

Council Minutes

Date: 28 July 2014

Time: 7.00 - 9.45 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs L M Clarke OBE (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs J A Adey, M Angell, I Bates, D J Carroll, R B Colomb, R Farmer, M A Foster, R Gaffney, J Gibbs, S Graham, A R Green, G C Hall, M Hanif, A E Hill, M Hussain, M Hussain JP, D A Johncock, Mrs G A Jones, M E Knight, Ms R Knight, S P Lacey, Mrs J D Langley, Ms P L Lee, Mrs W J Mallen, H L McCarthy, I L McEnnis, R Metcalfe, Mrs D V E Morgan, S F Parker, B E Pearce, B R Pollock JP, J A Savage, R J Scott, D A C Shakespeare OBE, A Slater, T Snaith, Mrs J E Teesdale, A Turner, P R Turner, Ms J D Wassell, D M Watson, R Wilson and Ms K S Wood.

Also Present : Honorary Aldermen M Blanksby, P Cartwright, D Cox, B Jennings, Mrs P Priestley and R Pushman.

11 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Honorary Aldermen: N B Oram and Mrs K M Peatey. Councillors: K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, D A Anson MBE, M C Appleyard, D H G Barnes, A C Collingwood, C A Ditta, W J Bendyshe-Brown, M Hussain JP, Maz Hussain, N B Marshall, Ms M L Neudecker, Ms S Manir, J L Richards, C Shafique and R Wilson.

12 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 28 April and the Special and Annual Council meeting held on 12 May 2014 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

13 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A R Green declared an interest in minute 21 as a Council appointed Member of the Wycombe Trust.

14 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Civic Service for WW1

The Chairman announced that this was scheduled to take place on 3 August at 9.45 at the Parish Church. Members' attendance was encouraged.

(b) Lights Out

The Chairman reported on the UK wide event of Lights Out organised by 14-18 NOW, commemorating the centenary of the start of World War 1 on 4

August. Everyone was encouraged to switch off their lights between 10-11pm leaving on a single light or candle for a moment of reflection. A number of organisations had agreed to mark the event.

(c) All Saints Parish Church

Members were informed that a reflection service would be held at the church on 4 August at 9.45pm.

Other Events

The Chairman continued her announcements by reporting on some of the events she had taken part in since taking office:-

- Raising of the Armed Forces Flag
- Visit to the Out of the Dark Furniture Project
- Flower Festival at All Saints Church
- Visit to John Lewis on Employee Ownership Day
- Community Carnival on The Rye

The Chairman closed her announcements by informing the Council of the new edition of District Guide. It contained useful maps of the area and information about the economy, education, shopping and leisure. This was available free of charge at various pick up points. Poppy pin badges were also available commemorating WW1.

15 PRESENTATION - KIDSINSPORT

Mr Roger Budd conducted a presentation on the Chairman of the Council's chosen charity for the current year.

Members were informed that Kidsinsport had been founded in 2007, and had awarded £208,000 in over 60 grants to benefit local disadvantaged children, within a 30 miles radius.

Mr Budd explained that the charity actively sought out youngsters who may be otherwise excluded, with a focus on helping local children enjoy sport on a regular basis. Following initiation of a sports grant the aim was to continue with it in future years.

Members were encouraged to provide assistance by making donations through their ward budgets.

Mr Budd was thanked for his presentation, and for the valuable work he had undertaken.

16 PRESENTATION - CHILDREN'S CENTRE

This item was withdrawn.

17 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(a) Question from Dr L Derrick to the Cabinet Member for Community

“WDC is required under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and to foster good relations for people. WDC has published a Public Sector Equality Duty (PESD) Statement on its website which I assume is intended to show how WDC is fulfilling its requirements.

I have to say that I could not understand most of this undated statement but I take it WDC has a duty to do these things for people with “protected characteristics”. And it appears that being a woman is a protected characteristic.

So I looked to see what WDC was doing to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation for women, to advance equality of opportunity for women and to foster good relations with women.

And there on page 13 of the 16 page statement is the section showing what WDC is doing to fulfil its requirements towards women.

Perhaps it is over generous to call it a section. It actually says “Periodic equal pay health checks are undertaken (the most recent being 2007) and a Pay Policy Statement has been agreed by Council”.

It seems to me that carrying out a pay health check in seven years ago is not a serious response to the problems of discrimination, harassment and victimisation of women.

Wouldn't you agree that WDC is doing virtually nothing to fulfil its duties towards women under the Equality Act 2010?”

Response from Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Community)

“Thank you for your question. No, I don't agree with your comment that the Council is doing nothing to fulfil its duties towards women under the Equality Act 2010. We are taking a number of positive steps, both as an employer and through service delivery, to ensure gender equality. For example:

- The Council has an Equal Pay Statement which is published on the Equalities section of the Council's website. We also monitor against the protected characteristics including gender, we conduct analysis of recruitment, turnover, training and development and pay and reward and publish the results in our annual Establishment Review (also available on the website)
- The Council has a range of people management policies and procedures which are equality impact assessed to ensure they comply with the requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty, again these assessments are available for public view on the Council's website.
- An employee survey is sent out every two years, part of which is to check with staff if they have experienced any inappropriate behaviour and how

this has been addressed and to seek suggestions on how the Council can support staff across the protected characteristics and foster good relations between those who share them and those who do not.

- Our Sports Development service has run targeted schemes for girls and women, and
- Community Safety run an annual awareness raising event for White Ribbon Day – for female victims of domestic abuse

Equality Impact Assessments are undertaken by each service area to ensure all protected characteristics are considered when reviewing policies/procedures or undertaking new work.”

