

Minutes of Extraordinary Council

9 December 2025 at 6.00pm at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury

Present: The Worshipful Mayor, Councillor Melia (Chair);

Councillors K Allcock, Bhamra, Carmichael, Cotterill, Davies, Dhariwal, Dhatt, Elizabeth Giles, J Giles, Elaine Giles, S Gill, W Gill, Hackett, Hartwell, Hemingway, Hinchliff, Hughes, Hussain, Iqbal, Jalil, Jeffcoat, Johnston, Kalebe-Nyamongo, Kaur, Khan, Khatun, Kordala, Lewis, Loan, Maycock, Muflihi, Owen, Pall, Piper, Rahman, Randhawa, Shaeen, A Singh, J Singh, Smith Taylor, Tromans, Trumpeter, Uddin, Williams and Younis

Apologies: Councillors M Allcock, Ashraf, Bhullar, Chidley, Choudhry, Crompton, Dunn, Fenton, Fitzgerald, Gavan, Luke Giles, Horton, Mayo, Millard, Millar, Moore, Preece, Uppal, Webb, Weston and Wilkes.

Also present: Shokat Lal – Chief Executive; Mike Jones – Monitoring Officer and Service Director Governance; Suky Suthi-Nagra – Democratic Services and Member Services Manager; Connor Robinson - Democratic Services Officer; Kennedy Brown – Sergeant at Arms.

61/25 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

62/25 **Nomination for the status of Freeman of the Borough for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council – Rt Hon Lord John Spellar of Smethwick**

The Council considered a nomination of the Rt Hon Lord John Spellar of Smethwick for the status of Freeman of the Borough. The title of Honorary Freeman (and Freewoman) of the Borough was the highest honour that the Council could bestow upon a person. The title was awarded to persons of distinction and persons who had rendered eminent services to the borough. To be considered for the honour of Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the Borough, a nominee was required to meet at least two of the following criteria:-

- had delivered in a way that had brought distinction to the borough and enhanced the borough's reputation as a direct result of their actions;
- had made a significant improvement to the life of others in the borough as a direct result of eminent service;

- had demonstrated exceptional innovation and entrepreneurship which was delivering significant economic growth and prosperity in the borough;
- exemplified selflessness and sustained commitment to their community through charitable deeds.

Council considered the nomination, moved by Councillor Luke John Davies, of the Rt Hon Lord John Spellar of Smethwick for the status of Freeman of the Borough for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council.

The Rt Hon Lord Spellar of Smethwick had first been elected as the MP for the then Warley West constituency in 1992, serving the Borough of Sandwell faithfully for 32 years. Lord Spellar had dealt with countless concerns and issues raised by the residents of Sandwell and had spread the name of Sandwell and Smethwick to many across the world. It was stated that Lord Spellar's choice to take the title Lord Spellar of Smethwick demonstrated his commitment to enhancing the reputation of the Borough.

Due to Lord Spellar's track record of public service in and for Sandwell, and for his promotion of the reputation of the Borough over more than three decades, Council was minded to grant Lord Spellar the status of Freeman of the Borough of Sandwell.

Resolved;-

- (1) that the Rt Hon Lord Spellar of Smethwick is granted status of Freeman of the Borough for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council;
- (2) that the Service Director – Governance and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Mayor and Leader of the Council, is authorised to make the appropriate arrangements to implement the decision set out in (1) above.

63/25

Nomination for the status of Freeman of the Borough for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council – Mr Stewart Towe CBE DL

The Council considered a nomination of Mr Stewart Towe CBE DL for the status of Freeman of the Borough. The title of Honorary Freeman (and Freewoman) of the Borough was the highest honour that the Council could bestow upon a person. The title was awarded to persons of distinction and persons who had rendered eminent services to the borough. To be considered for the honour of Honorary Freeman or Freewoman of the Borough, a nominee was required to meet at least two of the following criteria:-

- had delivered in a way that had brought distinction to the borough and enhanced the borough's reputation as a direct result of their actions;
- had made a significant improvement to the life of others in the borough as a direct result of eminent service;

- had demonstration exception innovation and entrepreneurship which was delivering significant economic growth and prosperity in the borough;
- exemplified selflessness and sustained commitment to their community through charitable deeds.

Council considered the nomination, moved by Councillor Pam Randhawa, of Mr Stewart Towe CBE DL for the status of Freeman of the Borough for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council. The nomination was in recognition of Mr Towe's enduring contribution to public life, enterprise and community development within Sandwell.

It was highlighted that Mr Towe had shown unwavering commitment to public service which was reflected in his work as a Deputy Lieutenant of the West Midlands and through his active engagement with numerous civic, charitable and educational organisations.

Due to Mr Towe's embodiment of civic responsibility, leadership and service, Council was minded to grant Mr Towe the status of Freeman of the Borough of Council.

Resolved -

- (1) that Mr Stewart Towe CBE DL is granted status of Freeman of the Borough for Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council;
- (2) that the Service Director – Governance and Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Mayor and Leader of the Council, is authorised to make the appropriate arrangements to implement the decision set out in (1) above.

Meeting ended 6.24pm