

Minutes of: COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 8 July 2020

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor T Pickstone, in the Chair)
Councillors J Black, S Briggs, R Caserta, R.Cathcart, P Cropper, T Cummings, C Cummins, I Gartside, R Gold, J Grimshaw, D Gunther, S Haroon, J Harris, M Hayes, T Holt, S Hurst, K Hussain, D Jones, N Jones, G Keeley, O Kersh, K Leach, J Mason, G McGill, C Morris, B Mortenson, E O'Brien, M Powell, A Quinn, T Rafiq, I Schofield, D Silbiger, A Simpson, L Smith, M Smith, S Smith, Sarah Southworth, Susan Southworth, T Tariq, C Tegolo, K Thomas, D.Vernon, R Walker, S Walmsley, C Walsh, M Whitby, S Wright and Y Wright

Apologies for Absence A McKay

Public Attendance: Due to the Covid 19 pandemic and government guidance in respect of social distancing the meeting was held virtually. One member of the public had requested to join the meeting.

Before the start of the meeting the Mayor's Chaplain Rev Jez Hackett conducted prayers and held a moment of thought with Members of the Council present at the virtual meeting.

C. 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made at the meeting in relation to items on the agenda.

1. Councillor Quinn declared a personal interest as relatives worked for the NHS, CAB and he was a member of Unite.
2. Councillors Vernon, Hussain, Rafiq and Susan Southworth declared a personal interest in the Lib Dem motion as they owned rental properties.
3. Councillors L. Smith declared a personal interest in the Lib Dem motion as she owned a rental property and a relative worked for the NHS.
4. Councillor Black declared a personal interest as she was a member of Bury Met Arts Board.
5. Councillor D Jones declared a personal interest for the joint authority policing questions as he received a pension from GMP.
6. Councillor Whitby declared a personal interest in the Lib Dem motion as she owned a rental property and was a Member of a trade union.

7. Councillor Silberger declared a personal interest in the Lib Dem motion and would not be voting on it.

8. Councillor Simpson declared a personal interest on a motion as she was an NHS employee.

9. Councillor S. Wright declared a personal interest as a relative worked for a school in the Borough.

10. Councillor Leach declared a personal interest on a motion as she was an NHS employee.

11. Councillor Holt declared a personal interest on a motion as he was tenant in the private rented sector.

C. 2 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of Council held on the 20th May 2020 be signed by the Mayor as a true and correct record.

C. 3 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor was sad to report on the recent death of former Councillor, Barry Theckston and Mr Mervyn Magnall.

Former Councillor Theckston served as a Conservative Member on the Council in 1992 to 1996 and again in 1999 to 2012.

Mr Magnall was the driving force behind creating links between Bury and Woodbury in the US, a town established by a Bury resident Henry Wood in 1682 and named after the 'Wood family from Bury'. Mervyn's work led to the towns becoming twinned in 2007, for which he was later made an Honorary Life Citizen of Woodbury.

As a mark of respect, Members of Council observed a one minute silence.

The Mayor reported that a Council Officer had been awarded the prestigious Greater Manchester High Sheriff Special Recognition Award. Dominic Press, the Council's Senior Dispute Resolution Officer within Legal Services, had been recognised for his outstanding activity and contribution to the community during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Mayor was also pleased to report that two Bury voluntary groups had received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service: DCaff by Greenmount Village Community, a dementia friendly café, and Eagles Wings, a mutual support group for asylum seekers and local people. The award had also been received by local HIV charity, George House Trust, which the Mayor would be supporting as one of the charities in his Mayoral year.

The Mayor thanked all those Council staff who had been working during the current Covid 19 pandemic and councillors expressed their appreciation with a round applause held virtually.

C. 4 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There had been no questions received in advance of the meeting however, one member of the public was in virtual attendance at the meeting and asked a verbal question.

The member of the public asked a question to the Leader of the Council and as this had not been submitted in advance within the required notice period, no supplementary question was permitted

No.	Issue	Questioner	Answered By
1.	Concerns with Council finances and justification of transformation by the Leader.	Ms Judi Sheppard	Councillor E O'Brien

C. 5 RECOMMENDATIONS OF CABINET AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

No recommendations were reported.

C. 6 LEADER'S STATEMENT AND MEMBER QUESTION TIME

The Leader of the Council, Councillor O'Brien, made a statement on the work undertaken by himself and the Cabinet since the date of the last Council meeting.

