

Council Minutes

Date: 15 December 2014

Time: 6.00 - 8.40 pm

PRESENT: Councillor (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs J A Adey, K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, M Angell, D A Anson MBE, D H G Barnes, I Bates, D J Carroll, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, A D Collingwood, R B Colomb, R Farmer, M A Foster, R Gaffney, J Gibbs, S Graham, A R Green, G C Hall, C B Harriss, A E Hill, A Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain JP, D A Johncock, Mrs G A Jones, M E Knight, Ms P L Lee, Mrs W J Mallen, J A Malliff, N B Marshall, H L McCarthy, I L McEnnis, R Metcalfe, S F Parker, B E Pearce, B R Pollock JP, J L Richards OBE, R J Scott, C Shafique MBE, A Slater, T Snaith, Mrs J E Teesdale, A Turner, P R Turner, Ms J D Wassell, D M Watson and R Wilson.

Also Present: Honorary Aldermen: B Jennings, P Cartwright, E H Collins, D A E Cox and Mrs P Priestley.

50 PRESENTATION - CHIEF CONSTABLE

A presentation was conducted by Chief Constable Sara Thornton CBE QPM who was accompanied by Superintendent McLean and Anthony Stansfeld (Police Commissioner for Thames Valley).

(A full copy of the presentation material is available from Democratic Services).

The presentation covered information on the annual assessment of police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy known as the PEEL Programme.

Other information provided related to strategic objectives for 2014/15. These included cutting crimes of greatest concern to the community, increasing the visible presence of the police and improving communication with the public to assist in cutting crime.

Members asked a number of questions following the presentation, some which had been submitted in advance of the meeting. Councillor Metcalfe enquired regarding the location and operator of the non-custodial reception facility for mental health related police interventions. He also asked about its relationship with Thames Valley Police.

It was agreed that a written answer would be provided for circulation to all Members.

The Council thanked the presenters and for their attendance and also wished the Chief Constable well in her future role.

51 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Honorary Aldermen J M Blanksby, M B Oram and Mrs K M Peatey MBE. Councillors: M C Appleyard, W J Bendyshe- Brown C A Ditta, M Hanif, Mrs J Langley, S P Lacey, Mrs D V E Morgan, Mrs M L Neudecker, Ms R Knight and J A Savage.

52 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 6 October 2014 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

54 CHAIRMAN`S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) WWI Commemoration

The Chairman reported that there had been a number of events since the last meeting of the full Council, commemorating the start of World War 1. There had been a memorable tea at Sands Village Hall and a photographic show of Sands prior to the First World War.

(b) Poppy Launch Appeal

The Poppy Launch Appeal had been followed by a Sunday Church Service. Members were urged to become involved in further events, which were in the process of being developed.

(c) Muslim Community Group

The Chairman reported that some Ahmadiyya Muslim Community Group representatives had made a kind donation to the Kidsinsport Charity. The Chairman`s chosen charity for the year.

(d) The Chairman informed Members regarding her interview on Wycombe`s own radio station "Wycombe Sound". It was reported that currently run by volunteers and was an air between 27 November and 24 December. It was anticipated that Wycombe Sound would be making a bid to OFCOM for a 5 year local community radio station license.

(e) Piddington Horticulture Society

The Chairman reported on her delightful evening and Christmas dinner at the Horticulture Society Christmas Party, where food was provided for the elderly people of Piddington. This was largely through the efforts of the Piddington Community, who ran fundraising activities during the course of the year.

55 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no public questions.

56 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

(a) Question from Councillor B Pollock to the Leader of the Council

“Given the problems caused by flooding across Wycombe District last winter, can the Leader let us know what arrangements are in place should a similar such problem occur again over the next few months?”

Response from Councillor R Scott (Leader of the Council)

“We have established and validated multi-agency plans in place to respond to any emergency. In future flooding events, as was the case this year, we will respond to requests for assistance from residents in emergency situations, and signpost people to get the help they need as far as possible. The Council will continue to issue sandbags, which is not a statutory duty of the District Council, and earlier this year we arranged distribution of over 15,000 sandbags to various communities around the District, giving very practical help to residents affected by flooding.

As is customary after any incident, following the severe weather last winter we undertook an internal debrief to identify positives from our response and also highlight any gaps / lessons to enhance our planning arrangements going forward.

