

# Council Minutes

Date: 10 October 2011

Time: 7.00 - 9.20 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor I L McEnnis (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs J A Adey, K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, M Angell, D H G Barnes, I Bates, W J Bendyshe-Brown, D J Carroll, A D Collingwood, R B Colomb, C A Ditta, R C Emmett, R Farmer, M A Foster, J Gibbs, S Graham, A R Green, Ms V Groulef, G C Hall, M Hanif, A E Hill, A Hussain JP, M Hussain JP, D A Johncock, Mrs G A Jones, M E Knight, Ms R Knight, S P Lacey, Mrs J D Langley, Ms P L Lee, Mrs W J Mallen, J A Malliff, N B Marshall, H L McCarthy, Mrs D V E Morgan, Ms M L Neudecker, S F Parker, B E Pearce, B R Pollock JP, J L Richards OBE, J A Savage, R J Scott, C Shafique MBE, D A C Shakespeare OBE, T Snaith, Mrs J E Teesdale, A Turner, P R Turner, Ms J D Wassell, D M Watson and R Wilson

## 33 DAVID JORDAN AND ROBIN KEY

The meeting commenced with a minute silence in memory of 2 former long serving members of staff who passed away in August, both of whom had given many years service supporting Members. The Chairman had attended the funeral of Robin Key on behalf of Members, and written to Pam Jordan on behalf of the Council. Councillor Emmett had attended the funeral of David Jordan on behalf of the Council.

## 34 MINUTES

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 4 July 2011 be approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

## 35 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Honorary Aldermen E H Collins, A J Hurst, M B Oram and Mrs K M Peatey MBE and Councillors D A Anson MBE, M C Appleyard, Mrs L M Clarke, R H W Gaffney, C B Harriss, Ms S Manir and Ms K S A Wood.

## 36 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made.

Member	Committee / Date	Minute No	Nature and Action taken (if any)
Cllr I L McEnnis	Cabinet 18/7/11	31c	Personal by virtue of his membership of Red Kite Shadow Board (Discussion took place so withdrew from the meeting).

Cllr B R Pollock JP	Cabinet 18/7/11	31c	Personal by virtue of his membership of Red Kite Shadow Board (Discussion took place so withdrew from the meeting).
Cllr H L McCarthy	Cabinet 18/7/11	31c	Personal by virtue of his membership of Red Kite Shadow Board (Discussion took place so withdrew from the meeting).
Cllr P R Turner	Cabinet 18/7/11	31c	Personal (Discussion took place so withdrew from the meeting).

### 37 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

#### (a) Battle of Britain

The Chairman expressed his thanks to those Members who had joined him at the Battle of Britain commemoration service on 18 September.

#### (b) Website Award

The Chairman invited Members to join him in congratulating the Council's Communications Team which had been awarded a website accessibility award at the National Good Communication Awards 2011. The Digital Accessibility Centre accreditation meant that the website had been tested by people with a wide range of disabilities and found to be accessible.

#### (c) Business Ambassador Awards

The Chairman reported that accompanied by the Chief Executive, and Deputy Leader (Property & Economic Development), he had undertaken a series of visits to those local businesses which had done well in the various categories of the Business Ambassador Awards.

#### (d) RAF Association – Great North Run

The Chairman thanked Members for their generosity at the last meeting in sponsoring Tracey Morris from RAF High Wycombe who had taken part in the Great North Run. Members had raised approximately £180 for the RAF Association.

### 38 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

#### (a) Question from Mr G Nuttall to the Leader of the Council

“Given the public acknowledgement by Cllr Clarke, in her interview on Marlow FM about the Rugby and Football Stadium proposal, that mistakes had been made, what steps is the Council making to ensure that similar mistakes are not made in the future?”

### **Response from Councillor A D Collingwood, Leader of the Council**

“Thank you for your question as it gives me the opportunity to share the changes we are proposing as part of the Council’s new priorities, one of which is on engaging and working with our communities.

We are always learning lessons and seeking to improve and one of the changes being proposed is to adopt five specific consultation standards, so that we make it very clear at the outset what people can expect from the Council.

This includes consulting when there is scope to influence the decision being taken, giving as much time as possible for consultations, being clear about what is and is not up for discussion, as well as giving everyone the opportunity to engage and, of course, providing feedback as we go along.

