

Council Minutes

Date: 25 February 2016

Time: 6.35 - 8.35 pm

PRESENT: Councillor I L McEnnis (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs J A Adey, K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, M C Appleyard, M Asif, D H G Barnes, Ms A Baughan, S Broadbent, Miss S Brown, H Bull, D J Carroll, M Clarke, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, A D Collingwood, M P Davy, R Farmer, R Gaffney, S Graham, A R Green, G C Hall, M Harris, M A Hashmi, A E Hill, A Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain JP, D A Johncock, M E Knight, D Knights, Mrs J D Langley, A Lee, N B Marshall, H L McCarthy, R Newman, Ms C J Oliver, B E Pearce, S K Raja, R Raja, S Saddique, J A Savage, R J Scott, D A C Shakespeare OBE, N J B Teesdale, Mrs J E Teesdale, A Turner, P R Turner, Ms J D Wassell, D M Watson, C Whitehead, R Wilson, L Wood and Ms K S Wood,

Also present: Honorary Aldermen: J M Blanksby, Mr P Cartwright, Mrs P Priestley and Mr R Pushman

78 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Honorary Aldermen E H Collins, D Cox, M Oram and Mrs K Peatey MBE. Councillors: C Etholen, M Hanif, Mrs A Jones, G Peart and Mrs W Mallen.

79 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14 December 2015, be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

80 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

81 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman reported upon some of the activities that he and the Vice-Chairman had attended since the last meeting of the Council, these included:

- i) Ribbon Cutting Event held at Wycombe Sports Centre on 5 January 2016
- ii) High Wycombe Guarantors Event held on 6 January 2016.
- iii) Armed Forces Returning Personnel Reception held on 27 January 2016.

- iv) Sea Cadets Awards held on 29 January 2016
- v) WDC'S Mayor's Civic Service held on 31 January 2016
- vi) Civic Dinner to mark 30 Year Renewal of Freedom of the Town to RAF HW held on 4 February 2016.
- vii) Chinese New Year Celebration
- viii) Marlow Town Mayor's Charity dinner held on 21 February 2016
- ix) Deputy Commissioner for Pakistan Celebration of his appointment held on 23 February 2016.

He also commented on the forthcoming events that he would be attending.

Wycombe Leisure Centre

The Chairman reported that, on 5 January 2016, he and colleagues had been one of the first people through the doors of the new Wycombe Leisure Centre and had enjoyed some of the activities on offer. He commented that we should all feel proud as the facility marked a great achievement for this Council. He also made mention of the increased footfall and the positive feedback from the public.

He reminded Members that, on 2 March 2016, his Royal Highness the Duke of Kent would return to officially open the Wycombe Leisure Centre, 38 years after he opened the previous Wycombe Sports Centre. He will be greeted by the five-time Olympic gold medallist, Wycombe district resident, and Deputy Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, Sir Steve Redgrave.

82 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

"Last July my 3 year old granddaughter had an accident on a slide in a playground on Red Kite Way in Disraeli. The playground was provided by Miller Homes under a S.106 agreement with WDC.

Under the agreement, WDC should have inspected the playground before it was opened to ensure it was safe. WDC didn't.

Moreover, Miller Homes was allowed to undertake road building alongside the playground and store hazardous material by the playground. When the accident took place the playground was formally classified as an active construction site.

An independent inspection found the slide had a moderate risk of causing serious injury to children.

Why did WDC not inspect the playground?

Why did WDC allow Miller Homes to undertake construction work by the playground?

Why did WDC allow Miller Homes to put children at risk?"

Response from Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet Member for Planning)

"Thank you Doctor Derrick for your question, actually three questions. I will do my best to answer them all in the time I'm allowed.

IN RESPONSE TO THE FIRST QUESTION 'WHY DID THE COUNCIL NOT INSPECT THE PLAYGROUND?'

I have reviewed the Planning enforcement file and it is clear that the Officers had spent many hours responding to complaints, Freedom of Information requests and attending public meetings outside of office hours to answer questions in relation to the Play Area on the new estate on Garratts Way.

This Play Area first came to the attention of the Planning Enforcement Team last Summer after they received a report that it had not been constructed in accordance with the approved plans and was not safe. This followed an accident involving your Grand-daughter who had been playing on the slide. It is my understanding that, thankfully, she only received bruising as a result of this incident and that, since then, there had been no further injury accidents.

Anyway, following that report, Officers promptly visited the site and established that the play area and equipment within it had been laid out in accordance with the approved plans.

However, a safety report relating to the play equipment had not been provided to the Council as required by the Section 106 Agreement. Following a request by Officers, the developer commissioned a safety report which confirmed that the play equipment was safe and met the required standards. The report did however make some minor recommendation as to how some of the equipment could be improved to overcome some small risks that had been identified. These works have now been carried out and a new safety report has been provided confirming the moderate risk previously identified had been overcome.

The Council did not inspect the playground before this because there was nothing to indicate that the development was a high risk in relation to not complying with the permission. The Council has to ensure that its resources are targeted effectively.

Moving onto the next question:

'WHY DID WDC ALLOW MILLER HOMES TO UNDERTAKE CONSTRUCTION WORK BY THE PLAYGROUND?'

My understanding is that the properties within the estate have been completed and occupied for a couple of years with the playground also being available for residents to use since they moved in. Due to some contractual issues between the

house builder and the construction contractor, the road and pavements were left unfinished until autumn of last year.

As the road and pavements were unfinished, the whole estate officially remained classified as a construction site under HSE guidance. However, in reality it was not a construction site in the conventional sense but a place where people were living and going about their daily lives. The playground was also completed and was used by children living on the estate and from neighbouring roads.

The works needed to be carried out to the pavements and roads were in order for the development to be finally completed. These were no different than a Highway Authority relaying a pavement or resurfacing a road. Officers from the Health and Safety Executive visited the estate in the summer whilst these works were being undertaken and did not observe practices that warranted them to intervene and stop the works.

Finally:

‘WHY DID WDC ALLOW MILLER HOMES TO PUT CHILDREN AT RISK?’

