



## Council minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 6 December 2023 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 4.00 pm and concluding at 6.00 pm.

### Members present

P Birchley, M Harker OBE, S Adoh, A Alam, M Ayub, R Bagge, M Baldwin, D Barnes, K Bates, J Baum, D Blamires, A Bond, M Bracken, S Broadbent, S Bowles, P Brazier, T Broom, T Butcher, M Caffrey, D Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, J Chhokar, S Chhokar, J Chilver, A Christensen, L Clarke OBE, A Collingwood, M Collins, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, E Culverhouse, I Darby, D Dhillon, T Dixon, M Dormer, P Drayton, C Etholen, P Fealey, M Flys, M Fayyaz, R Gaster, E Gemmell, P Gomm, T Green, G Hall, G Harris, C Harriss, D Hayday, O Hayday, C Heap, T Hunter-Watts, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain JP, Majid Hussain, Maz Hussain, T Hussain, P Irwin, C Jackson, S James, D Johncock, C Jones, J Jordan, S Kayani, P Kelly, R Khan BEM, D King, S Lewin, J MacBean, A Macpherson, I Macpherson, F Mahon, N Marshall, P Martin, Dr W Matthews, Z Mohammed, H Mordue, S Morgan, R Newcombe, C Oliver, A Osibogun, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, S Raja, W Raja, N Rana, M Rand, G Sandy, A Schaefer, L Smith BEM, N Southworth, B Stanier Bt, M Stannard, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, M Tett, N Thomas, D Town, J Towns, A Turner, M Turner, P Turner, G Wadhwa, M Walsh, J Ward, J Wassell, J Waters, D Watson, A Wheelhouse, G Williams, S Wilson, M Winn, A Wood and K Wood

### Agenda Item

#### **1 Apologies**

Prior to asking for apologies, the Chairman welcomed Councillor Anja Schaefer to her first full Council meeting following the Buckingham East Ward by-election on 2 November 2023.

Apologies were received from Councillors K Ashman, S Barrett, A Baughan, N Brown, R Carington, D Goss, P Griffin, S Guy, T Hogg, G Hollis, N Hussain, M Knight, S Lambert, R Matthews, N Naylor, S Rouse, J Rush, G Smith, M Smith, L Sullivan, D Summers, D Thompson, A Waite, H Wallace and L Walsh. Apologies were also received from Countess Howe, his Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire and Dame Ann Limb, High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire.

#### **2 Julia Adey and Ron Gaffney**

Tribute was paid to Julia Adey and Councillor Ron Gaffney who had recently passed away. The Chairman recorded sincere condolences to their families on their sad

losses.

Councillor Katrina Wood paid tribute to Julia Adey who had been a Member of Wycombe District Council from 2011-2020 representing 'The Wooburns' Ward and a Member of Buckinghamshire Council from 2020-21. During her time on Wycombe DC, Julia had served as the Cabinet Member for Community from 2015-17 and as the Cabinet Member for Environment from 2017-2020.

Catherine Oliver (a Hazlemere Ward colleague of Ron Gaffney) paid tribute to Ron Gaffney who had been a current Buckinghamshire Councillor for the Hazlemere Ward. He had passed away on 6 November 2023.

Ron had begun his career in 1964 as a trainee accountant for Buckinghamshire Council, before becoming a fully chartered accountant. Ron then worked for the former Wycombe Borough Council, which became Wycombe District Council in 1974. Ron remained working for Wycombe District Council for the remainder of his career until he retired in 2006.

From 2007 to 2020, Ron had served as a Councillor for Wycombe District Council in the former Hazlemere North Ward. During this time he had served on various committees, including Audit Committee, Licensing Committee and undertook the role of the Chairman of the Improvement and Review Commission in 2011. From 2020 to 2023, Ron had served as a Councillor for Buckinghamshire Council representing the Hazlemere Ward.

Members then observed a minute's silence in memory of Julia Adey and Ron Gaffney.

### **3 Chairman's Awards - Mike Clare and Paul Jennings**

Members were informed that the Council had introduced the Chairman's award which was the highest honour that the Chairman of the Council could give to individuals and organisations in recognition of their outstanding or exceptional contribution to the social, economic or environmental wellbeing of Buckinghamshire. There were a number of criteria to be met to be nominated for this award that could be granted at the discretion of the Chairman of the Council to individuals of any age who lived in Buckinghamshire and were from Buckinghamshire.

The Chairman stated that it gave her great pleasure to make 2 Chairman's awards to Mike Clare, founder and chairman of the Clare Foundation, and to Paul Jennings, Chairman of the River Chess Association.

