

Council Minutes

Date: 23 February 2017

Time: 6.30 - 8.56 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Hussain JP (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs J A Adey, Mrs S Adoh, K Ahmed, M C Appleyard, M Asif, D H G Barnes, Ms A Baughan, Miss S Brown, H Bull, D J Carroll, M Clarke, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, A D Collingwood, 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, 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

64 WELCOME

The Chairman warmly welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance.

65 MINUTE SILENCE

A one minute silence was observed in memory of Monty Seymour and Honorary Aldermen Tony Hurst, David Cox and Derek Done, who had all sadly recently passed away.

66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Honorary Aldermen: Mrs K Peatey MBE, Mrs P Priestly and Mr R Pushman. Councillors S Broadbent, M Davy, I McEnnis and M Hashmi.

67 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 12 December 2016 and 16 January 2017 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

69 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman took the opportunity to remind Members of some rules of debate for Full Council meetings. He asked all Members to please stand when speaking, and reminded Members to be respectful of each at all times in the meeting. The Chairman requested all Members to listen to each Member when they were speaking and addressing the meeting, and to not talk over another Member when that Member was speaking.

The Chairman thanked Members for their co-operation.

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

- i) Senior Citizens Christmas Lunch Party.
- ii) Wycombe Leisure Centre first birthday celebration on 5 January 2017.
- iii) Chinese New Year Celebration.

70 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(a) Question from Mr J Hoggett to the Cabinet Member for Community

“Will the cabinet member support MP, Carolyn Harris’, campaign to make all under 18 burials free of charge given the immense feeling of loss and sadness families suffer after a premature death by implementing the scheme in Wycombe despite current lack of government support?”

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

“The Council is among relatively few locally that provide entirely free burials for young children. We charge no fees whatsoever for burials in our Snowdrop Garden as we recognise that the loss of a child before they reach the age of three is such a tragedy for their families. If families choose cremation we are happy to accommodate burials up to the age of 14 in the Snowdrop Garden also free of charge. We do introduce charges for older children: up to the age of 16 our charge is £353 for the exclusive right of burial in a particular plot, and we make no charge for the interment. This charge is similar to the level charged by Marlow and Aylesbury Town Councils and less than a number of others. People older than 16 are buried in a full size plot and we therefore charge adult fees.

Extending free burials up to the age of 18 would require a further subsidy from council tax payers. The loss of a child at any age is always a tremendous loss for their families – we believe our fees are fair and they reflect common practice among local burial authorities.”

Supplementary Question

“As some people do not have life insurance and are unable to pay for funerals would the Council consider using funds from reserves, as did Caerphilly District Council. Would the Cabinet Member consider free funerals and burials?”

Supplementary response

“Regarding funds then this would be a decision for the High Wycombe Town Committee and regarding costs of funerals I would not be prepared to answer on behalf of funeral directors.”

(b) Question from Mr M Foyle-York to the Leader of the Council

“Last year billionaire Mike Ashley raked in profits of over £380m from Sports Direct. This retail chain operates in High Wycombe, and its wealth is generated by workers on zero/low hour contracts, and they don't even get paid a decent wage.

Will this Council now take steps to pressure multi-million pound businesses operating in the Wycombe District area, places like the Eden Centre, into properly employing their workers with a genuine wage and a guarantee of respectable hours?”

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

“Our vision for the district is to ensure that it remains economically strong and the place to live, work and visit. Stories such as that of the Boss of Sports Direct allegedly profiting from poor employment practices are always disappointing to hear – especially as we have a store in our town.

As a Council we do not operate at the ‘level of the firm’. Stepping in to put pressure on an individual business to adopt a ‘genuine wage’ and provide ‘respectable hours’ for staff is outside of our remit. This is a management issue for Sports Direct and, if found lacking on the pay front, then HM Revenue & Customs (HRMC) have the power to take employers to court for not paying the National Minimum Wage (for under 25s) and National Living Wage (25 years plus).

That said, what we are able to do is to look for opportunities for proactive awareness raising of the National Living Wage (introduced April 2016) with employers through our partnership work with bodies such as Buckinghamshire Business First (business representative organisation with over 10,000 members across Buckinghamshire – including some of our big retailers) and the High Wycombe Business Improvement District Co (HWBIDCo) that works across High Wycombe Town Centre and includes the Eden Centre. We will look for opportunities to work with both of these bodies to raise awareness.”

Supplementary Question

“If it is not in your reach then would it not be possible to encourage Trade Unions to operate rights on behalf of the employees?”

Supplementary Response

“We know that retail is a key and popular employment sector across our district – but particularly in High Wycombe Town Centre. Through our regeneration work, we continue to attract leading employers to the area – which brings new employment

opportunities for our residents. We also, through our work with partners such as the Skills Group of the Local Enterprise Partnership and Job Centre Plus support skill development opportunities for local people to enable them progress employment-wise in their sector of choice.”

(c) Question from Mr R Colomb to the Cabinet Member for Environment

“This weekend sees the Council reinstate the ‘pay and display’ system in its car parks following the debacle of the ‘ANPR experiment’.

Would you please identify how much the Council has wasted in installing ANPR before the Government had changed the regulations to permit Councils to be provided with the same information that the DVLA furnishes to private car park operators.

Please split the costs into the following categories:

- I. Cost of employing consultants to develop the ANPR scheme;
- II. Cost of removing Pay & Display equipment;
- III. Cost of installing ANPR;
- IV. Cost of redundancies;
- V. Estimated loss of revenue;
- VI. Cost of re-instating Pay & Display;
- VII. Cost of staff recruitment;
- VIII. TOTAL cost.”

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

“Mr Colomb, thank you for your question about the changes to how motorists pay to park in our car parks, which are coming into effect this weekend.