Some of the changes we made as a result of this process include clarification of our emergency plan activation arrangements and roles and responsibilities to ensure that we are able to assist residents in as timely and proportionate way as possible. We have also revised the flooding pages on our website so that residents have easy access to the information that they need and have offered advice and guidance to residents in the winter edition of District Times which was sent to all households in November.

We have already undertaken advance planning meetings with key internal stakeholders to make sure that those involved in the response to flooding, or indeed any emergency, are able to make timely decisions, based on sound intelligence. We have also established a formal out of hours emergency planning arrangement with Bucks County Council so that we can respond to incidents that arise outside of office hours.

As well as assessing the WDC response we were also involved in a multi-agency debrief with partners from across the Thames Valley. Actions arising out of this have included revisions to multi-agency tactical plans and clarification of the command and control structures in the area.

Residents have been able to apply for a number of schemes which were launched in the Spring, including council tax and business rate relief and ‘repair and renewal grants’, to help them cope with the cost of flooding and

also make their homes more resilient to future events, and it should be noted that it is a homeowners responsibility to protect their own property.

One positive outcome from the flooding was the growth in on the ground community action. Along with partners from the Environment Agency and Bucks County Council we are working with Medmenham Parish Council and Marlow Town Council to assist them in developing practical community led flood planning which will enhance and support the council and emergency services response to future events and ensure that help can be targeted, in a coordinated way, to those who need it most.

Our advice to people in an incident would be to first look at the Council's website, which will be used to give the most up-to-date information and help available."

Supplementary Question

"It would be most helpful if a direct central contact number could be made available in cases of emergency flooding."

Supplementary Response

"We do have procedures in place to monitor the flooding situation - we will ensure that the number is made available. It is likely that it will be a County Council contact number.

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

"Earlier this year Wycombe District Council agreed to petition the Government regarding the HS2 project construction traffic using the roads within this District, can you please advise as to who will be presenting the petition to the Select Committee on behalf of the Council and are they fully prepared?"

Response from Councillor H McCarthy (Deputy Leader of the Council)

"The Select Committee has indicated that it expects petitioners to work together and coordinate Select Committee appearances on issues of common concerns. Being mindful of this and given that WDC is not the highway authority, the District Council is supporting Buckinghamshire County Council as highway authority which is developing an appropriate evidence base and presenting it at Select Committee. The County Council's leading role on this issue is also recognised by HS2 who are liaising with the County Council on traffic matters including those affecting Wycombe District.

Buckinghamshire County Council is currently in the process of developing evidence including traffic modelling to determine the impact of construction traffic on Buckinghamshire's road network. The results of this work have not yet been finalised but officers will continue to liaise with BCC to ensure that impacts on Wycombe District's road network are understood and presented to Select Committee so that the best possible mitigation can be achieved. We do not have information on the main routes."

Supplementary Question

“As part of the planned route construction traffic will be passing through Sands and Cressex. Have those residents whose homes line this route been informed/consulted about these trucks trundling past their front doors 24 hours day, seven days a week for several years? As this is an unparished part of the District they are reliant on this Council to represent their interests.”

Supplementary Response

I have represented the Authority on HS2 for 4 years, during which time 76 meetings have been held. It is very difficult to communicate with all bodies affected by construction traffic. Please be assured we are working with partner authorities regarding landscape to raise the design quality of the proposed line.

We need to communicate to residents the necessary information, but I am not sure of the process. I hope we can eliminate many of the problems by altering the route to go further west”.

(c) Question from Councillor M Knight to the Cabinet Member for Community

“Does Wycombe District Council have any plans to begin exercising its right to make annual charges to home owners for a license to access their property via council owned service roads or footpaths, in locations where historically these licence fees have not been charged and are you aware of any local housing associations planning to introduce such charges?”

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

“In response, historically, some WDC owned homes had the benefit of footpath and / or service road access over roadways / tracks belonging to WDC but which were not adopted by the highway authority (BCC). To permit access (without granting a permanent right) in some cases licences were granted by WDC - for which an annual fee was payable.

When it came to dealing with RTB sales, depending upon the circumstances some tenant purchasers could have had licences to permit access whilst other circumstances may have resulted in the granting of permanent rights by way of easements in the sale transfer documentation.

Turning to the local housing associations, “WDC provided Red Kite with a list of licence holders and Red Kite asked them if they wished to continue with the arrangements. If they did, then invoices were sent out for the agreed amount.”

Supplementary Question

“I am not clear as to the number of people affected, and whether all the relevant legal issues were considered of the time of transfer, please could I have information as to exactly what was transferred?”

