

Council Minutes

Date: 18 July 2016

Time: 6.30 - 7.53 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Hussain JP (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs S Adoh, 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, M P Davy, C Etholen, R Gaffney, S Graham, A R Green, G C Hall, M Hanif, M A Hashmi, A E Hill, A Hussain, D A Johncock, M E Knight, D Knights, Mrs J D Langle, A Lee, N B Marshall, H L McCarthy, I L McEnnis, 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 Alderman J M Blanksby

1 MINUTE`S SILENCE

Following a request he had received in advance of the meeting, the Chairman called for a minute`s silence in memory of the late Jo Cox MP

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Honorary Aldermen: E H Collins, D Cox, M B Oram, Mrs K M Peatey and Mrs P Priestley. Councillors: Mrs J Adey, A D Collingwood, C Harriss, M Harris, M Hussain, Mrs G Jones, G Peart and Mrs W Mallen.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 11 April and the Special and Annual Council meetings held on 24 May 2016 be confirmed as true records and signed by the Chairman.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

5 CHAIRMAN`S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman listed some of the activities he had undertaken since the last meeting of the Council on 24 May 2016. These included:

(a) Marlow Regatta

- (b) Armed Forces Day
- (c) Royal visit at Speen
- (d) Queens 90th birthday Street Party –Princes Risborough.

Members were informed that the Chairman in some instances would need to accept invitations to events at short notice, which consequently may not have featured in the weekly distributed Chairman's Diary Sheet. Details of the most up to date events could be received from the Chairman's Office by contacting Rachel Mozley on 01494 421951.

The Chairman also gave mention to the fact that he had received some nominations for the Volunteers Award, and that the closing date for the receipt of any further nominations was 29 July 2016.

6 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(a) Question from T Snaith to the Leader of the Council

"The Chairman has started an initiative for his year "Let's celebrate volunteers and make Wycombe the best place to be."

He urged Councillors to volunteer one extra hour a week, which would be very much appreciated by the community.

I would like to ask the WDC leader what is being planned and how WDC resources and staff will be used to meet the Chairman's volunteering initiative and make Wycombe a better place to be?"

Response from Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

"I am very happy to offer support for the Chairman's initiative which he is leading. Volunteers provide an invaluable service across the District. The latest copy of the Wycombe District Times highlights the work carried out by them at the museum, the Citizens Advice Bureau and in our woodlands, together with one off initiatives such as Clean for the Queen.

I am delighted that the Council is able to support projects through the Employer Supported Volunteering Policy enabling staff to take one day per year to volunteer for a cause of their choice."

Supplementary Question

"Council volunteering is a secret to many, even its own staff. Only 4 people have participated in the scheme since its introduction 2 years ago. Out of respect for the Chairman's volunteering initiative, can I ask that the Council reviews the internal culture that it has for volunteering allowing local groups to ask for WDC help and resources?"

Supplementary Response

“Staffing is a matter for the Chief Executive not the Council. The Chairman will decide how he wishes to take forward his plans during his year in office.”

(b) Question from Mr M Chadwick to the Cabinet Member for Environment

“A report earlier this year by the Royal College of Physicians concluded that each year in the UK around 40,000 premature deaths were attributable to exposure to outdoor air pollution, much of which arises from emissions from traffic. In busy urban areas, nitrous oxide levels still exceed limits set in the 1990s which should have been fully achieved in 2010.

In 2002 Wycombe District Council designated an Air Quality Management Area along the M40 corridor because the target levels were being breached. Since then, annual progress reports have been published, including results from monitoring at other locations in the District. Every year since 2010, levels exceeding the guidelines have been found at several locations in urban High Wycombe, and, since 2013, central Marlow, with a resultant recommendation that new Air Quality Management Areas need to be designated. This has not happened.

Six years on, and with the dangers to health from poor air quality now undeniable, does the Cabinet Member agree that it is high time for steps to be taken to properly recognise and address the issue, and what plans does the Council have to do so?”

Response from Councillor Mrs J Teesdale (Cabinet Member for Environment)

“The Environment Act 1995 requires Local Authorities to undertake an air quality review in areas where the Governments air quality objectives are not anticipated to be met. If indeed the air quality objectives are not going to be met Local Authorities are required to establish Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's) to improve air quality.

