



WYCOMBE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Queen Victoria Road
High Wycombe
Bucks HP11 1BB

Council – Supplement – Items 5 & 6 – Questions from Public & Members & Item 13 Personnel & Development Committee Minutes

Date: 8 October 2018
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Council Chamber
District Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe, Bucks

You are hereby summoned to attend the Meeting of the Council to be held in the Council Chamber, District Council Offices, Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe on 8 October 2018 at 6.30 pm to consider the business set out in the Agenda below.

Ms K Satterford
Chief Executive

Fire Alarm - In the event of the fire alarm sounding, please leave the building quickly and calmly by the nearest exit. Do not stop to collect personal belongings and do not use the lifts. Please congregate at the Assembly Point at the corner of Queen Victoria Road and the River Wye, and do not re-enter the building until told to do so by a member of staff.

Filming/Recording/Photographing at Meetings – please note that this may take place during the public part of the meeting in accordance with Standing Orders. Notices are displayed within meeting rooms.

Agenda

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5	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC	1

Written questions may be asked of the Leader or any Cabinet Member if submitted to the Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services no later than 12 noon on Monday 1 October 2018. Questions will be submitted in the order in which they were received.

A questioner will have a maximum of 1 minute to ask a question and the answer shall not exceed 3 minutes. Any questioner may put one supplementary question without notice within a maximum time of 1 minute and the answer may not exceed 2 minutes.

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6	QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS	2 - 5
	Questions to the Leader or any Cabinet Member must be submitted by 12 noon on Monday 1 October 2018.	
	A questioner will have a maximum of 1 minute to ask a question and the answer shall not exceed 3 minutes. Any questioner may put one supplementary question without notice within a maximum time of 1 minute and the answer may not exceed 2 minutes.	
	Questions shall be taken first from the Group Leaders of the political parties who shall be entitled to ask an initial Leader`s question from his/her group, of which written notice shall have been given to the Head of Democratic, Legal and Policy Services prior to the meeting.	
	The order of questions shall then permit the first question from each other Councillor to be asked before any subsequent questions from the same Councillor. One question will be taken in turn from the same Councillor unless there are no other questions to be asked.	
	Every member asking an oral question is permitted to ask one supplementary question without notice provided that it is not substantially the same as a question that was put to a Council meeting during the past 6 months.	
	Any question remaining unanswered after 30 minutes will be answered within 10 working days in writing after the meeting by the appropriate Member and appended to the minutes of the meeting.	
13	PERSONNEL & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE	6 - 9
	To receive the minutes of and consider any recommendations from the following meeting:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personnel & Development Committee 26 September 2018 (to follow)	

For further information, please contact Peter Druce - Democratic Services Officer on 01494 421210, committeeservices@wycombe.gov.uk

Agenda Item 5

WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 8 October 2018

AGENDA ITEM 5

Questions from Members of the Public

1. Question from Honorary Alderman P Cartwright to the Cabinet Member for Environment

Passengers travelling to and from the Park and Ride site now enjoy free travel Mondays to Fridays whilst parking spaces are lost in the town due to roadworks.

What is the total number of passengers carried during the period 1 July to 30 September 2018 and the comparable period in 2016 (similar number of journeys), the gross and net costs of the service and the termination date of the contract for the service?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Environment).

Agenda Item 6

WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Monday 8 October 2018

AGENDA ITEM 6

Questions from Members

1. Question from Councillor R Raja to the Leader of the Council

Table 13b of WDC's annual accounts for the year to March 2018 show a £10M increase in the value of investment properties compared with March 2017.

Can the Leader of the council explain how this surplus was used or will be used to benefit our residents?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

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

Along with other Council Leaders in Buckinghamshire you are championing a major change in the delivery of local government in the Wycombe District and Buckinghamshire as a whole.

In leading this change do you believe it is your responsibility to ensure the best, and most well prepared solution for future local governance in the unparished area of High Wycombe?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

3. Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Leader of the Council

Sometime ago, we had discussions about the unitary authorities in Buckinghamshire.

Could you please update us on the present situation?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

4. Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Leader of the Council

According to a Sky News report based on Freedom of Information requests, dozens of councils have seized the initiative and produced their own analysis of the potential impact of Brexit on public services.

Brexit will ultimately be judged as a success or failure by local areas; real people in real communities. We need to take a lead on preparations for Brexit because our residents and our local businesses expect us to be ready.

