

Council Minutes

Date: 10 October 2016

Time: 6.40 - 7.32 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Hussain JP (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs J A Adey, Mrs S Adoh, K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, M C Appleyard, M Asif, D H G Barnes, Ms A Baughan, S Broadbent, Miss S Brown, D J Carroll, M Clarke, A D Collingwood, C Etholen, R Farmer, R Gaffney, S Graham, A R Green, M Harris, C B Harriss, M A Hashmi, A E Hill, A Hussain, M Hussain, D A Johncock, M E Knight, D Knights, Mrs J D Langley, A Lee, Mrs W J Mallen, H L McCarthy, I L McEnnis, R Newman, Ms C J Oliver, B E Pearce, G Peart, S K Raja, R Raja, S Saddique, J A Savage, R J Scott, 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: M Blanksby, Mrs P Priestley and R Pushman

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Honorary Aldermen: P Cartwright, E H Collins, M B Oram and Mrs K M Peatey MBE. Councillors: Mrs L M Clarke OBE, M Davy, G Hall, M Hanif, Mrs G A Jones, N Marshall and D Shakespeare OBE.

21 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 18 July 2016 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of Honorary Alderman R Pushman in the list of those present.

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received

23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman highlighted some of the events and activities he had undertaken between 19 July and 10 October. These included:

- (a) Attendance at graduations at BNU in early September
- (b) Battle of Britain Sunday Commemoration Service in Marlow
- (c) One Can Trust opening of new premises

(d) Rio 2016 celebration of our Olympians and Paralympians event.

The Chairman stated that these people were a true inspiration to the country as a whole and that Councillors needed to offer greater support at such events.

24 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(a) Question from Mr J Hoggett to the Leader of the Council

“The Town Council model is one that has given many more urban towns a greater say in their own affairs given that the needs of a town and a district-at-large can often be very different. The model gives citizens more devolved powers in order to have a greater say on more specific issues with in their communities. Will the Leader of the Council look in to establishing a High Wycombe Town Council?”

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

“Thank you for your question Mr Hoggett. There are many ways of securing devolution with strong democratic representation without the need to establish a High Wycombe Town Council. The democratically elected members of the unparished area here in High Wycombe already come together and meet as the High Wycombe Town Committee to consider and take action on behalf of the residents of our Town.”

Supplementary Question

“Clearly people have different socio economic needs. If you cannot consider establishing a Town Council for High Wycombe, perhaps you could consider changing the status of the High Wycombe Town Committee from an advisory body, to one that has a veto over Cabinet decisions on matters relating to High Wycombe Town.”

Supplementary Response

“The people of High Wycombe are understandably concerned regarding services and facilities available to them. The District Council provides many of these functions, with a strong track record of delivering improvements across the whole district. I do not believe the Town has suffered from not having a Town Council. We are one Council for one community.”

(b) Question from Mr D Chandler to the Cabinet Member for Community

“Six years ago, on 30th September, my eight year old daughter Olivia tragically died from an asthma attack. A week ago, on the anniversary of her death, my wife and children visited her grave together at High Wycombe Cemetery. We were very upset to discover that many personal items had been removed from her grave. We know that other families have also had the graves of loved ones vandalised in this way. Can you tell me what security is already in place to keep the cemetery safe and secure and what else could be done to prevent other families experiencing the same distress that we have?”

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

“We appreciate how distressing it is for friends and family when the grave of a loved one is damaged or vandalised. Over the years we have fortunately had very few acts of vandalism and, while we know of complaints about cemetery maintenance practices we are not aware of any on-going issue of vandalism within the Snowdrop Garden or other parts of the cemetery.

We periodically remove items from graves as stated on the signs clearly displayed in the Cemetery and this is likely to be the reason some items have been removed from your daughter’s grave. The Cemetery is largely maintained as lawn sections kept free of permanent obstacles other than permitted memorials. This is so we can maintain a high standard of grounds maintenance across the site and create a welcoming and attractive place for the bereaved to visit to remember their loved ones.

We remove old flowers, which obviously deteriorate over time, as well as other items as they succumb to the weather or where the number of items on a grave becomes so excessive as to prevent maintenance or intrude on an adjacent grave. We try hard to strike a balance between maintaining an attractive and tranquil environment and respecting that the bereaved seek to remember their loved ones with a variety of floral tributes and other mementoes. We leave items on a grave for as long as we can until they detrimentally affect the appearance of the cemetery or affect other mourners, particularly in the Snowdrop Garden and children’s areas which we appreciate are particularly sensitive. Most items are held at the Cemetery Office for 4-6 weeks should people wish to collect them.