Supplementary Question

“Words are one thing but I like to see where the money goes, it is often a good indicator of an organisation’s commitment.

1 million women in this country experience domestic violence every year. Two women a week are killed by their partners and ex-partners and at least three quarters of a million children witness incidents of domestic violence every year. Domestic violence is serious and pernicious and ruins lives. Reported domestic violence has gone up. Prosecutions and convictions have gone down. 9,000 frontline police officers have disappeared.

Yvette Cooper, the Shadow Home Secretary is today putting forward some well-considered proposals to tackle the problem. Even the Prime Minister has said the UK needs to get a grip on the issue of domestic violence (although he didn’t say how).

Women’s Aid is a key organisation in Wycombe which supports women and children who are victims of abuse. They do it from a feminist perspective and are committed to the principles of self-help and mutual support.

This Government’s cuts are falling disproportionately on women.

This year WDC cut its grant to Wycombe Women’s Aid by 28%.

Why?”

Supplementary Response

“We support Wycombe Women’s Aid and do it to the best of our ability”.

(b) Question from Ms A Baughan to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration

“I would like to enquire about the plans for the Old Library building. It is a beautiful building in a great location. What are the plans for the building, and is it going to be used for something that will benefit the whole community?”

Response from Councillor A Green (Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration)

“Thank you for your question about this important building in this part of High Wycombe town centre.

I must start by explaining that the building, although originally built by High Wycombe Borough Council, was handed over to Buckinghamshire County Council in the 1974 Council reorganisation when libraries became the responsibility of the County Council. The building is therefore not currently owned by Wycombe District Council and the County Council will decide on its future use.

Having been empty for the past six years, we would like to see the building brought back into suitable use as soon as possible. We have raised with the County Council a number of suggested uses on a number of occasions. We remain committed to playing our part in helping the County Council to secure a use that will benefit the town and its residents.”

Supplementary Question

“Could you provide an indication of timescales of when suggestions will come forward regarding its use?”

Supplementary Response

“Unfortunately I cannot. We do not have a current timescale.”

(c) Question from Mr D Carrington to the Cabinet Member for Community

“Thank you for responding to the petition I organised regarding the provision of toilets on the Rye. Even though I was acting alone and without the support of any campaign group, I was successful in obtaining 377 signatures in the first two weeks of a short campaign on Facebook. This is a large number of people who believe this is an important issue which needs to be urgently addressed. I believe given the time and support the petition figure would have risen 10 fold.

Despite this I feel your response to the petition essentially fobbed me off with the same response given two years ago. There was no evidence within your response that the situation had been reviewed nor was there any attempt to update the financial projections to reflect the present climate. This is not a new issue, I personally experienced problems with my older children some 30 years ago at a time when the main use of the park was more centralised.

I would ask you to reconsider the Council’s response and adopt a more proactive, creative and positive problem solving approach to this issue?”

Response from Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Community)

“Thank you for your question. I am sorry you feel you have been fobbed off, however, contrary to your view, we keep under close review the Council’s financial projections. Indeed when the Cabinet considered its revenue estimates when setting this year’s Council Tax it was reported that the Council’s formula grant had been cut in cash terms by 13.6% and by a further

15.5% in 2015/16. It was also reported that the Council's Medium Term Financial projections show there are significant shortfalls in future years. By 2019/20, the projections show the funding shortfall will be £2.33M.

To provide an additional public convenience block for the Rye with estimated annual revenue costs of circa £20,000 in this current climate would place pressures on other service areas if the Council is to deliver a balanced budget over the medium term. The Rye already has public conveniences adjacent to the car park and so to provide a second facility when other Council Parks such as the one at Hughenden do not have any provision is a significant consideration. However, I will keep this request under review as part of the Council's future budget setting process."

Supplementary Question

"In recent months the town end of the Rye has seen investment in the form of the new road crossing to encourage people to access the Rye more from the town centre. In addition there are an increasing number of annual events at the town end of the Rye including most recently the Wycombe Community Festival. Along with the Boathouse Café, the adventure playground and Pann Mill, many local schools, Cubs/guides are using this end of the Rye on a regular basis. In reality the town end of the park has a large and growing amount of use, far greater than in previous years and predominately with families with children and groups of young people. I fear the Council is a victim of their own success in so much as in creating a place local people especially those with young children now want to spend time.

The Rye is considered to be a district wide facility and a jewel in the crown of High Wycombe. It is significantly bigger and with a far greater footfall than all other parks in the area – over twice as long as Higginson Park in Marlow so to compare the toilet provision with other parks is irrelevant.

I'm sure the Rye Park generates an income and with the additional footfall could increase this revenue. It has been stated the existing toilets block are essential for the sports activities at the centre of the park, am I correct in my belief these sports facilities are paid for by those using them? If this is the case may I ask why in the response to the recent petition for new toilets its existing revenue was omitted and not offset against the costs in maintaining the existing toilet block.

Would the Council please carry out a full options appraisal, looking at creative solutions, to answer the concerns of the many users of the Rye who are concerned about the lack of toilet facilities?"

Supplementary Response

I do understand the point you make but, it is still very costly to build a whole new block of toilets. We will continue to monitor the situation."

18 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

a) **Question from Councillor B Pollock to the Cabinet Member for Environment**

“Now that the ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) system is operational or about to become operational across most car parks operated by Wycombe District Council, can the Cabinet Member tell me how many Blue Badge applications have been received from residents and how many of these have involved the issuing of cards for use at pay machines?”

