

## Council Minutes

Date: 12 December 2016

Time: 6.30 - 7.56 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor M Hussain JP (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs J A Adey, K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, D H G Barnes, Ms A Baughan, S Broadbent, Miss S Brown, H Bull, M Clarke, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, A D Collingwood, M P Davy, C Etholen, R Farmer, R Gaffney, S Graham, A R Green, G C Hall, M Hanif, M Harris, C B Harriss, A E Hill, A Hussain, M Hussain, D A Johncock, Mrs G A Jones, M E Knight, D Knights, Mrs J D Langley, A Lee, Mrs W J Mallen, N B Marshall, 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, 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

### 35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Honorary Aldermen: E H Collins, D Cox, M Oram, Mrs K M Peatey (MBE), Mrs P Priestley and R Pushman. Councillors: M C Appleyard, M Asif and D Carroll.

### 36 WELCOME

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to Members and to Councillor Mrs G A Jones following her return from a period of extended sickness absence.

### 37 ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman announced a change to the order of business within the agenda by bringing forward Petitions at item 7 now to be taken immediately following the Declarations of Interest item.

### 38 MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 10 October 2016 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

### 39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ms J Wassell declared that she was now a lease holder with Red Kite Housing Association.

#### **40 PETITIONS**

Vikas Kapoor (member of the public) and his son, Ruben, gave notice of a petition, which read as follows:

##### **Crown House School, High Wycombe**

“A petition for a footpath to run alongside the access road & a lollipop man/lady”

Ruben briefly addressed the meeting and summarised the contents of the petition. He conducted a short presentation and showed a brief video.

It was agreed that the petition would be handed in outside of the meeting, following which it would be validated against the Council’s Petition Scheme.

Members and the lead petitioners would be informed at a later date how the petition would be administered following the validation process.

#### **41 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that the volunteer nominations deadline was now imminent, and requested that all nominations be received by 31 January 2017, for those volunteers that had contributed 4000 hours of work or more of work within the district.

The Chairman went onto state that a tree would also be planted within the district in recognition of the invaluable work carried out by the volunteers.

#### **42 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

##### **(a) Question from Mr T Snaith to the Cabinet Member for Housing**

“Wycombe District continues to have a dire need for low cost and social rent affordable homes.

WDC identified that HMOs could be one such route. However there was a need to improve the quality of some of the HMOs in the district to meet acceptable standards.

In the last Council administration there was a Councillor T&F group set up to look at Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) and how WDC could introduce a new licencing system to improve the quality and monitoring of these properties.

Perhaps the Cabinet Member for Housing could give an update on how this project is progressing?”

##### **Response from Councillor Mrs J Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing)**

"I understand you have already received a response from officers but I will elaborate further.

The recommendation was considered by the Cabinet Member alongside a consultation from Central Government on a proposal for the mandatory licensing of HMO's. I as Cabinet Member commissioned a cross party Policy Action Group (PAG) on this matter and it was decided to wait for the consultation to conclude from central Government before a decision was made on how Wycombe District Council was to proceed. I do not want to waste time and money.

### **Supplementary Question**

"Do you agree that HMOs in the area are of poor quality, with slum landlords exploiting the most vulnerable. Whilst WDC continues to procrastinate regarding HMO licencing London Councils are buying properties in the area to house its homeless.

Licencing should happen but do you agree we need solutions? People should not be sent to bed and breakfasts in Slough instead WDC should use its properties and proceeds to purchase its own HMOs. This would be a great Christmas present for the people of High Wycombe.

### **Supplementary Response**

"The Government is committed to raising standards with regard to HMOs. The relevant PAG will discuss the issues further with a consultation expected to be carried out in the early part of the year."

### **(b)Question from Mr R Colomb to the Cabinet Member for Housing**

Mr Colomb had submitted the following question:

"In 2014 an Improvement and Review Commission Task & Finish Group conducted an in-depth review of Houses in multiple occupation. Its recommendations were considered by the Cabinet in February 2015, and it was resolved that a further report be presented to the July 2015 Cabinet responding to each of the recommendations in detail.

Would you please state what these recommendations were, as I have been unable to trace them?"

Mr Colomb stated that as this question was similar to the previous public question, he would proceed straight to his supplementary question and not ask the question above.

"It is dangerous to rely on the lethargy of Government to decide what we should do. Why not move forward faster, instead of waiting around forever as we wait for Brexit.