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

No.	Issue	Questioner	Answered by
1.	Exclude home and mobile based business from the discretionary funding?	Cllr Y Wright	Councillor O'Brien
2.	What support this Council has given to Bury businesses throughout lockdown, including how the discretionary grant fund has been used?	Cllr Richard Gold	Councillor Black
3.	Financial shortfall dealing with Covid 19 and how much will be covered by central government funding.	Cllr Sandra Walmsley	Councillor O'Brien
4.	The Councils plans regarding parking charges both in Bury Town Centre and across the townships.	Cllr N Jones	Councillor O'Brien

5.	How is the Council monitoring whether Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is available and being used in all care settings, including residential and domiciliary?	Cllr Powell	Councillor Simpson
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6.	Support for rough sleepers during the Covid-19 crisis and what support is in place to help end homelessness once and for all?	Cllr Beth Mortenson	Cllr Cummins
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7.	Black Lives Matter campaign and how the Council will support our black, Asian and minority ethnic communities across Bury.	Cllr Grimshaw	Cllr Rafiq
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8.	Producing a Bury local plan.	Cllr Harris	Councillor O'Brien
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9.	Highways Agency public consultation be further extended for the proposed M60 changes.	Cllr Tegolo	Cllr Lucy Smith
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Due to the lack of time to answer questions 10 to 26 inclusive, the Chair gave an undertaking that copies of those questions and responses would be made available to all Councillors via the Council meeting page in the website.

The Council Constitution now allows each Councillor to ask one verbal question on the work of the Cabinet since the date of the last Council meeting, or on issues contained in the Leader's Statement.

The Chair asked Members to refrain from asking questions which they have submitted to this evenings meeting as a written question.

No.	Issue	Questioner	Answered by
1.	Agenda item 7 xvii the decision via EPG on the 29 th June- distribution of the remaining 25% infection prevention control grant to care at home (domiciliary care) and supported living providers.	Cllr Caserta	Councillor Simpson
2.	Leader's report Covid data, could this be explained and how it will impact in Bury.	Cllr Walsh	Councillor Simpson

3.	Bury Market discretionary grants and how other LA's in Greater Manchester are helping their markets.	Cllr N. Jones	Councillor Black
4.	Aero space job redundancies in the North West and the union campaign to safeguard these jobs.	Cllr A Quinn	Councillor O'Brien
5.	Shortage of housing stock.	Cllr Kersh	Councillor O'Brien
6.	Arts and culture for Government funding rescue package.	Cllr Thomas	Councillor Black

C. 7 REPORT ON SPECIAL URGENCY

It was moved by Councillor O' Brien and seconded by Councillor Tariq.

RECOMMENDATION

That the Council noted the Executive Key Decisions that had been taken as urgent items and which were exempted from call-in.

C. 8 SCB COUNCIL VOTING REPORT

It was moved by Councillor O' Brien and seconded by Councillor Tariq.

RECOMMENDATION

(1) That Council approved the revised membership, voting and quoracy arrangements for the Strategic Commissioning Board as set out in the attached report to the Board on 8 June 2020; and

(2) That Council approved the revised Strategic Commissioning Board Terms of Reference.

C. 9 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM MONITORING OFFICER

It was moved by Councillor Pickstone and seconded by Councillor O' Brien

RECOMMENDATION

That Janet Witkowski be designated as the Council's Interim Monitoring Officer and Council Solicitor with immediate effect until a new Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services is appointed.

C. 10 NOTICES OF MOTION

(i) COVID-19 Recovery

A motion had been received and set out in the Summons in the names of:

Councillors R Caserta, P Cropper, J Daly, I Gartside, D Gunther, J Harris, S Hurst, K Hussain, N Jones, G Keeley, O Kersh, I Schofield, D Silbiger, D Vernon, R Walker, and Y Wright

It was moved by Councillor N. Jones and seconded by Councillor Caserta that:-

This Council Notes:

COVID-19 has had an adverse effect on the communities here in Bury. This Council needs to place on record its thanks to the key workers, residents, businesses and organisations for going above and beyond. This Borough owes you a debt of gratitude. Now is the time to plan for the recovery phase, to support our residents and local businesses, in the changing need for public services.

Bury Council requires a plan to prepare and kickstart the economic recovery following the impact of COVID-19 and provide our residents and businesses with a strategic vision for the future. The plan should involve all stakeholders in order to develop the best possible forward plan for the council, our residents and businesses.

This Council resolves:

The Council therefore resolves to create "*The Bury MBC COVID-19 Recovery Plan*".