I have also set up a group of Councillors to look into how we can strengthen the Councillor’s role in future consultations undertaken by the Council. This will be coming to my Cabinet for decision in due course. In addition we have met with the stakeholders of Handy Cross consulting the users first in order to receive relevant feedback on the replacement of the Sports Centre.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“That is very encouraging. The Leader’s response, to my question about learning from mistakes mentioned stakeholder involvement, which is pertinent to my supplementary question. The proposal to build a stadium and housing at Wycombe Air Park cast doubts on the Air Park’s future viability as a recreational airfield. In this case the stakeholders include the businesses and clubs that operate at the Air Park. With the rejection of the stadium proposal, can the Council confirm that it will support the existing Air Park businesses, clubs and tenants to provide them with long-term security?”

### **Supplementary Response**

“The Air Park is of key importance to us, in respect of the users and the businesses based there. We intend to meet and consult with the relevant parties, to establish how we can take this forward.”

### **(b) Question from Ms L Derrick to the Deputy Leader of the Council (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“On 12 December this year, the Council intends to transfer ownership of all its housing stock to Red Kite. In return it will get, on average, £2,800 for each property. The Council will also transfer play areas, open spaces and community facilities. It is giving these away to Red Kite.

As part of the transfer process, the Council is required by the Government to carry out an appraisal of the options. This appraisal has to be comprehensive and thorough to comply with Treasury guidance. The Council has to assess the economic, financial, social and environmental outcomes of each option. It also has to assess the advantages and disadvantages of the options to all the interested parties – in the case of the sale to Red Kite, not only to the tenants

but also for example to residents who are on waiting list for a Council house and to Wycombe's taxpayers. The aim of the appraisal is to help decision-makers decide which is the best option and to do this in a consistent and transparent way.

The options appraisal has to be approved by the Home and Communities Agency before the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government can give consent to the transfer. The Council has not carried out this option appraisal.

Without a proper options appraisal, on what basis has the Council decided to sell all its Council houses to Red Kite and give away Council land? And on what basis did it advise its tenants before they were balloted that this was the only viable option?"

**Response from Councillor D J Carroll, Deputy Leader of the Council (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

"Thank you. Following the successful ballot of secure Council tenants and eligible leaseholders the Council intends transferring its housing stock to Red Kite Community Housing on the 12 December 2011 subject to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government's approval. In line with the agreed valuation the average property value is around £14,500. This is not a sale of assets but a transfer to a partner organisation; the social housing will still be available to Wycombe District Council to meet out strategic housing role and to provide housing for those in need and on the waiting list.

A full and detailed Options Appraisal has been conducted and this adhered to Government guidance.

This consisted of a thorough consultation and engagement exercise to establish what was best for the tenants future. It also involved an evaluation of the options available from the point of view of the Council taxpayers."

**Supplementary Question**

"I have read these reports carefully and I have copies with me. None of them are options appraisals, and none comply with Government requirements.

Some of the requirements include explicit and clear outcomes and objectives; a review of a wide range of options against the objectives; an appraisal of each option, using Cost Benefit Analysis.

For example, the Council is required to estimate the strategic costs and benefits of each option - an estimation of the social costs and benefits of each option.

The Council has to look at issues of equality and the impact of the options on different social groups. It has to look at the impact on businesses and charities, and on health, on poverty, deprivation and unemployment. It has to assess risks, sensitivities and discount cost to present day values. None of these issues are visibly addressed.

Finally, reports have to be clear, logical, well founded, and geared towards helping the decision at hand. In non-technical language. Reports should provide an easy audit trail to check calculations, supporting evidence and assumptions. Transparency is vital.

None of the documents are available on the Council's website. The Tribal report has not been provided to me even under the Freedom of Information Act. It is not even a report, it is continuous update of a previous paper which isn't available. Perhaps this Council doesn't understand what an options appraisal is. Perhaps it doesn't believe in making decisions based on sound evidence. Perhaps it has been ill-advised on the necessary legal procedures. Perhaps the Council thought it could get away with not doing its homework. Perhaps it thought it could get away with misleading its tenants.

Could the Council tell me which one of these it is?"

### **Supplementary Response**

"We have followed all the correct procedures, and received and taken the relevant advice on the process. The Council voted in favour of and for the good of the tenants. If we don't go ahead, £250m debt will come to the Council for the next 30 years."