Two safety inspections have been carried out by suitably qualified independent professionals who have confirmed that the playground and equipment meets the required national standards and is safe to be used. The Health and Safety Executive investigated the construction of the road and pavement following a complaint and were happy for works to proceed. There is no evidence to suggest that children were put at risk by Miller Homes or anyone else.”

Supplementary Question

“This playground was poorly designed, and poorly specified in the Section 106 agreement. It was not inspected nor certified as required. As a result the playground put children at serious risk and still puts children at risk. It is also uninspiring and unadventurous.

I have been trying to discuss these issues with officials for some months, through Councillor Ahmed, the local Councillor. However, officials have declined to meet him. I think this undemocratic.

I then asked for a meeting directly with the Head of Planning . She has referred my request to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure and will be carrying out a full investigation into – well I don’t know what. I have asked if WDC could tell me what complaint I have made.

Councillor Johncock, will you invite me to a meeting, and quickly, to learn lessons and discuss what can be done to prevent children being at risk at this playground.”

Supplementary Response

“Dr Derrick, I have explained the position, and as you have continued to write to the Head of Planning on this topic since you submitted your original question, it had

been decided to deal with the matter under the Council's Complaint Procedure. That being so, it would be inappropriate for me to meet with you or to comment any further at this time."

(b) Question from Mr T Snaith to the Cabinet Member for Housing.

"Could the Cabinet member advise the number of local people on WDC Social housing register and how many are securing properties in High Wycombe?"

How does Wycombe District Council police the Home Choice Programme to ensure local people are housed in properties in High Wycombe?"

Response from Councillor Mrs Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing).

"Following the Localism Bill Act 2011 Local Authorities were able to frame their own Allocations Policy. The Bucks Home Choice policy was adopted in May 2014, and has introduced a local connection criteria for applicants wishing to apply via Bucks Home Choice. Bucks Home Choice is for rented accommodation only. An applicant is deemed to have a local connection with a district if the applicant:

- a) Is living and has lived in a district continuously for at least 2 years immediately preceding the date of the application and/or
- b) Is working and has been in continuous employment in a district for at least two years immediately preceding the date of the application and has worked for a minimum of 24 hours per week throughout that period. Employment is described as having a permanent contract, or working under contract as temporary member of staff. The applicants' normal place of work must be based in the Council's area; the existence of a company office based in the Council's area will not by itself meet the criteria.

If an applicant does not meet criteria above, then the applicant will not be a qualifying person for Bucks Home Choice and not able to register for social housing. The only **exceptions** are set out in the criteria.

The numbers on the Bucks Home Choice are 1525 live applications of which 1407 reside in High Wycombe and have the 2 year local connection criteria.

117 applicants are not resident of which:-

- 17 household work in the Wycombe District and meet the local connection
- 19 households are forces or ex forces
- 9 Care Leavers currently displaced out of district
- 5 homeless applicants
- 66 seeking over 65 accommodation
- 1 right to move

Since 1st April 2014 557 properties have been advertised and let through Bucks Home Choice. There were 44 properties let to applicants who did not fulfil the residency qualification for Bucks Home Choice. These were:

- 30 aged persons accommodation
- 14 general needs accommodation of which 12 were accepted homeless cases and 2 qualified under the working qualification.”

Supplementary Question

“It has come to my attention that, in a particular area within the district, there is a family living in a Housing Association property from outside of the area. How has this happened and how is the programme policed.”

Supplementary Response

“As we all know, there is not enough housing to go round, the Council does not have a housing stock and we know that locally and nationally there is a housing shortage. Homelessness is increasing, and placements do sometimes come from London Boroughs. The Bucks Home Choice does have criteria to police the programme.”

FIRE DRILL

The meeting was adjourned at 18.55 whilst the Council Chamber was evacuated due to the fire alarm sounding. Upon confirmation that it was safe to enter the building, the meeting reconvened at 19.00.

83 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

(a) Question from Councillor R Raja to the Leader of the Council

“When Cllr Wood became Leader last May she made "finding homes for the young" one of her top priorities. She had now dropped that priority in the new corporate plan. Could she tell us what targets she set for this priority and how far she had been successful in achieving her modest targets? Could she also tell us why “finding homes for the young” is no longer a priority?”

Response given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

“Thank you for your question Cllr Raja. I would just like to point out that my priorities when elected last year were Housing and Youth, not just finding homes for the young. However I am pleased you have given me the opportunity to highlight some of our plans for the next four years which have just been published in our Corporate Plan.

The Plan focusses on Place, People and Pounds.

Within our people priority, we list our priorities for engaging with younger people to help meet their needs and aspirations locally. These include increasing access to facilities and spaces for young people, which encompasses all kinds of facilities. Also within that priority we state we would be working on identifying opportunities and developing options for the Council to become more active in enabling the

provision of homes which would of course include endeavouring to provide homes for young people.

I think you would therefore see Cllr Raja that it is very clear that we are prioritising housing in the district for all our residents including the young, via our Corporate Plan, the Local Plan, the Homeless Strategy and the day to day work of the officers in the housing service.

It is not something that could happen overnight, but we are putting all the plans in place to enable us to meet our priorities.

In addition, whilst we have been doing all this work, during the last year we have also assisted 97 households under the age of 30 between into permanent housing and that included 55 aged under 25. Equally we have prevented 94 households in which the main applicant was under the age of 30 from becoming homeless in the same period. So I disagree that finding homes for the young is no longer a priority."

There was no supplementary question.

(b) Question from Councillor M Knight to the Leader of the Council

"Could the Leader outline the ways that Wycombe District Council works effectively with Bucks County Council and give examples of recent achievements as a result of collaboration, shared objectives and joint working?"