The Snowdrop Gardens and the cemetery grounds are surrounded by walls and fencing, and the gates are locked every night. We investigate every concern raised with us to understand what can be done differently. We encourage any visitor to the Cemetery to report any concerns they may have to the Cemetery Officer at the Council.”

Supplementary Question

“Could something definite be put into place to increase security? For example Marlow cemetery does have CCTV cameras, the cemetery could be locked earlier in the evening and public footpaths could be diverted so as not to cut through the cemetery.

Could a report on security options be presented to Cabinet in order to protect all graves?”

Supplementary Response

“CCTV cameras will not work unless the trees are felled around the area. In addition there would need to be around 15 cameras at a cost of up to £20,000 with call out service costs on top.

We will continue to closely monitor the situation. It may be that one incident is vandalism whilst another may not be.”

(c)Question from Ms N Rana to the Leader of the Council

“In August of this year, the House of Commons issued a report identifying Muslim women as the most 'economically disadvantaged' group in the UK. Unemployment, family culture and prejudice were just three of the reasons given for this.

What steps can Wycombe District Council take to promote opportunities for this group of women?”

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

“Thank you for your question. The report you mention covers the whole of the UK and I would like to note that Muslims are not a homogenous group. It actually describes Muslim women as more likely to be economically inactive rather than disadvantaged. There are, as you say, a whole range of reasons for this. The data does not relate to Wycombe specifically and the District has a low unemployment rate. I am sure that Muslim women who would like to enter or return to the workforce will find many opportunities to do so. In the meantime I am happy to support the Government’s work in this area.”

Supplementary Question

“At the present time, how would you better engage with this group of women in the community?”

Supplementary Response

“It is a countrywide problem. The Government needs to help in enabling them to access language and education and to work independently. Furthermore Mosques can play a role in promoting opportunities for Muslim women. The Equalities Office should create specific national outreach programmes to promote female role models and the Department for Work and Pensions should also consider integrating peer to peer support into their support package.”

(d)Question from Ms T Kershaw to the Cabinet Member for Community

“The purpose of a PSPO is to deal with a particular nuisance behaviour. Would consistent illegal and dangerous parking outside schools included in the proposed area be deemed as ‘nuisance behaviour’?

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

“Thank you for your question. Public highways are the responsibility of Bucks County Council, which has the power to take out a public space protection order to combat persistent and unreasonable behaviour that is detrimental to the quality of life in an area.

I am happy to pass on your query to the County Council if you so wish”

Supplementary Question

“If you do pass on the query what help are we likely to receive in stopping illegal parking outside the school.”

Supplementary Response

“It is the school that is best placed to interact with the parents and will have greater influence in seeking long term parking solutions.”

25 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

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

“The draft Local Plan, (as it says in the foreword to the document) "sets out the long term vision for the District, identifying where new homes, jobs and infrastructure will be created..." The plan also states that by the year 2033 (which is roughly as many years away as we are from the end of the last century), about 15,000 homes will need to be built, of which the unmet need for a third will be provided by AVDC.

Now that the consultation has been completed and in the face of vociferous NIMBY opposition from some areas can the leader tell us whether the draft plan is still on track, and is AVDC still interested in collaborating with WDC about accepting 5,000 homes?”

Response from Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet Member for Planning) on behalf of Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

“Thank you for the question. You are right to suggest that we have received a large response to the consultation on the draft plan – in excess of 3,000 people and organisations responded to it, and I am pleased that our consultation has been so effective in involving people in preparing the Plan.

We are still on track to produce a plan in early 2017 in line with the Government’s deadline but we do have a lot of work to do to consider all the comments we have had and to revise the Plan as appropriate.

Under the legal Duty to Cooperate, AVDC have to collaborate with WDC and WDC have to collaborate with AVDC in preparing their respective plans. There is an agreed Memorandum of Understanding between all the Bucks authorities which indicates that, in principle, AVDC will accommodate the unmet need from the three southern districts. However this agreement does not establish the amount of housing that AVDC should accommodate. The onus is on WDC to have explored all the reasonable options for accommodating its housing needs within Wycombe District before asking AVDC to accommodate any of those needs. We continue to be in close dialogue with AVDC and the other Bucks authorities on this issue with the aim of reaching agreement during this autumn period.”

Supplementary Question

“Most of the housing initiatives listed in the Local Plan do not have costs assigned. Does this mean they are unfunded or that they will be funded by third parties? As usual only lip service is paid to affordable housing. How much of this will be social housing or for housing associations and what is your definition of affordable?”