Supplementary Response

“If you are after specifics for your ward, I will have to come back to you, but land classed as Red Kite land was considered, and is the subject of on-going evaluation.”

(d) Question from Councillor R Metcalfe to the Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability

“It has been some considerable time since the National Planning Policy Framework was implemented nationally. What steps have WDC taken to update planning policies in line with the NPPF?”

In particular, the NPPF makes reference to the social and economic as well as environmental aspects of sustainable development. Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that sustainable, responsible residential building for good social and economic reasons within the AONB is all but prevented by WDC's current planning policies and procedures?”

Response from Councillor N Marshall (Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability)

“The NPPF was published in March 2012, just over two and a half years ago. More recent planning guidance explaining how aspects of the NPPF should be dealt with in detail was issued much more recently in March 2014, and is updated on line as appropriate.

The Council has an adopted Development Plan made up of policies which were subject to full public consultation and the scrutiny of an independent Planning Inspector. These policies were all found to be in accordance with government guidance, principally provided in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS's). The NPPF was essentially a consolidation and distillation of these policy documents.

When it was introduced the policies in our Development Plan were checked against the NPPF and most of the detailed policies were found to be compliant, as the government policy, although simplified had in essence not changed in relation to these issues. So I would say that most of our detailed policies are in-line with the NPPF.

The key difference between the NPPF and old Government policy comes in relation to strategic issues and in particular the requirement to meet our objectively assessed need for development. As you are aware, we are preparing a new Local Plan to address this as well update remaining detailed policy issues. The Local Plan will by statute have to be in compliance with the NPPF. In addition we have already adopted up to date policies for our town centres and a number of development management issues which post-date the NPPF in the form of the Delivery and Site Allocations Plan (adopted in July 2013).

It seems to me common sense that stables can be appropriate within the countryside, even within the AONB, subject to appropriate design and location. Both national and local policy supports this. It is wrong to say that as a matter of course all stables within the AONB must cause unacceptable

harm. That is why planning permission is generally required for such buildings so that their impact can be assessed on a case by case basis.

Our Development Plan policies support appropriate residential development within the AONB, but resists inappropriate development within the countryside. I cannot therefore agree with your assertion that our current policies are in any way flawed.”

Supplementary Question

“Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that the current policies place too much emphasis upon the environmental aspects generally, with a detrimental effect upon the social and economic aspects – and could he explain what plans are in place to update our policies to properly reflect what can be described as ‘the triangle of sustainable development’”.

Would you also agree that more consideration should be given to the knowledge provided by the Parish Council and bodies such as the Chilterns Conservation Board.”

Supplementary Response

“It is part of the local plan process to consult other bodies, and we welcome input at the appropriate time”.

(e) Question from Councillor R Colomb to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration

“Now that WASPS have played their last game at Adams Park would the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration advise his estimate of the loss to Wycombe District Gross Domestic Product, which has occurred due to the short-sighted decision of the predecessor Cabinet to kill off the visionary Stadium project.

On what facts does he base his estimate and has he used the new modelling tool launched by Sport England in October 2014?”

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

“I would like to thank Councillor Colomb for his question and share his regret at the decision of Wasps to leave High Wycombe for Coventry. It is impossible to put an exact figure on the financial loss to the Wycombe economy but Bucks Business First estimate that the loss is likely to be in the region of £3m -£5m per annum. To put this into context, Wycombe’s Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2014 is estimated to be £4.9bn by Experian’s Local Market Forecast, issued in October this year. So the impact could be 0.06 per cent to 0.1 per cent of GVA.

The Sport England tool puts the GVA from spectator sport at £5.1m, plus £4.8m wider spectator spend for Wycombe, but this is a wider measure and includes the income generated by Wycombe Wanderers and other sporting activities. A District with a similar football club but without a premiersip Rugby club would create around £3.4m from spectator sport plus £2.2 wider

spectator spend putting Wasp's contribution at £1.7m plus £2.6m in wider spend. This is in line with the earlier estimate. The most significant cost, however, is to the local supporters of Wasps who now face an additional round trip of 166 miles to watch them play.

We really wanted London Wasps to stay in High Wycombe but, in the end, they were looking for an improved match day experience which, without the Stadium project, was not able to be provided in Wycombe. However, the District has had the benefit of London Wasps for the last 12 years and we wish them well in the future.

They have a great future ahead of them and I am sad it is not here."