Response given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

"Thank you Cllr Knight for your question. We work very closely with a whole range of partners, including Buckinghamshire County Council, where we have mutual interest and benefit to help deliver the Council's priorities, which are set out in our Corporate Plan. Just by way of example, the County Council's support and involvement had been crucial to the delivery of our regeneration schemes, a number of which have recently come to fruition. The Handy Cross Hub development opened last month with the new sports and leisure centre, quickly followed by the coach way park and ride facility. Both of these projects involved close collaboration with the County Council because of their responsibilities for highway and traffic management. The opening of the Handy Cross Hub is a fantastic achievement for the Council and the District, increasing the District's connectivity and providing state-of-the art sporting and leisure facilities, as well as providing us over £1m a year annual income. The enhanced park-and-ride facility serves 19 National Express coach services, making High Wycombe better connected. The Cabinet Member for Community would be giving a more detailed answer on the increased level of participation of the new Sports and Leisure Centre later.

And there is so much more to come, with £5m Waitrose Superstore opening its doors to the public next month, again delivering an income stream to the Council. The retailer had reported 500 people applying for the 100 jobs at the store. Phases two and three, estimated to open in 2017/18, would include a 150-bed hotel and

300,000sq ft of office space which we are working to attract blue-chip businesses to relocate their headquarters to Wycombe – creating hundreds of additional jobs.

We have also worked closely with Bucks CC and three other Town and Parish Councils on a presentation to the HS2 Select Committee regarding the A4010/A4129 and A40 through West Wycombe village, This resulted in an agreement that HS2 Ltd would not use the A40 as a specified construction route that could have taken many heavy lorries past listed buildings along the A40 through West Wycombe, and a sum of £480,000 to use TO install safety measures along the A4010/A4129

As you can see Cllr Knight we have ambitious plans for the future, of Wycombe and we continue to work closely with Buckinghamshire County Council and other partners accordingly.”

Supplementary Question

“I am impressed with the partnership working for the Handy X development, although I’m aware that there were problems with the syncing of the traffic lights and the condition of the road. In the East section of Wycombe, residents and Local Members had suggested a panoramic walkway through CIL funding, BCC had acknowledged clear benefits for the proposal. WDC have failed to support it, by not contributing CIL funding, and therefore left the project in doubt. This is just one example of how in my view the Councils’ in this area are not working together effectively. Another, more high profile example is our chaotic and poorly maintained High Street. As you have recently welcomed two of the biggest supporters of Unitary Authorities with open arms, perhaps your position on this had changed, but if it hasn’t what more could be done to resolve residents’ issues, in partnership with others?”

Supplementary Response

“We are separate independent organisations and, as my answer shows, this is not a barrier to successful collaboration and delivery.”

(c) Question from Councillor S Broadbent to the Cabinet Member for Community

“Has the opening of the new Leisure Centre increased the level of participation in physical activity and exercise by residents of Wycombe District?”

Response given by Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Community)

“I am delighted to say that the new Wycombe Leisure Centre had been a phenomenal hit with residents. We are always looking at ways to encourage people to participate in exercise for their health and wellbeing and we have seen across the board increases in usage. I would just quote a few of the increases we have seen since the Centre opened at the start of January. Swimming is up across the board – adult swimming by 74%, family swimming by 177%; 50+ sessions by 59%; fitness classes by 45%; squash by 29%; swimming lessons by 60%. I could go on but you can see that everyone, young and old, is benefitting from the

Council's investment in state of the art sports and leisure provision. High Wycombe had greatly improved its retail offer over the past decade – with the new Wycombe Leisure Centre we are clearly showing our ambition to make the District a major destination for all and to provide an all-round great quality of life for our residents."

Supplementary Question

"Thank you for your response. Had the opening of the new leisure centre improved links with clubs and the community?"

Supplementary Response

"The swimming club would be holding top level competition in March, the last opportunity for swimmers to qualify for British Olympic trials. 1,900 swimmers have so far expressed a desire to compete at Wycombe (not all could take part of course!). They have also used the improved facilities to start a section for disabled swimmers.

The 50+ club have been able to bring in many new members from their waiting list, with further additional applicants attracted by the new centre

The climbing wall was a whole new area of activity and had started a junior section.

Links have been established with local squash and badminton clubs to provide junior coaching

Junior gym sessions have also begun and tiny tots have a fantastic new bouncy castle type facility that had seen a big increase in Under 3's participation

Links have also been established with Wycombe Wanderers football club encouraging 5-a-side football and gym based training."

(d) Question from Councillor A Hashmi to the Cabinet Member for Housing

"Three years ago WDC promised it would not use B&Bs for homeless families except in emergencies and then only for 1 week. It also promised not to use B&Bs outside Wycombe. It promised to set up a registration scheme for B&Bs in Wycombe and only use these B&B providers.

We now understand WDC is offering B&Bs outside Wycombe to homeless families causing them disruption to education, jobs and family support.

How many registered B&Bs in Wycombe does WDC have on its books for the homeless? How many homeless are in B&Bs and where are they? And how many families are being offered B&Bs outside Wycombe?"

Response given by Councillor Mrs J Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing)

“The ‘promise’ referred to by Councillor Hashmi relates to one action from our homelessness Strategy 2014-2019 which assisting us to meet our aims and objectives in preventing and resolving homelessness.

At present, we only use bed and breakfast accommodation if no other accommodation is available to us when a duty to provide accommodation is owed. At present, Saunderton Lodge; our main temporary accommodation unit; is operating at full capacity meaning we have had to access emergency accommodation for households who have become homeless from time to time. We have sourced accommodation in High Wycombe and now rarely use accommodation outside of the district unless the need arises due to lack of availability or due to the clients circumstances meaning it is unsafe for them to remain here.

We have met the statutory target of keeping use of bed and breakfast to less than 6 weeks for families and at present have 11 households placed in bed and breakfast accommodation at present, made up of 9 families and 2 single people. The longest stay for families currently in b&b had been 4 weeks. 5 of these households have been placed in the last 10 days with the most recent being this morning. With 4 households (3 families) placed in b&b in Slough due to a lack of availability in Wycombe. The longest stay out of district for families currently had been 2 weeks (one family) with the other two families being placed last Thursday and today. We have been creating vacancies at Saunderton to accommodate these households and would be moving them all in due course.

I cannot recall any promise to register b&b's in Wycombe, apart from our aim of sourcing one or more- which we have achieved.”