We want to see quality and improvement with a reasonable spread of the HMOs."

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

“I am satisfied that we are moving in the right direction, reducing red tape. A district wide review of HMOs would be a mammoth task. I do want to proceed but do not want to waste time and money. The PAG is to reconvene in January to consider the issues further.

There was no supplementary question

**©Question from Mr Blunkell in the absence of Mr D Done to the Cabinet Member for Community**

“Many voluntary organisations in Marlow are facing large increases in the cost of room hire and catering services at Court Garden, brought about by the removal of concessionary rates formerly given to local organisations.

These arrangements were in place for many years, only now being removed due to the subcontracting of the management of many facilities to an events company. In one case, a local organisation, having already placed a deposit for the provision of a meal, had that deposit returned and had to enter into a new agreement at increased cost with the new company.

It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this Council is unaware of, or deliberately ignoring, its obligations to the local community as sole trustee of the Higginson Park Trust. This is the body established, as outlined in the trust deed, to provide these facilities “for the benefit of the inhabitants of the District of Wycombe with particular regard for the inhabitants of the town of Marlow”, not for anyone the contractors decide can provide them with a commercial return.

Why is this happening?

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

“As you correctly say, the Higginson Park Trust has the purpose of providing a leisure resource for inhabitants of the District, though this does not imply any financial subsidy and the Trust is required to balance its books. The 50% discount previously offered to community organisations & charities for venue hire at Court Garden House is an historic legacy, not a Trust requirement or formal Council commitment. This discount has never applied to catering services. When letting the new operator contract the Council required the successful bidder to provide a maximum of £2,000 per annum financial assistance.

Places for People Leisure Ltd reviewed the subsidy in October and found that offering the 50% discount exceeded £9,000 in the first six months of the year, well in excess of the contractual obligation. This is not sustainable and in order to ensure that the available £2,000 is distributed in the most equitable way, the level of subsidy for eligible bookings will be reduced to 10% with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

Some local groups may be unaware that the Council also provides Venue Hire Grants, offering a 50% subsidy of venue hire fees to not-for-profit and voluntary

groups. The award criteria and full details of this scheme, together with an application form are available on the Wycombe District Council website.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“Thank you for your comprehensive answer. I trust I will be able to receive it in writing at some stage.”

### **Supplementary Response**

“Yes indeed.”

## **43 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

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

“The draft Local Plan identifies the need for some 10,000 homes to be built in Wycombe District area yet there is real concern over the ability of the over-subscribed schools, choking road network and a struggling sewage system, (especially the ability of the Little Marlow Treatment Works) to cope with thousands of new homes, should the draft Local Plan be approved.

Can the leader reassure the council that well before the extra houses are built the council will liaise with and seek commitments from the County Council, where it has the responsibility, to upgrade the sewage system, repair and improve the road network and have sufficient school places available with the increased numbers, so that all the planned development is fit for purpose and helps to improve the lives of the residents of WDC and not further increase residents discontent in this Tory administration?”

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

“I agree with you that delivery of infrastructure to accompany the housing growth proposed in the Local Plan is very important. That is why, as we have been working up the housing proposals in the Local Plan we have also been working very closely with all the relevant infrastructure providers, not just the County Council, to ensure that the infrastructure impacts of new development are properly addressed. When we published the draft Local Plan for consultation early next year, we also published a draft infrastructure delivery plan setting out the various infrastructure improvements required.

We have liaised closely with the County Council Education Department on the need for additional school places and the draft Local Plan sets out specific proposals on relevant sites to provide new or expanded schools. Similarly we have undertaken traffic modelling jointly with the County Council and the other Buckinghamshire Districts to assess the traffic impact of development across the whole county, not just Wycombe District, and to test appropriate mitigation measures. Site specific policies in the draft Local Plan explain how each development should address transport issues. We have been working closely with Thames Water and the Environment Agency, including undertaking detailed studies, to ensure that both the Little Marlow Sewage Treatment Works and the Princes Risborough Sewage

Treatment Works are upgraded in the right way and at the right time to accommodate new development.

I can assure Cllr Raja that we will continue to work with all the relevant infrastructure providers, including the County Council, to ensure the delivery of necessary infrastructure, although he should note that this is often rightly provided directly by or funded by developers and hence is linked to the timing of development.”

