

Council

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Present:

The Right Worshipful, the Lord Mayor Councillor Y Dar – in the Chair

Councillors:

Andrews, Abdullatif, Akbar, Azra Ali, Ahmed Ali, Nasrin Ali, Amin, Appleby, Bayunu, Bell, Benham, Brickell, Bridges, Butt, Chambers, Chohan, Collins, Connolly, Craig, Curley, Davies, Doswell, Douglas, Evans, Flanagan, Fletcher, Foley, Gartside, Good, Green, Grimshaw, Hacking, Hassan, Hewitson, Hilal, Hitchen, Holt, Hughes, Hussain, Igbon, Ilyas, Iqbal, Johns, Johnson, T Judge, Kamal, Karney, Kilpatrick, Kirkpatrick, Lanchbury, Leech, J Lovecy, Ludford, Lynch, Lyons, Marsh, McCaul, McHale, Midgley, Moran, Muse, Noor, Northwood, Nunney, Ogunbambo, Rahman, Rawlins, Rawson, Razaq, Reeves, Reid, Richards, I Robinson, T Robinson, Rowles, M Sharif Mahamed, Sheikh, Shilton Godwin, Simcock, Stogia, Taylor, Wheeler, Wiest, Whiston, White, Wills, Wilson and Wright

Honorary Aldermen of the City of Manchester –

Mrs Nilofar Siddiqi

CC/24/1 **The Lord Mayor's Announcements and Special Business - Kings New Year Honours**

The Lord Mayor informed the Council that she had written to the following people, who are either Mancunians or live or work in the city, to recognise and congratulate them on the honour they have received, as stated in the Kings New Year's Honours list:

- **Commander of the Order of the British Empire**
 - Joanne Roney

- **Order of the British Empire**
 - Eamonn Boylan
 - Antony Lockley
 - Katie Gallagher

- **Member of the Order of the British Empire**
 - John Cox
 - Paul Fairweather
 - Lauren Hemp
 - Lydia Ina
 - Christine Kenyon
 - Marion Meakin
 - Kathryn Morley

- Ehinor Otaigbe-Amedu
- **Member of the Royal Victorian Order**
 - Julie Denby
- **King's Police Medal**
 - Kam Hare
- **King's Fire Service Medal**
 - Dave Russel

CC/24/2 Death of Sir Tony Lloyd MP

The Lord Mayor invited those present to observe a minute's silence in memory of Sir Tony Lloyd MP. Sir Tony served as a local councillor in Trafford in 1979 and was later elected as a Member of Parliament in 1983 for Stretford and later served as MP for Manchester Central and Rochdale constituencies. Sir Tony served in Government as Minister of State for Foreign affairs in 1997, as well as serving as Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner and Interim Mayor of Greater Manchester.

CC/24/3 Lord Mayor's Announcements and Special Business - Manchester's vision to become a Child Friendly city

The Lord Mayor invited pupils from Manchester schools along with Youth Councillor and Youth Parliament representatives to address the Council to outline the vision for Manchester to become a Child Friendly city. Child Friendly Cities and Communities is a UK Committee for UNICEF (UNICEF UK) programme that works with councils to put children's rights into practice.

The programme aims to create cities and communities in the UK where all children – whether they are living in care, using a children's centre, or simply visiting their local library – have a meaningful say in, and benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives.

The Executive Member for Early Years and Young People (Councillor Bridges) explained how Manchester will become a recognised UNICEF UK-recognised Child Friendly City.

The Lord Mayor then introduced Pupils from Wright Robinson College, Lily Lane Primary, Old Moat Primary School, Crosslee Community Primary School and Melland School who addressed the meeting and were supported by two Youth Councillors and two Members of the Youth Parliament.

The council, community, and children and young people of Manchester will together agree on six priority areas or 'badges'. Supported by UNICEF UK, a draft action plan will be drafted during the Development Phase, setting out how the council will work towards achieving progress in the badges chosen, over the following two to four years.

The Lord Mayor and the Leader of the Council thanked the pupils and youth representatives for their impressive presentation and welcomed the initiative to make Manchester a Child Friendly city.