Response from Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Mrs J Teesdale

“Parking services currently have 1370 disabled registrations and each registration has the ability of the disabled persons own vehicle to be registered, plus a card to use in the machines for those occasions where they are being transported by a carer/family member/friend to use in conjunction to displaying their blue badge on the dashboard.”

Supplementary Question

“Could you clarify whether residents issued with a blue badge need to pay to exit car parks at hospital outside of Wycombe?”

Supplementary Response

“We take issues regarding disabled people very seriously, and are working hard to make it as easy and accessible as we can, please send me an email of your question and I will look into it answering it.”

b) **Question from Councillor A Turner to the Leader of the Council**

“At a previous Council meeting it was clearly stated that there was no need for a High Wycombe Town Council, as the Cabinet always agreed to proposals put forward by the High Wycombe Town Committee. How is it then; that a recent request from the Town Committee for an enhanced payment of CIL monies, 25%, rather than the mandatory 15%, was refused by Cabinet?”

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott

“I am rather intrigued by the members from Princes Risborough taking such a keen interest in the activities of High Wycombe Town Committee. Can I assume that this is nothing to do with the possibility of Princes Risborough looking to establish a Neighbourhood Plan, thus making more CIL monies potentially available to that Council?”

Specifically though, I refer you to my reply to Councillor Hall at the Council meeting on 28 April, 2014, which is printed in full in the Minutes. It clearly states that my Cabinet looks to (and has a history of) approving all recommendations of the Committee, unless there is a wider District interest that needs to be considered. This issue was a case in point with this particular decision.”

Supplementary Question

“Wycombe Town Committee’s inability to make financial decisions without Cabinet permission defeats the whole ethos of Localism. Unless the Cabinet approve funding for a neighbourhood plan it would be impossible for the Town Committee to meet the criteria for increased CIL payments. Therefore, how are you intending to redress this inequality and give them a fairer “bite of the cake?”

Supplementary Response

“The Town Committee is not a Town Council, we are where we are”.

c) Question from Councillor M Knight to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

“We are concerned about the increasing pressures on the infrastructure of East Wycombe. These pressures would be exacerbated by some of the proposals in the Local Plan like an additional junction of the M40 and additional housing provision on a Site of Special Scientific Interest in Gomm Valley.

In the case of the proposed junction 3a we are told in the Local Plan Consultation Document that it would “provide the other half of junction 3. This effectively means that those roads between junction 3 and the new junction would become part of an extended motorway junction. These roads are both residential roads and form the major routes in and out of East Wycombe. Indeed the Local Plan Consultation Document states traffic modelling shows an increase in traffic on the London Road, Kingsmead Road and Abbey Barn Lane.

If these proposals go ahead it seems as if East Wycombe will become essentially one big motorway interchange, concreted over and devoid of any green space. Residents will be blighted by congested roads, constant traffic noise and intolerable levels of pollution.

I commend all the work officers have put into the consultation and continue to put in as they develop our new Local Plan.

Would you agree that any new Local Plan should be looking at creative solutions to increase the amount of affordable housing and employment opportunities but in a way that does not involve eliminating important green places such as Gomm Valley and bringing gridlock to East Wycombe?”

Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability, Councillor D A Johncock in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

Thank you for your question in relation to the new local plan and the impacts on the eastern side of High Wycombe.

I would agree that we should be looking for creative solutions to meeting the future needs of the district and the local plan consultation identified a number of different options to meet our needs. These included a new settlement,

expansion of existing villages and at Princes Risborough, and reviewing the green belt as well as developing the Reserve Greenfield sites.

The Council has worked closely with the County Council to identify what the traffic impacts would be of development on the Reserve Sites and the proposed Junction 3a and how they can be managed or dealt with. There is a mix of impacts across the town on the road network as a result of the new junction, with increases and decreases in traffic flows in different parts of the town, but overall initial works suggests that the junction could have an overall positive impact. It is, however, important to understand that proposals for the new motorway junction are at a very early stage and the Council is working with both the County Council and the Highways Agency on assessing further if and how this proposal could be implemented.

Both of the options for the development of the Gomm Valley included in the consultation document suggested that a significant majority (at least two thirds) of the area would be free from development and could be protected as green space. This was based on an assessment of the landscape and biodiversity present in the area. Development of the Gomm Valley would not involve building on the Site of Special Scientific Interest – this is a nationally protected biodiversity site and neither of the options in the Local Plan consultation suggested building on this part of the Gomm Valley.

The Council is committed to delivering development that meets our needs whilst at the same time is as sustainable as possible. In 2013 the Council adopted the Delivery and Site Allocation plan which protects a large number of green spaces across the District and in particular in High Wycombe.

Supplementary Question

“I am pleased that you want to see creative solutions within the new Local Plan.

For example, our housing needs don't just need to be met by building on green fields. There is much derelict or inefficiently used land and buildings within existing urban areas, particularly in High Wycombe town centre which is crying out for more investment and an improved economy.

We should also be considering how we can create a more sustainable future for our rural communities by encouraging appropriate and sensitive development without contributing to the urban sprawl of High Wycombe.

It is my view that the upgrading of junction 3 to a full junction would cause less disruption to residents, cost less and bring more benefits than the building of a new junction of 3a.

I want to be reassured that the option of extending junction 3 has been fully explored. Could Wycombe District Council commission a preliminary scheme cost estimate similar that already commissioned for the 3a proposal?”