The Council decided to modernise the parking service and provide customers with a more flexible way of paying for the service, while also achieving some efficiencies to keep tariffs low. We did this through the introduction of the ANPR system into the majority of our fee paying car parks. The system we purchased is modern and efficient and the issues that we have are not related to how the system itself works, but rather the restrictions placed on us on by the government. In spite of the changes taking place over the weekend, we’ll continue to make use of this system, albeit in a modified way.

It’s no secret that I’m disappointed that we’ve had to make the change from ANPR to pay and display. Our customers have told us that they think it’s a retrograde step and I don’t blame them. To them I say that I’m sorry that from this weekend, we

won't be able to fully provide an ANPR system and all of the benefits that has brought them.

The Council decided to invest in ANPR following a review of its parking service in 2011/12. The cost of this review was £11,400. A successful initial pilot was carried out in two car parks during 2013. Following this, external advice from counsel and clarification discussions with DVLA, the Council rolled out the system to most of its fee paying car parks. The total cost of this was £678,000.

As the ANPR payment machines were installed at a time when the previous pay and display machines had reached the end of their life, there were no additional costs for their removal. Using the ANPR system enabled us to use a leaner team of staff, so we incurred redundancy costs of £30,000.

Taking all of this into account, the one-off investment cost in the ANPR system was £730,900.

Following the subsequent decision by DVLA to restrict the Council's access to Registered Keeper Data, the level of daily parking income has remained relatively consistent with income prior to the introduction of ANPR. In 2012/13 the Council received £2.823million of parking income and in the first full year of ANPR (2015/16), the income was £2.536million. The difference in income has largely been offset by savings in staffing costs."

Supplementary Question

"I am a bit confused by the figures. When you decided to go back was there any thought to keep ANPR if car parks were disposed of to private operators, such as the Dovecote car park for example?"

Supplementary response

"This was not an option. We have also brought forward a decision to install some additional pay machines in five surface car parks, to reduce queues. This has required an investment of £80,000, which covers the machines and the cost of installation.

I can assure you that we didn't make the decision to change to pay and display lightly. We worked very hard to try and resolve the issues with the government and, following positive discussions, had been led to believe that they are working on a parking package which includes wider ANPR usage for the public sector. But as we all now know, that just hasn't happened and there is no clear timescale for when it will.

I believe it is ludicrous that companies and hospitals can access the ANPR information but we can't. This was a situation that was no fault of our own and it is for the government to sort out the legislation."

71 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

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

“WDC, at its meeting on 16 January 2017, opted for a two unitary authority model for Buckinghamshire. The draft proposals are peppered with plenty of ‘sales talk’ but no mention of the gap in educational achievement between the children from well off families and those from economically disadvantaged groups, or how the road infrastructure is to be made fit for purpose or indeed about housing or social care.

Would the Leader tell us how and where she believes the new unitary authority will prioritise to raise the quality of core services?”

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

“Thank you for your question Councillor Ahmed.

I’m not sure which submission you have read but our Road Map addresses the tests which have been identified by government against which the submission will be measured and Appendix C sets out a detailed model for improving outcomes for children.

Let me read you a quote from the ‘sales talk’ (page 105).

‘By broadening the remit of Children’s Centres we will develop ‘Family Hubs’ which will provide support for families with school age children encompassing Health and Children’s development, School readiness, Employment support and access to childcare, parenting support for families with more complex needs and early identification of Special Educational Needs. We will take a collaborative approach to co-locating and delivering services using a lead professional and Team Around the Family model.’

These are recognised models of delivery which have a proven track record and have demonstrated success in other areas in improving outcomes for children. This section of the report was prepared by an experienced Director of Children’s Services with a strong track record in working with children from disadvantaged backgrounds in London. It will be my personal ambition to ensure that a new unitary Council of whatever size will give all children the best possible start in life. It is also important that for the benefit of all residents that our infrastructure from roads to broadband works well and supports housing and business growth to generate a thriving economy.

Supplementary Question

“I am pleased to hear that the Leader proposes to ensure quality. However the impression I get is that sales talk is still being used and I am hoping you will stick to your word?”

Supplementary Response

“Of course I will Councillor Raja.”

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

“In recent years the dominant service delivery model for both Wycombe District Council and our neighbouring district councils has been that of outsourcing services to external agencies. This model has clearly delivered savings although whether it has always resulted in service improvements is less clear.

According to the Modernising Local Government document it appears that this approach would continue to be favoured. Additionally the Labour motion at the last meeting of full council, which was supported by your group, specified the desire for a new unitary authority to deliver only "statutory" services.

Can you confirm that services such as adult social care and children's services are at risk of outsourcing, and that non-statutory services will cease to be a priority within the proposed local government structure?”

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

“I am surprised that you ask this question of Wycombe.

We have had significant success in outsourcing for example our Leisure Service arrangements have achieved significant savings but also a significant increase in the number of people using Leisure facilities which makes a real difference to people’s health and life expectancy. There are also high levels of customer satisfaction. There is a long list of successful arrangements such as Chiltern Rangers and Sports Development which have expanded to create jobs and provide more services.

You will see that the County submission (page 42) proposes ‘a diverse range of delivery models’ including contracting with private sector providers, creation of new organisations or joint ventures. As they have such a strong track record in outsourcing after all!

It is very sad that the County has announced further cuts to its preventative services. Our submission has a clear vision statement that says we will redirect resource towards promoting independence for adults; our model for Children’s Services emphasises the benefits of early intervention and prevention. We would do more prevention not less and will use the resource generated by stronger economic growth, and better financial management to enable us to invest in prevention services to reduce demand on statutory services. This is the District proposal in a nutshell.”

Supplementary Question

“Would you agree with me that the most vulnerable children and adults in our community are at risk if services are outsourced to private companies and non-statutory support and preventative services are cut as part of efficiency savings?”

Supplementary Response

“No, the best options and systems will be put place and we can learn from the best that have already used those systems.”