Supplementary Question

"I appreciate he is minimising the effect of the loss of Wasps in an effort to protect the reputation of his colleagues. If the stadium project had gone ahead the increase in gross value added would be 1.26%. How is he proposing to replace the lost gross value added?"

Supplementary Response

"There are number of redevelopment projects happening at the current time. Also Wycombe Wanderers continue to be the top of the second division, and as they move up, their viability and profitability will go up in general. In addition the phasing of the three main redevelopment programmes is estimated to bring an inward investment of £150m."

(f) Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Leader of the Council

"Does the Leader agree with myself and the minister for Local Government; Mr Pickles, that waste bins should be collected and emptied weekly?"

Response from Councillor R Scott (Leader of the Council)

"The current waste service is based on an alternate week frequency (AWC) and most of the Wycombe district has had this collection frequency in place since 2004. At the time, Wycombe was recycling less than 20% and were facing a statutory target to recycle 30% by 2005.

Wycombe's current waste collections are part of a Joint Waste Service shared with Chiltern District Council. The contract with Serco commenced in March 2013 and the new enhanced service was introduced to the Wycombe District in October 2013. Based on Wycombe and Chiltern's previous successful experiences of alternate week collections (AWC), the new contract continues with these collection frequencies, has expanded them across the district and is yielding savings of approximately £1m per annum between the two authorities.

Although the Joint Waste Service is based on an alternate week frequency (AWC), residents **are** still provided with a weekly collection service. Residents are asked to separate their recyclables and compostables from the residual waste stream (waste that cannot be recycled and is sent to landfill) and the various waste streams are then collected on different frequencies, but

households are visited every week to have containers emptied. Food waste, is collected on a weekly basis.

There may well be some local authorities for whom weekly residual collections are the best option. For Wycombe and Chiltern District Councils joint service this is not the case. The Joint Waste Service follows the best practice advice advocated by WRAP (Waste and Resources Action Programme) which sets out how the current collection frequencies, container capacity and weekly food waste collections have yielded much needed efficiencies for the councils and have had a positive impact on customer satisfaction rates and improved recycling performance.

This has been confirmed by the national recycling figures recently published by DEFRA for 2013/14 which have placed Wycombe District Council in the top 10 of most improved performers which is excellent in view of the fact that the new enhanced service was only introduced to the Wycombe District in October 2013.”

(At this point of in meeting, the time allocated to questions elapsed).

The Chairman announced that all remaining unanswered questions 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 13 would receive a written reply within 10 days, and be appended to the minutes of the meeting.

57 PETITIONS

No petitions were received by the deadline of 5pm on Monday 8 December 2014.

58 CABINET

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20 October, 17 November and 11 December 2014 be received, and the recommendations as set out at minute numbers 56, 61, 62, 64, 70 and 71 be approved and adopted.

59 STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 14 October 2014 be received.

60 IMPROVEMENT & REVIEW COMMISSION

The Chairman rose to present the minutes and was pleased to announce that the final meeting of the Urgent Health Care Review was to take place in January. He would be presenting the final report at the February Council Meeting.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 12 November and 11 December 2014 be received.

61 AUDIT COMMITTEE

In the absence of the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor J Richards OBE rose to present the minutes of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 20 November 2014 be received.

62 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 25 November 2014 be received.

63 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 24 September and 22 October be received.

64 REGULATORY & APPEALS COMMITTEE

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor R Wilson rose to present the minutes.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory and Appeals Committee held on 26 November 2014 be received and the recommendations as set out at minute numbers 16, 17 and 18 be approved and adopted.

65 NOTICES OF MOTION

- (i) The following notice of motion was proposed by Councillor B R Pollock and seconded by Councillor Ms P L Lee.

“On 20 October 2014 Wycombe District Council’s Cabinet reached a decision to release the reserved sites identified in the Core Strategy. Despite the item being referred back to the Cabinet by the Improvement & Review Commission in which they raised a number of salient points, Cabinet has continued to press forward with this release.

This decision has been made without reference to Full Council which is the sovereign body of the authority. Moreover local members were given only one minute to speak at the original Cabinet meeting and, other than the Members of the Improvement & Review Commission present on the 12 November no

other Councillor has had a vote on this issue despite it being of enormous importance to many of the residents of Wycombe District.