### **(c) Question from Mr M Chadwick to the Leader of the Council**

"As the Council fleshes out its Corporate Plan for the next four years, could I urge you to include a programme of work relating to domestic energy consumption of existing stock, centring on insulation and other efficiency measures, but also the take-up of renewables where appropriate?"

Through the provision of information, encouragement, and targeted incentives, with the Council facilitating and coordinating delivery by a range of partners, such a programme would contribute towards a significant number of the Council's identified objectives, including addressing fuel poverty, job generation, community engagement, as well as carbon reduction."

### **Response from Councillor A D Collingwood, Leader of the Council**

"Thank you for your question on a very important issue for the Council, our partners and our communities. Tonight the Council is being asked to adopt our Corporate Plan to 2015 and this restates the Council's continuing strong commitment to work towards becoming a "greener" district. There are a number of key work streams underpinning this commitment, such as our joint waste contract with Chiltern District Council from next year, as well as taking forward the implementation of the Carbon Reduction framework and our commitment to renewables.

The Council adopted a Carbon Reduction Framework for the District this year which set a target of 21% reduction in emissions by 2020 (from a 2005 baseline). This Framework is to be delivered in phases by working in partnership with others, and it is intended to deliver a programme of the measures outlined in the question with funding set aside for the first year. The programme will be reviewed regularly to assess progress and to establish further sources of funding."

### **Supplementary Question**

“There is an alliance of community groups (including Transition Town High Wycombe, Transition Town Marlow, Wycombe friends of the Earth, and the re-born Environment Centre) keen to work with the Council on projects within the Carbon Reduction Framework. Although some resources will still be needed, delivery in this way can make limited funds go further. Will you or a fellow Cabinet Member undertake to meet us to explore this further?”

### **Supplementary Response**

“Thank you. Yes indeed we will give our commitment to exploring this. I myself pushed the issue of Glass recycling in Marlow. The Town Council in Marlow which is a Conservative Council, took the lead in Transition Town Marlow.”

## **39 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS**

### **(a) Question from Councillor T Snaith to the Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“At the recent High Wycombe Town Committee it was resolved that the Committee recommend to the Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes and Housing that:

- a) dowry or no dowry, WDC retain all land currently in the HRA in the unparished wards that Members of the High Wycombe Town Committee have requested to be retained; and
- b) any associated costs for maintenance or upkeep of the land following retention be taken from proceeds from the stock transfer and/or borne by the General Fund; and arrangements be put in hand to provide all members of the Committee with a full list of all land in the HRA in the unparished wards, together with the estimated capital value of each.

This Council will make a considerable financial gain in terms of the proceeds from the land it keeps and proceeds from the Council house sell off. Perhaps the Cabinet Member would like to disclose the amount?

With the proceeds it can easily fund the upkeep of green spaces without any financial burden on the tax payer!

Is this Cabinet prepared to deliver fully on the request from High Wycombe town members in points a) and b)?”

### **Response from Councillor D J Carroll, Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“The Council has recently undertaken consultation over the physical assets that will transfer to Red Kite and I am pleased to note that a significant number of Members took the time to meet with officers in the Members’ Room and to view the plans including satellite images. This has raised a number of enquiries that officers are responding to and the reference from the High Wycombe Town Committee is included in this. All of the feedback from this

consultation will be the subject of a joint report of the Cabinet Members for Homes and Housing, Property, Community and Finance.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“None of my financial issues have been addressed. Also this Council is not engaging and working with the public as the Leader has stated. It has not consulted or sought advice on land in the unparished wards or on open spaces. All areas on the map have not been put onto the web for consultation, including Marsh Memorial.

You are not being open or consulting as the Leader has said; would you like to comment?”

### **Supplementary Response**

“We have rigorously followed the correct process, and have had in-depth Member discussions. We can confidently say that the Red Kite Board has done the right thing. We urge you to give your support as you did a year or so ago, as your previous Leader signed a 3 way agreement.”

### **(b) Question from Councillor Ms V Groulef, to the Cabinet Member for Community**

“In our own District Wycombe’s Race Equality Council (WREC) has seen cuts this year in its budget from £70k to £10k (over 83%) and then was told that funding would be pulled completely.