(c) Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Environment

“Does the member responsible for the environment agree with me that the attitude of the crews on the waste disposal vehicles is counter-productive by their ridiculous attitude of basically sorting out what is in the bins at the roadside, removing items, throwing them onto the grass verge, surely this can be sorted out at the relevant recycling facility because I am convinced that sometimes a member of the public walking by the bin must chuck in an ordinary bit of litter, also refusing to take green bins unless there is nothing in any way overhanging.

Do you agree with me that this can alienate residents, and is counter-productive when we are all trying to make an effort and do our bit to save the environment?”

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

“The recycling crews are instructed to carry out a visual inspection of the contents of the recycling bins, prior to emptying them, in order to see whether the bins contain items which are not permitted. While Cllr Pearce has reported that in his experience, collection crews had removed the wrong items from the recycling bins and had thrown them on to the grass verge, the procedure they should be following is that that if a bin contains the wrong items, a contamination tag should be left on the bin and the bin left un-emptied. We believe that the crews were trying to be helpful by removing the items and by continuing to empty the bin, but clearly they were going about this the wrong way. This matter is with Serco’s Operations Manager who has addressed this with the relevant collection crews. The crews generally empty bins from over 1000 properties per day, so they do have to work quickly but that does not condone throwing items on the ground and that point has been made clear to them.

Unfortunately, if we collect items which are not acceptable, this does mean that they are rejected at the Material Recycling Facility (MRF) where they are sorted. For every load of recyclable material which is delivered to the facility, a sample quantity of it is checked for quality and a reject percentage is applied to the whole load based on the element which is sampled. A high reject rate will have a negative impact on the council’s recycling rate and the amount of income that is received as a recycling credit from the County Council. Recycling credit income helps to offset some of the collection costs. The MRFs are obliged to follow a MRF Code of Practice to monitor and assess the quality of materials delivered to them. For our part, we need to work to make sure that we are not collecting the wrong items which is why we communicate this in the waste literature which is provided to residents and why collection crews are instructed to check for contamination and to not empty bins which contain the wrong materials.

We do appreciate that residents can be confused by what can and can't go into the bin. We distributed the most recent waste collection calendar to all residents in October and tried to make it very clear and visual in this respect.”

Supplementary Question

“Do you agree questions should be asked, residents have contacted me where crews are not behaving correctly when residents are trying to do their best?”

Supplementary Response

“I have only had one resident come to me regarding this. We don't condone this behaviour if they are doing this. If anyone has this problem please let me know and I will make sure things are done properly. Most of the crews behave well and it is sad to hear this. If there are problems these will be dealt with.”

(d) Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Cabinet Member for Housing

“After perennial failure and countless announcements, the housing crisis is getting worse. The Secretary of State has admitted that the housing market is broken and local councils and developers need to "get real" to the scale of the challenge we are facing. I am sure that the cabinet member will agree with the Secretary of State and accept that this is the biggest social issue we are facing today, which cannot be left to fester. She will also share my views that this council has failed young people for not having sufficiently robust policies to get the young on to the housing ladder and into affordable rented homes.

In view of the current situation what is planned by WDC to address the problem highlighted by the Secretary of State?”

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

“Good evening Councillor Hanif and thank you for your question.

The Secretary of State, as you rightly say has admitted that the housing market is broken.

Whilst it may be fair to say that nationally the housing market may be broken, locally we are doing all we can to meet the needs of our residents in regard to affordable housing. I can assure you that compared to other neighbouring authorities the housing team here at WDC are doing an excellent job.

I am sure you are aware Councillor Hanif that we have a five year homelessness strategy in place to ensure we assist all households facing homelessness, including but not limited to young people.

Officers meeting quarterly with numerous agencies and services across the district to ensure we are doing all we can to prevent and relieve homelessness. Joint work is also done with planning to ensure affordable rented and home ownership products are provided in new build developments.”

Supplementary Question

“When will Wycombe speed up their house building programme?”

Supplementary response

“As you know there are no quick fixes and there will always be challenges and we will explore all possible avenues. Developers also have delaying tactics which are not helpful. I am confident that this will in part at least be addressed by the white paper.

If you have any suggestions I would be happy to hear them and tell me how to move forward.

In light of the white paper my colleague Councillor David Johncock and I are having a joint PAG which I am sure will not be short on ideas.”

(e) Question from Councillor S Graham to the Leader of the Council

“Can the Leader of the Council tell me how much money Bucks County owes to Wycombe District Council for works to be carried out as part of the improvement to our High Street, and if money is owed, when will the work commence?”

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

“I think your question refers to maintenance of the paving and other surfacing of the High Street and other parts of the historic town centre.

Buckinghamshire County Council does not owe Wycombe District Council any money for works to the High Street. I understand that the maintenance contract between BCC and Transport for Bucks (TfB) only gives them responsibility for keeping the highway safe and owing to budgetary considerations this invariably involves ‘temporary’ tarmac patchwork repairs. The District Council is keen that the fabric of these areas are maintained in a good condition as it supports the economic life of the town centre and helps make it a place that people want to visit and in which businesses wish to invest. When the Council has funded improvements or ‘enhanced maintenance’ funds are transferred after the works have been completed, so there is no question of the District Council being owed money.

In July 2015 the District Council funded almost £19,000 of ‘enhanced maintenance’, for example re-grouting of slabs to prevent and pavement repairs using like for like materials. Since then discussions have taken place about what further works would be appropriate to ensure that the appearance and the vitality of our town centre are maintained and we are aiming to agree a further package of works for implementation later this year; the timetable is not in our control but is down to TfB and their contractors. We hope that it will take place during spring or summer, and we are also working with the market operator to ensure that their operations minimise any risk of damage to surfaces.

Supplementary Question

“If Bucks County Council doesn’t owe money then why stop washing the high street. Do you agree the high street is in need of repair and the Council has been given a raw deal?”

