7th March 2021. The Mayor advised that Reece was employed as a Case Management Officer in the Civic Enforcement Team. It was reported that Reece was a valued member of the Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services team. As a mark of respect, Members observed a short silence in memory of Mr. Williams.

Retirement of the Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services – The Mayor advised Members that Pauline Mitchell, Assistant Director, Housing and Building Services, would be retiring on 30 April 2021, and paid tribute to Pauline's contribution to the work of the Council, particularly in relation to her work in Housing Services.

The Virtual Mayor's Ball – The Mayor reminded Members that tickets were available

for 'The Virtual Mayor's Ball', which was taking place on Saturday, 24 April 2021. The Mayor advised that the 'Ball' would have an 80's theme, and would also be celebrating the town's 'Lockdown Heroes'.

66 QUESTIONS - TO ANSWER QUESTIONS (WHERE APPROPRIATE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN FROM):-

(1) THE PUBLIC;

There were five questions, with notice, from Members of the Public, who each received an answer thereon.

(Note: The questions, with notice, were asked by The Mayor on behalf of the Members of the Public, in accordance with Paragraph 27 of the Meetings (Coronavirus) Protocol).

(2) MEMBERS TO CABINET/CHAIRS;

There were no questions from Members, where notice had been given, for the Mayor, Members of the Cabinet, or the Chairs of the Scrutiny Committees.

67 COUNCIL REPORTS.

(1) PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021/2022

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting approval of the Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2021/2022 in line with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 and Local Government Transparency Code 2014.

The submitted report stated that the Localism Act 2011 required the Council to agree a written Pay Policy on an annual basis and publish specific information relating to the Council's highest and lowest paid employees.

RESOLVED – That the proposed Pay Policy 2021/22, as detailed at Appendix A of the submitted report, be approved, and arrangements be made to publish the Policy on the Council's intranet for public access.

REASON – To enable the Council to comply with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

68 CABINET REPORTS.

The Cabinet Members each gave a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken under their relevant portfolio since the previous meeting of the Council. Members answered questions on their portfolio thereon.

69 SCRUTINY REPORTS - TO CONSIDER SCRUTINY OVERVIEW REPORTS:-

The Scrutiny Committee Chairs each submitted a report (previously circulated) on the main areas of work undertaken by their relevant Scrutiny Committee during the last

cycle of Committee meetings.

70 NOTICE OF MOTION

(1) TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CRUMBIE, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR NEWALL

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Crumbie, and seconded by Councillor Cossins (in Councillor Newall's absence):

Council believes:

1. The Covid Pandemic has accelerated the devastating issue of food insecurity.
2. Headline findings from a new report released by the Food Foundation states that food insecurity remains at crisis levels, with devastating impact on the most vulnerable.
3. Food insecurity remains higher than pre- covid levels, affecting an estimated 4.7 million adults (9% of households) over the last six months, compared to pre covid levels of 7.6%. 55% of those experiencing food insecurity an estimated 2.5 million) said it was because they did not have enough money for food.
4. Groups found to be at higher risk were People with disabilities, BAME households, households with children and food sector workers.
5. Although we recognize and welcome the holiday activity funds this is only a temporary measure and food banks and The Bread and Butter Thing are only masking the serious issue of food insecurity.
6. The UK Government must act now to address this for the long term. The UK Government needs to make food security a priority in the recovery phase. We must move away from short term solutions and prioritise policies that will address the underlying causes of this issue.

Council resolves to:

1. Ask the UK Government to conduct an urgent review of the current eligibility threshold for Free School Meals to ensure no disadvantaged child is excluded.
2. Request to the UK Government that a designated authority be appointed to be responsible for monitoring and tackling food insecurity long term.

The following amendment to the Motion was moved by Councillor Curry, and seconded by Councillor Allen:

'That the following be added to the resolution:

3. That the Council seeks funding to ensure that all children that are currently identified as on Free School meals have free meals during the 6 weeks summer holiday in 2021. To identify and feed those children also in the family

of those identified for free school meals.’

The Amendment was Lost.

The Substantive Motion was subsequently put to the meeting, and was also Lost.

(2) TO CONSIDER A MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ALI, AND SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR WALLIS

The following Motion was moved by Councillor Ali, and seconded by Councillor Wallis:

‘Council believes:

1. Fireworks are a traditional way of celebrating key dates such as Guy Fawkes Night, New Year’s Eve, Chinese New Year and Diwali.
2. Public fireworks displays at such occasions can foster a great community spirit.
3. However, it is well known that fireworks can cause serious trauma to some people with autism, war veterans suffering PTSD, and pets/other animals.
4. Fireworks are often set off throughout the year, often just for the purpose of causing a nuisance, and are even thrown at emergency service personnel on occasion.
5. Hi tech alternatives to fireworks, e.g. drone displays or lasers, can be an even more spectacular way to mark special events.
6. That the creation of a new Office for Product Safety and Standards, which will support local authorities in reviewing and enforcing the current guidance materials on the safe and responsible use of fireworks, is a positive step.

Council resolves to:

1. To ask Cabinet to consider requiring all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people;
2. To ask Cabinet to consider actively promoting a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animal welfare – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks;
3. To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays as per RSPCA guidance;
4. To back the RSPCA campaign to encourage suppliers of fireworks to stock ‘quieter’ fireworks for public display;
5. To promote alternatives to fireworks.’

The following amendment to the Motion was moved by Councillor Dulston, and seconded by Councillor Tait:

'(a) Delete the following from the 'Council believes' paragraphs:-

3. However, it is well known that fireworks can cause serious trauma to some people with autism, war veterans suffering PTSD, and pets/other animals.
4. Fireworks are often set off throughout the year, often just for the purpose of causing a nuisance, and are even thrown at emergency service personnel on occasion.
5. Hi tech alternatives to fireworks, e.g. drone displays or lasers, can be an even more spectacular way to mark special events.
6. That the creation of a new Office for Product Safety and Standards, which will support local authorities in reviewing and enforcing the current guidance materials on the safe and responsible use of fireworks, is a positive step.

(b) Delete the following from the 'Council resolves' paragraphs :-

1. To ask Cabinet to consider requiring all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
2. To ask Cabinet to consider actively promoting a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animal welfare – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.
3. To write to the UK Government urging them to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90dB for those sold to the public for private displays as per RSPCA guidance.
4. To back the RSPCA campaign to encourage suppliers of fireworks to stock 'quieter' fireworks for public display.
5. To promote alternatives to fireworks."

And replace with :-

1. To encourage all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.
2. To run a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on vulnerable people and animal welfare – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks.
3. Bring back the South Park Firework Display in 2022, as an organised and safe public firework display.'

Amendment Carried.

The Amendment then became the Substantive Motion and was put to the meeting and carried.

71 MEMBERSHIP CHANGES - TO CONSIDER ANY MEMBERSHIP CHANGES TO COMMITTEES, SUBSIDIARY BODIES AND OTHER BODIES.

There were no membership changes reported at the meeting.