Supplementary Question

“In December 2015, there were 70 families in b&b accommodation and 1,500 on the social housing waiting list. As you know, with the proposed benefit cap in April this would only get worse. Following the cuts in April, could you provide an estimate number of how much accommodation WDC would need to provide?”

Supplementary Response

“I think it's worth drawing your attention to the fact that neighbouring authorities' figures are much higher than ours, Reading had 160, Slough approximately 60, and South Bucks have 20. The Council had relatively low numbers, by comparison, in b&b accommodation and I wish I could take the credit for that. Currently there are 11 households made up of 9 families & 2 single persons. The longest stay was 4 weeks. The Council had good management and dedicated staff. The Council would continue to utilise Saunderton Lodge which is the Council's main temporary accommodation Hostel. I'm pleased to say that the hostel is being considered for improvements as part of a feasibility study on potential options. I am aware that the numbers are likely to increase and this would be monitored.”

(e) Question from Councillor S Graham to the Cabinet Member for Housing

“When Wycombe's council homes were transferred to Red Kite in 2011, tenants were promised that Red Kite would invest £10.5 million to regenerate the Starblocks flats in Castlefield. The contract between Red Kite and WDC requires the redevelopment to be finished by the end of 2016.

Red Kite promised to keep local Councillors informed about what was happening. It hasn't.

What I have found out is that Red Kite plans to demolish the existing 69 social housing units at the Starblocks flats and replace them with 102 affordable units, 12 shared ownership units and 12 outright sale units - to be delivered by 2018/9. So redevelopment would be at least 2 years late and another 69 social homes would disappear from Red Kites books in addition to the 130 already gone.

Don't you agree that Wycombe needs more social homes not less? And if Red Kite is not going to build them, who will?”

Response given by Councillor Mrs J Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing)

“Red Kite made a number of promises to tenants and leaseholders prior to transfer in December 2011 including a promise to regenerate the Castlefield Starblocks and are making steady progress to achieve their aims including the redevelopment of this area.

If my maths are correct, Cllr Graham had stated that Red Kite are demolishing 69 units, replacing them with 102 units of which 90 would be considered affordable, thereby an increase of 21 units of new, affordable housing in an area in need of regeneration.

The 130 units lost, I would assume relate to right to buy sales since transfer, however I do not have these figures to hand and could only speculate as to the source of Cllr Graham's figures.

Red Kite are not the only housing association developing affordable housing in the district, with new affordable housing being delivered by, amongst others Home Group, Housing Solutions, Bucks Housing Association, Paradigm Housing, Thames Valley Housing Association, and High Town Housing group to name but a few.”

Supplementary Question

“Are you confident that Red Kite will fulfil their obligations by the end of the contract?”

Supplementary Response

“You could contact Red Kite directly for information at any time, in line with the agreed protocol for Member enquiries. I am also of the understanding that Councillor Hanif, Knight and yourself have been updated on events and were invited to Red Kites drop in event in December 2015, but I understand that you

were unable to attend. Just to advise you that the Audit Committee are regularly provided with an update on Red Kite's performance, as set out in the committee's minutes attached to the Council summons. I am confident that Red Kite is on progress to fulfil their obligations."

(f) Question from Councillor K Ahmed to the Leader of the Council

"Nearly two years ago, WDC proudly rolled out an ANPR system throughout its 19 car parks. However, the 'all singing all dancing' system had failed to deliver. Thieves and vandals have targeted the new pay machines 49 times, stealing nearly £50,000, causing over £100,000 of damage and depriving WDC of who knows how much lost revenue. 49 times!

Cabinet should have made sure the pay machines were vandal-proof before they installed such an expensive system. But they didn't. Cabinet should have made changes when the first theft took place - or the second - or even the third. But apparently not. To get targeted 49 times is beyond belief.

Would the Leader agree that her Cabinet had been negligent - or asleep - or both?

Would the Leader agree with me that her Cabinet had failed miserably and should consider taking up jobs that don't have such severe consequences for ill thought ideas?"

Response given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

"The ANPR system that was installed and had delivered many benefits to customers and businesses such as:

- enabling people to pay when they leave the car park and therefore only having to pay for the time that they have used
- not having to rush back to the car parks allowing people to spend more time shopping or on business
- as well as options to pay online and pay up to 24 hours after leaving the car park.

The system had enabled the council to make savings on overheads.

With the court case still pending in connection with the break-ins and vandalism, I need to be careful about commenting on the vandalism and robberies. However, the machines are robust, have good levels of security and comply with British Standards. Indeed, some of the break-ins failed due to the levels of security. Sadly, the sheer force and destruction that the machines were subjected to was immense.

Unfortunately, we have had robberies in the past, so it is not specific to these machines. Nor is it unique to Wycombe, but a nationwide issue. It is not uncommon in the industry and occurs across different car park operators and machine types.

Cllr Ahmed I take great exception to your comments that my Cabinet were negligent or asleep. As Councillors we work very hard for the benefit of the residents of the

District. We make decisions based on information provided to us by our hard working officers who are the experts in their fields. We have just delivered a fantastic new Leisure Centre, and Waitrose at Handy Cross as I detailed earlier along with many other projects we are currently working on and I am sorry that by implication you are deriding the fantastic work our officers do advising and carrying out our vision and I would hope that you would see fit to withdraw those comments.”

Supplementary Question

“Whatever the Leader believes about the competence of her Cabinet, the financial implications of the failure of this system would cost residents dear.

The ANPR system cost £680,000 and was expected to save a minimum of £200,000 a year. Now Cabinet estimates that WDC would get about half a million less in revenue a year from the new system than it previously calculated.

In fact this loss of revenue would consume all of the new revenue to be raised from the proposed rate increases – and more. Money raised from the rate increases would go straight into paying for the failure of the ANPR system.

I know Cabinet is finding financial management difficult so I have a simple question.

The new system was brought in to effect in 2014. On the old calculations, it should have paid for itself by 2018. Can I ask when you know estimate the ANPR system would pay for itself?”

Supplementary Response

“There are many contributing factors with regards to less income in relation to ANPR, these include less footfall due to the internet shopping, and people now being able to pay for the time they use.”