Supplementary Response

“As far as I am aware it is washed every day. Going forward, in view of the undoubted budget constraints that Councils face, and the importance of maintaining the historic town centre, I think it will be important that funding from different sources is available to support the continued upkeep of the town centre in a way that we all want to see, and I am pleased to see that a report is going forward to Town Committee recommending that some of the local CIL allocation (£15k) be allocated towards upkeep of the town centre in terms of maintenance and access.”

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

“The ANPR system has cost the taxpayers of Wycombe around £1.28 million, if one includes the cost of the system, damage and theft from machines due to vandalism, judicial review costs and costs associated with reverting back to pay display, but excluding the loss of £500,000 due to poor forecasting.

The fact that WDC installed a system which has failed to perform as intended begs the question as to why no due diligence appears to have been undertaken.

Rather than extolling the virtues of the system would the leader not agree that the basic homework was not done and as a result the people of Wycombe have been short changed and is it not time that she came clean and accepted her own party’s culpability in this fiasco?”

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

Thank you for your question Cllr Ahmed.

You will have heard my Cabinet member colleague give an overview of the investment and costs associated with the installation of the ANPR system and the change to pay and display. You will also have heard that those figures just aren’t the same as the ones that you refer to in your question.

I feel I must also take issue with your comment around vandalism. Yes it’s true that our payment machines, like any other parking operator, have been the subject of mindless vandalism and thefts. And yes, it’s also true that we have incurred significant costs as a result of the vandalism to the payment machines – a cost which exceeds the amount actually stolen. But I don’t accept that the costs that we’ve unfortunately incurred as a result of vandalism is in any way related to the system that we’re using and reject your suggestion to the contrary.

As my cabinet colleague also said earlier, we have recently announced that due to restrictions in being able to access register keeper details, we are changing to a pay and display system in the majority of our car parks this weekend. This will happen in Marlow on Saturday, when we’ll also be offering free parking, and in High Wycombe, Bourne End and Princes Risborough on Sunday, when the majority of car parks are also free.

The Council decided to invest in ANPR following a review of its parking service in 2011/12, at a time when the previous machines needed changing. We chose to invest in a modern and innovative system that offered many customer benefits and was being used widely by both the private and public sector, including other councils.

The ANPR system was rolled out to a total of 20 car parks following a trial in two car parks, external counsel advice on a lawful way of using ANPR for enforcement, and a conversation with the DVLA who at that time saw no problem with us rolling the system out.

Subsequently, as you know, the government decided to restrict our access to registered keeper data which has obviously impacted how we have been able to run the service.

Following that decision, we worked very hard to try and resolve the issues with the government and had been led to believe that they are working on a parking package which includes wider ANPR usage for the public sector. This has yet to be implemented and there is no clear timescale for when it will.

As you can see Councillor Ahmed we thoroughly investigated the options prior to full rollout and I do not accept that this is a “fiasco”, as you call it as we have invested in car park machinery which we will still be using.

However, I would like to re-echo Councillor Teesdale’s disappointment that we’ve had to make the decision to bring in these changes and to say to our customers that I’m sorry that they won’t be able to benefit from the ANPR system after the weekend. We have been keeping a log of the comments that we’ve received and will be passing these onto the government for their information.”

Supplementary Question

“You can dress it up as you want, call it what you want but it was not me who called it a fiasco. A year ago we were told to wait a year and have done. Is the Cabinet Member going to do the decent thing and resign?”

Supplementary Response

“It is not a “fiasco” and have done all we can. Our customers are at a disadvantage. There is no need for anyone to resign.

(g) Question from Councillor Ms A Baughan to the Cabinet Member for Environment

“In the Swan and Easton Street Multi Storey Car park, over the last few months there have been speakers installed playing music. The volume is variable. I would be interested to know the purpose and cost for this scheme?”

It has attracted both positive and negative comments on social media, although for children and adults with processing disorders I do believe it does cause some distress and discomfort.”

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

“The council is playing music in the stairwells in our multi-storey car parks to add some ambiance and make using our car parks a better experience for the 9,000 plus customers who park their vehicles in them every week.

People expect us to keep our car parks – and any other public building or space we control – clean, safe and welcoming, and so we are playing the music throughout the day and the evening to improve the visitor experience.

When we initially switched on the music system in the Swan car park, we received one comment about the volume disturbing a child and so the volume was reduced as a result. We continue to review the system as a matter of course.

The cost of installing the system was £6,000 per car park but the long term system license is £25 per month per car park.”

Supplementary Question

“Thank you Councillor Teesdale. I do know about the incident in question, it was in the press. Could you confirm that it is not the case that music is being used to deter homeless people from sleeping in the car parks?”

Supplementary Response

As a result of music being playing in the car parks, it may well discourage people from using them as a shelter but the main aim is to improve the atmosphere and experience for visitors to the town and the people who park their vehicles in the car parks.

We have received 40 complaints in the last two years associated with rough sleepers in the car parks and a large number of other comments from people who have told us they would like us to discourage people from using the car parks as a shelter, which we know is a sensitive issue and it leaves us between a rock and a hard place.

Our goal is to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place and if people require our help, our housing team does all it can to support people in need. But we also have customers who expect a clean, safe and welcoming car park to be used for its intended purpose.

However, I strongly believe we are doing all we can and more to assist anyone who is sleeping rough and needs our support.

We work closely with a number of partner organisations including Wycombe Homeless Connection, Wycombe Women’s Aid, YMCA and the Wycombe Rent

Deposit Guarantee Scheme. The Connexions outreach service, funded by the council, is also on hand to help people who are sleeping rough.

We also work closely with our neighbouring councils and were part of a consortium that was awarded a £625,000 trailblazer grant from the Government in December to enable ambitious new ways of preventing homelessness to be piloted.