What preparations has WDC made to address the impact of Brexit?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

5. Question from Councillor Abdullah Hashmi to the Cabinet Member for Housing

According to our Draft Plan we set a target of 10,000 new homes to be delivered in the district by 2033.

Can the cabinet member for Housing please update us on the number of new houses that have been delivered to date?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Mrs J Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing).

6. Question from Councillor M Clarke to the Leader of the Council

The current MLG proposals agree on one thing, that being that the status quo is untenable. Therefore it would appear that Buckinghamshire is heading inexorably towards a unitary format, be it a single county wide unitary or a two unitary solution.

Will the Leader please tell this Council what steps she and her executive have taken to ensure the continuance of the Mayoralty of High Wycombe or are they content to condemn 750 years of continuous occupation of the position of Mayor and the unique customs of this Mayoralty to history?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

7. Question from Councillor S Graham to the Cabinet Member for Community

With the increasing levels of obesity, one would expect all Councils would be doing all they can to encourage people to eat a healthy diet and exercise. I am therefore dismayed to note that the Leisure centre under the control of WDC is charging £6.45 for a child over 14 years, which means that anyone with average income and two or more children over 14 would be disadvantaged and discouraged from using the facilities of the Leisure Centre.

Would the Cabinet Member with responsibility for the Leisure Centre tell us what incentives are provided for people to benefit from their local council Leisure Centre?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor G Peart (Cabinet Member for Community).

8. Question from Councillor K Ahmed to the Cabinet Member for Planning

WDC has agreed to spend £200k on hiring someone to help regenerate the town centre.

This need for regeneration of the High Street and Frogmoor has been long overdue, so I say better late than never.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell us what the residents of Wycombe will be getting in return for £200k that you are intending on spending on their behalf?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor D Johncock (Cabinet Member for Planning).

9. Question from Councillor M Asif to the Leader of the Council

Can the Leader of the Council please give a breakdown of monies spent on DFG (Disabled Facilities Grants) in the year 2017/18 and up to the end of September this year?

The breakdown in how many Grants permitted in groups of £1 to £5000 onwards.?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

10. Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Community

Some years ago, at a full council meeting, a member of the public submitted a petition regarding toilets on the Rye. I understand that £30,000 was set aside for a feasibility study but my understanding is that said study only actually cost £20,000.

Could you please update us on the progress on having public toilets in the aforementioned vicinity?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor G Peart (Cabinet Member for Community).

11. Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration

One Public Estate, OPE provides practical and technical support and funding to councils to get the best use out of its land and property - for example, releasing land for new homes - and using the programme to deliver them.

Has WDC any plan of working in partnership with OPE to benefit from their programme to get the best use out of our land and property by taking a strategic approach to asset management?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor S Broadbent (Cabinet Member for Economic Development & Regeneration).

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

Do you think that the unparished areas of our District, within the urban area of High Wycombe, are kept cleaned and maintained to a sufficient standard, particularly in terms of street cleaning, weeds and maintenance of footpaths?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

13. Question from Councillor R Raja to the Leader of the Council

It is reported that spending on welfare benefits for Britain's poorest families will have shrunk by nearly a quarter after a decade of austerity. By 2021 £37Bn less will be spent on working age social security compared with 2010.

In the light of this information would the Leader tell us how the introduction of the Universal Credit is progressing in the District and do you have numbers of those who have been unable to access their benefits for more than a week?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council).

14. Question from Councillor K Ahmed to the Cabinet Member for Housing

WDC has received hundreds of thousands and is due to receive many hundreds of thousands more by central government to tackle homelessness and rough sleepers.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell what net gains and benefits have been realised from the investment of this money?

Verbal reply to be given by Councillor Mrs J Langley (Cabinet Member for Housing).

Personnel and Development Committee Minutes

Date: 26 September 2018

Time: 6.05 - 7.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillor M Harris (in the Chair)

Councillors: Mrs S Adoh, M C Appleyard, G C Hall, M A Hashmi, Mrs W J Mallen and S Saddique

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs J Teesdale.

8 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel & Development Committee held on 20 June 2018 be confirmed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

10 WORKFORCE REPORT 2017/18

A report was submitted which requested that the Workforce Report for 2017/18 be noted and which invited further comment and feedback from Members.

Members were informed that the report was produced and published annually and provided information regarding the workforce to assist in identifying the key trends and issues for the organisation and inform the development and maintenance of HR policies and practices to support the achievement of strategic priorities and service objectives. The information included such details as organisation structure, recruitment and turnover, training and development and pay and reward.