CC/24/4 Urgent Business - Constitutional and Nomination Committee minutes

The Lord Mayor reported that she had agree to the submission of the minutes of the Constitutional and Nomination Committee held on 31 January 2024.

CC/24/5 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29 November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Lord Mayor.

CC/24/6 Notice of Motion - Extension of the Franchise - Our Home Our Vote Residence - Based Voting Motion

Councillor Bayunu submitted the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Abdullatif: -

This Council notes:

- That all our residents, no matter their nationality, bring significant value to our area.
- 37% of Mancunians were born abroad and 12% are from the European Union (EU). They live, work, study, make use of public services, and call Manchester their home.
- Many of our foreign-born residents from EU and Commonwealth countries can vote in our local elections.
- However, our residents born in non-EU and non-Commonwealth countries cannot.
- Scotland and Wales have implemented residence-based voting rights where all residents with lawful immigration status have the right to vote in local and devolved national elections.
- A poll conducted by Number Cruncher showed that 63% of people agree that all residents should have the right to vote in local elections in England and Northern Ireland.
- The current complexity in voting eligibility causes confusion and will reduce voter turnout in local elections amongst migrant voters, a group which already has a disproportionately lower voter registration rate compared to British voters.

The Council resolves to:

Call upon our leader, Bev Craig to;

- to write to the Minister of State for the Cabinet Office, requesting that the Elections Bill be amended to extend local election voting rights in England and Northern Ireland to all qualifying foreign nationals in line with voting rights in Scotland and Wales.”

- Write to the Minister of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities requesting that the franchise for local elections be extended in England and Northern Ireland to all qualifying foreign nationals in line with eligibility criteria in Scotland and Wales. This would ensure a UK-wide and fair approach so that all our residents who are also our council taxpayers are enfranchised.

Councillor Lyons moved an amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Muse, as follows: -

This Council notes:

- That all our residents, no matter their nationality, bring significant value to our area.
- The 2021 Census showed that 31% of Mancunians were born abroad and 12% are from the European Union (EU). They live, work, study, make use of public services, and call Manchester their home.
- Many of our foreign-born residents from EU and Commonwealth countries can vote in our local elections. However, our residents born in non-EU and non-Commonwealth countries cannot.
- Scotland and Wales have implemented residence-based voting rights where all residents with lawful immigration status have the right to vote in local and devolved national election
- A poll conducted by Number Cruncher showed that 63% of people agree that all residents should have the right to vote in local elections in England and Northern Ireland.
- The current complexity in voting eligibility causes confusion and will reduce voter turnout in local elections amongst migrant voters, a group which already has a disproportionately lower voter registration rate compared to British voters.

This Council Further Notes –

- We welcome the positive comments by Sir Kier Starmer around voter residency when he said in 2021 that he is in "*favour of voting rights for everybody who has contributed to our society.*" And the policy was subsequently accepted into Labours policy forum.
- This Council has consistently campaigned against the unfair electoral changes that have disenfranchised the 2 million citizens without the correct photo identification.
- We applaud the recent investigation by the Sunday Mirror Newspaper into how the "*Tories are rigging the General Election rules*" and the observation from the Independent Electoral Commission that the Government is "*telling the umpire how to enforce the rules of the game.*"

This Council Resolves –

- To support the cross party Migrant Democracy's campaign for Residence Based Voting Rights and call on Manchester Labour MPs to continue to show their support

- To continue to campaign against the to suppress votes in this country by enforcing facial identification requirements for the general election, whilst appointing overseas coordinators to make it easier to vote from overseas.
- To call on all Councillors to stand up to the attacks on our electoral system by this Tory government and call on all Councillors who support residency-based voting rights to vote Labour for a Labour government to implement them.

Councillor Bayunu indicated that she had agreed to the amendment and that the amended motion would be the substantive motion to be considered.

The amended motion was put to the Council as the substantive motion and the Lord Mayor declared it was carried.