Homelessness is not just about rough sleeping. Not all cases can be prevented and not everyone can be assisted, but we work closely with our partner agencies to do all we can to assist anyone who is, or is likely to become homeless.”

Questions 8-13 were not put as the 30 minutes time period had expired. In accordance with Standing Orders, as 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.

72 PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

73 CABINET

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 February be received, and the recommendations as set out at minute numbers 63, 67, 68, and 72 be approved and adopted.

(The Leader of the Council presented the minutes of the Cabinet Meeting of 6 February with the exclusion of Minute 69 - Revenue Budget and Council Tax Setting 2017/18 - which would be recommended to Council separately as part of the Council Tax Setting, agenda item 9.)

74 COUNCIL TAX SETTING 2017/18 AND PRESENTATION FROM LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The meeting then specifically turned to the recommendation outlined in minute number 69 of the Cabinet Minutes of 6 February 2017 (Revenue Budget & Council Tax Setting 2017/18) along with the supplement issued to the item in advance of the meeting.

The Leader of the Council in introducing the Cabinet Member for Finance to make his Budget presentation, referred to the reduction in government grants and that by 2018/19 the Council would no longer receive any revenue support grant from Central Government. The Government were working on an amended scheme for business rates to help local councils however the details on how the new scheme would work were still unclear. The Leader commented that under the current system, after tariffs had been applied by the Government, that the Council only retained around 5% of the total received, not 40%.

The Leader noted that Wycombe was one of the very small percentage of Councils that were freezing their Council Tax. She explained that the Council continued to provide excellent services and managed assets efficiently to provide income to replace the loss the Government grants. Projects included improvements at Handy Cross, the building of the Royal Star and Garter, the Extra Care Home at Hughenden Quarter, the £9.5m regeneration scheme for Desborough and Baker Street, and the new retail companies that had opened in the town centre.

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

The Cabinet Member for Finance rose to give his budget speech beginning with some background to this year's budget. He noted that the impact of any decision regarding Modernising Local Government was not yet known and was not therefore factored into this year's budget.

He said that the Council had achieved one of the lowest council tax levels in England by delivering considerable efficiencies and growing the Council's commercial income in order to offset a 51% cumulative decline in the revenue support grant and business rate income.

He noted increased revenue from projects such as the development at Handy Cross and the rationalisation of office accommodation had been a key driver in helping the Council to balance its budget for next year. Also the development of the Hughenden Quarter spine road which had unlocked three development sites which have been sold to bring homes, jobs and increased choice. He added that the Council had invested in the regeneration empty retail units in Wycombe, helping to regenerate key shopping areas and bring more choice to shoppers visiting our town. He said that the investments had substantially increased income for the Council and without the Council going into debt.

The Cabinet Member noted that work with various voluntary bodies and associations had continued with the completion of the improvement works and recent transfer of the Museum to the Wycombe Heritage Arts Trust.

He reported that the Council planned to continue to deliver sustainable efficiencies where it could and further increase the estate and other income streams. It was noted that Council approved the Efficiency Plan back in July 2016 and this was duly submitted to the government who approved the plan and had, as promised, confirmed the level of funding in the original 4 year financial settlement which was published back in February 2016. The government had also confirmed significant changes to the New Homes Bonus which had seen this authority lose over £1.3m from 2016/17 with further reductions beyond next year. He said that the Council had been prudent in how funding had been managed and the financial plans had anticipated this reduction.

He went on to say that there was continuing uncertainty regarding business rates, including the transfer of business rates income. However, he confirmed that the Council had set aside funds to cover future losses.

He also said that financial provision had been made to repay the share of the pension deficit and allowance had been made in the budget for an expected increase in pension costs. The budget had also been updated to take account of the cost of inflationary pressures existing costs, rising homelessness and the new Apprenticeship Levy. The impact of these cost pressures had been offset by making some further savings on waste and other contracts and from growing income.

The Cabinet Member stated that in preparation for the year ahead the Council had a rolling medium term financial strategy and had budgeted in detail for the coming financial year. He noted that the latest projections, assuming no increase to council tax over the next six years, indicated a growing shortfall between expected revenues and costs of up to £2.0M. Last year with the increase in the council tax share by £5.00 on a Band D property, together with additional revenue grown over the past 12 months, meant that a balanced budget could be achieved without the need to increase council tax in the coming year.

He noted that local government faced some very challenging financial issues and would continue to work hard to do keep council tax levels as affordable as possible.

He then made mention of further improvements to facilities and services, these included investing significant resources into the Local Plans for the District and Princes Risborough, further phases at Handy Cross, investing in leisure facilities in Marlow and Princes Risborough, investing in Saunderton Lodge, increasing the revenue budget by over £250k to ensure that the Council was able to meet the needs of the homeless, working with a local Registered Social Landlord in order to acquire more high quality temporary accommodation and continuing with the High Wycombe Town Centre Masterplan.

The Cabinet Member concluded by saying that the balanced budget had been achieved as a consequence of the Council being able to increase the income generated to offset the increased cost pressures and the reduction in government funding and therefore no increase in council tax was required. Local residents would therefore continue to benefit from one of the lowest levels of district council tax in the country.

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

The Leader of the Labour Group, Councillor Raja, rose to respond to the Budget speech. He stated that for any local government organisation, the financial plan should support the plan for delivering services to residents and the community. The budget should serve the district council and not vice-versa.

He noted that the officers who had been instrumental in producing the budget should be congratulated for having produced a balanced budget within the

parameters given to them. He said that naturally, the political direction must come from the party in charge and lest the Council forget “the budget is based on information and assurances from members and the senior management team”. He noted that moreover, an explanatory note attached to the draft budget to the Cabinet, said clearly that “the council faces a significant challenge in continuing to deliver a balanced budget and would either need to implement significant income growth policies or service reduction” he commented that ‘you have it in a nutshell!’