In 2001 a review and assessment of the district indicated that levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) along the M40 were likely to exceed the national objective. In response to this an AQMA was declared and later an Air Quality Action Plan approved in respect of the M40 as it passes through the district.

The Council does monitor air quality throughout the district on a continuous basis and results have highlighted that levels of Nitrogen Dioxide exceed the national objective in three areas within the district. These are High Wycombe town centre, the main roads through Marlow town centre and a further area surrounding the existing M40 AQMA.

The Council is currently considering how best to move this forward and a report will be going to Cabinet in the autumn recommending the declaration of a further two Air Quality Management areas and an extension of the existing M40 Air Quality Management Area.”

Supplementary Question

“The pace of progress is disappointing. In the meantime would the Council consider some low cost steps such as providing advice to the public on behavioural changes

to minimise exposure in the affected areas. In addition could the Council seek to enforce the directive to bus drivers to turn engines off in the bus station?"

Supplementary Response

"I am happy to look at this and discuss further with the Council's Environmental Health Officers."

© Question from Mr R Colomb to the Leader of the Council

"I believe that on 16th June 2016 you and the Chief Executive attended an Achievements Awards Ceremony at the London Hilton, sponsored by the Municipal Journal. The Council was shortlisted in the 'Commercialism in the Property Estate' - category

Would you please advise how much the Council spent preparing and submitting its bid and how much was spent attending the Awards Ceremony?"

Response from Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

"In WDC we are extremely proud of the work that we are doing to regenerate the area. We are involved in a half a billion pound regeneration programme over the years, which will create at least 2,000 new jobs. This includes work on Handy Cross, Hughenden Quarter, NEXT, John Lewis, Eden, Desborough Square, etc. We have heard only last week heard from consultants working nationally that Wycombe is the most commercial regeneration programme of any local authority they have encountered in the country. Our 10 year track record of this work is much greater than many LA's.

Our programme provides much needed improved services and local facilities for local people. It also provides significant revenue income and capital to enable us to continue running our services in the face of a current anticipated 84% reduction in government grant by 2020. It also helps us keep our Council Tax as one of the lowest in the country.

We therefore submitted our programme for the National M J Awards and were delighted to be shortlisted alongside the likes of Leeds and Liverpool. Just to be shortlisted for this award is a huge feather in Wycombe's cap and is a demonstration of the great work we are doing for local people to improve their area. A condition of the award was that we attended the awards ceremony. There was a charge of £250 per head to cover the administration of the awards, judging by national judges and the awards event."

Supplementary Question

"What benefits did the Council obtain from participating in this event having failed to win an award?

This is particularly poor timing as it coincided with the first time in 6 years that WDC has imposed a Council Tax increase on its already hard pressed residents. This

does however pale into insignificance when compared with the proposed £114,376 increase in Members' allowances.

Supplementary Response

"Simply to have been shortlisted for the award is a fantastic result. We should be proud of Members and staff to have achieved such a great outcome.

The recognition of Wycombe's reputation in improving its area for local people has been much enhanced by our success in these awards and I repeat that we should all be rightly proud of the work our members and officers have put in to achieve such a fantastic outcome."

7 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

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

"How do you anticipate the EU referendum result, and the subsequent withdrawal of the UK from the EU, will impact on local government finances and what contingencies and plans have WDC put in place to help us through this period of uncertainty?"

Response from Councillor Ms K wood (Leader of the Council)

"The historic decision taken on the 23rd June to leave the EU will have significant impacts for our district, many which we cannot yet comprehend. The media have focused on the likely short term implications, of which many are financial. The decision has created a lot of uncertainty in the short term and unsurprisingly resulted in market volatility and a focus on the downside risks. The political situation and ultimate negotiations that will take place both with the EU and the global markets will shape our futures in the medium to longer term.