Councillor Arif Hussain, who had nominated Mike Clare for the Chairman's award, informed

Members that after a career in business, Mike Clare had set up the Clare Foundation in 2009, which helped Buckinghamshire-based charities develop their strategy and governance and increase their impact in the community. The Clare Foundation provided organizations with free support and advice, funding and grants, leadership development, and brought like-minded charity leaders together at networking and round table events. Mike had also re-established Family Angels, which helped Buckinghamshire families on the edge of monetary ability and financial hardship. Through the Clare Foundation, Mike had led numerous initiatives that have supported the Council, Buckinghamshire's VCS sector, and Buckinghamshire residents, particularly during COVID-19. Mike was an ambassador and Deputy Lieutenant for Buckinghamshire, a Freeman of the City of London, and a winner of numerous entrepreneurial awards. In 2009, Mike had been awarded an honorary doctorate from Bucks New University in recognition of his outstanding achievements in the field of commerce and business. He was also a patron of the Clare Business School based within Bucks New University.

Mike Clare was invited to speak and stated he was very proud and privileged to accept the Chairman's Award, on behalf of the Clare Foundation and that it recognised the hard work undertaken by fellow trustees, Martin Gallagher (CEO) and staff.

Councillor Gareth Williams, who had nominated Paul Jennings for the Chairman's award, informed Members that Paul Jennings had led initiatives for many years to protect and restore the ecological health of the River Chess, a rare chalk stream that hosted diverse wildlife. He had been involved in projects to monitor, lobby, and challenge the water companies, the Environment Agency, and HS2 on issues such as abstraction, sewage, and construction. He had also shared his passion and knowledge of the River Chess with the local community, especially children, through river dipping, newsletters, and social media. He has also brought together charity leaders, volunteers, and experts to work in partnership for the river.

Paul Jennings was invited to speak and accepted the award for himself and the team of people he had been working with for the last 15 years. He made brief mention of the importance of partnership working and on the recent discovery of the presence of a rare stone fly invertebrate in the river.

The Chairman thanked Mr Clare and Mr Jennings for their hard work and for being worthy winners of the Chairman's awards. They were both then presented with Certificates of Achievement and a medallion from the Chairman.

#### **4 Armed Forces Covenant**

Members were informed that the Council had committed to re-sign an updated version of the Armed Forces Covenant. The Covenant contained a number of pledges, by which the Council promised to:

- Recognise and honour the sacrifices made by the armed forces.
- Raise public awareness of issues affecting the armed forces and their families.

- Reduce any disadvantages suffered by the armed forces community as a result of their service or association.
- Encourage activities which help to integrate the armed forces with the wider community.

Air Commodore Simon Harper OBE, commanding officer of RAF Halton and representing the Ministry of Defence, was invited to speak and he thanked the Council for their remarkable work in supporting the armed forces and the armed forces community in the county. He mentioned that Defence was busy and continued to need support for the serving population, veterans, cadet forces, and their families. Air Commodore Harper recognized the benefit of the armed forces community to the county and stated that the covenant represented a promise, foundation, and codification of mutual support. He expressed his honour in signing the covenant and thanked the Council for their support.

Councillor Mimi Harker OBE, the Council's Armed Forces champion, then spoke and thanked the armed forces for their service, and listed the commitments made by the Council to support them and their families. Councillor Harker mentioned that the Council had been recognised with a Defence Employer Recognition Scheme Gold Award, which was the highest honour for employers who supported the armed forces community. She also stated that the Council was happy to provide information and guidance to other organisations who wanted to sign their own covenants and pledge their support to the Armed Forces community. In concluding, Councillor Harker, on behalf of Buckinghamshire Council, extended deepest thanks and gratitude to all who had served and continued to serve the country.

The updated version of the Armed Forces Covenant was then signed by Air Commodore Simon Harper OBE and Councillor Mimi Harker OBE.

## 5 Minutes

During consideration of the Minutes, Councillor Wassell stated that at Minute 8 (Proportionality Review), it should be clarified that after Councillor Nabella Rana had left the Alliance Grouping, she had then been a non-aligned Independent for a period before joining the Conservative Group.

**RESOLVED –**

**That, subject to the above clarification, the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 September 2023 be approved as a correct record.**

## 6 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Tony Green declared a personal interest in item 6 (Adoption of Model Street Collection Regulations) as he was a member of the Royal British Legion for the High Wycombe area and arranged collections during the poppy appeal period.