As the County and District Council have a statutory obligation to provide equalities services they have decided to transfer staff to the employment of the County Council.

Would Cabinet agree that this looks like the big society in reverse and will they confirm if they will continue to impose disproportionate cuts to other charitable organisations?”

### **Response from Councillor S P Lacey, Cabinet Spokesman for Community in the absence of Councillor Ms K S A Wood: Cabinet Member for Community**

“While the Council does not have a statutory obligation to provide an equalities service we have supported the Wycombe Race Equality Council for a number of years and remain keen to see core services continue in an efficient, effective form. This has been successfully achieved by working in partnership with the County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council. To focus solely on the Council’s funding contribution is misleading as there is more money coming in from the County Council and, by removing management, premises and support costs, we have been able to focus on the core service that residents value.

The service is part way through its transition and will be migrating to an established voluntary organisation, the Citizens’ Advice Bureau, which has an outstanding reputation for high quality advice services. We appreciate everyone’s patience during this period of change.

The Council is a signatory of the Bucks Compact and values the work of local voluntary and community organisations. We face a difficult financial future and have agreed three year funding arrangements with key partners so that they have certainty over funding. It is our hope that we will be able to maintain other grant budgets.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“I am not sure that the Cabinet Spokesman has answered my first question. I am well aware of the history of the WREC, but the WREC was just one example of many cuts being forced on local charities by this Conservative Council.

As you are aware the Communities and Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles has hinted that he might have to amend the Localism Bill currently going through Parliament and penalise “high-handed” local authorities if they cut funding to charities too much when trying to make savings.

Pickles told voluntary groups they were entitled to expect not to suffer what he calls “disproportionate” cuts when council budgets are cut as part of Central Government austerity measures. Taking this into account how can Cabinet allow cuts over the next few years such as, High Wycombe CAB 17%, Mediation Bucks 100%, Relate Mid Thames and Buckinghamshire 50%, Wycombe Youth Action 17%? These are just a few examples, I could go on.

Would the Cabinet Spokesman suggest that any of these cuts are disproportionate, particularly when families are currently in need of voluntary sector support due to central Government austerity cuts, and would the Cabinet Spokesman tell me if this Cabinet knows the price of everything but the value of nothing?”

### **Supplementary Response**

“I do not have the information to hand, but will respond to you in writing.”

### **(c) Question from Councillor A Turner to the Cabinet Member for Community**

“With the impending closures of both Princes Risborough and Hazlemere Royal Mail delivery offices, which could adversely affect around 30% of this district’s postal service customers, what if anything does this authority plan to do as a response?”

### **Response from Councillor S P Lacey, Cabinet Spokesman for Community in the absence of Councillor Ms K S A Wood: Cabinet Member for Community**

“We have contacted Royal Mail for an update, which has not yet been received. We are however aware of ongoing discussions between Princes Risborough Town Council and local MPs with Royal Mail, which perhaps Councillor Turner has more knowledge of than us.”



### **Supplementary Question**

“This is a broader question than just that relating to Princes Risborough. This causes major problems for residents and businesses who collect their mail early in the morning as it is essential to their efficiency. In Princes Risborough, two offices are involved, and we met with Royal Mail representatives for a discussion. We were informed that the situation would be re-evaluated if the move from Princes Risborough was financially economical. A response is expected to be received after Christmas.

I believe that this Council should give its support to the Town Council in Princes Risborough, and the Parish Council in Hazlemere to prevent the closures.

Do we have a commitment from this Council?”

### **Supplementary Response**

The Leader of the Council confirmed a keen interest in meeting with Royal Mail and to help protect offices. Cllr H L McCarthy reported that the Hazlemere closure was seen as acceptable due to its lack of activity, but the battle to prevent closure of the Princes Risborough office was fully supported.

#### **(d) Question from Councillor I Bates to the Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“The Conservative-led Government published guidance in July of this year on “Self Financing: Planning the Transition”. Section 9.1.2, paragraph 6 of the document says: “those authorities currently discussing potential transfers with the Homes and Communities Agency and the Department will need to take a “twin-track” approach i.e. those authorities will need to plan to deliver self-financing as well as any transfer activity, so that self-financing can proceed if for any reason the transfer is delayed or rejected”.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that these Government guidelines are being adhered to and will they provide the evidence to Members in the form of copies of the full options appraisal and the 30-year business plan?”

