

Minutes of: THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF BURY

Date of Meeting: 5 November 2008

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor P Ashworth) in the Chair;
Councillors I Ahmed, D M Ashworth, R L Baum, C A Berry, R A Bibby, D B Bigg, D Boden, K S Briggs, R C A Brown, W A Campbell, D M Cassidy, F A Chaudhry, S Cohen, M Connolly, S Costello, Y Creswell, A J Cummings, M D'Albert, V D D'Albert, W J Davison, A J Garner, A S Garner, I B Gartside, J Grimshaw, D L Gunther, M Hankey, J Harris, D M Higgin, T Holt, S Hurst, A Isherwood, S P Mangnall, A K Matthews, D O'Hanlon, T D Pickstone, P H Redstone, K Rothwell, J Smith, B J Sullivan, J W H Taylor, B Theckston, B Vincent, R E Walker, J F Walton, M J Wiseman, S D Wright and Y S Wright

Apologies for absence: Councillors K Audin, J Byrne, S P Penketh

Public attendance: 3 members of the public attended the meeting

C.402 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- (a) Councillors D'Albert and Rothwell declared personal interests in the Notice of Motion relating to Mobility Benefits for Blind Residents, as recipients of Disability Living Allowances. (Minute C.407 (4) below.)
- (b) The following Councillors declared personal interests in Councillors Baum's written question relating to the value of the Greater Manchester Pension Fund, as recipients of pensions from that Fund:-
- Councillors Walton, D M Ashworth, Matthews, Bigg (also in respect of her work training dogs for the blind – Notice of Motion relating to Mobility Benefits for Blind Residents), Taylor and P Ashworth. Councillor Boden declared a personal interest in respect of his wife's pension received from that Fund. (Minute C.406 (5) below.)
- (c) Councillor Gartside declared a personal interest in the Notice of Motion relating to Mobility Allowances for Blind Residents as a Director of the Royal National Institute for the Blind. (Minute C.407 (A) below.)
- (d) Councillor Wiseman declared a personal interest in the Notice of Motion relating to Mobility Allowances for Blind Residents as an employee of a related voluntary organisation. (Minute C.407 (A) below.)

- (e) Councillor Walker declared a personal interest in Councillor Smith's written question relating to the Residents' Parking Scheme in Fishpool as the recipient of a disputed Fixed Penalty Notice attached to his car in the area covered by the Scheme. (Minute C.406 (9) below.)
- (f) Councillors Bigg, Davison, Smith and Wiseman all declared personal interests in the Notice of Motion relating to the Credit Crisis as Directors of Six Town Housing Ltd. (Minute C.407 (B) below.)

C.403 MINUTES OF THE COUNCIL

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 September 2008 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C.404 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Worshipful the Mayor informed the Council that, for the fifth year in succession, Bury had been awarded first place in the 'Large Town Category' in the North West in Bloom Competition and nominated to represent the region in Britain in Bloom 2009.

The Borough had also received recognition for the cleanliness of highways on judging day and had been awarded the 'Clean Sweep' accolade.

The Mayor paid tribute to all who had been involved in any way in this outstanding achievement.

C.405 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

No written questions had been submitted.

C.406 LEADER'S STATEMENT AND EXECUTIVE QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Council, Councillor R A Bibby, made a statement on the work of the Executive since the date of the last Council meeting.

The Leader and the relevant Executive Members answered questions raised by Councillors on the following issues:-

(a) Written Questions (four clear working days' notice given)

No	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
1.	1. Proposed Congestion Charge – cost implications for Council vehicles 2. Raising awareness of the public to possible increased costs	Councillor M D'Albert	Councillors Gunther and Bibby

2.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whether the Leader would be encouraging residents to vote in the TIF Referendum 2. What was the Leader's voting recommendations 	Councillor Boden	Councillors Gunther and Bibby
3.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 20mph speed restrictions on roads near schools and casualties on those roads 2. Referral of the matter to Economy, Environment and Transport Scrutiny Commission 	Councillor Pickstone	Councillor Gunther
4.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council's Policy of Alley-gating 2. Alleyway between Daneshill and Polefield Road, Prestwich – Anti-Social Behaviour 	Councillor V D'Albert	Councillor Cohen
5.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Effects on Greater Manchester Pension Fund of recent falls in share prices 2. Affordability of pension commitments of AGMA Authorities 	Councillor Baum	Councillor Redstone
6.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Launch of Policy to limit authorised absences of pupils 2. Governing Bodies' agreement to Policy amendments 	Councillor S Wright	Councillor D Ashworth
7.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Proposals in the 'Buildings Schools for the Future' and 'Playbuilder' Schemes – siting in the north of the Borough 2. Equitable distribution of projects between north and south of the Borough 	Councillor O'Hanlon	Councillors D Ashworth and Bibby
8.	Establishment of Children's Trusts to safeguard children	Councillor Rothwell	Councillor D Ashworth
9.	Residents' Parking Scheme in Fishpool	Councillor Smith	Councillor Gunther
10.	Council policy on Climate Change	Councillor Boden	Councillor Gunther

Due to a lack of time to answer questions 8, 9 and 10, the Leader gave an undertaking that copies of the answers would be circulated to all Councillors

(b) Oral Questions on the work of the Executive since the last Council meeting (Without Notice)