## 7 Chairman's Update

The Chairman congratulated Sir Francis Habgood QPM DL on his recent appointment

to the role of Vice Lord-Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire. Sir Francis had been Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police from 2015-2019, retiring after over 32 years in policing, and had been made a Deputy Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire in 2020. He succeeded Mr Alexander Boswell who retired from the role after 12 years, although Alexander would be continuing as a Deputy Lieutenant of the County.

The Chairman then informed Members that since the last Council meeting in September she had:

- Visited Restore Hope at Latimer to present a Chairman's Award in recognition of work done to preserve the water quality of the River Chess.
- Attended the Best Kept Village in Bucks awards, the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Chiltern Rangers, the 50th anniversary of the Ridgeway National Trail celebrations, the Milton Keynes and the Beaconsfield Civic Services, and the Chairman of Buckinghamshire Council's Civic Service at St Mary's church, Chesham.
- been present at the installation of the new team rector in High Wycombe, the Reverend Anthony Searle.
- Visited RAF Croughton, where the United States Air Force had spoken of their high regard for their joint operations with the Royal Air Force.
- opened the new Audley Wycliffe Park retirement village at Horsleys Green.
- Enjoyed last night the pantomime of Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs in Aylesbury.

The Chairman also thanked her Vice Chairman, Councillor M Harker OBE, who had covered the Remembrance Sunday Service in Aylesbury, and thanked everyone who had supported the Buckinghamshire Children's Christmas 2023 gift appeal, and had set up stalls in the Street prior to the Council meeting for the Chairman's two charities (Medical Detection Dogs and Scannappeal), the Councillor Shadowing Scheme and on the IT Cyber Briefing for Members.

## **8 Petitions**

There were none.

## **9 Adoption of Model Street Collection Regulations**

Fundraising collections played a vital role in the work carried out by charities and were an important means of both raising money for good causes and also promoting the goals and messages of the collecting charity. However, it was equally important, to ensure that any charitable fundraising, whether in public spaces or door-to-door, was carried out by bona fide charitable organisations and collectors, that a fair percentage of collection proceeds were donated directly to charitable causes, and that no nuisance was caused to businesses and residents as a result of collections.

Buckinghamshire Council's ability to regulate charitable collections in public areas was discretionary and was reliant on full Council passing a resolution to adopt regulations to control charitable "street collections". Whilst adoption was discretionary, it was clearly desirable for Buckinghamshire Council to adopt these

controls. This contrasted with house-to-house charitable collections that were governed by a statutory licensing regime which required all such collections to be licensed and Buckinghamshire Council had no discretion to adopt controls.

The Council currently regulated both types of charitable collections, that was house-to-house and collections in public places, by virtue of established historical arrangements that were in place under each legacy District Council area prior to the formation of the unitary council in April 2020. In accordance with the ongoing programme of work harmonising the policies and approaches of the various licensing functions of the Council it was proposed that a new resolution was made to adopt the Home Office's Model Regulations for Buckinghamshire Council.

The Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services informed Members that the draft Regulations had already been to public consultation, and been submitted to the Licensing Committee who had recommended that the Regulations should be adopted.

**RESOLVED –**

**That the Model Street Collections Regulations as set out in the 'Charitable Collections (Transitional Provisions) Order 1974 (SI 1974/140) (Model Street Collections Regulations) be APPROVED and ADOPTED.**

**10 Proportionality Review report**

Council was informed that a request had been received from the Alliance Grouping Leader to conduct a proportionality review. Since the last proportionality review in September 2023, Councillor Anja Shaefer had been elected via by-election and subsequently joined the Alliance Grouping. Councillor Luisa Sullivan had left the Conservative Group and was ungrouped. Councillor Ron Gaffney, a former member of the Conservative Group, had sadly passed away on 6 November 2023. Councillor David Anthony, former member of the Conservative Group, had resigned on 13 November 2023.

These political group changes had resulted in a change in proportionality as detailed in the Council report and at Appendix 1, which was based on 145 Members. Appendix 1 detailed the allocation of seats on Council Committees and other bodies to political groups.

**RESOLVED –**

**That the allocation of seats on Council Committees and other bodies to political groups at Appendix 1 (supplementary agenda report) be APPROVED.**

**11 Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care System – setting up a joint health scrutiny committee**

Regulation 30(1) of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013, provided that two or more local authorities

could appoint a joint committee. The Joint Authorities each had their own independent established health overview and scrutiny functions, but recognised that there may, from time to time arise certain matters where it would be to the individual and collective interest of one of some of the Joint Authorities to exercise their overview and scrutiny functions through a joint health overview and scrutiny committee, comprised of representatives of the constituent Local Authorities.