Supplementary Response

“We do not provide funding for housing, we simply establish the demand, and leave it to the market to deliver. It is the market which decides what will be affordable housing. We have a housing policy which states that 40% of affordable housing will be built on green field sites. The definition of affordable housing is whereby 80% of the market rate is paid by the buyer.”

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

“Recently Bucks County Council voted to support the idea of a unitary authority for Buckinghamshire and their report talks about boosting the role of town and parish councils to ensure adequate representation of local communities.

Do you agree that this leaves the unparished areas of High Wycombe in a vulnerable position and therefore decisive action is required now to ensure that the 14% of the population of the county who live in this area are properly represented at all levels?”

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

“Thank you for your question which is similar to that raised by Mr Hoggett earlier this evening.

You are quite right that the County Council has recently agreed to support a single County Unitary for Buckinghamshire, but this is just a proposal – and it is far from being a done deal. The decision to create new councils rests with Parliament. We have been in regular dialogue with ministers, who have continued to advise us that they will not impose a solution without local consensus. At this stage there is no consensus in Buckinghamshire.

I would also like to remind members that, the four districts commissioned an open and independent review to find the *best* option for the future of local government in Bucks and this week I will be sharing the conclusions of that review with you; with our partners and stakeholders and with the people of Buckinghamshire.

I do not believe that there is a need for any change to the arrangements for High Wycombe. If Buckinghamshire does become unitary the number of unitary Councils has yet to be determined. If there were two or three unitary Councils, this would ensure that the same level of representation, which has served the Town well, can continue.

On the broader point in relation to the Town representation I refer you to my earlier answer to Mr Hoggett”.

Supplementary Question

“I eagerly await the result of the commissioned report. If Bucks residents do not need the representation of a Town Council then perhaps we should get rid of Marlow Town Council. It is the 14% of residents living in the town that should decide as to how they wish to be governed and as such there should be a referendum in the parish of High Wycombe to establish their views.”

Supplementary Response

“I did not say that the Parish Councils currently in existence were not needed. High Wycombe Town Committee services the town. We will conduct a thorough consultation process with relevant stakeholders.”

©Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Planning

“I am sure the Cabinet Member would agree with me that Daws Hill Lane must rate as the worst major road in Buckinghamshire and it is an absolute disgrace. Of course there is the large development being constructed at the moment on the old RAF site (a benefit of the peace dividend). But do you agree with me that Taylor Wimpey should contribute considerably to the upkeep and the repair of this road because at the moment it is an utter disgrace?”

However, the situation has now been slightly improved”

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

“Daws Hill Lane is maintained by Buckinghamshire County Council in their role as the Highway Authority. As part of the development being constructed at the former Daws Hill Base some highway works are being completed: a crossing, a new junction into the site and widening at the junction with Marlow Hill to create two standard queueing lanes. Generally a road is damaged during the course of construction works then as I understand it the Highway Authority will seek its repair at the developers cost. Your question would therefore be better addressed to Bucks County Council.”

Supplementary Question

“This clearly demonstrates the need for unitary status. There is not much cooperation between Highways and Planning.”

There was no supplementary Response.

(d)Question from Councillor N Teesdale to the Cabinet Member for Environment

“For the last twelve years, the residents of Sands, have been exposed to noxious odours produced by an industrial process on the Sands Industrial Estate.

Will the Cabinet Member assure me that a report will be produced to the appropriate Committee outlining the options available to this Council in order to bring an end to this nuisance?

Only then will the residents of Sands be able to once again fully enjoy their homes and gardens.”

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

“I would confirm that Synergy have confirmed their report on their pollution control systems is nearly complete although they will probably have to consider this before sharing the conclusions with us. We look forward to this as we can then discuss with them the effectiveness of their current odour control and any recommended improvements to their systems.

It is also the intention of the Company to prepare an Odour Management Plan once the report they have commissioned is finalised. This will be a public document that will outline their odour control and monitoring procedures and their procedures in response to complaints and as such it should be a helpful document to both themselves and the public.

It would appear that complaints have subsided in the last few weeks and we have witnessed less odour but we do of course continue to respond to complaints to witness any issues. We notify Synergy of all complaints received, they usually monitor these as well and this provides useful feedback so they can resolve issues.”

There was no supplementary question

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

“Please would the Cabinet Member tell me the cost of clearing up after the travellers who camped on the public open space at Terriers last month?”