(g) Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Housing

“Is the member concerned, like I am, that morale in the company carrying out maintenance work for Red Kite is very low.

Before Red Kite was set up, and the housing stock maintained by WDC, Mears, the company carrying out maintenance work had a logo on the side of the vans saying 'Invest in people'.

As you may recall I worked for Mears until the contract was not renewed so I have an interest to declare.

We are now on the 3rd company carrying out routine maintenance since Mears contract ceased and morale with the workforce seems to be getting lower as each company is removed from the contract.

Do you agree with me that this is of great concern because the tenants for Red Kite were once tenants of WDC? And the morale of the workforce had a direct effect on tenants.”

Response given by Councillor Mrs J Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing)

“I do not think it is appropriate for us to comment on another organisation’s staff morale. We would not wish to intervene in a matter for Red Kite and it’s contractor and would suggest that the Member contact Red Kite directly to discuss his concerns in accordance with the agreed protocol for Members enquiries.”

Supplementary Question

“Did you know that morale was that low?”

Supplementary Response

“I was not aware, obviously during the maintenance of properties it could be a very stressful time. You could contact Red Kite directly, or alternatively I would be happy to discuss this with you in more detail.”

Questions 8, 9, 10 and 11 were not put as the 30 minutes time period had expired. In accordance with Standing Orders, a written reply would be sent to the questioner by the appropriate Member within 10 working days, and would also be appended to the Minutes of the next meeting.

84 PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

85 CABINET

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 8 February 2016 be received, and the recommendations as set out at minute 60 be approved and adopted. The Leader of the Council presented the minutes of the Cabinet Meeting of 8 February 2016 with the exclusion of Minute 63 (Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting 2016/17) which would be recommended to Council separately as part of the Council Tax Setting agenda item (item 9).

86 COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2016/17 AND PRESENTATION FROM LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The meeting then specifically turned to the recommendation outlined in minute number 63 of the Cabinet Minutes of 8 February 2016 (Revenue Budget & Council Tax Setting 2016/17) along with the supplement issued to the item outlining the final Parish / Town, Buckinghamshire County Council, Thames Valley Police Authority and Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority precepts and

confirmation of the Formula Grant figures required in order to set the Council Tax. An addendum to pages 9 and 12 of the supplement was tabled at the meeting.

The Leader of the Council in introducing the Cabinet Member for Finance to make his Budget presentation, referred to the challenging times we were living in. She commented that the focus from Government was changing from central support to local taxation and this would result in the Council losing its grants at a faster rate than previously anticipated. She explained that the Council would have gaps in its funding in the future, and we therefore had to consider not just the current year but future years when setting the budget.

She expressed her thanks to the Council's Improvement and Review Commission's Budget Task and Finish Group for their rigorous examination of the budget and the professional manner in which they conducted their task. The Leader then thanked the Chief Finance Officer and Chief Executive along with the Senior Management team and the many other officers involved in the budget preparation.

She concluded by saying that Councils were not allowed to predict a deficit and the need to approve a balanced budget was paramount. She emphasised that the work that had gone into producing the budget, especially with the changing information from Government, was time consuming and challenging and therefore she thanked everyone involved.

The Cabinet Member for Finance rose to give his budget speech starting with some background to this year's budget. He started by mentioning that the budget process had been challenging, and that over the last five years the Council had kept Council Tax at the same level. He then emphasised that he was pleased to be able to present a balanced budget to Council for 2016/17.

He said as with last year, the Council continued to work in extremely challenging times especially with the challenges detailed in the final version of the four year financial settlement. He informed Members that this included the reduction to zero of the Revenue Support Grant by 2018/19, and over a 50% decrease in New Homes Bonus funding. The Council would receive significantly less funding than had been originally projected, approximately 2.6m less. It was noted that a key reason for the reduction in funding was the assumption that Councils with lower quartile council tax, including Wycombe District Council would increase their share of tax by a maximum of £5 on Band D properties for 2016/17. The four year settlement could be revisited should the condition of the national finances significantly deteriorate. He commented that the government had assumed in its financial calculations that the council tax base would grow by 2%, although the recent trend had averaged around 1%.

The Cabinet Member also reminded Members of the many efficiencies and revenue generating projects that the Council was involved in, which would offset the 40% cumulative decline from the Revenue Support Grant. He continued by saying that the Council would continue to deliver sustainable efficiencies where it could, to increase other income streams.

He went on to say that there were continuing risks to the Council's budget, including the transfer of business rates income. However, he confirmed that the Council had budgeted in detail for the forthcoming financial year, which included a Contingency Fund. He confirmed that the Council continued to have healthy reserves.

The Cabinet Member for Finance stated that he did not see any alternative but to recommend that the council tax be increased. He confirmed that the Council would continue to review income generation and possible cost reductions which had been identified by the Cabinet and the Improvement & Review Commission.

He then made mention of further improvements to facilities and services that would be possible due to the proposed increase, these included additional resources for the Local Plans for the District and Princes Risborough, reviewing the leisure facilities in Marlow and Princes Risborough, improving the provision of temporary accommodation, and continuing with the High Wycombe Town Centre Masterplan.

The Cabinet Member concluded by saying that any increase in tax, however modest, would be unwelcome news to our residents due to the challenging economic period. However, he confirmed that the Council would continue to have one of the lowest levels of Council Tax in the Country and in Buckinghamshire.

He then commended the Budgets to Council and asked for the recommendations to be approved.

The Leader of the Labour Group, Cllr Raja, rose to respond to the Budget speech, he commented on his Group's scepticism on the robustness of the budget estimates. He commented that his Group felt that budgets should be balanced and sound, based on realistic assumptions which would provide the Council with stability and sustainability.

He commented that based on previous incorrect budget assumptions with regards to the ANPR scheme, demolition of Wycombe Sports Centre and Handy X Hub, it was apparent that the Council struggled with forecasting expenditure.