The Chairman of the Health and Adults Social Care Select Committee informed Members that whilst Buckinghamshire was part of an Integrated Care System with Oxfordshire and Berkshire West (made up of Wokingham, Reading and Berkshire West local authorities), known as BOB ICS, Buckinghamshire residents also accessed health services within the neighbouring integrated care system of Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes. These footprints were set up by the NHS in 2015 to drive forward the Sustainability Transformation Plans (STPs). The BLMK JHOSC would comprise 13 Councillors with three Councillors appointed by Bedford Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, Luton Council and Milton Keynes City Council and one appointed by Buckinghamshire Council. The draft terms of reference for the BLMK JHOSC were attached to the report to Council.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (1) That it be AGREED to appoint a Member to the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Joint Health Scrutiny Committee (BLMK JHOSC), part of the Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Integrated Care System.**
- (2) That the terms of reference for the Joint Health Scrutiny Committee be AGREED.**

## **12 Reports from Cabinet Members**

Members received reports from Cabinet Members. There was an opportunity for members to ask questions of individual Cabinet Members about matters and issues affecting their portfolios.

### **Leader of the Council, Councillor Martin Tett**

The Leader informed Members that he had attended the recent ‘Dragons Den’ event run by the Clare Foundation at which Councillor Paul Irwin had pitched and won a substantial amount of funding for his charity, Inspire Bucks, which supported disadvantaged children across the county. The Leader placed on record his recognition of Councillor Irwin’s efforts.

The Leader received questions on the budget shortfall and its impact on non-statutory services funded by Community Boards, as well as the Opportunity Bucks scheme. Members were informed that details of the budget would be revealed to all Members in due course and at the same time.

The Leader reiterated that the Opportunity Bucks scheme was a worthwhile initiative to target areas of disadvantage and improve the conditions for residents across the county.

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Angela Macpherson**

The Cabinet Member received questions about the handover of patients discharged from Milton Keynes to care workers, and the resourcing to manage the growing concern of mental health post COVID.

Members were informed that there was more integrated working than last year, and she felt assured that there was a more robust mechanism for discharge. The Cabinet Member also mentioned that mental health was managed with Oxford Health through the urgent and emergency care board and that there were several initiatives in Buckinghamshire, including the Safe Haven initiative.

**Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services, Mark Winn**

The Cabinet Member provided a short update announcing that the consultation on the Housing Strategy, which outlined the issues and solutions for housing in Buckinghamshire, had been extended to 18 January 2024.

The Cabinet Member received questions about Bucks Home Choice and pavement licensing issues related to Kingsbury Square. Members were informed that the Bucks Home Choice figures represented people in housing need, not necessarily homeless, and that the Housing Strategy would identify the gaps in provision which could then be addressed.

The plans for Kingsbury Square had not yet been published by the Council, and as such, he could not comment on them at this time, but would be open to a discussion about any related concerns once they had been made available.

**Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, Councillor Gareth Williams**

The Cabinet Member received questions on tree planting and the Council's carbon emissions. Members were informed that the Council had consulted with Forestry England, and would organise community planting days in Wing, where a new wood of more than 100,000 trees was being created. These would likely begin next February.

The Cabinet Member also confirmed that the Council would continue to evaluate its progress towards reaching net zero emissions for its own operations by 2050 or sooner, and that the evaluation would be part of the Portfolio and Asset Strategy. The Council had planted 145,000 trees in the last year and planned to double the number of electric vehicle charging points by 2027. Buckinghamshire Council had reduced its own operational emissions by 73.4% and was looking for more opportunities to continue to lower its carbon footprint.

**Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, Councillor Anita Cranmer**

The Cabinet Member received questions on the new phone line for children's services, and the possibility to involve local charities in a future 'Shout Out for SEND'

event. Members were informed that the new phone line was part of a complete transformation of the children's services and would be revised between January and April 2024.

The 'Shout Out for SEND' event was the second one that the Council had delivered, and had a focus on bullying. The event had been received very positively, and the suggestion of inviting local charities that offer different opportunities for children with special educational needs was a good one, that the Council could look to include at a future event.

**Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Clive Harriss**

The Cabinet Member received questions on the roofing works on the Court Garden Leisure Centre, grant funding for Haddenham library, and the Queen's Park Arts Centre winning the King's Volunteering Award.

The Cabinet Member was not aware of the current timescale for the roof repair but would provide the information in writing following the meeting. Damage to the pool liner was a health and safety issue, but was not currently considered urgent. Buckinghamshire Council was in discussion with the contractor to get a proper response and solution.