Supplementary Response

“Yes I agree we need innovative ideas, and we encourage innovative ideas. We are looking at all options to meet housing needs, and do not wish to build only on greenfield sites. Whilst only brownfield sites remain, we need to strike the correct balance.”

d) Question from Councillor R Colomb to the Cabinet Member for Community

“The reopening of the Lido on the Rye with enhanced facilities by Fusion under the terms of a long lease was yet another example of this Council delivering its promises at no cost to the local taxpayers.

However, there is one niggling problem over Fusion's management arrangements for the car park which forms part of the complex.

On 8th May this year we received training on car parking and it was made clear to Members that WDC did not make any profit from enforcement. This does not seem to be the case regarding Fusion's management of the Rye Lido Car Park, where the contract for operating it is held by Civil Enforcement Ltd, a Liverpool firm.

Parking charges are minimal. Enforcement is vigorously pursued and there is some doubt as to whether the correct legal procedures are followed particularly after the recent appeal by a Beaconsfield resident to POPLA (the Parking on Private Land Appeal body).

This reflects badly on Wycombe District Council and has caused great disquiet among my constituents.

Would the Cabinet Member take this up with Fusion and see if more equitable arrangements can be made?”

Response from the Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor Mrs J Adey

“Fusion Lifestyle Ltd has a contract with Civil Enforcement Ltd, which is a private enforcement company, to manage the car park on the Rye. Whilst the Council is not party to the details of this contract which is between two private companies, Fusion have confirmed they will work with their customers and their enforcement contractor and deal with customer complaints as sympathetically as possible.”

Supplementary Question

“Civil Enforcement is vigorously pursued, and in many cases they refuse even to enter into correspondence to deal with complaints. Please could we encourage them to get some better civil enforcement in place?”

Supplementary Response

“A number of car parks across the district are not managed by the Council and this is one such case. All these car parks operate under private land and are subject to correct operational procedures. Some companies may be more

forgiving than others. Fusion is aware of the matter but the contract they have with the Civil Enforcement Agency does not appear to have any flexibility.

e) Question from Councillor A E Hill to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

“We have heard about the proposal for a new junction on the M40 between Loudwater and Junction 4 Handy Cross, has any consideration been given to the creation of a Junction 4a?

This could assist the opening up of the Booker Area, and take a lot of traffic from an already congested area of Daws Hill and Heath End Road the only east/west route to this proposed junction.

It would also help to expand the specialised aero employment at Booker Airpark. Not to mention that it would also help traffic going to Oxford from Marlow, the H.G.V.'s from Cressex Business Park and help reduce traffic on Handy Cross Junction, which we all know is extremely busy at the best of times. Surely this would be a win for our town and residents? It does seem the most obvious choice.”

Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability, Councillor D A Johncock in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

“A potential junction 4A at Clay Lane was explored with the Highways Agency when the Air Park was being considered as an option for the potential new stadium development. At that time, the HA discouraged exploration of this for two reasons: the proximity to Junction 4, leading to safety concerns; and the difference in ground levels between Clay Lane and the M40, which runs through a cutting at this point.

Transport evidence for the Local Plan tested an alternative: a local link between Handy Cross and Clay Lane (not motorway). This showed the same kinds of effect as suggested by Cllr Hill for a potential junction 4A.

The Southern Quadrant Transport Strategy (SQTS), which was jointly developed by WDC and BCC, looked closely at a range of solutions for the south of the town. A potential junction 3A was identified as a scheme which could potentially improve transport in the southern quadrant. However, this was not part of the approved strategy itself, and junction 3A remains an option requiring further work to determine if it is worth pursuing at all.

The real point is that junction 4A was not identified as a result of that work, and probably not worth considering at this time.”

Supplementary Question

“Handy Cross is still chaotic, with junctions very close together. We should get the highway agency's input into this.”

Supplementary Response

“Not sure of the relevance of this question as junctions are not just a few metres of one another.”

f) Question from Councillor T Snaith to the Cabinet Member for Community

“Now that the new Cabinet Member for Community along with her deputy for Housing has now been working together in the role for several weeks, I’m sure the council is expecting great things from the new team!

Can the Cabinet member please tell the Council how she plans to improve the services in her remit for the benefit of residents?”

Response from the Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor Mrs J Adey

“I am pleased to be continuing the excellent work of my predecessor.

Across Community Services, we have excelled at finding creative ways to introduce new services and to improve existing ones. For example the arts centre and woodlands mutual, while finding year on year savings to enable the Council to manage on a reduced budget.

Looking ahead, we have a number of exciting projects that will bring benefits to our community, including:

- Investing c£250k in improvements to the Museum and preparing to transfer it to a Trust that will be able to develop it further
- Completing work on Wycombe Marsh Community Centre, Desborough Recreation Ground changing rooms and Bellfield House and bringing them into use
- Starting new community facility projects in Hughenden/lower Disraeli and Totteridge
- Continuing to invest in new play provision

So far as Housing is concerned we intend to continue the excellent progress made thus far, in reducing our need for temporary accommodation, not placing families in bed and breakfast wherever possible and for no more than 6 weeks when necessary.

We will continue to deliver the 5 year homelessness strategy as approved by full Council late last year by working closely with the private rented and social rented sectors to ensure standards are adhered to and to maximise the provision of affordable housing in the district.”

Supplementary Question

“I have a lot of respect for the Community Services department but it concerns me that often none revenue generating departments and services are seen as any easy target for cost cutting.

The Department is facing enormous work and can you safely say your department is resourced to meet these needs in the areas of:-

- Community regeneration
- Grants and voluntary sector support

- Children and young people
- Homes and housing

This Tory run cabinet does not have a good track record when it comes to Community Service delivery. It hides behind its “not our responsibility” we reply on partners.