Some of the more immediate short term impacts are expected to include a reduction to base rates, (which didn't happen in the end last week), rising inflation at or slightly above the BoE inflation target and a reduction to growth as businesses take stock of the changes and what this means for them. There are of course wider political and social impacts that will emerge over the coming months and years. There is naturally a lot of uncertainty and it is important for the Council to act responsibly in supporting its local community and economy in dealing with both the challenges but also in identifying and seizing new opportunities that may emerge.

In the short term we expect there to be continued turbulence due the uncertainty a change of this magnitude presents. The Council is well placed to manage the short term financial pressures that might arise from this in terms of lower base rates, increases in inflation and therefore our costs. As we have in the past and will continue to do so moving forward we will continue to invest in our district for the medium to longer term in projects and infrastructure which support economic growth, help those in greatest need in terms of housing and continue to support the Council's overall financial sustainability. We will be sticking to the course we have

set. This is not the time to pull up the drawbridge but to show confidence and invest in the future of our district and economy.”

Supplementary Question

“I am glad to hear that the Leader is positive about longer term opportunities as we leave the EU. However would you not agree that in the short to medium term the greatest impact will be upon the most vulnerable, including those on benefits, and those in low paid jobs?”

What is WDC doing to ensure greater provision for those who are pushed into greater financial turmoil?”

Supplementary Response

“The Council has been asked tonight to confirm its agreement to the 4 year Local Government Finance deal, which commits the Council to delivering a further £2.5m in cost savings and income growth over this period. It remains to be seen whether this deal will be reopened by Government, regardless we will continue to work on optimizing savings and revenue growth whilst protecting valued public services as we have always done.

The impact of Brexit cannot yet be known but I am sure that our Government and this Council will steer our way through to ensure a brighter better future for all our residents”

(b) Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Planning

“Does the Cabinet Member for Planning realise that the Tesco express store at Turnpike which replaced the old Turnpike public house is a victim of its own success, causing chaos to the local roads in the vicinity of the store.

As you know the store is located near a very heavily congested 4 point roundabout on the A4010 and a major T junction leading into Cressex industrial estate.

I was absolutely astonished to find a vacant area at the rear of the store totally fenced in, cannot be seen by members of the public, which could hold possibly 20 or more cars and also ease the congestion caused by lorries making deliveries to the store.

Can this vacant area be opened up?”

Response from Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet member for Planning)

“Planning permission was not required for the change of use from a public house to a shop. However, at the time that the pub was converted to a shop, planning permission was also granted for the conversion of the upper first floor to 3x 2 bed flats with associated external alterations and the construction of two storey side

extension. I believe that the area to which you refer is the garden and car parking area for the flats.

As the flats are unoccupied, the area has been fenced off as you note. However, as we have no control over the use of this space, perhaps your question should be directed in the first instance to Tesco.

All that said, I am aware of the congestion issues in this area and i also know that the county council has submitted a bid for funding to address these. I am asking my officers to forward your comments to the relevant officers at County to inform any proposals that are being developed for this area.”

Supplementary Question

“I have asked Tesco on numerous occasions, only to receive the reply that it is down to the Planning Authority at WDC. The situation is bound to get worse because more traffic will be encouraged by new post office counter.”

There was no supplementary response as no question was put.

© Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Leader of the Council

“The County Council had taken a decision in early May to look at options for developing a business case for a new, single unitary council. District councils were invited to work with the county in the interests of residents and evaluating options based on common methodology and shared evidence base.

Wycombe District Council had declined that offer and may have to spend up to £200,000 tax payers’ money on external management consultants to carry out the review instead of working with the County Council.

What was the logic behind this decision that gives complete disregard to the tax payer’s money?”

Response from Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

“Thank you for your question, which now gives me the opportunity to correct some of the misconceptions printed by the press and to provide the correct information to the public.

Wycombe District Council, working in partnership with Aylesbury, Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils, is commissioning an independent review so that a range of options for modernising local government in Buckinghamshire can be considered.

You are quite right in saying that Buckinghamshire County Council are also working on a review. The difference with their review is that the County Council have been quite clear in their intention of working up a business case for a single unitary

council for the geographical area of Bucks. This was agreed at a county council cabinet meeting in May.

Following that decision, the district councils were approached by the county council to join in with the single unitary business case. While the county council proposal came without advance warning, we did want to give the offer of joining in this work careful consideration.