I would just like to comment on your assumption with regards to WDC residents` discontentment with the Tory administration. I would like to point out that we increased our majority in the last election which would demonstrate that they are more than happy with us.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“Do you accept that improvements of the infrastructure cannot be left undone indefinitely? Let`s promise to make a plan that works for the WDC residents and achieve it.”

### **Supplementary Response**

“That was not really a question, but I have already answered what has been asked.”

### **(b)Question from Councillor R Farmer to the Leader of the Council**

“When will WDC start supporting the 'Hand Back our Hospital Campaign' by writing to the Minister of Health with our concerns about the loss of services at the hospital, and also request our MP Steve Baker to get back on the case?”

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

“Current plans released do not involve having A&E back at Wycombe, although it is very clear the hospital will stay. You need to address your concerns to the Health Trust as they are the decision makers on this. However if the Hospital Trust wished to discuss any issues then I would be happy to meet with them.

Quite frankly with the way modern healthcare is going, I am surprised you would be advocating less good healthcare for our residents.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“Responsibility for Public Health will fall within our remit once we become a unitary, therefore let`s start fighting now for the provision of better health services.”

### **Supplementary Response**

“This will be a matter for the unitary as to how best to plan it.”

### **©Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Environment.**

“Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that it is false economy and foolhardy for Bucks County Council to change the closing time of the waste disposal facility at High Heavens from the summer time of 6pm to 4pm on 1st October before we altered clocks to GMT?

In previous years the winter closing time has been 5pm not 4pm.

This reduction in hours is coupled with the lack of information to the general public e.g. no sign at the entrance from Clay Lane, one wouldn't know they are closed until you got there. Surely as a result there is more chance people may fly tip because some people would not want to make a second journey”

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

“I don't agree with you I am aware that one of Bucks County Council's Select Committees considered this matter in depth and requested a full review of all the data from the Household Waste and Recycling Centres' traffic counters. Customer usage after 4pm last winter was such that there were marginally fewer people using the sites. Across all sites, only 8% of winter visits were between 4.00pm and 5.00pm which equates to an average of 23 visits per day to each of the sites after 4.00pm.

The winter opening hours of 9.00am until 4.00pm will ensure that sites are open when most used by residents and closed when usage is low. These times coincide with it getting darker and will enable the County Council to obtain better value for money from the sites with a financial saving. The saving in hour amounts to 66,000 per annum.

These changes have been publicised.”

**Supplementary Question**

“There is a great concern over the lack of signage at the junctions of all these facilities. Could you take further steps to ensure that the public are aware that the facility will be closed by 4pm?”

**Supplementary Response**

“I am satisfied with the current arrangements, but will speak to my counterpart at the County. In addition the fly tippers should be aware that they will receive a heavy fine for doing so.

**(d)Question from Councillor S Broadbent to the Cabinet Member for Environment.**

“Given the rising popularity of flying UAV's (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), also known as drones, and the likelihood that many people in the district may receive one as a Christmas gift, does the council have any publicly available guidelines on their appropriate usage within the district?

Recent national statistics indicate an increase in aerospace incidents and physical injuries to members of the public when UAV's are flown in an unsafe manner."

**Response from Mrs J Teesdale (Cabinet Member for Environment).**

"The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is the appropriate enforcement authority so the Council is not in a position to be issuing guidelines on this as it does not fall within our sphere of influence.

This is very much a developing issue as these devices become more popular. I am aware that the CAA has recently issued a revised Drone code to help people getting a drone to fly safely and responsibly and this code is hosted on a new dedicated Drone safe website. The advice is backed by a wide range of leading aviation players, drone retailers and manufacturers and the Department for Transport."

I would like to add that I fully accept your point and your concerns over the safety of drones. I feel that we should write to our local MPs raising our serious concerns and ask for action to be taken before a serious tragedy occurs."

**Supplementary Question**

"I am pleased you are aware of the aerospace drone code, whilst a survey conducted established that only 39% of users were aware of it. Although I fully support the technology, I would urge that the Council issue safety guidelines, following the example of other councils, such as in Somerset.

I feel that we should work with the community in demonstrating how we can access the drone code publicly."

**Supplementary Response**

"I am happy to do that."

**(e)Question from Councillor Mrs L Clarke to the Leader of the Council**

"Having read in the local papers recently that Aylesbury Vale District Council is working with Buckinghamshire County Council on the Aylesbury traffic problems, does Wycombe District Council have this working relationship with Buckinghamshire County Council on the traffic problems that beset Wycombe District?"