I’m therefore seeking your assurances that you and your deputy for housing are not simply caretaker cabinet members. I’m looking for assurances that there are no plans by this Tory administration to decimate your department and the services it delivers in the coming months or the foreseeable future.

Can we have your assurance that we won’t see the Community Services and housing services department and portfolio disappearing or being merged and lost into other department? Our residents deserve better.”

Supplementary Response

“No, you won’t see us disappear.”

g) Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

“WDC Local Plan has been one of the biggest talking points across the area since it was released in January this year. There are some controversial issues such as, junction 3A has received mixed reviews, residents of Princess Risborough believe that their village doesn't need the huge development proposed, and concern was expressed about WDC consultation process in which residents in some areas didn’t get the leaflets so they have not seen the plans. Some have complained about the lack of details within the leaflet. With such public concerns and uncertainties how WDC propose to move this plan forward?”

Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability, Councillor D A Johncock in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

“Thank you Councillor Hanif and can I start by highlighting that WDC has not yet issued its new local plan and neither is it yet approved. What we undertook at the beginning of the year was a consultation on a number of options that we might consider as part of the new local plan.

As you know, we are calling this “the big challenge plan” and for good reason. As the consultation earlier in the year highlighted, there are major issues to address for our district including a high level of housing need. In addition, there is a clear need for new jobs and providing the right infrastructure to accompany growth whilst protecting our local environment.

That is why we had to consult on some difficult options. but we have to remember that the plan looks forward to possible housing developments and employment sites that are going to be needed right through until 2031. We have a duty to think about our district over the next 15 years or so and not just the next few years.

In relation to the consultation process we used a wide range of methods for publicising the consultation, not just the leaflet that we asked royal mail to deliver to every household and business in the district. Repeated publicity was given in the bucks free press and our own weekly planning bulletin.

At the end of the day, we held a number of public meetings across the district and these were very well attended. As you said in your question, this is now a major topic of conversation around the district suggesting that the message had got out there eventually.

Returning to the leaflet itself, it was deliberately designed to provide a high-level view of the options and then provided links to our website where those who wanted to know more could access a much more detailed consultation report as well as a range of even more detailed technical reports.

The fact is that we have received over 1700 inputs from residents across the district plus the results of a market testing exercise that was undertaken by an independent company called qs who were contracted by the council to provide a more focussed and balanced assessment.

The findings of all that have been provided both to members and, on a separate occasion, to key stakeholders. We are setting up a further series of public meetings to provide this feedback to a wider audience and to discuss how we address the issues and concerns that have been raised, the first round of these meetings will occur over the next few months and the dates will be publicised shortly.

Supplementary Question

“Please could you reassure us that the concerns of the public will be taken on board and addressed.”

Supplementary Response

“Yes indeed they will.”

All remaining questions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12 would receive a written reply within 10 working days and be appended to the minutes of the meeting.

19 PETITIONS

Petition Against the M40 junction 3a Plans.

A petition was received from Councillor Ms K Wood, who briefly outlined the contents of the petition, which contained 1617 signatories.

The signatories were concerned over the closure and possible demolition of Cobbles Farm. This is was a valued local business providing a home for many horses, many of whom have been rehomed by the RSPCA and Horsewatch.

In addition it was believed that the preservation of the Countyside is important providing a green barrier between High Wycombe and Flackwell Heath.

The Cairman received the petition and stated that it would be validated against the Council's Petition Scheme. Members would be informed outside of the meeting on how the petition would be administered.

20 CABINET - 16 JUNE 2014

Minute 4 – Cemetery Site Options Appraisal

A Member emphasised the need for public consultations with regard to any future proposals relating to cemetery site options. The Member was assured that this would be the case in future.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 16 June be received.

21 CABINET - 14 JULY 2014

Minute 15 – Community Infrastructure Levy Funding in Unparished Wards

A Member reiterated that the High Wycombe Town Committee had requested an increase in CIL funds by 10% and questioned the Leader as to how this could be secured.

He was informed that there were no grounds on which to increase the allocation, and as such would remain at its current rate.

Minute 17 – Wycombe Museum

A Member enquired as to whether there would be space for a new public toilet in the Queen Victoria offices now that the museum would not be moving there. Members were informed that this would not be the case.

Another Member suggested that as a district facility, the Museum should be relocated to Court Garden in Marlow, which would enhance the museum in terms of its general appeal, helping to build up the tourist trade

The Leader stated that the Council had previously looked at a number of alternative suggested sites, but that due to the change in the economic situation, it was decided to remain at the current location.

Councillor A R Green declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item in his capacity of member of the Wycombe Arts Trust, and took full part in the discussion held.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 July 2014 be received and the recommendations as set out at minute numbers 16 and 17 be approved and adopted.

22 CABINET - 28 JULY 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Special meeting of the Cabinet held on 28 July 2014 be received and the recommendations as set out in minute numbers 24 and 25 be approved and adopted.

23 STANDARDS COMMITTEE - 3 JUNE 2014

Councillor D J Carroll rose to present the minutes of the meeting in the absence of Councillor A D Collingwood.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 3 June 2014 be received.

24 IMPROVEMENT AND REVIEW COMMISSION - 18 JUNE 2014

Minute 4 – Health and Safety Update

A member questioned the issue relating to the appointment of a Health and Safety Officer. He was informed that this was a staffing issue, and therefore outside this remit.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Review Commission held on 18 June 2014 be received.

25 AUDIT COMMITTEE - 26 JUNE 2014

Councillor D Watson rose to present the minutes in the absence of Cllr M C Appleyard.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 26 June 2014 be received.

26 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - 10 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 10 June 2014 be received.