The Leader of the Labour Group then stated that there was not much in the Conservative administration's budget that his group supported, given the financial challenges facing the nation in the future. However, he then stated, that future cuts proposed by the central Conservative Government would adversely affect the services that local authorities offer, with many people already using food banks, being evicted and young people struggling to find work. He then commented that there were areas of Council activity which needed to be strengthened and extended to meet the needs and expectations of its population.

He raised some concerns with regards to the condition of roads, footpaths, insufficient school placements and the lack of A&E provision within the District. He requested that dual role Members note these points and consider them during deliberations at Bucks County Council.

The Leader of the Labour Group also commented that in these difficult financial times the Council should be rigorous in ensuring that the best value for money was achieved for the tax payer.

The Leader of the East Wycombe Independent Group, Cllr M Knight, also rose to present his Group's comments on the budget proposals, he commended the work of the Head of Financial Services and officers for the way in which they had managed the Council's finances in an extremely difficult and testing time for the Council.

He acknowledged the challenging times facing the Council, in light of Central Government's austerity measures. He confirmed that he understood the deficit that the Council faced over the next 6 years and, therefore within this context, it was inevitable that taxes would need to rise. He welcomed the commitment that the Council had made by retaining the Council Tax Reduction for the most vulnerable within our community. He commented that his Group felt that the most vulnerable in society must be protected and that crucial charity and voluntary organisations, under increased pressure, should be supported in these difficult times.

He commented that the budget did not reflect the Leader's priorities of young people and housing. He mentioned that these priorities had not been reflected in the budget. He then made various suggestions to address the Council's housing needs. He stated that because of the rising costs and lack of suitable housing Wycombe District was becoming out of reach for vulnerable, young and low paid individuals.

The Leader of the East Wycombe Independent Group, concluded that, in principle, a tax rise was okay, but not for more of the same. His Group wanted to see a radical change of how the Council's assets and investments were used to ensure that the Wycombe District became a thriving place of opportunity for all.

Other Members made a number of remarks in respect of the Budget proposals, in particular the fact that the Council had managed to previously freeze Council Tax for a number of years was mentioned.

The Cabinet Member for Finance made some closing remarks and asked Members to support his proposed recommendations. His proposals were seconded by Councillor Miss K Wood, Leader of the Council.

The Budget was then put to the recorded vote.

In accordance with subsection (5) of the Council's Standing Order 16 (Voting) the voting of the Members in respect of these Council Tax setting decisions was recorded as follows:

In favour of the recommendations:-

Councillors J Adey, Z Ahmed, M Appleyard, D Barnes, S Broadbent, Miss S Brown, D Carroll, M Clarke, A Collingwood, R Farmer, R Gaffney, A Green, G Hall, A Hussain, M Hussain JP, Maz Hussain, D Johncock, D Knights, Mrs J Langley, T Lee, N Marshall, H McCarthy, I McEnnis, R Newman, Mrs C Oliver, B Pearce, S Raja, S Saddique, J Savage, R Scott, D Shakespeare, Mrs J Teesdale, N

Teesdale, A Turner, P Turner, D Watson, C Whitehead, R Wilson, Miss K Wood and L Wood.

Abstentions:-

Councillors K Ahmed, M Asif, Ms A Baughan, H Bull, M Davy, S Graham, M Hashmi, M Knight, R Raja and Ms J Wassell.

In Favour:- 40

Against:- 0

Abstention:- 10

(Councillors Mrs L Clarke OBE, A Hill, and M Harris were not present in the meeting when the above vote was taken.)

RESOLVED: That (i) the recommendations contained in Minute 63 of the Cabinet Meeting held on 8 February 2015 be approved and adopted; and

(ii) it be noted that the following amounts have been calculated for the year 2016/17 in accordance with regulations made in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

(A)66,372.88; being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 ("the Regulations") as its Council Tax Base for the year. In total for the District a £1 tax on a band "D" equivalent property will raise £66,372.88.

(B)

Parish / Town Area	Council Tax Base
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	1200.31
Bradenham	226.09
Chepping Wycombe	6319.36
Downley	1969.52
Ellesborough	440.07
Fawley (Parish Meeting)	135.46
Great & Little Hampden	165.47
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	474.18
Great Marlow	717.92
Hambleton	835.11
Hazlemere	3975.22
Hedsor (Parish Meeting)	80.18
High Wycombe Town	21505.14
Hughenden	3934.44
Ibstone	144.52
Lacey Green	1235.65
Lane End	1385.10
Little Marlow	791.25
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	680.72
Marlow Bottom	1511.84
Marlow Town	6645.20
Medmenham	514.27
Piddington & Wheeler End	263.27
Princes Risborough	3483.90
Radnage	380.60
Stokenchurch	1916.00
Turville	218.33
WestW'- Parish Council	540.66
Wooburn and Bourne End	4683.10
Grand Total	66,372.88

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with the Regulations, as the amounts of its Council Tax Base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more of the special items relate;

- (ii) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2016/2017 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ("the Act").

(A) £87,018,017 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31(A)(2) of the Act; taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils as at the date of the meeting.

(B) £75,498,558 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31(A)(3) of the Act;

(C) £11,519,459 being the amount by which the aggregate at (ii)(A) above exceeds the aggregate at (ii)(B) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31(A)(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year.

(D) £173.56 being the amount at (ii)(C) above divided by the amount at (i)(A) calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31(B)(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;.

(E) £ 2,758,897 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act;

(F) £131.99 being the amount at (ii)(D) above less the result given by dividing the amount at (ii)(E) above by the amount at (i)(A) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates:

(G)

Part of Council's Area	2016-17
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	147.11
Bradenham	162.95
Chepping Wycombe	186.01
Downley	177.69
Ellesborough	176.57
Great & Little Hampden	147.61
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	195.26
Great Marlow	149.03
Hambleden	170.31
Hazlemere	194.25
High Wycombe Town	152.02
Hughenden	182.21
Ibstone	180.43
Lacey Green	152.22
Lane End	214.55
Little Marlow	191.53
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	165.62
Marlow Bottom	152.96
Marlow Town	180.57
Medmenham	169.15
Piddington & Wheeler End	207.96
Princes Risborough	227.2
Radnage	198.2
Stokenchurch	165.97
Turville	161.76
West Wycombe	212.63
Wooburn and Bourne End	184.96

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (ii)(F) above the amounts of each of the special items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the appropriate amount at (i)(B) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more of the special items relate.