The Bury MBC COVID-19 Recovery Plan will focus on:

- Economic impact, recovery & growth for our high streets, Bury Market and businesses
- Residents - improving the skills-base to lift wages for lower income residents and adapt to the changing needs of local businesses
- Health and Social Care delivery
- Financial resilience and ensuring minimal waste of taxpayers' money to ensure money reaches frontline council services such as bins, highways and tackling flytipping which saw an increase over lockdown.
- Transformation of Bury MBC to ensure that we deliver services efficiently and more accessible to residents.
- A review in to the spatial framework and our environment - with an inevitable economic slowdown, there will be less of a need for housing. Lockdown has made us appreciate the environment we have around us and the council should recognise what we can do to enhance it to deliver health benefits for our residents.

Progress updates should be provided to the Joint Executive team on a weekly basis and the Cabinet as a standing item each month. A report will be presented at the September Full Council Meeting.

A cross-party working group will be established to monitor and track the progress of the recovery. The Group will remain in operation as long as there is a need for a recovery response to COVID-19. The plan will be evidence based and will closely monitor the impacts and the effectiveness of the responsiveness of Bury Council in a post-COVID world.

On being put, with 19 voting for, 28 voting against and with the Mayor abstaining, the Mayor declared the substantive motion lost.

(i) Securing a Fair Deal for Private Renters and Selective Licensing

A motion had been received and set out in the Summons in the names of:

Councillors M Powell, T Pickstone, C Tegolo and S Wright

It was moved by Councillor Tegolo and seconded by Councillor S Wright that:-

This Council notes :-

1. The significant contribution that private-rental property makes to the borough's housing market.
2. That poor housing management and low standards in the sector can lead to the failure of a local housing market. Low demand and antisocial behaviour can result in unsettled communities, along with other social and economic problems.
3. That private renters spend a higher proportion of their income on housing than with other tenures, and that moving costs can be prohibitively expensive, with high letting fees and large deposit requirements.
4. The impact that the Coronavirus pandemic has had on private renters, with recent research finding that 1 in 8 have fallen behind with housing costs due to lost income as a result of the crisis.
5. The potential of 'selective licensing', already successfully used by some of our neighbouring authorities such as Manchester and Oldham, requiring landlords in finite geographical areas to register with the Council enabling certain standards to be enforced.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. To give full consideration to introducing a selective licensing scheme in specific areas, such as in Prestwich, Radcliffe and East Bury, to tackle antisocial behaviour and support wider housing market renewal and regeneration and to help develop more sustainable communities.
2. That by the end of this calendar year, a report be brought to Overview and Scrutiny and then to Cabinet, reporting back on whether a selective licensing approach is appropriate for parts of Bury. The report should include:
 - a comprehensive assessment of privately rented accommodation in Bury
 - an update on criminality and antisocial behaviour and any link between this and the private rented sector
3. To continue to work with Six Town Housing, to address how the Council can help bring empty properties into use through assisting with private sector renting, in return for nomination rights.
4. To call on the Government to provide greater assistance for those private renters who are particularly struggling during the Coronavirus pandemic.

On being put, with 47 voting for, 0 voting against and with the Mayor abstaining, the Mayor declared the substantive motion carried.

(iii) Independent inquiry into the handling of coronavirus

A motion had been received and set out in the Summons in the names of:

Councillors J Black, S Briggs, R Cathcart, A Cummings, C Cummins, R Gold, J Grimshaw, M Hayes, S Haroon, T Holt, D Jones, K Leach, G McGill, C Morris, B Mortenson, E O'Brien, A Quinn, T Rafiq, A Simpson, L Smith, S Smith, Sarah Southworth, Susan Southworth, T Tariq, K Thomas, S Walmsley, C Walsh and M Whitby

It was moved by Councillor Morris and seconded by Councillor Simpson that:-

This Council notes :-

With sadness up to the 12th June 2020 there have been 228 deaths of Bury residents attributed to coronavirus. Our thoughts are with the families and friends of those that we have lost. We also wish to pay tribute to the hard work of our health and care staff, volunteers across Bury, local businesses and council officers. Our community has stepped up and stepped in when this government has abjectly failed to do so. Ten years of Conservative austerity, aided and abetted by the Liberal Democrats for five of those years, have seen the very institutions that have been at the forefront of this effort run down, yet still they responded magnificently.

Our local council, NHS and the voluntary and community sector, as well as local businesses have been at the forefront of the response to this devastating health crisis over the past months. They have supported the creation of community hubs that have brought together hundreds of local volunteers; they have been on the frontline in our hospitals, care homes and other health and care settings; they have donated to the food banks that are supplying much needed essentials to hard working local families; they have worked tirelessly and often with little recognition to keep council services running and got support to where it has been needed in the community; and they have manufactured or sourced PPE to support our frontline staff.