Along with our other district council colleagues, we reflected on the work of the county council and were concerned about funding a study in which the outcome appeared to be pre-determined. Instead, we are in favour of an impartial, objective and totally independent study - after all, this is an extremely important piece of work which will inform how local government in Bucks could look in the future.

We have decided to commission the review, rather than do the work ourselves, because we do not have the resources in-house to undertake this specialist piece of work. We also want to ensure the review is independent and objective. And I will reiterate that this review will mean that a range of options for modernising local government in Buckinghamshire can be considered. And as we have offered to share data and information with BCC, we are hopeful that the review that the district councils are commissioning will complement the county council's work on a single unitary authority.

In commissioning the review, we will be seeking the best value for money we can and will share the costs across the districts. And of course the funding will not only cover the study, but the equally important work of engaging with our communities."

Supplementary Question

"Authorities throughout the country are working together to achieve more for less. Please could you reassure us that the taxpayers will be looked after and receive value for money?"

Supplementary Response

"Yes of course we will ensure that we do that. We are looking at a range of options to ensure that we can achieve the best outcome for our residents. The following is a quote from the Chairman of the District Councils Network.

Districts are positive in their capacity and ability to embrace change. This is because District Councils are the most efficient valued and trusted part of Government. We are flexible and adaptable, able to move and change at speed and the strand of local Government that is closest to its communities while having the scale, leadership and influence to make a real difference where it counts."

(d) Question from Councillor T Green to the Cabinet Member for Community

"Please could the Cabinet Member update me on the progress towards building a new crematorium in Bierton by the Chilterns Crematorium Joint Committee?"

Response from Councillor S K Raja (Deputy Cabinet Member for Community in the absence of Cabinet Member for Community: Councillor Mrs J Adey).

"The Westerleigh Group (developers of the crematorium at Watermead, Aylesbury) are seeking the Court's permission to challenge Aylesbury Vale DC's decision last Autumn to grant planning permission for the crematorium at Bierton. They have failed to obtain permission from the High Court so are now applying to the Court of Appeal.

The process of obtaining permission could take until the end of this year and, if successful, will lead to a full hearing sometime next year. If Westerleigh fail to obtain permission, work at Bierton will start as soon as the necessary licence from Natural England is obtained. Natural England will consider the licence application once the planning permission is no longer subject to challenge."

Supplementary Question

"Would you agree that it is outrageous that a commercial organisation wants to undermine a much needed service in the area? This is not in the public interest.

Supplementary Response

"Yes I agree with you."

(e) Question from Councillor A Hashmi to the Cabinet Member for Community

"The Cabinet would be aware that following the referendum result there has been a rise in hate crime especially directed at recent EU residents; would the Cabinet Member condemn this hate crime and does the Member have details of any reported hate crime in the District following the Brexit vote?"

Response from Ms K S Wood (Leader of the Council)

"Hate crime will not be tolerated in our district, which has a proud history of being a diverse and cohesive community. I know Thames Valley Police are determined to tackle hate crime and Wycombe District Council will do all it can to support them.

The message sent out to Members late last month was based on the information made available to us the time - but as you will have now read in the local media, our police colleagues have in fact noted an increase in the number of hate crimes reported across the Thames Valley during the last week of June.

The reported crimes were not in a specific area of the Thames Valley region, nor were they committed against people from a particular group, race or religion.

In terms of here in Wycombe, there have been 212 hate crimes reported in the Wycombe Local Police Area for the 12 month period from 14 July 2015 to 12 July this year, which is an increase of 54 hate-related crimes in comparison to 2014/15.

Since the EU Referendum, there have been a total of 21 reported hate crimes but only one was directly related to the Brexit result.

The police are encouraged that the national debate has given greater exposure to the nature of hate crime and the ways in which people should respond to it.

I know the police will treat any report of hate crime seriously and vigorously investigate any incident reported to them as a priority – this approach will in turn help to breed confidence and encourage more people to come forward.

I would, therefore, encourage my fellow councillors and members of the public to report any hate incident or intolerance they witness or experience to police by calling 101.