(H)

Part of the Council's Area	Band A Charge	Band B Charge	Band C Charge	Band D Charge	Band E Charge	Band F Charge	Band G Charge	Band H Charge
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	98.07	114.42	130.76	147.11	179.80	212.49	245.18	294.22
Bradenham	108.63	126.74	144.84	162.95	199.16	235.37	271.58	325.90
Chepping Wycombe	124.00	144.68	165.34	186.01	227.34	268.68	310.01	372.02
Downley	118.46	138.20	157.94	177.69	217.18	256.66	296.15	355.38
Ellesborough	117.71	137.33	156.95	176.57	215.81	255.04	294.28	353.14
Fawley (Parish Meeting)	87.99	102.66	117.32	131.99	161.32	190.65	219.98	263.98
Great & Little Hampden	98.40	114.81	131.20	147.61	180.41	213.21	246.01	295.22
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	130.17	151.87	173.56	195.26	238.65	282.04	325.43	390.52
Great Marlow	99.35	115.91	132.47	149.03	182.15	215.26	248.38	298.06
Hambleden	113.54	132.46	151.38	170.31	208.16	246.00	283.85	340.62
Hazlemere	129.50	151.08	172.66	194.25	237.42	280.58	323.75	388.50
Hedsor (Parish Meeting)	87.99	102.66	117.32	131.99	161.32	190.65	219.98	263.98
High Wycombe Town	101.34	118.24	135.12	152.02	185.80	219.58	253.37	304.04
Hughenden	121.47	141.72	161.96	182.21	222.70	263.19	303.68	364.42
Ibstone	120.28	140.34	160.38	180.43	220.52	260.62	300.71	360.86
Lacey Green	101.48	118.39	135.30	152.22	186.05	219.87	253.70	304.44
Lane End	143.03	166.87	190.71	214.55	262.23	309.90	357.58	429.10
Little Marlow	127.68	148.97	170.24	191.53	234.09	276.65	319.21	383.06
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	110.41	128.82	147.21	165.62	202.42	239.23	276.03	331.24
Marlow Bottom	101.97	118.97	135.96	152.96	186.95	220.94	254.93	305.92
Marlow Town	120.38	140.44	160.50	180.57	220.70	260.82	300.95	361.14
Medmenham	112.76	131.56	150.35	169.15	206.74	244.33	281.91	338.30
Piddington & Wheeler End	138.64	161.75	184.85	207.96	254.17	300.38	346.60	415.92
Princes Risborough	151.46	176.71	201.95	227.20	277.69	328.18	378.66	454.40
Radnage	132.13	154.16	176.17	198.20	242.24	286.29	330.33	396.40
Stokenchurch	110.64	129.09	147.52	165.97	202.85	239.73	276.61	331.94
Turville	107.84	125.81	143.78	161.76	197.71	233.65	269.60	323.52
West Wycombe	141.74	165.38	189.00	212.63	259.88	307.13	354.38	425.26
Wooburn and Bourne End	123.30	143.86	164.40	184.96	226.06	267.16	308.26	369.92

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (ii)(F) and (ii)(G) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (iii) That it be noted for the year 2016/2017 the Buckinghamshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner Thames Valley and the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Precepting Authority	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Buckinghamshire County Council	773.46	902.37	1031.28	1160.19	1418.01	1675.83	1933.65	2320.38
Police and Crime Commissioner Thames Valley	111.31	129.86	148.41	166.96	204.06	241.16	278.27	333.92
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority	39.8	46.43	53.07	59.7	72.97	86.23	99.5	119.4

- (iv) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (ii)(H) and (iii) above, the Council in accordance with Section 30 of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2016/2017 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Part of the Council's Area	Band A Charge	Band B Charge	Band C Charge	Band D Charge	Band E Charge	Band F Charge	Band G Charge	Band H Charge
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	1022.64	1193.08	1363.51	1533.96	1874.83	2215.71	2556.60	3067.92
Bradenham	1033.20	1205.39	1377.60	1549.80	1894.20	2238.59	2583.00	3099.60
Chepping Wycombe	1048.57	1223.34	1398.10	1572.86	1922.38	2271.90	2621.43	3145.72
Downley	1043.03	1216.86	1390.70	1564.54	1912.22	2259.88	2607.57	3129.08
Ellesborough	1042.28	1215.99	1389.71	1563.42	1910.85	2258.26	2605.70	3126.84
Fawley	1012.56	1181.32	1350.08	1518.84	1856.36	2193.87	2531.40	3037.68
Great & Little Hampden	1022.97	1193.47	1363.96	1534.46	1875.45	2216.43	2557.43	3068.92
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	1054.74	1230.53	1406.32	1582.11	1933.69	2285.26	2636.85	3164.22
Great Marlow	1023.92	1194.57	1365.22	1535.88	1877.19	2218.48	2559.80	3071.76
Hambleden	1038.11	1211.12	1384.14	1557.16	1903.20	2249.22	2595.27	3114.32
Hazlemere	1054.07	1229.75	1405.42	1581.10	1932.46	2283.80	2635.17	3162.20
Hedsor	1012.56	1181.32	1350.08	1518.84	1856.36	2193.87	2531.40	3037.68
High Wycombe Town	1025.91	1196.90	1367.89	1538.87	1880.84	2222.80	2564.79	3077.74
Hughenden	1046.04	1220.38	1394.72	1569.06	1917.74	2266.41	2615.10	3138.12
Ibstone	1044.85	1219.00	1393.14	1567.28	1915.56	2263.84	2612.13	3134.56
Lacey Green	1026.04	1197.05	1368.06	1539.07	1881.09	2223.09	2565.12	3078.14
Lane End	1067.60	1245.53	1423.47	1601.40	1957.27	2313.12	2669.00	3202.80
Little Marlow	1052.25	1227.63	1403.00	1578.38	1929.13	2279.87	2630.63	3156.76
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	1034.98	1207.48	1379.97	1552.47	1897.46	2242.45	2587.45	3104.94
Marlow Bottom	1026.54	1197.63	1368.72	1539.81	1881.99	2224.16	2566.35	3079.62
Marlow Town	1044.95	1219.11	1393.26	1567.42	1915.74	2264.04	2612.37	3134.84
Medmenham	1037.33	1210.22	1383.11	1556.00	1901.78	2247.55	2593.33	3112.00
Piddington & Wheeler End	1063.21	1240.41	1417.61	1594.81	1949.21	2303.60	2658.02	3189.62
Princes Risborough	1076.03	1255.37	1434.71	1614.05	1972.73	2331.40	2690.08	3228.10
Radnage	1056.70	1232.82	1408.93	1585.05	1937.28	2289.51	2641.75	3170.10
Stokenchurch	1035.21	1207.75	1380.28	1552.82	1897.89	2242.95	2588.03	3105.64
Turville	1032.41	1204.47	1376.54	1548.61	1892.75	2236.87	2581.02	3097.22
WestW'- Parish Council	1066.31	1244.04	1421.76	1599.48	1954.92	2310.35	2665.80	3198.96
Wooburn and Bourne End	1047.87	1222.52	1397.16	1571.81	1921.10	2270.38	2619.68	3143.62