The Leader of the Labour Group then stated that the creation of the new unitary system of local government would no doubt ensure that some of the estimates would be wildly out of synch and the budget was just a ‘firefighting’ exercise.

He noted that there was a balanced budget and ‘earmarked reserves’ of over £36M but questioned the overall reference to the ‘big picture’. He stated that societies were judged not just on what the majority of the people attained but what the minorities had to endure.

He stated that we all certainly lived in an affluent part of the country and repeatedly told that we are doing very well.

The Leader of the Labour Party raised some concerns with regards to deprivation in Wycombe, the educational attainment gap between the different socio economic groups, reduced funding for upper schools, affordable housing for people on lower incomes or the young, roads and footpaths, the cost of ANPR in lost revenue, parking enforcement, the lack of A&E provision in Wycombe, homelessness in the town and music being played in town centre car parks, empty shops, and the lack of public consultation regarding the unitary authority debate.

The Leader of the Labour Party concluded that the council had no plan for sustainable delivery of key service and the financial plan was effectively meaningless and just a set of numbers.

The Leader of the East Wycombe Independent Group, Cllr M Knight, also rose to present his Group’s comments on the budget proposals. He commended the work of the Head of Financial Services and officers for their work all year round and not just at the time of budget setting.

He acknowledged the challenging times facing the Council in light of the Government’s austerity measures. He said that in many areas the NHS was in crisis, adult social care was dangerously underfunded and the long term disabled continue to face aggressive and unfair cuts to their benefits and other support.

He noted that although the Council did not deliver all of those services the Council did deliver services which were heavily impacted by their decline, which showed a growing need whilst budgets decrease. He also stated that since the coalition government came into power local authority budgets had fallen by 51%. Much of the pressure caused by the austerity agenda was picked up by local charities and voluntary organisations, only some of which were supported with an Annual Revenue Grant from the Council, although he stated that this was a commendable use of the Council’s resources.

He said that due to the reasons above then a council tax freeze caused concern as that in effect a freeze was actually a cut due to a gradual rise in inflation. He explained that a freeze this year would compound inflationary increases in future years which would either necessitate a big increase in council tax in the future, or cuts to services.

He stated that his group were concerned that as greater efficiency savings were sought out then some of the non-statutory support mechanisms would come under threat. For example council tax reduction for the disabled had been retained but there was concern for how long this would remain.

He stated that it was ironic that in Buckinghamshire there were Conservative run councils suffering at the hands of Conservative driven austerity.

He explained that his Group would like to see Wycombe District Council putting greater pressure on central government to release more money for public services. Also they would like politicians of all parties to give a clear message to central government that austerity was not working and that it was unfairly targeting the most hard pressed in our communities.

He noted that housing and homelessness was highlighted as one of the main budget pressures of the coming year and that this was not surprising as household budgets were stretched to breaking point. He noted the £250,000 additional spending proposed and was concerned that this would not offer adequate funding for additional costs of bed and breakfast accommodation, and the lack of detail regarding "longer-term" action mentioned in the report.

He was concerned at the lack of progress regarding creative solutions for housing and that over the year there had been no major change and homelessness continued to spiral out of control. He was also concerned that the new Universal Credit system could impact homelessness if people that had transferred over fell into arrears. He suggested the introduction of additional discretionary support to smooth the transition of people onto Universal Credit.

He supported the plan to commit £1.2 million from reserves to top up pension funds, but questioned the same level of commitment to invest more temporary housing provision and more affordable rented properties. He requested more urgency in addressing housing issues and to seriously consider the use of assets to do this.

He stated that Wycombe district was perhaps unique across the whole country when taken into consideration the high cost of housing, the constraints of the AONB, greenbelt and the high demand for housing due to location. He said that this presented an opportunity to become a nationally recognised innovator in using public assets to deliver housing solutions. He stated that the Council could become a showcase for creative housing provision that met the diverse needs of housing in the district. As there were £2 million in unallocated reserves which along with internal borrowing, investing our own resources in real bricks and mortar housing, that there would be the opportunity for some really exciting work around housing.

The Leader of the East Wycombe Independent Group concluded that these were difficult times and those with the least in communities were the ones who felt this the hardest. He said that an ambitious vision was required to deliver real solutions to the big issues that face communities and a council tax freeze appeared to represent a lack of ambition, an acceptance of the status quo, a sticking plaster approach to the big issues like housing and a reluctance to meet responsibilities to the most hard pressed members of the community. He noted the £600,000 underspend, but was concerned that some in the district would suffer. He was also concerned that the freeze in council tax would not provide support to the homeless, vulnerable and those with limited personal resources.

Other Members also made a number of remarks in respect of the Budget proposals.

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

The Budget was then put to the recorded vote.

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

In favour of the recommendations:-

Councillors Shade Adoh, M Appleyard, D Barnes, Miss S Brown, H Bull, D Carroll, Mrs L Clarke, M Clarke, A Collingwood, C Etholen, R Farmer, R Gaffney, A Green, G Hall, M Harris, C Harriss, A Hill, Maz Hussain, D Johncock, Mrs G A Jones, D Knights, Mrs J Langley, T Lee, Mrs W Mallen, N Marshall, H McCarthy, R Newman, Mrs C Oliver, B Pearce, G Peart, S Raja, S Saddique, J Savage, R Scott, D Shakespeare, Mrs J Teesdale, N Teesdale, A Turner, P Turner, D Watson, C Whitehead, R Wilson, Miss K Wood and L Wood.

Abstentions:-

Councillors K Ahmed, M Asif, Ms A Baughan, S Graham, M Hanif, M Hussain JP, M Knight, R Raja and Ms J Wassell.

In Favour:- 44

Against:- 0

Abstention:- 09

(Councillors Mrs Adey & A Hussain had left the meeting when the above vote was taken.)