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

“The cost of the clear up was £ 1016.89. Officers are seeking quotations for bunding the open space – it is large as you know and it may be costly to secure. I have spoken to Thames Valley Police to understand why this did not meet their threshold for intervention as this meant travellers were on site for longer. I can share their policy with you if you would like.”

Supplementary Question

“I would like to thank the officers and contractors for the speedy and well organized clean up. Since the delay in removing the travellers was mainly due to Thames

Valley Police going back on their agreement to use Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act, will the Council be requesting that the police make a sizable contribution to the costs incurred?"

Supplementary Response

"I have spoken to the police as to the reasons why they could not remove them. It transpires that each force has its own policy in relation to this and as such we are not likely to receive any financial contribution."

(f)Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Leader of the Council

"Will there be additional parking and free parking in Wycombe during December for seasonal shopping? I assume that arrangements will be made specifically at the Marsh Retail Park where there was chaos and tailbacks onto the A40 last year."

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

"It is hoped that as in previous years, High Wycombe and its car parks will be busy at Christmas with seasonal shoppers. There are no plans to provide additional parking as there is sufficient capacity taking into account car parks across the town, particularly if shoppers also use Dovecot car park. The HWBIDCo have selected 3 days in November as the free parking offer in Wycombe including the Christmas lights' switch on 17 November – the other dates are Friday 18 and Friday 25 November. With respect to the Marsh Retail Park, we are not aware of complaints in recent years, nor is this site in the Council's ownership or control so we are not in a position to put in place any initiatives"

Supplementary Question

"As you are not aware of the tailbacks it means you are out of touch with what is going on. Also the money saved from the abolition of Marlow Town Council should be used to improve the access points in the retail parks."

Supplementary Response

"I did not say I was not aware of the problem but that there had been no complaints received. The site to which you refer is not in our remit, nor can we put into place any initiatives to ease the issues faced at the relevant junctions".

(g)Question from Councillor S Graham to the Cabinet Member for Planning

"The Bucks Free Press recently reported that Buckinghamshire could become a 'working age ghost town' in the next generation if action is not taken to boost its job market according to a leading voice in business.

Does the cabinet member for planning and sustainable development share this view, and if not, what steps are being taken to ensure Wycombe remains a vibrant and living Town?"

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

“Thank you for this question. I do not share this pessimistic view of the town. We are working on a range of fronts to ensure that the town not only remains a vibrant and living Town but becomes an even better place to work and live. New jobs are being provided including at Handy Cross Hub and on a range of other sites across the town to help maintain the vitality of the local economy. New homes including affordable homes are being planned and built, including on Council-owned land.

We are transforming the town centre through the High Wycombe Town Centre Masterplan bringing about a step change in the environmental quality of the town centre and making it a much more attractive place for people to live, work and visit – this will help attract new business to the town.

Looking further ahead, the New Local Plan will aim to broadly balance the growth in housing with the potential growth in local jobs. This includes further opportunities for new business, including potentially at Wycombe Air Park, in the town centre and by improving Cressex Business Park, whilst providing around 5,000 more homes in and around the town over the next 20 years to help meet the high level of housing need.

I do not think this is a picture of a ‘ghost town’ or a town in decline – far from it.”

Supplementary Question

“Can the Cabinet Member promise to take all necessary action to ensure that Wycombe remains a vibrant and prosperous town.”

There was no supplementary response.

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

“Before planning consent is approved for large developments consideration could be given to the infrastructure of the road network and sewerage network to the area concerned.

Considering that we are going through a testing time in Wycombe District Council District trying to meet the Government’s quota on new housing development. Do you agree with me that it is sometimes very frustrating when the development takes place long before the infrastructure is constructed?”

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

“Planning permission is only granted for large developments when they have demonstrated that any adverse impacts on infrastructure can be appropriately mitigated.

This is achieved in different ways. Planning conditions or S106 Legal Agreements can be used to ensure that specifically required infrastructure is delivered e.g. to

support transport infrastructure improvements. Separately the Community Infrastructure Levy is a planning charge and these funds are used to help deliver general infrastructure requirements to support the development of the area.

To ensure that the infrastructure is provided in a timely way and is in place before it is required by any new development appropriate triggers are used e.g. a school may be required to be built prior to the occupation of x number of houses, etc. It should not therefore be the case that development is constructed long before the infrastructure required to support it is constructed.

I would also like to correct you in saying that we are trying to meet the Government quota on new housing. As you will be aware, we are not set a quota by government. Instead we work out our own need, which drives the demand for land that can be used for development.”

Supplementary Question

“Your answer has been very encouraging.”