This crisis has brought out the best in community spirit, but while there is much to praise about the community response to COVID-19 this council believes that the Conservative government has systemically failed to manage the crisis from day one and has made vital errors in the handling of this crisis when it comes to national policy decisions.

We note with sadness that the UK has the highest death toll in Europe and these deaths will haunt this country for years. The failure of this Conservative administration to deal with the COVID crisis from day one is nothing short of a national scandal.

Critically, the government has failed to provide the reassurances needed to local government on funding. Local councils up and down the country face serious long-term financial harm as a result of coronavirus due to increased costs, lost revenue and a funding shortfall.

Here in Bury, the council is facing losses of £29 million. After a decade of cuts totalling over £102 million, this council, like many other councils nationwide cannot undertake more austerity without cutting further services and jobs that would push us to the brink of insolvency due to no fault of our own. The Secretary

of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government promised local councils “whatever it takes” but we are still waiting.

This government has also catastrophically failed our BAME communities. It was clear as the death toll was rising that this crisis was disproportionately affecting those from BAME backgrounds. The British Medical Association and other organisations called for an urgent investigation, but this was ignored and significantly delayed by the government. An investigation was eventually carried out belatedly, but the government then missed its own deadline for publishing the official review into the matter. A version of the report was then leaked, but with the recommendations buried, and now that the final report has been published the government is yet to confirm that it will be implementing all the recommendations.

In Bury, we are proud of our diverse communities, yet we know that those from religious minorities are more likely to be adversely affected by coronavirus. Recent ONS data show that Muslim men have the highest death rates among all religious groups, with Jewish men also recording a higher mortality rate. This council is shocked that in the face of such clear evidence, this government is not prioritising the protection and care of our BAME communities.

More broadly, it is clear that this government made fatal errors in the handling of the health and care response to this crisis. As the crisis was unfolding, the prime minister himself missed five Cobra meetings, missed eight calls with EU leaders, missed two opportunities to bulk buy PPE and ventilators with the EU and went on holiday for two weeks.

The government failed time upon time to recognise the urgent need for PPE, as well as the need to roll out a major testing programme. Tragically this government failed to learn the lessons of Exercise Cygnus in 2016. This was an exercise when a pandemic was simulated. Cygnus predicted the very failings of this government, they were forewarned but took no notice. It allowed mass events to go ahead like race meetings, concerts and football matches. It had the advantage of seeing what was unfolding in Europe but failed to act, failed to prepare, failed to protect its own citizens.

Then there is the scandal of care homes where our senior citizens were discharged from hospitals without being tested.

More recently, we have seen another missed deadline as the Health Secretary has admitted that the NHS contact tracing app will be scrapped in its current form with a new version in development for winter. The original release date was the end of May. On tracing and testing, this was abandoned on March 12th only for the PM to state in May that we would have a “world class” system in place for June 1st. This date now looks to have been pushed back to September.

These grotesque failings have hit public confidence in the government’s handling of the crisis, but nothing has raised questions over the prime minister’s ability to lead the country through this emergency than his abject failure to deal with his own special adviser who was found to have broken the lockdown rules. Dominic Cummings broke the rules, refused to apologise and yet he remains in a job. People across Bury have made significant personal sacrifices in order to follow the rules to protect themselves and others, but it is clear that there is one rule for us and another for the prime minister and his inner circle. This breaks down trust at

a time when trust in government, public figures and our national institutions is integral to the handling of this crisis.

We must learn from the lessons of COVID-19.

Therefore, this Council proposes that we should:

- 1) Call on the government to commission an independent inquiry into its handling of coronavirus and that;

This council resolves to:

- 1) Write to the prime minister to demand an independent inquiry into the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This inquiry should be wide ranging in scope bringing in evidence from national and international experts and local and community stakeholders. It should report back in a timely manner – we suggest before the end of this year – with clear recommendations on what the government needs to do to make amends for the mistakes made thus far, but importantly to ensure those same mistakes are not made again.

On being put, with 32 voting for, 15 voting against and with the Mayor abstaining, the Mayor declared the motion carried

C. 11 SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORTS AND SPECIFIC ITEMS "CALLED IN" BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

There were no items reported.

C. 12 COMBINED AUTHORITY UPDATE

The Chair reported due to the lack of time this item could not be dealt with.

Councillor Gold who was a Council representative on the combined authority board would circulate copies of those questions raised along with the responses which would also be made available to all Councillors via the Council meeting page on the website.

C. 13 DELEGATED DECISIONS OF THE COUNCIL COMMITTEES

No questions were asked on the delegated decisions made by the Regulatory Committees and Scrutiny Committees published since the last ordinary meeting of the Council.

THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR

NOTE:

The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 10.16pm