Alternatively, contact the Hate Crime Network on 0300 1234 148 or the Crime stoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111.”

Supplementary Question

“What is WDC doing to assure residents that their future in the District is unaffected.”

Supplementary Response

“That question was answered in the first part of my original answer to you.”

(f) Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Planning

“I am very pleased to learn that the Lynton House Surgery will have a temporary reprieve whilst options for a new Health Centre are appraised.

Can you assure me that Wycombe District Council is working closely with NHS Commissioners and developers to ensure that an appropriate Health Centre is provided?

It has been said for some time now that Lynton House is 'not fit for purpose'. East Wycombe desperately needs modern facilities for patients in view of population growth and significant pockets of health inequality and deprivation.”

Response from Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet Member for Planning).

“As you say Lynton House will be kept open for at least another 6 months whilst the NHS explores short and long term options for surgery provision in east Wycombe. It is recognised there is a bit of a spatial gap in the provision of GP practices in the east and south east of High Wycombe which would obviously be exacerbated if and when Lynton House were to close.

I can assure you we are working closely with the NHS particularly in relation to our new Local Plan informing them of the potential housing allocations, rates of development and population growth. Whilst it will be NHS England and the Chiltern

CCG who will ultimately be responsible for bringing forward new proposals in east Wycombe, we are assisting them in highlighting potential sites and we may also assist through developer funding at an appropriate time. Members will be kept updated on progress.”

Supplementary Question

“NHS England and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) seem committed to a new health centre for East Wycombe, particularly in view of the high level of deprivation and ill health in Totteridge and Micklefield.

Can you assure me that the CCG will be fully involved in developing new facilities?”

Supplementary Response

“We are actively working together and will continue to ensure that we achieve a good outcome.”

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

“The Leader recently sent an email assuring councillors and members of the public alike that WDC and its partner agencies have not seen an increase in reported hate crime or an increase in community tension since the EU referendum result.

According media reports, it is suggested that reported hate crime has increased fivefold since the EU referendum result. Could this be because most hate crimes taking place in Wycombe are going unreported?”

Response from Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

“Your question was answered in the previous answer provided to Councillor Hashmi. However I will reiterate it.

The reported crimes were not in a specific area of the Thames Valley region, nor were they committed against people from a particular group, race or religion.

In terms of here in Wycombe, there have been 212 hate crimes reported in the Wycombe Local Police Area for the 12 month period from 14 July 2015 to 12 July this year, which is an increase of 54 hate-related crimes in comparison to 2014/15.

I would, therefore, encourage my fellow councillors and members of the public to report any hate incident or intolerance they witness or experience to police by calling 101.

Alternatively, contact the Hate Crime Network on 0300 1234 148 or the Crime stoppers charity anonymously on 0800 555 111.”

Supplementary Question

“I have established that there is no easy way of reporting hate crime via the TVP and /or WDC website unless you are willing to navigate through an unending amount of links, which are confusing and do not always work.

It would appear that both the TVP and WDC operate third party reporting mechanisms, and would you therefore agree that the figures you quoted are inaccurate?”

Supplementary Response

“I have given you 3 separate numbers on which people can report hate crimes.”

(h) Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Planning

“Does the Cabinet Member for Planning realise that the new Lidl store which was constructed on a large car park is a victim of its own success, because there are not enough car parking spaces for the supermarket and this causes absolute chaos in the vicinity of Desborough Avenue?”

This sometimes causes complete gridlock in the Richardson Street and Desborough Avenue vicinity because cars are queuing to find a parking space.”

Response from Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet Member for Planning)

“I am aware that this car park is well used and that it is able to be used by visitors to both the store and to the Desborough Road. It is of course managed by the operator Lidl who are able to propose changes to the management regime if need be.

There are of course a number of Council owned off street car parks in the area that are also typically well used. Whilst appreciating the concern, I am not aware that the problems are causing unacceptable highway problems. In any case, that would be for the highway authority and/or the police to consider

Whilst highlighting this issue you stop short of identifying any proposals to address the situation and I am not clear about what if any intervention you believe this Council should be considering?”

Supplementary Question

“I think it is down to the Cabinet Member and the Planning Authority to think of something?”