Resolution

This Council resolves:

- To support the cross party Migrant Democracy's campaign for Residence Based Voting Rights and call on Manchester Labour MPs to continue to show their support.
- To continue to campaign against the to suppress votes in this country by enforcing facial identification requirements for the general election, whilst appointing overseas coordinators to make it easier to vote from overseas.
- To call on all Councillors to stand up to the attacks on our electoral system by this Tory government and call on all Councillors who support residency-based voting rights to vote Labour for a Labour government to implement them.

CC/24/7 Notice of Motion - Post Office Scandal and Lies

Councillor Karney proposed the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Hilal: -

All of Manchester and the country have been horrified at the lies and injustices perpetrated by the Post Office against 900 postmasters.

At the height of the scandal from 2010 – 2012 the Postal Affairs Minister was Sir Ed Davey. The record shows that he refused to meet with postmaster Alan Bates who let the campaign for justice.

The City Council calls on Ed Davey:

- I) To apologise to Mr. Bates
- II) To apologise to the 900 postmasters whose lives were shattered by the lies and criminal harassment of the Post Office

Councillor Leech moved an amendment to the motion, which was seconded by Councillor Good, as follows: -

All of Manchester and the country have been horrified at the lies and injustices perpetrated by the Post Office against 900 postmasters.

From the year 2000, hundreds of sub-postmasters and sub-postmistresses across the country were wrongly convicted, because of faults with the Post Office's Horizon IT system that it covered up for years. The truth was finally uncovered in 2019, thanks to the sub-postmasters' High Court battle and crucial evidence from a whistleblower.

Council recognises that successive Labour, Coalition and Conservative Governments failed to take the necessary action to uncover the scandal, and condemns the Post Office for lying to Ministers during the Labour Governments between 1997 and 2010, the Coalition Government from 2010-2015 and the subsequent Conservative Governments after 2015.

Council further condemns those politicians and sections of the media who have attempted to smear individual politicians for party political gain, rather than seeking justice for the sub-postmasters and sub-postmistresses and the prosecution of those who are responsible for innocent sub-postmasters and sub-postmistresses being wrongly convicted, and having their lives ruined by this scandal.

Council notes the comments of well-respected BBC investigative journalist John Sweeney who said on X, formerly Twitter, "Our BBC Panorama Trouble At The Post Office in August 2015 had a Fujitsu whistleblower who said Horizon computer generated errors. This was the first time outsiders knew for a fact the Post Office was lying. So it is unfair to criticise Keir Starmer and Ed Davey who were out of the picture in August 2015. By then the Conservatives were in charge. And they gave Paula Vennels a gong."

Council further notes the role of Fujitsu in the Post Office scandal, whose faulty Horizon accounting software was used to convict hundreds of innocent people, and Fujitsu Europe's boss, Paul Patterson has admitted that Fujitsu has a "moral obligation" to contribute to compensation for those who were wrongly prosecuted as a result of its faulty IT software.

Council notes with concern that an "exploratory agreement" with Fujitsu was signed last month by Council Leader Bev Craig, and Greater Manchester Mayor, Andy Burnham, even though the inquiry is ongoing and no compensation has yet been paid out.

Council therefore calls on the Government:-

1. To ensure that any Post Office or Fujitsu staff found to have lied about the problems with the Horizon software be prosecuted.
2. To ensure that the compensation scheme is fast-tracked and includes punitive costs against the Post Office and Fujitsu.

Council also requests that the Leader of the Council brings forward an urgent report to the Executive, setting out the nature of the "exploratory agreement" with Fujitsu, with a guarantee that no deal can be signed with Fujitsu before full compensation has been paid out and any appropriate prosecutions pursued.

The amendment was put to the Council and on voting, the Lord Mayor declared that it was lost.

A further amendment was moved by Councillor Johnson and Councillor Nunney, as follows: -

All of Manchester and the country have been horrified at the lies and injustices perpetrated by Fujitsu and the Post Office against 900 the sub-postmasters.

Between 1999-2015, over 900 sub-postmasters were convicted of theft, fraud, and false accounting, with most of these prosecutions carried out by the Post Office. Alan Bates led the campaign for justice.