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

"As you know traffic is one of the foremost concerns that people raise in response to new development and have also raised during consultations on our draft New Local Plan.

Buckinghamshire County Council is responsible for highways and the District Council is responsible for local planning decisions. As a matter of necessity therefore we strive for a close working relationship on these issues. I think that what the District brings to the relationship in particular is a recognition of the joined up nature of development problems and potential funding for solutions.

Almost five years after Wycombe introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy we remain the only Council in Buckinghamshire that has such a levy in place which is an important source of funding for new infrastructure. We have worked hard to ensure that County Council's input supports the development planning process and we have worked with Infrastructure Liaison and Reserve Sites Liaison groups to ensure that technical and professional views are scrutinised and adjusted to reflect local views.

In terms of the Local Plan we have been working closely with BCC on where new housing may be located and the transport implications and this is reflected in the allocations in our draft Local Plan. Alongside the other districts and BCC, county wide traffic modelling was commissioned to look at the traffic impacts of the various local plan site allocations and to put forward mitigation measures. We are also working with Buckinghamshire and with Highways England on access to High Wycombe from the strategic road network. In due course we hope that these work streams will inform the development of a High Wycombe Transport Strategy.

In Princes Risborough we are continuing to work with BCC and local stakeholders on how a proposed relief road maybe delivered and in Marlow we are working with both BCC and Highways England on delivering improvements at the Westhorpe Interchange to ease peak hour congestion into Marlow and Globe Park.

In High Wycombe we are working collaboratively with the County on the highway changes that form part of the Town Centre Masterplan and the County Council has secured £6.2m funding from the Local Transport Board to deal with cumulative impacts of development for example from the reserve sites and we will continue to work closely with them to get the best outcomes from this funding in a way that complements the improvements that will be secured from new developments through the planning process.

Finally, I think everyone is aware that traffic issues in the District are already significant but are not simple to solve. However, we are working hard to deliver cost-effective solutions. I can ensure you we work closely with BCC on traffic issues and my Cabinet Member for Planning & Sustainability regularly meets with the Cllr Mark Shaw - the Cabinet Member for Transport at BCC - to manage these work streams and to ensure that local concerns are understood and translated into effective solutions."

### **Supplementary Question**

“We said that we would look to link the extreme amount of all the traffic lights and pedestrian lights in collaboration with BCC many years ago. Something urgent needs to be done, as they do not run properly and are not linked.”

### **Supplementary Response**

“I understand and share your frustration regarding this issue of the lights not managing the traffic flow efficiently. We have an aspiration to resolve the issues, and have given consideration as to whether some can be replaced by roundabouts.

We are pursuing the matter with Bucks CC and will publish a report on the subject as soon as possible.”

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

“A year ago, I presented a motion to the council to take up to 200 refugees under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, which is funded and promoted by the Government.

This motion was rejected by the ruling party on the basis that, whereas the council recognised the humanitarian crisis, Wycombe was not in a position to pledge assistance owing to our own homeless list and the difficulty of liaising with all the services which would need to be involved.

Many thousands of men, women and children have since died.

In view of this, I would like to ask the leader whether she would now be willing to engage with us in cross-party action to save lives by giving some of the most vulnerable refugees a home in the Wycombe district?”

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

“As you know and have stated to you previously, I have great sympathy for the plight of refugees, who have taken the desperate decision to flee their homes due the violence and suffering that they have experienced. For those who are resettled in the UK, I feel strongly that they deserve a comprehensive support package to help them build a safer and more stable life.

Wycombe District Council is not able to provide a comprehensive package of support alone – we are not responsible for the education, social or health care services which would be needed. We are more than aware that there is already enormous strain on those services as highlighted by your Leader earlier.

With your very keen interest in housing, you are more than aware that there is still enormous pressure on what little housing there is available within the district, that there is a long waiting list and that many people have been on that list for some time. It would have been disingenuous of me to then tell those people that their wait for a home would be even longer, because what little housing had become available was being used for other means.

Should the time come that the housing waiting list has significantly reduced and that families and individuals who are homeless, or at risk of being made homeless, do not need our help, we will reconsider our position. Until then, we will continue to focus our effort and attention on finding homes for local people.

My Deputy has had several meetings with the Wycombe Refugee Partnership to see how we can assist them. They have already brought 31 refugees into High Wycombe.