A summary of the main findings established that there was nothing significantly different from last year and that the situation had remained stable. In the current year, the workforce was still in balance with the community it served and the overwhelming majority of staff were successful in their jobs many exceeding the

expected standard of performance. The findings also revealed that 75% of senior managers were female and that the gender pay gap was narrowing.

It was brought to Members' attention however that amongst some of the challenges facing the authority was the need to attract, recruit and retain larger numbers of younger people in order to assist with succession planning in an authority with an increasingly ageing workforce. The Presenting Officer reported that she was pleased to be able to announce that WDC had now recruited a total of six new apprentices. In addition out of the three more recently recruited two of these had secured permanent posts within the authority.

Another challenge was the need to raise awareness of staff about their mental health and reducing the stigma associated with mental health conditions. This was particularly significant given that stress, mental health and depression were amongst the top reasons for absence, with a slight increase from last year's rate. The overall absence rate however remained consistently below the sector average.

Members considered the report before them and made a number of comments.

All Members were keen to express their delight over the progress being made in engaging 6 apprentices since the introduction of the scheme last year, and they hoped that further opportunities could be sought to engage more apprentices. In relation to hard to fill posts, a Member highlighted that another Council offered key worker housing to assist with recruitment and that this could be a potential avenue that could be considered.

Another query was raised with regards to the steps that were being taken to assist those with mental health conditions within the organisation. It was confirmed that the Authority was shifting the focus on more preventative methods by raising awareness with managers through training, enabling them to recognise the signs of stress at an early stage. Members were also informed that the Authority would also be introducing Mental Health Allies who were designated people that staff could speak to about their concerns and who could signpost them to the appropriate resource.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

11 REVIEW OF SMOKING POLICY AND FACILITIES ON QVR SITE - RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

A report was submitted which set out the results of the recent consultation exercise on future options for smoking on the QVR site. The report recommended that the results be reviewed and an agreement be made as to which option to support, and to recommend this to Full Council accordingly.

Option A would make the whole of the QVR site smoke free. Option B would see the designated smoking area moved to the rear QVR car park barrier. Both options would become effective from 1 January 2019.

The report stated that both the Joint Staff and Personnel & Development Committees had considered the options regarding the smoking policy at their meetings on the 20 June 2018. Based on the decision taken by the Personnel & Development Committee, a 4 week consultation exercise had been conducted, which determined that 64.3% of respondents were in favour of making the whole of the QVR site smoke free.

The report also highlighted that whichever one of the two options was agreed it would require an amendment to the Council's current Smoking Policy. This was necessary in order to reflect that employees would be expected at work during core hours (9.30-12 noon and 2.30pm-4pm) and so breaks off the QVR site including smoking breaks would not normally be permitted. Members were informed that a copy of the proposed new Smoking Policy would be brought back to both the Joint Staff and Personnel & Development Committees at the next cycle of meetings in the autumn.

At the Joint Staff Committee meeting which had preceded this one, staff side members had not been in favour of option (a) which was to create a smoke free site. In particular staff side expressed concern about enforcement of the policy and for the necessity to be clear about breaks in general during core hours, so that it was not unfair to smokers.

Members debated the report before them in some considerable detail, with each expressing their individual view on the matter. It was recognised by all that there were strong views and arguments on both sides and that there was no single perfect solution which would satisfy all parties.

The Presenting Officer stated that although there were compelling arguments on both sides of the debate the consultation had shown a clear majority in favour of a smoke free site. In addition since 2013 the Council now had a duty of care in promoting health at work and in the local community, and that some would feel that expenditure of public funds to support the continuation of the smoking habit contradicted this. In relation to enforcement, it was indicated that a phased approach would be used, and disciplinary action would not be used as a first step. It was generally expected that the majority of people would act reasonably in the event of a rule change, just as behaviours had changed as a consequence of the Health Act 2006, which prohibited smoking indoors.

Upon a vote being taken it was unanimously

RECOMMENDED: That

- (i) The QVR site be made smoke free with effect from 1 January 2019 subject to a number of logistical and procedural clarifications to be presented to the next meeting.
- (ii) A draft new smoke free policy be prepared and brought back to the Joint Staff Committee and the

Personnel & Development Committee in November 2018.

12 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED: That the next meeting of the Personnel & Development Committee be held on Wednesday 21 November 2018 at 6pm.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Iram Malik	- Democratic Services Officer
John McMillan	- Head of HR, ICT & Customer Services
Jo Whiteley	- Human Resources Manager (Operations)