27 PERSONNEL AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE - 23 JUNE 2014

Cllr S Lacey rose to present the minutes in the absence of Cllr D Barnes.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel and Development Committee held on 23 June 2014 be received.

28 PLANNING COMMITTEE - 9 APRIL, 7 MAY AND 4 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 9 April, 7 May and 4 June be received

29 REGULATORY AND APPEALS COMMITTEE - 9 JUNE 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory and Appeals Committee held on 9 June 2014 be received and the recommendations as set out at minute number 5 be approved and adopted.

30 REGULATORY AND APPEALS COMMITTEE - 21 JULY 2014

Minute 10 – Standing Orders – Questions at Full Council

A number of Members rose to express their dismay at the recommendation before Council which proposed that the time allocated per question be reduced to 1 minute, and the response to a supplementary be reduced to 2 minutes. This was viewed as a restriction on the democratic freedom of Councillors, and the taxpayers within the district. It was felt that the time devoted to both public and member questions should be extended, not reduced.

It was stated that question time served to provide information to members and the public, and as a scrutiny body of the executive.

Others spoke in favour stating that the recommendations presented a valuable opportunity for members to provide succinct and well thought out questions, a duty which was incumbent upon all. As such the recommendations were supported.

Following some debate, an amendment to the original recommendation was proposed by Councillor Pollock. This amendment sought a change to the wording to allow 3 minutes to be allocated towards a supplementary question and response. This was duly seconded by Councillor A Turner, but upon being put to a vote was lost.

A second amendment was then proposed by Councillor R Farmer which stated that:

“Questions should take 1 hour in total, but that any time remaining from the public questions if less than 30 minutes be added as time allowed for Members questions”

This was duly seconded by Councillor T Snaith, but upon a vote being taken, the amendment was lost.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Special meeting of the Regulatory and Appeals Committee held on 21 July 2014 be received and the recommendations as set out at minute numbers 10 and 11 be approved and adopted.

31 NOTICE OF MOTION

The following notice of motion was proposed by Councillor A R Green and seconded by Councillor Mrs J E Teesdale:

“This Council welcomes the recent report by the Buckinghamshire Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee into urgent care provision in Buckinghamshire but believes that additional work is required to fully understand the effect the changes at Wycombe Hospital have had on the residents of Wycombe District.

This Council therefore requests the Improvement and Review Commission to undertake further work on Urgent Care provision in Wycombe that includes:

- A public listening event in Wycombe District to hear from the general public, stakeholders and users of the A&E and Minor Injuries and Illness Unit.

- More evidence on the Emergency Medical Centre at High Wycombe, Transportation between Wycombe district and Stoke Mandeville, and the situation of the frail elderly and hard to reach groups.”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Green stated that the Council had been rightly concerned with the services received by residents of the district. As the Council’s representative on the County’s Health and Adult Care Scrutiny Committee, he reported that a recent investigation had been conducted into urgent care provision but it was felt that this had not gone far enough in examining the experiences of users. Meetings were restricted to providers rather than recipients. Councillor Green suggested that as the majority of the Committee had been unprepared to widen the investigation to include the effects of the service on recipients in Wycombe it was proposed that Wycombe District Council take on this important piece of work, via the Improvement and Review Commission.

Councillor Green also emphasised that many people were unsure of which hospital they needed to be treated at, in the case of minor incidents/illness. It was highlighted that the people of Wycombe deserved an urgent care service that could deal with the issues presented, including the need to deal with the requirement to carry out x-rays at night within Wycombe.

A number of Members across the floor rose to speak in agreement with the comments made, and re-emphasised the views and principles of the proposed action.

It was unanimously,

RESOLVED: That this Council welcomes the recent report by the Buckinghamshire Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee into urgent care provision in Buckinghamshire but believes that additional work is required to fully understand the effect the changes at Wycombe Hospital have had on the residents of Wycombe District.

This Council therefore requests the Improvement and Review Commission to undertake further work on Urgent Care provision in Wycombe that includes:

- A public listening event in Wycombe District to hear from the general public, stakeholders and users of the A&E and Minor Injuries and Illness Unit.
- More evidence on the Emergency Medical Centre at High Wycombe, Transportation between Wycombe district and Stoke Mandeville, and the situation of the frail elderly and hard to reach groups.

32 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 11.2

There were none.

33 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS/CHANGES

The following changes to Committee membership were noted in accordance with Standing Order 18(9):

Since the last meeting Councillor Ms J D Wassall and Cllr M E Knight had resigned as Members of the Lib Dem Group. They were now Members of East Wycombe Independent Group. As a result there had been a number of changes to Committee Membership.

The revised political composition of the Council was as follows:

Group	Members	%
Conservative	42	70
Labour	5	8.33
Liberal Democrat	7	11.67
Independent	2	3.33
UKIP	1	1.67
Independent Real Con	1	1.67
East Wycombe Independent	2	3.33

Councillor Ms P L Lee had come off the Improvement & Review Commission

Cllr M E Knight had become a member of the Improvement & Review Commission with Cllr Ms J D Wassall as Standing Deputy

Councillor B R Pollock replaced Cllr Ms J D Wassall on the Standards Committee,

Cllr A Slater replaced Cllr M E Knight on the Personnel & Development Committee,

Councillor T Snaith replaced Cllr M E Knight as standing deputy of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee,

Cllr P L Lee replaced Cllr M E Knight as standing deputy of the Joint Staff Committee,

The new Deputy Leader of the Lib Dem Group, and the new standing deputy of the JNC Staffing Matters Committee replacing Cllr M E Knight would be Cllr T Snaith.