### **Supplementary Question**

“In other words your answer is still no. Is your conscience comfortable?”

### **Supplementary Response**

“I have set out my answer. My concern is about the people of Wycombe first and foremost.”

### **(g)Question from Councillor S Graham to the Leader of the Council**

“According to BFP report on the 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2016 the three District Councils in South Bucks is offering free parking days in the run up to Christmas.

Would the Leader of the Council agree that this appears to be a test run off collaboration among the three Councils, and does this betray her preference for a unitary authority base on Wycombe District Council, Chiltern District Council and South Bucks District Council?”

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

“As you will have seen from reports in the media the four District Councils have agreed to put forward a submission for two unitary Councils - one North in the Vale of Aylesbury and one South in the Chiltern Hills.

The four districts agree that the north and south are two separate economies and geographies with distinctive characteristics.

We also believe that the relationships which need to be formed to serve the two communities effectively are different.

The ability of the two new Councils to focus on their separate priorities will enable them to be more agile in delivering growth and productivity, more effective at helping the most vulnerable and provide services which genuinely reflect the needs and priorities of our distinctive communities.

Free parking days is the least of the many benefits our proposal will offer residents, which has been available for some time.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“Does this mean that the Leader is not in agreement with other County Council Tories, who are advocating one unitary authority for the County?”

### **Supplementary Response**

“This is a different question to the original one asked”

### **(h)Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Community.**

“Given the reported rise in hate crime this year, by the Thames Valley Police, has the Council any proposals to protect and support Wycombe residents in this situation or provide additional training to staff?”

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

“Hate crime is a serious matter and we work closely with the Police to support them in taking action, raising awareness and increasing reporting. There is comprehensive information on our website on hate crime, which includes information on what hate crimes/incidents are and how people can report them, either to the police or to our shared reporting centre – The Hate Crime Network.

We also actively support the police in any campaigns they run relating to hate crime, which includes raising awareness via social media. The police have recently consulted on hate crime and we look forward to working with them on any recommendations that need implementing. We have been jointly trying to encourage victims of disability hate crime to come forward and anything Members can do in their Wards to promote the reporting of hate crime will be very helpful.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“I am finding that the rise in hate crime is impacting on my case work. The level of malice and racism involved in some of this is quite appalling with racist comments and malicious allegations to agencies such as Social Services. I am collecting anonymised case studies of these situations.

Would you agree that fleeing hate crime does not make a person intentionally homeless?”

### **Supplementary Response**

“I would be very interested in having sight of your papers to which you refer.”

### **(i)Question form Councillor M Hanif to the Leader of the Council**

All Bucks Councils are divided over unitary plans and can you please update us on the progress of the Wycombe District Council's plan to how far things have gone and are we getting the relevant work done in time to put forward the relevant proposals before the deadlines?

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

I don't agree that Councils are divided over unitary plans. Four of the five Councils are in agreement. We all believe that two unitary Council's offer the best solution for our communities.

I can assure you that we have a very compelling case. We know that a single unitary will continue to have divided economic objectives and, as a result, will not be able to maximise the contribution this thriving economic area could make to the national economy.

The single unitary is based on a historic administrative boundary which does not reflect the communities which exist today.

As a result we believe that the single unitary will perpetuate the current failure to address rising costs in the delivery of social care and the failure to protect our children.

Any unitary arrangement will be cheaper but more significant savings will be achieved if the services are effective.

We also believe that, unlike the Community Hubs proposed by the County, our two councils with the network of Parish and Town Councils and Town Committee will provide genuine local accountability.

Officers across the four Councils have been working on the detailed evidence which supports our case. We are confident we can present a compelling case to DCLG.

### **Supplementary Question**

"Can you please assure Members that partner local authorities have shown a genuine desire to work together and it is not out of stealth to oppose the county unitary proposal?"

### **Supplementary Response**

"Yes"

**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.**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 14 November 2016 be received, and the recommendation as set out at minute number 47 be approved and adopted.

#### **45 CABINET**

##### **Minute 54 – Public Spaces Protection Order**

A Member enquired with regard to the possibility of receiving a map of the protection order area to establish if it fell within members' wards. The Leader of the Council confirmed that this had been included within the report on the Cabinet agenda.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 12 December 2016, be received and the recommendations as set out at minute numbers 57 and 58 be approved and adopted.