The Cabinet Member stated that he would be happy to provide information concerning the grant funding for Haddenham library. Buckinghamshire Council was undertaking a rationalisation of the library services, and was in discussion with Haddenham Parish Council, which had volunteered to have a greater involvement in the library moving forward. He concurred with a Member in congratulating the Queen's Park Arts Centre for receiving the King's volunteering award, which recognised the contribution of volunteers to the arts and culture sector.

**Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Peter Strachan**

The Cabinet Member received questions on CIL money for Portland House, the town centre update for Aylesbury, and a response to Buckingham Town Council's questions to the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee.

The Cabinet Member confirmed that he had provided a written reply to the question on CIL funding, and that he was happy to discuss the issue following the meeting. He reiterated that the CIL money was being correctly administered, and that the Opportunity Bucks scheme was a great asset of Buckinghamshire Council.

Members were informed that the Regeneration Strategy had been agreed by Cabinet, which included a larger public realm element. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Town Centre Regeneration would be willing to discuss the involvement of local Ward Members. The project was not a duplication of the Town Council's work, but a complementary initiative.

Members were informed that a written response had been sent to the Buckingham Town Council clerk earlier in the day concerning their Growth, Infrastructure and

Housing Select Committee questions.

**Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Arif Hussain**

The Cabinet Member received questions about the possibility of attending meetings in the unparished Wycombe area, and on Community Boards.

Members were informed that the Cabinet Member regularly attended meetings of the High Wycombe Town Committee, as he was a Member of that Committee. He also engaged widely with everybody through the Community Boards. The Cabinet Member stated that he would welcome invitations to attend meetings in the unparished area.

The Cabinet Member reiterated his support for the Community Boards as an integral part of the Council and the community. A boundary review on the High Wycombe unparished area was currently underway, and the views of Members' had been requested. Following the conclusion of the review, the Council would be in a better position to see how Community Boards might be impacted.

**Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources, Councillor John Chilver**

The Cabinet Member received questions on the Housing Strategy, and the Capital Budget in relation to Saunderton Lodge.

Members were informed that the Council was compiling a Portfolio and Asset Strategy that would address the housing issues. Buckinghamshire Council was on track to deliver around 300 units of new affordable housing on its assets and to reach the target of 500 units over the course of the Council, whilst achieving a good return on its commercial property portfolio.

The Council had retained Saunderton Lodge for the time being because of the need for more temporary accommodation although no decision had been made about any other use of the site. Two new properties for temporary accommodation were being acquired in Aylesbury and High Wycombe.

**Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Steve Broadbent**

The Cabinet Member updated Members to confirm that the consultation on the proposed amendments to the School Transport Policy had gone live on 6 December 2023, and would run for eight weeks. The Cabinet Member received questions on broken parking machines in Cornwall's Meadow, Buckingham, on the proposed expansion to Luton Airport, on the Fix My Street service, and on the Pick-Me-Up service and footpaths in Wing.

Members were informed that the parking machines at Cornwall's Meadow were ageing and prone to breakdowns, caused largely by the mechanisms used to accept cash payments. Whilst the Council had a policy to keep using the spare parts as long as possible, over time the machines would become obsolete and beyond repair. The Council was working to change the payment methods to contactless cards and phone apps, which were more reliable and convenient.

The proposed Luton airport expansion was subject to a Development Consent Order, meaning that the final decision would be made by the Secretary of State. The Council had submitted its response and given evidence as an interested party in the form of documents and live evidence by officers, and the public could access this information online.

The Fix My Street service had been enhanced, with some reports concerning Parish responsibilities now being directed firstly to Parish Councils. The Council had a separate £2 million programme to clean gullies across Buckinghamshire throughout the year, and so Fix My Street would not react to every report of a blocked gully. If there were any functionalities that were missing from the service, he was open to discuss this with Members.

The Pick-Me-Up service was in a defined zone as agreed with the Department for Transport through the Rural Mobility Fund and usage of some central Government funding. The service had recently been extended into Flackwell Heath and had seen increased patronage. Usage data was kept under review and would be used to examine the scope, both financially and within the delivery of the service, to expand further the service.

The Cabinet Member informed Members regarding the footpaths in Wing, stating that there was no application to close any defined footpath and that the landowner was exercising their right to define where the footpath lay across the land through a CA17 form (Section 31(6) of the Highways Act 1980 and Section 15A (1) of the Commons Act 2006).

### **13 Notices of Motion**

The Chairman informed Members that two motions had been submitted to the meeting. The motions related to:

- (i) Member Call-In of Planning Applications.
- (ii) Protecting Childrens and Adults Health by Reducing Idling in Buckinghamshire.

