

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

<p>COUNCIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 12 MARCH 2021</p>

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE COUNCIL BUSINESS MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE HELD ON FRIDAY 12 MARCH 2021 AT 1500 HOURS,
AS AN ON-LINE MEETING**

PRESENT: Councillor Ian Ward in the Chair;

Councillors Robert Alden, Fred Grindrod, Brigid Jones, Carl Rice, Martin Straker Welds and Mike Ward.

NOTICE OF RECORDING

- 3079 The Chairman advised that the meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.civico.net/birmingham) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs at the meeting except where there are confidential or exempt items.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 3080 Members were reminded that they must declare all relevant pecuniary and non pecuniary interests relating to any items of business to be discussed at this meeting. If a pecuniary interest was declared a Member must not speak or take part in that agenda item. Any declarations would be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

APOLOGIES

- 3081 An apology was received from Councillor Gareth Moore.

CHANGES TO POLLING STATION VENUES 6 MAY 2021

The following report of the Returning Officer was submitted:-

(See document No 1)

Robert Connelly, Returning Officer, made introductory comments relating to the report. He noted the hard work being undertaken by his team to ensure that the elections could take place as smoothly as possible despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic and he thanked them. A further issue had arisen following the late letter from the Department for Education to all schools that schools should avoid closure on polling day, if at all possible. Schools had

been helpful in identifying local alternative accommodation. He highlighted the one outstanding issue currently at paragraph 4.2 in the report.

During the ensuing discussion Members of the Committee thanked staff for their efforts in ensuring a smooth election.

Councillor Mike Ward felt it was a concern that some polling stations had had to be moved to outside the polling district as it could depress turnout on the day. He was particularly concerned in relation to the polling station at Severne Junior & Infant (NC) School having to be moved outside the polling district and he queried whether any of the Polling Stations which were in different polling districts could be reconsidered.

Councillor Brigid Jones in noting that the alternative polling stations were in walking distance of the originals requested that appropriate guidance on polling cards, website and any other communications be given that polling stations may change, and electors should check beforehand. Signage on the original polling station giving details and directions to the new polling station should be provided. She also felt postal votes should be encouraged.

The Chair noted that details of postal votes were being sent out to all residential property with the Council Tax bills.

Councillor Robert Alden sought clarification if the issues in Bartley Green had been resolved as he was aware that the two Councillors in that Ward had had concerns at the alternative proposals put forward. In respect of Stockland Green Ward he highlighted that if the proposed alternative, which was the most suitable, there were community facilities at the other end of the Ward at the park and Greek Centre.

Robert Connelly, Returning Officer, referring to the Severne Junior & Infant (NC) School indicated that there were a lack of alternatives in the Ward. Consideration of using a car park was being given but that was not without problems due to the lack of huts due to the pandemic. He indicated that he would look at messaging but noted that the limited space on the polling Card had already been used for covid safety messaging but undertook to provide signage at old polling stations giving directions of the new polling station including a map. Mr Connelly noted that the situation had not yet been resolved and again there were issues of using car parks and trying to get alternative premises such as public houses but communication was difficult because they were shut or they were reluctant to use the outdoor space. With reference to Stockland Green that was also not resolved as the alternative premises' management needed to meet to decide if they could accommodate the polling station.

3082

RESOLVED:-

That the polling station venue changes be agreed for the polls taking place on Thursday 6 May 2021.

APPOINTMENTS

Following nominations from Councillor Martin Straker Welds it was-

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RESOLVED:-

- (i) That Councillor Carl Rice (Lab) appointed to the WMCA Audit, Risk & Assurance Committee in place of Councillor Fred Grindrod (Lab) for the period ending with the next Annual Meeting of the Council;
- (ii) that Councillor Shabrana Hussain (Lab) appointed to the Economy and Skills Overview and Scrutiny Committee as Chair in place of Councillor Lou Robson (Lab) for the period ending with the next Annual Meeting of the Council;
- (iii) that Councillor Shabrana Hussain (Lab) appointed to the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee in place of Councillor Lou Robson (Lab) for the period ending with the next Annual Meeting of the Council;
- (iv) that Councillor Shafique Shah (Lab) appointed to the Housing and Neighbourhoods Overview and Scrutiny Committee in place of Councillor Shabrana Hussain (Lab) for the period ending with the next Annual Meeting of the Council.

OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair was of the opinion that the following matter could be considered as a matter of urgency in view of need to expedite consideration thereof and instruct officer if necessary:-

Use of The Coat of Arms

Councillor Brigid Jones indicated that she had recently 'bumped into' the driver for the Lord Mayor who had had a face mask made up with the Coat of Arms on it. However, he had been advised that he was not allowed to use it as Council Business Management Committee had not agreed it under the usual procedure. She therefore requested that the Committee give its approval.

Councillor Robert Alden noted that the driver was travelling round Birmingham with the Lord Mayor representing the City and nobody should have stopped him from wearing it in the first place. Therefore, he was happy to agree to the suggestion made.

The Chair sought the agreement of the Committee to not having any objection to the Lord Mayor's driver using a facemask with the Coat of Arms on it.

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RESOLVED:-

That the Committee has no objection to the use of the Coat of Arms by the Lord Mayor's driver on a facemask.

AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS

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RESOLVED:-

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1522 hours.

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CHAIR