#### **46 STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 15 November 2016 be received.

#### **47 IMPROVEMENT & REVIEW COMMISSION**

##### **Minute 17 - Housing Portfolio Update**

A Member commented that he would like to have seen the various options available. He questioned when WDC would use its estates to provide quality housing in the area, instead of reliance on the B&B use.

The Cabinet Member stated that it was unlikely that Saunderton Lodge would go for the rebuild option, as the cost of this would be exorbitant. However the council was satisfied with the numbers in B&B accommodation as compared with other authorities.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Review Commission held on 18 October and 9 November 2016 be received.

#### **48 AUDIT COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 17 November 2016, be received and the recommendation as set out at minute number 29 be approved and adopted.

#### **49 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 22 November 2016 be received.

**50 PERSONNEL & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel & Development Committee held on 7 November 2016 be received and the recommendation as set out at minute number 6 be approved and adopted.

**51 PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 24 August and 19 October 2016, be received.

**52 REGULATORY & APPEALS COMMITTEE**

**Minute 13- Variations to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy**

A Member questioned who the consultees were in the current ongoing consultation process, and whether this would be extended to other users also.

He was informed that letters had been despatched to those within the trade, and a high response level was predicted. In addition the Licensing Department had approached the representative of the trade Mr Rehman, with whom a meeting had been scheduled in December.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee held on 17 October 2016 be received, and the recommendation as set out at minute number 11 be approved and adopted.

**53 NOTICE OF MOTION**

A motion was submitted by Councillor R Raja and seconded by Councillor S Graham:

"In view of the opportunity being presented by the reorganisation of local government in Buckinghamshire, this Council resolves to take all necessary steps to ensure that a unitary authority, capable of delivering the statutory services to the local residents, is created which not only balances the financial /economic criteria against democratic and accountability considerations but also takes account of the projected growth in population and will ensure proper investment in housing and infrastructure for an efficient delivery of the services needed to support the wellbeing of the people of the District."

In proposing the motion, Councillor Rafiq stated that whilst there was consensus on the need to replace the current Local Government structure, there was little consensus about the way forward between the County and the 4 district Councils concerned. Councillor Raja made reference to the 2 reports issued on the subject first by the County Council in September, followed by the District Councils.

He went on to state that despite the projected growth in population he saw no evidence within the reports of the likely consequences having been addressed. Including the increased housing demand expected to rise by 21% over a 20 year period, and demand for the already constrained adult and social care/children's services. Instead he felt that the financial analysis seemed to be based on a set of static assumptions

In summing up he concluded that it would be a dereliction of duty if the Council did not take all necessary steps to ensure that a unitary authority capable of delivering the statutory services to local residents was created.

Councillor S Graham in seconding the motion, echoed the sentiments of the proposer, stating that following the publication of two costly reports it was imperative that the County and District Councils should work together in order to reach the right conclusion for the people of Bucks.

He encouraged openness and honesty with residents and emphasised that false promises and assumptions must not be made as was the case during the Brexit campaigns in June.

Councillor Mrs L M Clarke commented that Members should not lose sight of the fact that they were present as Wycombe District Councillors, and not as Bucks County Councillors.

Councillor Mrs L Clarke rose to support the motion and requested a recorded vote. This was seconded and in accordance with Standing Orders, was also supported by at least 7 other Members.

The motion was then put to a recorded vote.

In accordance with subsection (7) of the Council's Standing Order 16 (voting) the voting of the Members in respect of the motion was recorded as follows:

### **In favour of the motion**

Councillors: Mrs J Adey, K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, D Barnes, S Broadbent, Miss S Brown, H Bull, Mrs L Clarke, M Clarke, A Collingwood, M Davy, C Etholen, R Farmer, R Gaffney, S Graham, A Green, G Hall, M Hanif, M Harris, C Harriss, A Hill, A Hussain, Maz Hussain, D Johncock, D Knights, Mrs J Langley, T Lee, Mrs W Mallen, N Marshall, H McCarthy, I McEnnis, R Newman, Mrs C Oliver, B Pearce, G Peart, R Raja, S Raja, S Saddique, J Savage, R Scott, D Shakespeare, Mrs J Teesdale, N Teesdale, A Turner, P Turner, D Watson, R Wilson, Miss K Wood and L Wood.

### **Against the motion**

Councillor Mrs G A Jones,

### **Abstentions**

Councillors: Ms A Baughan, M Hussain (JP) M Knight, Ms J Wassell.