#### **(i) Member Call-In of Planning Applications**

The motion was proposed by Councillor Robin Stuchbury and seconded by Councillor Stuart Wilson –

“Under the current Constitutional arrangements, a single Member may request a Call In of a planning application in their Ward and, if material planning grounds are provided, the Service Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the relevant Planning Committee may agree to the request.

If 3 Members of a particular ward make the request, with appropriate grounds, then there is an automatic right for the matter to be Called In to the Committee.

This Motion proposes that such an automatic right be given to every Member.

Where 3 Members are of a different political group, or less engaged with the planning process as the others, then it is very difficult to get the 3 Members to agree a joint request for Call In. And, in anticipation of the boundary changes in 2025, many Wards will not have 3 Members representing them after May 2025.

**This Council therefore** calls on the Audit and Governance Committee to propose appropriate wording to make the necessary changes to the Constitution to ensure each Member should have the right to request a Call In and – if material planning grounds are provided – such an application should automatically be considered by the relevant Planning Committee.”

Councillor Stuchbury briefing explained the rationale of the motion. During the debate it was mentioned that whilst the reduction in the number of Members and the change in the Ward boundaries at the next Council elections in 2025 would require the Constitution to be changed in certain aspects, the Audit and Governance Committee and the Standards and General Purposes Committee at their next meetings would consider reports proposing setting up a cross-party Constitution Working Group in order specifically to consider all the changes for the Constitution required in preparation for 2025. For this reason, the motion submitted to the meeting was premature.

At the conclusion of the debate, the motion was put to a vote and declared to be **LOST**.

**(ii) Protecting Childrens and Adults Health by Reducing Idling in Buckinghamshire.**

The motion was proposed by Councillor Ed Gemmell and seconded by Councillor Adam Poland-Goodyer –

**“The Council notes:**

1. The Council has committed in its **Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy** to “Reduce Emissions to air from all council operations” and notes that “Some air pollutants are acidic (for example oxides of nitrogen and sulphur dioxide) or are powerful oxidizing agents (for example tropospheric ozone) and will corrode the lining of the lungs, other living tissue, and inorganic material”
2. In addition, under the **Wycombe District Air Quality Plan**, that Council committed to:
  - a. “Work with the Highway Authority to identify and agree Information displays at strategic positions as drivers are entering the Air Quality Management Areas to inform them that they are entering such”;
  - b. “A campaign to reduce incidents of engine idling, using powers under Regulation 98 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use)

Regulations 1986, and associated signage will keep air quality issues in the mind of the public”;

- c. “Wycombe District Council will implement our powers under Regulation 98 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 to instruct motorists to switch off their engines while their vehicles are parked and to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to those who refuse to co-operate”.
3. Children are especially vulnerable to air pollution.
4. The Royal College of Physicians estimate [40,000 deaths a year in the UK are linked to air pollution](#), with engine idling contributing to this.
5. Idle reduction efforts are particularly important in school zones due to the impacts of exhaust on children’s lungs, which continue to develop until the age of 18. Exposure to excess exhaust and smoke can stunt lung growth and contribute to many lung disorders, including asthma.
6. The Insignis Academy Trust, in a move initiated in Princes Risborough School, is banning idling in the car parks of all its 4 schools in Buckinghamshire.
7. Vehicle idling is against the law and is an offence against the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002.
8. The council is authorised as a designated authority to issue fines for idling under The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002
9. On 15 July 2020 the council committed to working “to achieve net carbon zero for Buckinghamshire as a whole by 2050 “and to evaluating “reaching ‘net zero’ for its own emissions no later than 2050 and possibly before this, potentially by 2030, subject to resources”.
10. The Council’s Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy confirms the Council has four levels of control or influence on emissions and has committed:
  - a. Where we have direct control, we will take action to reduce emissions.
  - b. Where we have financial or regulatory influence, we will look to use these abilities to reduce emissions.
  - c. Where we can enable others to reduce emissions, we will support that change.
  - d. In other circumstances, we shall seek to inform and influence those who do have control over emissions, with the aim of reducing them.
11. In addition, in the Wycombe District Air Quality Plan, it was noted that A) “There is a misconception amongst a small proportion of the population that restarting their vehicle’s engine uses significantly more fuel than an idling engine and that regularly restarting their engine damages the starter motor. In fact, idling for a couple of seconds uses more fuel than restarting the engine and starter motors are a lot more resilient than a few decades ago. Unfortunately, idling engines are commonly found in town centres, car parks, bus stations and outside schools. Emissions from an idling engine do not disperse rapidly into the environment as they are not subject to the turbulence effect that is caused to traffic travelling at speed. They cause very high concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in the immediate vicinity of

the car. This is particularly a problem when idling occurs outside schools with vulnerable young children being primarily exposed”.