Other changes included:

Cllr Ms J A Adey had replaced Cllr J M Gibbs as Cabinet Member for Community,

Cllr J M Gibbs had replaced Cllr Ms J A Adey as Deputy Cabinet Member for Community and Health.

34 URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY CABINET OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

The individual decisions published since the last meeting of the Council were noted.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Ian Hunt	- Democratic Services Manager
Iram Malik	- Democratic Services Officer
Karen Satterford	- Chief Executive
Ian Westgate	- Corporate Director

Unanswered Questions from Members

Questions 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12

Question from Councillor Ms P Lee to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

Could the Cabinet Member for Planning please advise why the slides presented to members at the seminar on the Local Plan, differed from those presented to the Stakeholders; as several key slides appeared to have been omitted from the Stakeholder presentation?

Response from the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability, Councillor D A Johncock in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

The slides differed because we wanted Members to focus more of their time in their session on the issues regarding the way forward with the Local Plan. It was important at the stakeholder session to provide more feedback on the outcomes from the consultation earlier in the year. Further public sessions are being set up next month for stakeholders and the public to discuss the way forward on the Local Plan.

Question from Councillor Ms J D Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Community

The retention of the Wycombe Museum on the existing site and the additional funding is *to* be welcomed. Hopefully, this will not preclude the Museum going out with exhibits into community locations. Has this decision been influenced by the debate on a Unitary Council as there are 'uncertainties' as to whether the Council Offices will be required in future?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor Mrs J Adey

When deciding to retain the Museum at Castle Hill House, regard was had to the economic climate and reductions in Government revenue grants which gives rise to

uncertainty about the long term retention of the Queen Victoria Road offices in part or as a whole. Given that the Council would need to commit to either retaining the Museum on the Queen Victoria Road site for 25 years, or to refund a pro-rata amount of the Heritage Lottery Fund award, it was for this reason it was considered to be in the best financial interests of the Council to close the relocation project and withdraw the submitted Heritage Lottery Fund application.

At item 10 on tonight's Council agenda, we are seeking Council's agreement to Cabinet's recommendation to commit £257k for improvements to the Museum and grounds and so creating a much enhanced visitor experience.

These recommendations also include the transfer of the Museum to the Wycombe Heritage Arts Trust (WHAT). So far as outside exhibits are concerned, I think this is something we would want to discuss with WHAT and no doubt they will look at the business and community benefits in continuing with these.

Question from Councillor A E Hill to the Leader of the Council

Is it fair that the Group Leaders take precedence over Members when asking questions at full council, as Members could put a question in first?

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott

This is a long standing convention at Council meetings, which predates my time as Leader.

The key issue for me is not about group leaders having precedence but more about seeking to answer as many Member questions as possible.

As a rule, I would say that we do seek to answer as many Member questions as possible and the Chairman of the Council also has the ability to extend the time allowed for questions as well, which has been used in the past. The Constitution allows up to 30 minutes for questions from Members. In the last two years there has only been 3 occasions when all the questions have not been able to be asked. Those that were not answered received a written reply.

Members will have seen the recommendation from the Regulatory and Appeals Committee from last Monday, which is before the Council later this evening for consideration. This is seeking to speed up the time taken to ask questions so we can take as many as possible in the public domain at Council meetings. Every question gets a response.

Question from Councillor M Knight to the Leader of the Council

Is it time that WDC consider the situation regarding DBS checks for councillors?

Mandatory checks for all councillors may seem burdensome and councillors could regard it as unnecessary for them. However, by the very nature of their role in serving their constituents most councillors will almost inevitably find themselves from time-to-time in positions where they have direct contact with children, young people or more likely, vulnerable adults.

Whilst our position is not unlawful it may not be satisfactory. There may be a risk to community and the Council's image and reputation if the Council does not take reasonable

steps to assess and mitigate the risk of councillors with convictions having access to vulnerable people.

The Disclosure and Barring Service gives no direction about councillors, other than for those with specific responsibility for children's services or vulnerable adults.

For all other councillors this leaves a grey area to be decided by each authority. The authority could be left exposed as it cannot be aware of all the activities of its councillors.

Will you agree with me that taking into account our general duty of care and the low cost of checks we should implement these for all councillors?

Response from the Leader of the Council, Councillor R J Scott

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) have merged to become the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). CRB checks are now called DBS checks. There are standard and enhanced checks within the DBS system. The Council has maintained a review on the requirements under the former CRB scheme and the current scheme administered by the Disclosure and Barring Service so far as they relate to both Member and Officer roles.

Before an organisation considers asking a person to apply for a criminal record check through the DBS, they are legally responsible for ensuring that they are entitled to submit an application for the job role. Whilst we take the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults very seriously, having regard to the guidance for the Disclosure and Barring Scheme we do not believe that our Councillor role meets the criteria for a DBS criminal record check. The Council will continue to keep this sensitive area under review.

Question from Councillor Ms J D Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Community

Bucks County Council will be holding a Scrutiny exercise concerning their grass cutting contract on 30th September 2014. They have already agreed to produce a 'user friendly'

map of the areas they are responsible for. It is hoped that Wycombe District Council will participate in the Scrutiny, work collaboratively and ensure that any map includes the areas of responsibility for Housing Associations and the District Council. Can you confirm that you will be actively engaged with this process?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Community, Councillor Mrs J Adey

We will work with Bucks County Council if they ask the District to be involved in their review, although no such request has been received to date.