RESOLVED: That (i) the recommendations contained in Minute 69 of the Cabinet Meeting held on 6 February 2017 be approved and adopted; and

(ii) it be noted that the following amounts have been calculated for the year 2017/18 in accordance with regulations made in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

(A) 67139.17; being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 (“the Regulations”) as its Council Tax Base for the year. In total for the District a £1 tax on a band “D” equivalent property will raise £67,139.17.

(B)

Parish / Town Area	Council Tax Base
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	1201.62
Bradenham	231.56
Chepping Wycombe	6348.32
Downley	1971.34
Ellesborough	440.98
Fawley (Parish Meeting)	141.8
Great & Little Hampden	164.28
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	489.34
Great Marlow	719.64
Hambleden	835.68
Hazlemere	3980.69
Hedsor (Parish Meeting)	79.62
High Wycombe Town	21970.52
Hughenden	3993.46
Ibstone	145.96
Lacey Green	1249.37
Lane End	1405.86
Little Marlow	792.56
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	682.86
Marlow Bottom	1522.44
Marlow Town	6664.86
Medmenham	517.52
Piddington & Wheeler End	259.68
Princes Risborough	3496.37
Radnage	381.66
Stokenchurch	1941.12
Turville	214.38
WestW'- Parish Council	541.13
Wooburn and Bourne End	4754.55
Grand Total	67139.17

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

(ii) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2017/2018 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 ("the Act").

(a) £91,292,928 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31(A)(2) of the Act; taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils as at the date of the meeting.

(b) £79,442,271 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31(A)(3) of the Act;

(c) £11,850,657 being the amount by which the aggregate at (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31(A)(4) of the Act, as its Council Tax requirement for the year.

(d) £176.51 being the amount at (c) above divided by the amount at (a) calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 31(B)(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year;

(e) £2,989,027 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act;

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

(G)

Part of Council's Area	2017-18
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	147.09
Bradenham	162.82
Chepping Wycombe	186.32
Downley	181.03
Ellesborough	176.48
Great & Little Hampden	150.28
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	222.80
Great Marlow	149.00
Hambleden	170.28
Hazlemere	200.47
High Wycombe Town	151.88
Hughenden	183.94
Ibstone	179.95
Lacey Green	152.61

Lane End	217.74
Little Marlow	192.62
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	172.22
Marlow Bottom	156.95
Marlow Town	183.22
Medmenham	171.95
Piddington & Wheeler End	209.97
Princes Risborough	230.86
Radnage	201.32
Stokenchurch	169.09
Turville	162.31
West Wycombe	215.34
Wooburn and Bourne End	205.40

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

(H)

Part of the Council's Area	Band A Charge	Band B Charge	Band C Charge	Band D Charge	Band E Charge	Band F Charge	Band G Charge	Band H Charge
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	98.06	114.41	130.74	147.09	179.78	212.46	245.15	294.18
Bradenham	108.54	126.64	144.72	162.82	199.00	235.18	271.36	325.64
Chepping Wycombe	124.21	144.92	165.61	186.32	227.72	269.13	310.53	372.64
Downley	120.68	140.80	160.91	181.03	221.26	261.49	301.71	362.06
Ellesborough	117.65	137.26	156.87	176.48	215.70	254.91	294.13	352.96
Fawley (Parish Meeting)	87.99	102.66	117.32	131.99	161.32	190.65	219.98	263.98
Great & Little Hampden	100.18	116.89	133.58	150.28	183.67	217.07	250.46	300.56
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	148.53	173.29	198.04	222.80	272.31	321.82	371.33	445.60
Great Marlow	99.33	115.89	132.44	149.00	182.11	215.22	248.33	298.00
Hambleden	113.52	132.44	151.36	170.28	208.12	245.96	283.80	340.56
Hazlemere	133.64	155.92	178.19	200.47	245.02	289.57	334.11	400.94
Hedsor (Parish Meeting)	87.99	102.66	117.32	131.99	161.32	190.65	219.98	263.98
High Wycombe Town	101.24	118.13	135.00	151.88	185.62	219.38	253.12	303.76
Hughenden	122.62	143.06	163.50	183.94	224.81	265.69	306.56	367.88
Ibstone	119.96	139.96	159.95	179.95	219.94	259.93	299.91	359.90
Lacey Green	101.73	118.69	135.65	152.61	186.52	220.43	254.35	305.22
Lane End	145.16	169.35	193.54	217.74	266.13	314.51	362.90	435.48
Little Marlow	128.40	149.82	171.20	192.62	235.41	278.22	321.02	385.24
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	114.81	133.95	153.08	172.22	210.49	248.76	287.03	344.44
Marlow Bottom	104.63	122.07	139.51	156.95	191.83	226.70	261.58	313.90
Marlow Town	122.15	142.51	162.86	183.22	223.94	264.65	305.37	366.44
Medmenham	114.63	133.74	152.84	171.95	210.16	248.37	286.58	343.90
Piddington & Wheeler End	139.98	163.31	186.63	209.97	256.63	303.28	349.95	419.94
Princes Risborough	153.90	179.56	205.20	230.86	282.16	333.46	384.76	461.72
Radnage	134.21	156.58	178.95	201.32	246.06	290.79	335.53	402.64
Stokenchurch	112.72	131.52	150.30	169.09	206.66	244.24	281.81	338.18
Turville	108.20	126.23	144.26	162.31	198.38	234.44	270.51	324.62
West Wycombe	143.55	167.49	191.41	215.34	263.19	311.05	358.90	430.68
Wooburn and Bourne End	136.93	159.76	182.57 ²³	205.40	251.04	296.69	342.33	410.80

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

(iii) That it be noted for the year 2017/2018 the Buckinghamshire County Council, the Police and Crime Commissioner Thames Valley and the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Act for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