There was no supplementary response

(i) Question from Councillor R Raja to Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

“WDC currently appears to have over £3.5M in a fund (“CIL”) targeted at supporting future infrastructure projects. Would the leader like to tell us how best to make use of these reserves to improve the life of local residents?”

Response from Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet Member for Planning) on behalf of Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

“Thank you for the question. You are referring to the Community Infrastructure Levy, which are funds paid by developers when they are building new housing or retail development in the district. These funds are then spent by the Council or other infrastructure providers so as to improve the infrastructure of the area and support economic growth.

At the September 2016 Cabinet meeting, a decision was made on how CIL will be broadly allocated for the next three years. That report included an appendix that sets out some of the higher priority projects that may be supported through CIL, for example to ensure that the strategic transport network is fit for purpose, to support town centre regeneration, and to support investment by the County Council and the NHS to ensure sufficient school places and doctors surgeries are available. This provides a good indication of where I consider that investment in infrastructure should be directed so as to improve the quality of life of our residents.

Decisions on the release of the funding are usually made by Cabinet each March and updates on spending are included in the Major Projects Programme outturn reports that are published quarterly.”

There was no supplementary question.

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.

26 PETITIONS

Mr D Chandler (member of the public) handed in a petition, which read as follows:

“Provide CCTV to protect graves from people stealing and anti-social behaviour within the cemetery”. Cllr Matt Knight spoke on behalf of Mr Chandler.

The Chairman received the petition and commented that it would be validated against the Council's Petitions Scheme.

Members, and the lead petitioner, would be informed outside of the meeting how the petition would be administered following the validation process.

27 CABINET

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 19 September 2016 be received and the recommendation as set out at minute number 35 be approved and adopted.

28 IMPROVEMENT & REVIEW COMMISSION

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Review Commission held on 14 September 2016 be received.

29 AUDIT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 22 September 2016 be received and the recommendation as set out at minute number 18 be approved and adopted.

30 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

Minute 11 – Next Phase Of concrete Burial Chambers

A Member rose to reiterate the importance of Cemetery security, and felt that the matter should be referred to the High Wycombe Town Committee as an item for discussion.

The Chairman of the Committee concurred with the Member and stressed that the Committee had always taken a great interest in matters relating to the cemetery. He

stated that this could be included as an item for consideration at a future meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee at the request of Members.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 28 July 2016 and 13 September 2016 be received.

31 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 29 June 2016 and 27 July 2016 be received.

32 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 11.2

A question was submitted by Councillor M Hanif to Councillor Mrs J Adey and Councillor D Carroll (Cabinet Member for Community and Cabinet Member for Youth & External Partnerships).

In accordance with Standing Order 11.2 a written answer was provided to all Members and no discussion took place at the meeting.

Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Cabinet Member for Community / Cabinet Member for Youth & External Partnerships

“I have attended students graduation ceremony at BNU recently and there was talk about students going out of town because there is not much night life entertainment for them in our town. Students contribute a lot in the success and prosperity of our town. We should work closely with BNU and see what the best way forward is in catering for the need of the students.

Are there any plans to provide any entertainment in the form of night clubs or something along those lines in the near future?”

Response from Councillor Mrs J A Adey (Cabinet Member for Community) or Councillor D Carroll (Cabinet Member for Youth and External Partnerships).

“We are proud to be the home of Bucks New University. I made it one of my first priorities as Cabinet Member to meet with the Vice Chancellor Rebecca Bunting and look forward to continuing the successful partnership between the Council and the University.

High Wycombe is well provided with a range of restaurant and bars, including two new craft beer establishments and the Antelope, now open until 6am, along with two cinemas, bowling and arts centre. The University has its own on campus late night entertainment as well. We have to accept though that High Wycombe is not a major city and we are dependent on a night club operator seeing the town as an

attractive and viable location for a nightclub. Having said that the Council has plans to re-attract Luminar, one of the UK's leading nightclub operators, to the town, with the aim of plugging a gap."

33 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS/CHANGES

The following changes made to Committee membership in accordance with Standing Order 18(9) as set out in the summons were noted:

- (i) Councillor D Carroll to replace Councillor R Newman as Cabinet Member for Youth and External Partnerships
- (ii) Councillor T Lee to replace Councillor Carroll as Deputy Cabinet Member for Housing
- (iii) Councillor R Newman to replace Councillor T Lee as a member of the Improvement & Review Commission.

34 URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY CABINET OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

The individual decisions published since the last ordinary meeting of the Council held on 18 July as set out in the summons were noted.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

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