12. The council notes the recently reported incident where a member of public approached the driver of a council vehicle to make him aware he was illegally idling and was sworn at.

**The Council believes:**

1. Childrens health and that of adults is extremely important and reducing idling will help to protect the health of children and adults in Buckinghamshire.
2. Vehicle idling pollutes the air, harms health, causes unnecessary emissions, isa against the law and wastes energy.
3. The Council that discouraging idling aligns with its commitment in its Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy to Reduce Emissions to air from all council operations and helps both the Council itself and Buckinghamshire as an area to more easily reach publicised net zero emissions goals.

**The Council calls on Cabinet to resolve:**

4. In relation to its own operations to do the following:
  - a. Clearly inform all council staff that their engines should be turned off whenever their car is not moving and make all staff aware that to leave an engine idling is detrimental to air quality and health, especially of children, and is against the law.
  - b. Request all contractors and suppliers to inform their own staff similarly; and
  - c. Place signage to request engines are turned off in all council car parks and on all council notice boards.
5. To request all schools communicate the health and legal issues associated with idling to parents and staff including by placing appropriate signage in and around each school requesting engines be turned off when waiting.
6. To write to all parish and town councils to encourage their involvement in discouraging idling in their local area.
7. To follow through on the commitments from the **Wycombe District Air Quality Plan** as referred to in note 2 above.”

An amendment to the motion, proposed by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Broadbent, had been submitted and circulated to all Members prior to the meeting in a supplementary agenda, as follows (changes in **BOLD** or struckthrough):

**“The Council notes:**

1. The Council has committed in its Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy to “Reduce Emissions to air from all council operations” and notes that “Some air pollutants are acidic (for example oxides of nitrogen and sulphur dioxide) or are powerful oxidizing agents (for example tropospheric ozone) and will corrode the lining of the lungs, other living tissue, and inorganic material”.
2. **The Council notes the significant improvement in air quality across the**

County over the last five years, as updated in the Climate Change and Air Quality progress report, released on 14<sup>th</sup> November, which notes:

- All nine Air Quality Management zones (AQMA's) are now below the 40 µg/m<sup>3</sup> NO<sub>2</sub> danger threshold, with the exception of one new location in the Friarage Road AQMA in Aylesbury.
- A 41.5% reduction on a net basis of the Council's GHG compared to 18/19 with a similar decline in pollutants.
- Significant progress in the last year on new initiatives such as planting 145,000 trees, emissions mitigation in eligible domestic properties through our energy doctor scheme and the commission of the first upcycled EV Bin lorry by any Council.

2. In addition, under the ~~Wycombe District Air Quality Plan~~, that Council committed to:

- a. ~~“Work with the Highway Authority to identify and agree Information displays at strategic positions as drivers are entering the Air Quality Management Areas to inform them that they are entering such”;~~
- b. ~~“A campaign to reduce incidents of engine idling, using powers under Regulation 98 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986, and associated signage will keep air quality issues in the mind of the public”;~~
- c. ~~“Wycombe District Council will implement our powers under Regulation 98 of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 to instruct motorists to switch off their engines while their vehicles are parked and to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to those who refuse to co-operate”.~~

3. Children are especially vulnerable to air pollution.
4. The Royal College of Physicians estimate [40,000 deaths a year in the UK are linked to air pollution](#), with engine idling contributing to this.
5. Idle reduction efforts are particularly important in school zones due to the impacts of exhaust on children's lungs, which continue to develop until the age of 18. Exposure to excess exhaust and smoke can stunt lung growth and contribute to many lung disorders, including asthma.
6. **The Council has launched a campaign called “Clean up our air campaign” <https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/community-and-safety/clean-up-our-air-campaign/>. This is managed through the Community Boards and we are providing tools, signs etc empowering Community Boards to work with schools, interested groups etc to take action on idling vehicles. One of the first projects we are working with is The Insignis Academy Trust, in a move initiated in Princes Risborough School, which is banning idling in the car parks of all its 4 schools in Buckinghamshire. on school premises.**
7. Vehicle idling is against the law and is an offence against the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002.
8. The council is authorised as a designated authority to issue fines for idling under The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002.
9. On 15 July 2020 the council committed to working “to achieve net carbon zero for Buckinghamshire as a whole by 2050 “and to evaluating “reaching

'net zero' for its own emissions no later than 2050 and possibly before this, potentially by 2030, subject to resources". **This council fully supports our ambitious, detailed and costed Climate Change Strategy.**