<u>Precepting Authority</u>	Valuation Bands							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
Buckinghamshire County Council	812.05	947.40	1082.74	1218.08	1488.76	1759.45	2030.13	2436.16
Police and Crime Commissioner Thames Valley	113.52	132.44	151.36	170.28	208.12	245.96	283.80	340.56
Buckinghamshire & Milton Keynes Fire Authority	40.59	47.35	54.12	60.88	74.41	87.94	101.47	121.76

(iv) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at ((h) and (3) above, the Council in accordance with Section 30 of the Act, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2017/2018 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

Part of the Council's Area	Band A Charge	Band B Charge	Band C Charge	Band D Charge	Band E Charge	Band F Charge	Band G Charge	Band H Charge
Bledlow-cum-Saunderton	1,064.22	1,241.60	1,418.96	1,596.33	1,951.07	2,305.81	2,660.55	3,192.66
Bradenham	1,074.70	1,253.83	1,432.94	1,612.06	1,970.29	2,328.53	2,686.76	3,224.12
Chepping Wycombe	1,090.37	1,272.11	1,453.83	1,635.56	1,999.01	2,362.48	2,725.93	3,271.12
Downley	1,086.84	1,267.99	1,449.13	1,630.27	1,992.55	2,354.84	2,717.11	3,260.54
Ellesborough	1,083.81	1,264.45	1,445.09	1,625.72	1,986.99	2,348.26	2,709.53	3,251.44
Fawley	1,054.15	1,229.85	1,405.54	1,581.23	1,932.61	2,284.00	2,635.38	3,162.46
Great & Little Hampden	1,066.34	1,244.08	1,421.80	1,599.52	1,954.96	2,310.42	2,665.86	3,199.04
Great & Little Kimble cum Marsh	1,114.69	1,300.48	1,486.26	1,672.04	2,043.60	2,415.17	2,786.73	3,344.08
Great Marlow	1,065.49	1,243.08	1,420.66	1,598.24	1,953.40	2,308.57	2,663.73	3,196.48
Hambleden	1,079.68	1,259.63	1,439.58	1,619.52	1,979.41	2,339.31	2,699.20	3,239.04
Hazlemere	1,099.80	1,283.11	1,466.41	1,649.71	2,016.31	2,382.92	2,749.51	3,299.42
Hedsor	1,054.15	1,229.85	1,405.54	1,581.23	1,932.61	2,284.00	2,635.38	3,162.46
High Wycombe Town	1,067.40	1,245.32	1,423.22	1,601.12	1,956.91	2,312.73	2,668.52	3,202.24
Hughenden	1,088.78	1,270.25	1,451.72	1,633.18	1,996.10	2,359.04	2,721.96	3,266.36
Ibstone	1,086.12	1,267.15	1,448.17	1,629.19	1,991.23	2,353.28	2,715.31	3,258.38
Lacey Green	1,067.89	1,245.88	1,423.87	1,601.85	1,957.81	2,313.78	2,669.75	3,203.70
Lane End	1,111.32	1,296.54	1,481.76	1,666.98	2,037.42	2,407.86	2,778.30	3,333.96
Little Marlow	1,094.56	1,277.01	1,459.42	1,641.86	2,006.70	2,371.57	2,736.42	3,283.72
Longwick-cum-Ilmer	1,080.97	1,261.14	1,441.30	1,621.46	1,981.78	2,342.11	2,702.43	3,242.92
Marlow Bottom	1,070.79	1,249.26	1,427.73	1,606.19	1,963.12	2,320.05	2,676.98	3,212.38
Marlow Town	1,088.31	1,269.70	1,451.08	1,632.46	1,995.23	2,358.00	2,720.77	3,264.92
Medmenham	1,080.79	1,260.93	1,441.06	1,621.19	1,981.45	2,341.72	2,701.98	3,242.38
Piddington & Wheeler End	1,106.14	1,290.50	1,474.85	1,659.21	2,027.92	2,396.63	2,765.35	3,318.42
Princes Risborough	1,120.06	1,306.75	1,493.42	1,680.10	2,053.45	2,426.81	2,800.16	3,360.20
Radnage	1,100.37	1,283.77	1,467.17	1,650.56	2,017.35	2,384.14	2,750.93	3,301.12
Stokenchurch	1,078.88	1,258.71	1,438.52	1,618.33	1,977.95	2,337.59	2,697.21	3,236.66
Turville	1,074.36	1,253.42	1,432.48	1,611.55	1,969.67	2,327.79	2,685.91	3,223.10
WestW'- Parish Council	1109.71	1294.68	1479.63	1664.58	2034.48	2404.40	2774.30	3329.16
Wooburn and Bourne End	1103.09	1286.95	1470.79	1654.64	2022.33	2390.04	2757.73	3309.28

(v) That in accordance with sections 52ZB and 52ZC of the Act it is determined that the Council's relevant basic amount of Council Tax for 2017/2018 is not excessive.

(vi) Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The Council introduced its own scheme after the government abolished the national Council Tax Benefit system, Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy. The rules of the 2017/18 scheme were unchanged from the 2016/17 scheme.

75 STANDARDS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 8 February be received and the recommendations as set out at minute 18 be approved and adopted.

76 IMPROVEMENT & REVIEW COMMISSION

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Review Commission held on 11 January 2017 be received.

77 AUDIT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 19 January 2017 be received.

78 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 17 January 2017 be received.

79 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning Committee held on 16 November 2016, 14 December 2016 and 18 January 2017 be received.

80 REGULATORY & APPEALS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee held on 13 February 2017 be received, and the recommendations as set out at minute 19 be approved and adopted.

81 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 11.2

No questions had been received.

82 URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY CABINET OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

The individual decisions published since the last ordinary meeting of the Council held on 12 December 2016, as set out in the summons were noted.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Jemma Durkan	- Senior Democratic Services Officer
Ian Hunt	- Democratic Services Manager
Karen Satterford	- Chief Executive
Paul Shackley	- Corporate Director

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