This scandal revealed the mendacity and opportunism by the Post Office, their failure in corporate governance, judicial and court failure as well as legislative failure. Consecutive Postal Affairs Ministers during this period are part of this failure.

The City Council calls on those Postal Affairs Ministers: -

- To apologise to Mr. Bates;
- To apologise to the sub-postmasters whose lives were shattered by the lies and criminal harassment of the Post Office.

The City Council also calls on the Government:

- To quickly and adequately allocate compensation to the victims of the scandal;
- To hold the Post Office and Fujitsu to account.

The amendment was put to the Council and on voting, the Lord Mayor declared that it was lost.

The motion was put to the Council as the substantive motion and the Lord Mayor declared it was carried.

Resolution

The City Council calls on Ed Davey:

- I) To apologise to Mr. Bates.
- II) To apologise to the 900 postmasters whose lives were shattered by the lies and criminal harassment of the Post Office.

CC/24/8 Notice of Motion - Save the Housing Support Fund: Stop Government cutting vital support for families

Councillor Midgley submitted the following motion, which was seconded by Councillor Marsh: -

This Council notes:

- Since 2010, cuts and decisions have led to rising levels of poverty in the UK, made even worse by the Cost-of-Living Crisis.
- In Manchester, we have long worked hard to increase opportunities and reduce poverty. Despite our best efforts over 40% of our children live in poverty. With over 41,000 residents likely to be living with disposable income of less than £30 a month and a further 60,000 who potentially have less than £124 disposal income a month, the situation is acute.
- This council works hard to support those in need and last year alone the council spent over £50 million to support residents in hardship and reduce poverty. Examples include our freephone Cost of living advice line, our food support response service and free school meals for children in the school holidays.
- The Government is now threatening to scrap the Household Support Fund in March 2024. In Manchester we use this to provide support to around 60,000 residents in the form of:
 - 40,000 children and young people receiving free school meals holiday support;
 - 12,500 vulnerable households receiving cost of living support payments;
 - 6,000 children and young people accessing additional Holiday Activity Fund support;
 - 400 care leavers receiving an income top up;
 - Valuable support to charities working in our communities.
- This support makes a real difference to some of Manchester's most vulnerable residents in managing cost of living pressures.

This Council is concerned that across Manchester families are living under the threat of losing this vital lifeline, and that many charities and voluntary groups in Manchester depend on HSF to deliver emergency cost of living support to families who are at risk of financial hardship.

This Council resolves:

- To restate the fact that political choices have seen levels of poverty rise in the UK.
- To call on the Government to provide urgent clarity and reassurance to these families and community groups reliant on this funding and extend the Household Support Fund beyond its current end date of March 2024.
- That the Leader of the Council is requested to write to the Government to restate Manchester's deep worry that this lifeline for many will be scrapped.
- To campaign alongside the LGA, Labour MPs and community groups to save the HSF.

On the motion being put to the vote, the Lord Mayor declared it carried unanimously.

CC/24/9 Proceedings of the Executive

The proceedings of the Executive on 13 December 2023 and 17 January 2024 were submitted.

Decision

To receive the minutes of the Executive meetings held on 13 December 2023 and 17 January 2024.

CC/24/10 Questions to Executive Members and Others under Procedural Rule 23

Councillor Igbon responded to a question from Councillor Hilal regarding the use of refillable cups at cafes providing a takeaway service.

Councillor Igbon responded to a question from Councillor Hilal regarding the use of larger bins in parks and the frequency of refuse collection.

Councillor Igbon responded to a question from Councillor Hilal regarding a refresh of the Council's Parks Strategy, with an emphasis on safety of women and girls in parks.

Councillor Igbon responded to a question from Councillor Hilal regarding funding for street cleaning.

Councillor Igbon responded to a question from Councillor Hilal regarding contract arrangements with Biffa.

Councillor White responded to a question from Councillor Nunney regarding arrangements to ensure the inclusion of local residents in the consultation on the Wythenshawe Culture Hub.