No	Issue	Questioner	Answered by (and action)
11.	Removal of graffiti from Council and non-Council property	Councillor Pickstone	Councillor Gunther (Councillor Pickstone to provide locations for graffiti removal)
12.	1. Explanation of the terms 'strong consideration' and 'community partners' in paragraph 2.9 of the Executive report on the Future of Secondary Learning – Strategy for Change – provision of an all-through school at East Ward Primary School. 2. Involvement of the East Ward Governing Body in the development of the Strategy	Councillor Connolly	Councillor D Ashworth
13.	Empty Property Strategy – bringing back into use empty private properties on Council housing estates	Councillor Boden	Councillor Gartside
14.	Ticketing systems for the proposed Congestion Charge	Councillor Baum	Councillor Bibby

The Mayor ruled out of order questions from Councillor V D'Albert (Refurbishment of the Longfield Suite) and A S Garner (Heaton Park Concert) as these topics had not been considered by the Executive since the last Council meeting.

C.407 NOTICES OF MOTION

Two Notices of Motion had been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.

(A) Payment of Mobility Benefits for Blind Residents

It was moved by Councillor Y Wright and seconded by Councillor O'Hanlon that the following Motion be approved:-

"This Council notes:

1. That blind people experience significant barriers to independent mobility.

2. That blind people are often isolated and find it difficult to access basic services without mobility assistance.
3. That many blind residents within the Borough find it difficult to access shops, supermarkets, doctors, dentists and community facilities and centres.
4. Our blind residents find it difficult to access many Council services ranging from housing to voting without mobility support and face additional costs as a result, such as using taxis or private hire vehicles.

This Council further notes:

5. That blind people are not entitled to the higher rate mobility component of disability living allowance.
6. Loss of usable sight clearly causes significant independent mobility problems and incurs significant additional and unmet costs.
7. That blind people are in many parts of England excluded from social care support because their needs are not considered 'critical' or 'substantial'

This Council resolves:

1. To ask the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions expressing their concerns.
2. To ask the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council to write to our local MPs asking that they sign EDM 1982 and write to the Secretary of State expressing their concerns.
3. To support the Royal National Institute of Blind People's (RNIB) campaign on securing the higher rate mobility component of DLA for blind people"

In the names of Councillors Y S Wright and I B Gartside.

Following a debate on the Motion, Councillor Gartside moved and Councillor Bibby seconded that the question be now put which was passed by the Council with 33 members voting for, 14 against and the Mayor abstaining.

The above Motion, on being put, was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be approved and adopted.

(B) Bury's Response to the Credit Crisis

"This Council notes with grave concern the impact of the international financial situation on ordinary people and on business, in particular:-

- the rise in home repossessions and unemployment
- the collapse of the housing market and

- the threat to the survival of well-run and established businesses induced by the credit crunch and the economic slow down

This Council further notes the impact on households in the Borough of the steep rise in inflation, and in particular the cost of fuel and energy, leading to a steep rise in the cost of living.

This Council calls on the Leader of the Council and the appropriate Executive Members to:

- (a) enter into discussions with Council operated and voluntary sector providers of debt and money advice services to ensure that services are available to meet the needs of local people;
- (b) work with our Team Bury partners to ensure that agencies across the Borough have addressed the potential changing needs of residents as a result of the credit crisis and how best to meet these needs.
- (c) work with Six Town Housing and other social landlords to ensure a supportive approach to tenants who have fallen into arrears as a result of financial hardship;
- (d) use communication tools such as 'Our Voice', the website and through working with local media to provide advice on local residents on financial issues, and promote sources of help and information;
- (e) consider any new powers made available by Government which would allow Councils to act to prevent repossessions and improve the availability of affordable housing;
- (f) investigate whether the Council could improve its payment times to Bury-based small and medium suppliers to within 10 days, in recognition of the current pressures faced by our local businesses
- (g) work with our Team Bury partners and through our partners in the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities, to ensure that local businesses have access to the appropriate information and to consider strategies for encouraging and sustaining local businesses."

In the names of Councillors Baum, M D'Albert, V D'Albert, Davison, A J Garner, A S Garner, O'Hanlon, Pickstone and S Wright.

The Motion, on being put, was agreed unanimously and it was:

RESOLVED:

That the Motion be approved and adopted.

C.408 SCRUTINY REPORTS AND SPECIFIC ITEMS 'CALLED IN' BY SCRUTINY COMMISSIONS

There were no Scrutiny Review Reports or specific items 'called in' by Scrutiny Commissions to be considered at this Council meeting.

C.409 JOINT AUTHORITIES – REPORTS BY THE COUNCIL’S REPRESENTATIVE AND QUESTIONS

- (a) Councillor Walton, the Council’s representative on the Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Authority, gave a verbal report on the work of that Joint Authority to Members of the Council present at the meeting.
- (b) No written questions had been received on the work of the Joint Authorities

C.410 QUESTIONS ON THE WORK OF OUTSIDE BODIES OR PARTNERSHIPS

There were no written questions on the work of outside bodies or partnerships on which the Council is represented, submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.2.

C.411 DELEGATED DECISIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

There were no written questions asked on the delegated decisions of the Committees or Scrutiny Commissions contained in the Digests of Decisions 5 and 6 (2008/2009).

THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR

(NOTES: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.59 pm)