Supplementary Response

“I would very much like to be responsible for roads but I am not.”

(i) Question from Councillor T Green to the Cabinet Member for Planning

“Please would the Cabinet Member let me know what the comparison is between the number of motor vehicles per household and the number of adult bicycles per household is in High Wycombe and the wider Wycombe District?”

Response from Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet Member for Planning).

“As far as we have been able to ascertain, there are no official statistics for bicycle ownership per household neither nationally nor specifically for this District. Consequently I am unable to make any sort of comparison with car ownership.

If your question is related to bicycle parking standards compared with those for cars, then you will be aware that last year we adopted a new county wide standard which covers both of these. It is a complicated and detailed standard and I don’t therefore propose to go through it line by line. I have an extract here which I’m happy to pass to you after the meeting.

However, I would like to say that, for bicycle parking, the drafting of the standard drew heavily from practice in a number of other local authorities. That said, we are aware that the topography in this area is seen by some as a disincentive for bicycle riding. Nonetheless, we will monitor the standard over time and consider refinements to it should that prove necessary.

In the meantime, it is also fair to say that the level of cycling ownership and cycling for both commuting and leisure has experienced a significant increase in recent years and we would wish to encourage this as much as possible for many reasons not least of all in getting cars off our congested roads.”

Supplementary Question

“Could you explain how it is that in a hilly place like High Wycombe there are often 8 bicycle places to 5 car parking spaces, when clearly there are more cars per household than bicycles?”

Supplementary Response

“I cannot justify that. There are no hard facts and we have been guided by other Councils in the country. If we have got it wrong then we will alter it.”

Questions 10 - 12 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 meeting.

8 PETITIONS

No petitions were received by the deadline of Monday 11 July 2016.

9 CABINET

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 June 2016 be received and the recommendation as set out at minute 9 be approved and adopted.

10 CABINET

Minute 17 – Public Spaces Protection Order

A Member stated that implementation of the Protection Orders would penalise vulnerable women who were engaged in prostitution in the town centre and surrounding area. The Leader stated that the public consultation would establish the best way forward as to whether or not to implement two Public Spaces Protection Orders thereby providing assistance to businesses by restricting activities that may have a detrimental effect on the area.

Minute 18 – ICT Task & Finish Group Recommendations

It was felt that I.T support should be made available over the weekends. In addition another Member felt that there was an absence of full and proper training for the effective use of I.T

The Leader confirmed that the relevant Cabinet Member would be working on both the abovementioned issues.

Item 19 – Dissolution of Bucks Joint Committee on Waste

A Member requested that recycling should be extended to areas that do not currently have it. She sought the Cabinet Member's assurance that residents requesting recycling in their area will be dealt with as a matter of priority, thereby ensuring equal opportunities for all.

The relevant Cabinet Member emphasised that as this was a joint working programme other relevant parties would need to be consulted. She suggested that a formal email request be made, following which the matter would be included on the agenda for further discussion.

Minute 20 – Abbey Barn South Development Brief

A couple of Members highlighted deep concern over the traffic situation that would follow due to the proposed development. It was emphasised that there was only one road into and out of the site, namely through Daws Hill development, which was already overburdened with traffic. The Members urged the Cabinet Member to take on board the issues and concerns of residents.

Members were reassured that the Cabinet Member would communicate further about the highlighted issues outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 11 July 2016 be received and the

recommendations as set out at minute numbers 19, 21 and 23 be approved and adopted.

11 IMPROVEMENT & REVIEW COMMISSION

In presenting the minutes of the meeting, the Chairman of the Committee referred to minute number 6 and wished to place on record his gratitude to Charles Meakings Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services for the fantastic service he had given to the Council over many years.

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

12 STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 7 June 2016 be received

13 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minute 4 – Health & Safety Annual Report

A Member stated her concern over the increase in the number of incidents of verbal abuse being reported by employees, who she felt that in a huge number of cases did an excellent job.

Minute 5 – End of Year Performance Report

A Member referred to the initiatives being undertaken to deal with the issue of increasing numbers of people in temporary accommodation. He requested a brief summary of these. However the Cabinet Member was unable to comment on these at the present time as she had not been present at the committee meeting at which it was discussed.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 30 June 2016 be received

14 JNC STAFFING MATTERS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the JNC Staffing Matters Committee held on 13 April and 19 April 2016 be received.