10. The Council's Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy confirms the Council has four levels of control or influence on emissions and has committed:
  - a. Where we have direct control, we will take action to reduce emissions.
  - b. Where we have financial or regulatory influence, we will look to use these abilities to reduce emissions.
  - c. Where we can enable others to reduce emissions, we will support that change.
  - d. In other circumstances, we shall seek to inform and influence those who do have control over emissions, with the aim of reducing them.
11. ~~In addition, in the Wycombe District Air Quality Plan, it was noted that A) "There is a misconception amongst a small proportion of the population that restarting their vehicle's engine uses significantly more fuel than an idling engine and that regularly restarting their engine damages the starter motor. In fact, idling for a couple of seconds uses more fuel than restarting the engine and starter motors are a lot more resilient than a few decades ago. Unfortunately, idling engines are commonly found in town centres, car parks, bus stations and outside schools. Emissions from an idling engine do not disperse rapidly into the environment as they are not subject to the turbulence effect that is caused to traffic travelling at speed. They cause very high concentrations of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) in the immediate vicinity of the car. This is particularly a problem when idling occurs outside schools with vulnerable young children being primarily exposed".~~
12. ~~The council notes the recently reported incident where a member of public approached the driver of a council vehicle to make him aware he was illegally idling and was sworn at.~~

**The Council believes:**

1. Childrens' health and that of adults is extremely important and reducing idling will help to protect the health of children and adults in Buckinghamshire.
2. Vehicle idling pollutes the air, harms health, causes unnecessary emissions, is against the law and wastes energy.
3. ~~The Council~~ **That** discouraging idling aligns with its commitment in its Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy to Reduce Emissions to air from all council operations and helps both the Council itself and Buckinghamshire as an area to more easily reach publicised net zero emissions goals.

**The Council calls on Cabinet to resolve:**

4. In relation to its own operations to do the following:
  - a. Clearly ~~inform~~ **remind** all council staff and **suppliers** that their engines should be turned off whenever their car is not moving and make all staff aware that to leave an engine idling is detrimental to air quality and health, especially of children, and is against the law.

- b. ~~Request all contractors and suppliers to inform their own staff similarly; and~~
- c. ~~Place signage to request engines are turned off in all council car parks and on all council notice boards.~~
- 5. To request all schools, **where appropriate, to communicate with School safer travel teams to come up with School travel plans centred around reducing car travel and 'park and stride'.**
- 6. **In line with this Council's commitment to localism, where appropriate, local Community Boards determine how to take part in the anti-idling campaign listed above.**
- 7. **Schools, including Academies, may also consider communicating the health and legal issues associated with idling to parents and staff. This may include including by placing appropriate signage in and around each school requesting engines be turned off when whilst waiting.**
- 6. ~~To write to all parish and town councils to encourage their involvement in discouraging idling in their local area.~~
- 7. ~~To follow through on the commitments from the Wychcombe District Air Quality Plan as referred to in note 2 above.~~

Councillor Gemmell informed the meeting that he had spoken to the proposer and seconder of the amendment and was happy to agree it with one small additional change which was at point 8 in the 'The Council calls on Cabinet to resolve' and which would call on Cabinet 'to resolve to consider placing signage intended to discourage idling in Council car parks.'

With the agreement of all parties to the motion and the amendment, and with the agreement of full Council, the updated amendment was then put forward for debate.

Councillor Gemmell then briefing explained the rationale of the motion. Following a brief debate the motion, as amended and agreed, was put to a vote and declared to be **CARRIED**.

**RESOLVED –**

**That Council call on Cabinet to resolve –**

- (1) **In relation to its own operations to do the following:**
  - (i) **Clearly remind all Council staff and suppliers that their engines should be turned off whenever their car is not moving and make all staff aware that to leave an engine idling is detrimental to air quality and health, especially of children, and is against the law.**
  - (ii) **To consider placing signage intended to discourage idling in Council car parks.**
- (2) **To request schools, where appropriate, to communicate with School safer travel teams to come up with School travel plans centred around reducing car travel and 'park and stride.'**

- (3) In line with this Council's commitment to localism, where appropriate, local Community Boards determine how to take part in the anti-idling campaign listed above.
- (4) Schools, including Academies, may also consider communicating the health and legal issues associated with idling to parents and staff. This may include placing appropriate signage in and around each school requesting engines be turned off whilst waiting.

**14 Questions on Notice from Members**

The written responses to questions from Members, published as a supplement to the agenda, were noted.

**15 Report for information - Key Decisions Report**

A list of decisions taken by the Leader since the last Full Council meeting on 20 September 2023 were received and noted.

**16 Date of Next Meeting**

4pm, Wednesday 21 February 2024 (Budget Setting)