- (v) That in accordance with sections 52ZB and 52ZC of the Act it is determined that the Council's relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2016/2017 is not excessive.
- (l) Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Council introduced its own scheme after the government abolished the national Council Tax Benefit system. The rules of the 2016/17 scheme are unchanged from the 2015/16 scheme.

87 STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 5 January 2016 be received.

88 IMPROVEMENT & REVIEW COMMISSION

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Review Commission held on 13 January 2016 be received.

89 AUDIT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 14 January 2016 be received, and the recommendations as set out at minute 45 be approved and adopted.

90 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 19 January 2016 be received.

91 SPECIAL PERSONNEL & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Special Personnel & Development Committee held on 17 February 2016 be received, and the recommendations as set out at minute 57 be approved and adopted.

92 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 18 November 2015 and 16 December 2015 be received.

93 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 11.2

No questions had been received.

94 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS/CHANGES

RESOLVED: That the following changes to Committee Membership as set out in the summons be noted in accordance with S.O.18(9):

Since the last meeting Councillors A Turner and G Hall had resigned as Members of the Independent Group. They were now Members of the Conservative Group.

Councillor B Pearce had resigned as a Member of UKIP and was now an independent Councillor.

As a result of these changes, the political composition of the Council was as follows:

Conservative Group	49	81.66%
Labour Group	6	10%
East Wycombe Independent Party (EWIP)	3	5%
Independent	1	1.67%
Liberal Democrat	1	1.67%

Committee Changes

As a result of the changes to the political composition, the Conservative Group had gained a seat on the Audit Committee, Standards Committee, Personnel & Development Committee, Regulatory & Appeals Committee, and the Improvement & Review Commission.

The shared seat allocated to EWIP and the Independent Group on the Audit Committee, Standards Committee and Personnel & Development Committee had been lost.

With regard to the Improvement & Review Commission, the seat held by the Independent Group had been lost.

With regard to the Regulatory and Appeals Committee, the shared seat held by UKIP and Liberal Democrat had been lost.

Councillor G Hall to continue on the Audit Committee as a Full Member but as a Conservative Group representative.

Councillor Ms J Wassell to be removed as a standing deputy of the Audit Committee.

Councillor Mrs W Mallen to replace Councillor Ms J Wassell as a Full Member on the Standards Committee.

Councillor A Turner to be removed as a standing deputy on the Standards Committee.

Councillor G Hall to continue on the Personnel & Development Committee as a Full Member but as a Conservative Group representative.

Councillor M Knight to be removed as a standing deputy on the Personnel & Development Committee.

Councillor A Turner to replace Councillor Ms A Baughan as a Full Member on the Improvement and Review Commission.

Councillor G Hall to be removed as a standing deputy on the Improvement and Review Commission.

Councillor M Clarke to replace Councillor B Pearce on the Regulatory and Appeals Committee.

Councillor R Farmer to be removed as a standing deputy on the Regulatory and Appeals Committee.

Councillor A Turner to replace Councillor Mrs G Jones as a Full Member on the Planning Committee.

Councillor C Whitehead to replace Councillor Mrs G Jones as the Deputy Cabinet Member for Planning.

Councillor Ms A Baughan to replace Cllr A Turner as a full Member of EWIP on the Planning Committee.

Councillor Ms J Wassell to replace Councillor Ms A Baughan as a full Member on the Regulatory & Appeals Committee

Councillor Ms A Baughan to replace councillor Ms J Wassell as a standing deputy on the Improvement & Review Commission

Outside Bodies

Councillor Miss S Brown to replace Councillor Mrs J Teesdale on the Red Kite Board.

95 POLLING PLACES

The report before Members sought delegated authority for the Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee to revise and bring into effect any changes to polling places that may be required. This would enable the Council to respond quickly to any changes arising at short notice, for example, a fire or lack of availability during the preparations for the forthcoming Police and Crime Commissioner Election and the EU Referendum.

Approval was sought for the proposed measures to be implemented for all future elections to ensure any issues that arose could be addressed promptly. This would negate the need for calling special meetings at short notice. Any proposed changes to a polling place would be made in consultation with the appropriate Ward Councillors.

The report highlighted that this delegation would not affect the statutory 4 year review of polling places that the Council was required to undertake and that this would continue to be processed through the Council's decision-making process.

RESOLVED: That the delegated authority be granted to the Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy Services, in consultation with the Chairman of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee to make any change to a polling place that may be required, for all future elections.

96 URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY CABINET OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

The individual decisions published since the last meeting of the Council held on 14 December 2016 as set out in the summons were noted.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Ian Hunt	- Democratic Services Manager
Catherine MacKenzie	- Principal Democratic Services Officer
Karen Satterford	- Chief Executive