15 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee held on 6 April, 27 April and 1 June 2016 be received.

16 REGULATORY & APPEALS COMMITTEE

Minute 25 – Members` Allowances Scheme

A Member voiced her concern over the proposed increases stating that the current level of housing benefit was barely sufficient to cover the standard rent payments. She was informed that the increases to Members` allowances would bring it in line with the average level within our 12 neighbouring Councils. In addition Councillors were required to contribute much more time to the role of Councillor.

Minute 26 – Scheme for Enrolment of Honorary Aldermen

A Member rose to commend the Leader for restricting the maximum number of Honorary Aldermen, and welcomed the cut back on pomp and ceremony.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee held on 8 June 2016 be received and the recommendations as set out at minute numbers 25 and 26 be approved and adopted.

17 SECTION 85, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - EXTENSION OF 6 MONTH RULE

Under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, if a Councillor failed to attend any meeting of the Council throughout a period of six months from the date of his/her last attendance, he/she automatically ceased to be a Councillor unless the failure to attend was due to some reason approved by the Council before the expiry of the six-month period. The Council was also able to extend the statutory period of absence.

Members noted that Councillors Mrs Jones had been unable to attend meetings for some time due to ill health and the Leader of the Council had submitted a request to extend the period of absence for a further period of six months. It was noted that the last date of the initial six month statutory period would be August 2016 and the proposed extension would take the period to February 2017.

RESOLVED: That the failure to attend meetings be noted and approved, and the request from the Leader of the Council to extend the time period of absence to February 2017 be approved

18 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 11.2

None were received

19 URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY CABINET OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

The individual decision published since the last ordinary meeting of the Council held on 11 April as set out in the summons was 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

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Minute Item 7

COUNCIL

Monday 18 July 2016

Agenda Item 6

Questions from Members

Unanswered Questions – Responses sent subsequent to Meeting

10. Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Planning

I am concerned again that the Ancient Monument in Easton Street has become engulfed by weeds and ivy. Could you advise me if contact has been made with the owners Columbia Threadneedle and a schedule of works agreed?

Response from Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability)

Thank you Cllr Wassell for your question and for drawing this matter to our attention.

On the 14th July 2016, our conservation officer visited St John's House which is behind St John's Hospital and is currently vacant and scaffolded. Work is currently under way to refurbish the office buildings which were previously the buildings of the victorian grammar school and which are locally listed. The work is being done on behalf of the owners, Columbia Threadneedle investments.

The Morgan Lovell's project manager advised that, when the refurbishment of the offices is nearing completion, the grounds will be similarly refurbished which will include clearing ivy from the grade ii listed St John's Hospital and the undergrowth and scrub that has grown up around it. It has been unusually moist this year and this has encouraged exceptionally vigorous weed and unwanted ivy growth.

Our conservation officer will continue to monitor the situation to ensure that Columbia Threadneedle investments carry out the landscape works and, in particular, clear the ivy and creeper from the medieval building which is the oldest surviving building in High Wycombe and thus of exceptional historic significance.

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

Following the EU referendum result we have seen a sharp increase in reported hate crime at a national level and a number of anecdotal cases have been reported locally in our own towns and district. At a meeting last week this increase was dismissed as insignificant by some members and yet Thames Valley Police have now confirmed a 44% rise in reported

hate crime compared to the same period last year. Do you agree with me that this is significant and should be of great concern to us as a council?

Response from Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

I would refer you to the previous answer given to Question 5 (Cllr A Hashmi) which was on the same subject and substantially the same question.

12. Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Leader of the Council

Could you update us about actions being taken by WDC regarding the possibility of a Unitary Council? I am particularly concerned about the lack of consultation with councillors who represent Wycombe Town wards?

Response from Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

Thank you for your question Cllr Wassell and may I refer you to my previous answer to Cllr Hanif (Q3). I would add though that I am very clear that any discussions must include consideration for the unparished area of High Wycombe.