In favour – 49

Against – 1

Abstentions – 4

### **The motion was therefore carried**

(Councillor C Whitehead had left the meeting when the above vote was taken.)

## **54 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 11.2**

There were none

## **55 COMMITTEE CHANGES/ APPOINTMENTS**

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

### **Improvement & Review Commission**

Councillor M Davy be replaced by Councillor L Wood as a full Member of the Commission.

Councillor L Wood be replaced by Councillor M Davy as a Standing Deputy on the Commission.

### **Outside Body Appointment**

#### **Membership of iESE Transformation Limited**

Councillor Miss K S Wood be appointed to serve as WDC Councillor representative, with immediate effect.

## **56 URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY CABINET OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER**

The individual decisions published since the last ordinary meeting of the Council held on 10 October 2016, as set out in the summons were noted.

## **57 REFRESHMENTS**

The Chairman wished all those present a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year, and invited all Honorary Aldermen, Members, and colleagues to join him in some light refreshments at the close of the meeting.

## **58 MEMBERS UNANSWERED QUESTIONS WRITTEN RESPONSES**

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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

# Minute Item 58

## COUNCIL

Monday 12 December 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 Housing.**

Disabled residents under the age of 60 require adapted ground floor properties to enable their independent living. Bucks Home Choice is providing details of properties which are not adapted and properties for those 60 years old or over. Please can you clarify what properties are available for disabled people and whether or not older persons properties are available to the under 60s?

Basically we rely upon the housing associations to supply us with correct details of their properties. If they fail to provide full details regarding adaptations of suitability for adaptations neither we nor the applicant will be aware.

We do advertise properties that are suitable for those with disabilities when they become available and we are aware of them. This includes properties for the under 60's when available.

The Registered Providers will determine if the older persons housing is available for those under 60. The restriction can be due to planning or the policy of the association.

We work with providers to assist clients with disabilities including for new build and for suitable empty units.

Put simply, there is not enough affordable housing supply at present; however we are trying to assist via the new local plan.

**11. Question from Councillor Ms J Wassell to the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources.**

Recently, disabled people have received a declaration form to confirm that they are still eligible for the council tax discount of 25%.

Disabled people with sensory impairment or who have had a stair lift fitted to use stairs appear not to be included in this form which has confused them. The form indicates that the disabled person has to have an extra room or extra space for using a wheelchair.

Not every disabled person has these exact facilities.

How many disabled people receive the discount and how many have not renewed this entitlement?

The Council is responsible for ensuring its records are up to date and, in particular, that all discounts and reliefs are correctly applied. As a result a review of the disabled persons reduction is underway. WDC is currently helping 432 council tax payers by awarding disabled persons relief which takes the form of an on-going reduction to the relevant property band (rather than a 25% discount as assumed in the question). Relief is awarded to the person responsible for paying council tax who is often not the disabled person (who may be a spouse, parent or relative).

The review form explains the legal criteria for relief and asks the council tax payer to confirm that it is still applicable. This statutory relief is only available where certain DWP defined criteria are met, and the Council has no discretion to give disabled persons relief for other reasons. A helpline number is also given should the applicant wish to discuss the relief.

Once WDC has completed the review the number of disabled people who continue to qualify for the relief will be known.

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

The Ancient Monument called St Johns Hospital in Easton Street is now looking much improved following the conservation works there. How will the council ensure that this significant asset is properly maintained and promoted in future?

As I'm sure you'll remember, around this time last year and as a result of you raising the issue with me, our then conservation officer, Martin Andrew, met with the facilities manager responsible for this site and subsequent to this the ivy has been removed from the monument itself.

I'm sure we'll all agree that the monument is now looking much improved following the recent conservation works there.

Anyway, I think that the previous meeting between martin andrew and the facilities manager brought about a shared understanding of the value of regular routine maintenance of this type. Moreover, he was able to emphasise what the site owner needed to do in future to ensure that they would not come into conflict with us or English Heritage.

It seems to us that the site is now in good hands and of course, as always, the responsibility for on-going maintenance rests with the site owner. however should there be a need for further intervention in future, then of course my officers will not hesitate to revisit the matter.

Needless to say we do rely on – and appreciate - the continued input of vigilant members such as yourself as well as members of the public to draw these issues to our attention when necessary. so thank you once again.