Taken together with erroneous mathematical data, an approach to infrastructure issues which goes against that in the Core Strategy and a failure to take into account Government guidance issued on the 6 October which explicitly states that Councils that have large areas of Green Belt may be restricted in the number of homes they can build, this Council has no confidence in the decision taken by the Cabinet at its meeting on 20 October, and reconfirmed at its meeting on 17 November in respect of the release of the reserve sites.”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Pollock emphasised that all Members had been elected as District Councillors and as such should all have been involved in the vote on the decision as to whether or not to release the 5 reserved sites. He strongly believed that this should not have been limited to a cabinet only decision on such a matter of district wide importance. He also highlighted that things that had changed within the core strategy whereby infrastructure was no longer the main priority, and called upon fellow Members to take the opportunity to review and revisit the decisions made in the best interests of the residents of Wycombe.

The Secunder of the motion reserved her right to speak later in the debate.

The Leader was the first to speak in opposition to the presented motion, stating that it was a purely opportunistic and politically motivated motion, designed to re-ignite the concerns of certain groups of residents within the district. He highlighted that all matters had been fully discussed in public and had been answered on numerous occasions by the Cabinet Member for Planning and the Head of the Planning & Sustainability.

He went on to explain that the Cabinet understood and acknowledged the concerns that residents had and that it would do everything possible to ensure any developments were appropriate, which supported the infrastructure.

Councillor Green also rose to oppose the motion stating that the decision had been a difficult one. It had been the duty of the Council to take and act upon the professional officer advice received. This view was echoed by another Member who felt that the motion was a politically motivated one. He stated that Cabinet had made a decision which would give the Council some degree of control over the type of development which would take place.

Councillor J M Gibbs rose to move that under Standing Order 14.38(a) that the meeting proceed to the next item of business.

The Chairman declared that the matter had been sufficiently discussed in various other forums. The Chairman then invited Councillor Pollock as mover of the original motion to address the meeting.

A vote was then taken on the closure motion, and this was agreed.

In accordance with this Standing Order, the motion was deemed to be lost, and the meeting moved to the next item of business.

- (ii) The following notice of motion was proposed by Councillor B R Pollock and seconded by Councillor Ms P L Lee.

“This Council believes its Constitution should be amended to ensure that in future the Council takes the final decisions on non-statutory planning plans and policies, to ensure the democratic involvement of all elected Councillors on matters of district- wide importance and to ensure the Full Council acts as the ultimate decision-making body in such matters.”

In proposing the motion, Councillor Pollock re- emphasised his main points. He wished to see a system in place for decisions on only non- statutory planning plans and policies only of a similar district wide importance to come to Full Council for the final decision to be determined. He stated that he envisaged that the officers would decide as to the enormity and scale of the decision and whether it merited a decision by the Full Council. This could then be brought to Council via Cabinet as a recommendation as opposed to a resolution, for further consideration. As such an amendment to the Constitution was sought in order to effect this policy.

Cllr Pollock went on to state that there had been an enormous amount of public interest in the matter of the reserved sites, and any other matters which were likely to have such a huge impact on the future of residents should indeed be addressed by the Full Council. He very much hoped that for the benefit of the residents the Council would support this motion.

The Leader rose to address the Council in response to the motion, stating that this had appeared to be proposed as a consequence of the recent decision taken by the Cabinet on the reserved sites, a decision which was fully in line with the delegated authority endorsed by Full Council. He emphasised that the release of the reserve sites was a non- statutory plan and therefore Cabinet had been quite correct in taking the decision in the way that it did.

The Leader went on to state that this Council had previously agreed that the Cabinet and Leader model was the appropriate governance framework with which to take the relevant decisions with the appropriate safeguards.

Cabinet he said made many difficult decisions and there were checks and balances in place to ensure that all relevant factors were considered. As such he saw no compelling reasons as to why this should change.

Other Members rose to speak both in support of and in opposition to the motion. Some of those in opposition highlighted that there were no alternative proposals or policies presented within the motion to justify support for it. It was stated that instead the Cabinet and officers should be congratulated on all the hard work carried out so far, and that the motion should be rejected. Others spoke in agreement with the comments made.

Upon being put to a vote it was

RESOLVED: That the motion be rejected.

There were none.

67 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS/CHANGES

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

Councillor Ms R Knight to serve as a Standing Deputy on the Standards Committee.

68 URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY CABINET OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

The individual decision published since the last meeting of the Council was noted.

69 REFRESHMENTS

The Chairman took the opportunity to wish the whole council a very Happy Christmas and New Year. In the spirit of the occasion the Chairman and Vice Chairman invited everyone present to join them for mince pies and mulled wine at the close of the meeting.

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