Minute Item 18

COUNCIL

28 July 2014

Agenda Item 8

Questions from Members

Unanswered Questions – Responses sent subsequent to Meeting

8. Question from Councillor Ms P Lee to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

“Could the Cabinet Member for Planning please advise why the slides presented to members at the seminar on the Local Plan, differed from those presented to the Stakeholders; as several key slides appeared to have been omitted from the Stakeholder presentation?”

Response from Councillor D A Johncock (Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability), in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

“Thank you for your question.

The slides differed because we wanted Members to focus more of their time in their session on the issues regarding the way forward with the Local Plan. It was important at the stakeholder session to provide more feedback on the outcomes from the consultation earlier in the year. Further public sessions are being set up next month for stakeholders and the public to discuss the way forward on the Local Plan.”

9. Question from Councillor Ms J D Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Community

The retention of the Wycombe Museum on the existing site and the additional funding is to be welcomed. Hopefully, this will not preclude the Museum going out with exhibits into community locations. Has this decision been influenced by the debate on a Unitary Council as there are 'uncertainties' as to whether the Council Offices will be required in future?”

Response from Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Community

“When deciding to retain the Museum at Castle Hill House, regard was had to the economic climate and reductions in Government revenue grants which gives rise to uncertainty about the long term retention of the Queen Victoria Road offices in part or as a whole. Given that the Council would need to commit to either retaining the Museum on the Queen Victoria Road site for 25 years, or to refund a pro-rata amount of the Heritage Lottery Fund award, it was for this reason it was considered to be in the best financial interests of the Council to close the relocation project and withdraw the submitted Heritage Lottery Fund application.

At item 10 on tonight's Council agenda, we are seeking Council's agreement to Cabinet's recommendation to commit £257k for improvements to the Museum and grounds and so creating a much enhanced visitor experience.

These recommendations also include the transfer of the Museum to the Wycombe Heritage Arts Trust (WHAT). So far as outside exhibits are concerned, I think this is something we would want to discuss with WHAT and no doubt they will look at the business and community benefits in continuing with these.”

10. Question from Councillor A E Hill to the Leader of the Council

“Is it fair that the Group Leaders take precedence over Members when asking questions at full council, as Members could put a question in first?”

Response from Councillor R J Scott (Leader of the Council)

“This is a long standing convention at Council meetings, which predates my time as Leader.

The key issue for me is not about group leaders having precedence but more about seeking to answer as many Member questions as possible.

As a rule, I would say that we do seek to answer as many Member questions as possible and the Chairman of the Council also has the ability to extend the time allowed for questions as well, which has been used in the past. The Constitution allows up to 30 minutes for questions from Members. In the last two years there has only been 3 occasions when all the questions have not been able to be asked. Those that were not answered received a written reply.

Members will have seen the recommendation from the Regulatory and Appeals Committee from last Monday, which is before the Council later this evening for consideration. This is seeking to speed up the time taken to ask questions so we can take as many as possible in the public domain at Council meetings. Every question gets a response.”

Supplementary Question

“You may wish to make the general point that asking a question at Council is only way of raising an issue with the Cabinet. Members are always welcome to contact the relevant Cabinet Member directly, as well as asking questions at Council meetings.”

11. Question from Councillor M Knight to the Leader of the Council

“Is it time that WDC consider the situation regarding DBS checks for councillors?”

Mandatory checks for all councillors may seem burdensome and councillors could regard it as unnecessary for them. However, by the very nature of their role in serving their constituents most councillors will almost inevitably find themselves from time-to-time in positions where they have direct contact with children, young people or more likely, vulnerable adults.

Whilst our position is not unlawful it may not be satisfactory. There may be a risk to community and the Council’s image and reputation if the Council does not take reasonable steps to assess and mitigate the risk of councillors with convictions having access to vulnerable people.

The Disclosure and Barring Service gives no direction about councillors, other than for those with specific responsibility for children’s services or vulnerable adults.

For all other councillors this leaves a grey area to be decided by each authority. The authority could be left exposed as it cannot be aware of all the activities of its councillors.

Will you agree with me that taking into account our general duty of care and the low cost of checks we should implement these for all councillors?”

Response from Councillor R J Scott, Leader of the Council Scott

“Cllr Knight, thank you for your question.

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) have merged to become the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). CRB checks are now called DBS checks. There are standard and enhanced checks within the DBS system. The Council has maintained a review on the requirements under the former CRB scheme and the current scheme administered by the Disclosure and Barring Service so far as they relate to both Member and Officer roles.

Before an organisation considers asking a person to apply for a criminal record check through the DBS, they are legally responsible for ensuring that they are entitled to submit an application for the job role. Whilst we take the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults very seriously, having regard to the guidance for the Disclosure and Barring Scheme we do not believe that our Councillor role meets the criteria for a DBS criminal record check. The Council will continue to keep this sensitive area under review.

So far as a possible supplementary is concerned, I think you can say that the role of the Councillor does not include directly working with children or vulnerable adults, nor does it involve direct delivery of services to these groups. As you say, they would normally be escorted.”

12. Question from Councillor Ms J D Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Community

“Bucks County Council will be holding a Scrutiny exercise concerning their grass cutting contract on 30th September 2014. They have already agreed to produce a 'user friendly' map of the areas they are responsible for. It is hoped that Wycombe District Council will participate in the Scrutiny, work collaboratively and ensure that any map includes the areas of responsibility for Housing Associations and the District Council. Can you confirm that you will be actively engaged with this process?”

Response from Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Community)

“We will work with Bucks County Council if they ask the District to be involved in their review, although no such request has been received to date. Suggested additional line (for use re supplementary?): We will chase BCC to seek involvement in this important review and map.”