Councillor Craig responded to a question from Councillor Nunney regarding a response to the use of Manchester Airport in the shipment of incoming cargoes of endangered live macaque monkeys destined for UK vivisection laboratories.

The question received from Councillor Northwood to Councillor Akbar was withdrawn in accordance with Rule 12.1, Council Procedure Rules, Council Constitution.

Councillor Igbon responded to a question from Councillor Leech regarding inspection arrangements for roads following leaf clearance.

Councillor Rawlins responded to a question from Councillor Leech regarding the carbon emission impact of the 32 ward Climate Change action plans.

Councillor Craig responded to a question from Councillor Leech regarding a partnership arrangement with Fujitsu in light of the findings and potential outcome from the Post Office Horizon software inquiry.

Councillor Hacking responded to a question from Councillor Shilton-Godwin regarding plans for promoting cycling in the city following the launch of Manchester, European Capital of Cycling.

Councillor Akbar responded to a question from Councillor Wheeler regarding pay arrangements from 1 May 2024 to ensure the Council continues to be a Real Living Wage Employer.

Councillor Rawlins responded to a question from Councillor Good regarding safety measures at the Great Ancoats Street, and Pin Mill Brow road crossing.

Councillor Rawlins responded to a question from Councillor Good regarding the Council's policy on the minimum width of parking bays.

Councillor Tom Robinson responded to a question from Councillor Good regarding access arrangements to GP and dentistry services in Beswick and Ancoats.

Councillor Akbar responded to a question from Councillor Johnson regarding an update on a feasibility study concerning the use of enforcement agents for the collection of outstanding council tax.

Councillor Craig responded to a question from Councillor Johnson regarding a call on the UK Government to work with international partners towards a long-term cease fire and creation of a Palestinian state in order to bring lasting peace between Gaza and Israel.

CC/24/11 Scrutiny Committees

The minutes of the following Scrutiny Committee meetings were submitted:

- Economy and Regeneration – 5 December 2023 and 9 January 2024
- Communities and Equalities – 5 December 2023 and 9 January 2024
- Children and Young People – 6 December 2023 and 10 January 2024
- Health – 6 December 2023 and 10 January 2024
- Resources and Governance – 7 December 2023 and 11 January 2024
- Environment, Climate Change and Neighbourhoods – 7 December 2023 and 11 January 2024

Decision

To receive those minutes submitted.

CC/24/12 Proceedings of Committees

The minutes of the following meetings were submitted:

- Audit Committee – 28 November 2023
- Planning and Highways Committee – 14 December 2023 and 18 January 2024
- Health and Wellbeing – 24 January 2024

- Constitutional and Nomination Committee – 31 January 2024

The Council was asked to give particular consideration to the following recommendations from the minutes:

CN/24/02 Appointments and Changes to Council Committee Membership

Committee	Member(s) to be added	Member(s) to be removed
Licensing Policy Committee	Councillor Connolly Councillor Igbon	Councillor Flanagan Councillor Rawlins

Health and Wellbeing Board

- Remove Bill McCarthy - GMMH to appoint Tony Warne - GMMH

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

- Remove Teacher Representative - Saba Iltaf
- Re-appoint Teacher Representative - Laura Smith – (term to run for two years, with effect from 1 December 2023, until 31 November 2025)
- Re-appoint Teacher Representative (Primary Sector) – Laura Smith (term to run to two years, with effect from 1 December 2023 until 31 November 2025)
- Re-appoint Parent Governor Representative – Gary Cleworth (term to run for two years with effect from 3 February 2024, until 2 February 2026)
- Appoint new Parent Governor Representative – Shade Davies to replace Katie McDaid – (term to run from 31 January 2024, for two years until 30 January 2026).

Decisions

1. To receive the minutes submitted.
2. To approve the changes in appointments to Committees and panels of the Council, as detailed above.

CC/24/13 Key Decisions Report

The Council considered the report of the City Solicitor on key decisions that have been taken in accordance with the urgency provisions in the Council’s Constitution.

Decision

To note the report.