#### **Response from Councillor D J Carroll, Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“The Council is very aware of Government Guidance that all authorities currently progressing stock transfer need also to adopt a twin track approach for Self Financing in the event that transfer does not proceed.

We are also aware that should the transfer not be completed by March 2012 it would by default become part of the new Self Financing Regime. We believe Government guidance has been followed and that current progression of the housing finance system takes account of the Council’s commitment to progress transfer on 12 December. We are able to supply copies of the reports requested.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“Under the twin track approach, the Council should by now have a draft business plan for stock retention under the self financing proposals, and also a firm business plan for stock transfer to Red Kite. We should be able to compare the business plans and the financial options for WDC and its tax payers under both options. Instead for stock retention we have an update by Tribal of some financial projections made in 2009, which were in turn an update of another unspecified document. For stock transfer we have a Red Kite business plan dated Dec 2010. Even these documents are seriously flawed, as the Tribal report bases its estimates of the repayment of the loan by WDC under self financing on an interest rate of nearly 6%. Last week’s quoted rates by the Public Works Loans Board vary from 1.0% to 3.6% dependent on the length of the loan. WDC would be £6million a year better off if the proper, lower rates were used in the calculation.

Accurate up to date information is not being laid before Councillors to enable them to make the best decisions for WDC tax payers. In spite of repeated requests, these reports are not being made public, they are not posted on to the Council’s website and we are all being kept in the dark. When will the Cabinet Member release the information?”

### **Supplementary Response**

“All documents requested can be seen. We have nothing to hide, and tenants want stock transfer not sale. We are in this together, and wish to achieve this ambition for the tenants.”

#### **(e) Question from Councillor Ms V Groulef to the Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“Can Cabinet outline the terms of any claw back clause as part of the Red Kite transfer? In particular please can they outline what will happen to revenue gained if former WDC housing revenue land is resold or developed?”

#### **Response from Councillor D J Carroll, Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“On completion the housing stock will transfer to Red Kite Community Housing Limited (Red Kite) in accordance with the terms of a transfer deed that is in a standard acceptable format for CLG and for the funders of Red Kite. This will incorporate a provision that in the event of “disposal” by Red Kite a percentage of sale proceeds (less costs) will be paid to the Council.

For the transfer to be acceptable to Red Kite and its funders there are required to be exemptions to the clawback to allow Red Kite to function as a viable body which include disposal by way of mortgage to allow Red Kite to buy the housing, RTB sales (although these proceeds will be subject to separate sharing arrangements with the Council), and the grant of easements and sales of small parcels of land to neighbouring land owners for nominal consideration.

In addition, it is recommended that there are exemptions where the Council gives consent for the sale proceeds to be ring fenced for specific housing projects in the District or where units in a rural area can be replaced by an

equivalent number using the proceeds of sale. The percentage for clawback is recommended at 50%.

Any redevelopment of the land by Red Kite must be in pursuance of its charitable objects and for public benefit and would, therefore, not be subject to clawback.”

### **Supplementary Question**

“At the Red Kite training seminar back in September it was claimed that a clawback clause would be inserted and that this clause could and I quote “stipulate where any revenue should go, or how it could be ring fenced”.

The Labour Group on this Council and I suspect others on the opposition benches will press for 50% of the proceeds from any future land deals made by Red Kite to be clawed back by the Council, and the proceeds ring fenced for new affordable or new social housing. Astonishingly we seem to be supported in this by the Prime Minister in his speech last week. Will the Cabinet Member use his listening skills on this occasion and ring fence the money from claw back for the affordable and social housing this district so desperately needs?”

### **Supplementary Response**

“This is currently under negotiation with Red Kite. None of the terms can be changed without negotiation, and we will come back to you when these have been completed.”

### **(f) Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“In a recent interview David Cameron said that he plans to boost the “right-to-buy” in England and council house tenants will be able to buy their homes at a discounted price under the right-to-buy scheme. He also said that a new house will be built for every one sold.

We are transferring our stock to Red Kite; what safeguards will be in the system to ensure that Red Kite will honour the ‘right to buy’ and build one for every one sold?”

### **Response from Councillor D J Carroll, Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“The question relates to a recent announcement by the Prime Minister and we have been advised by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on how this will affect Red Kite.

The Prime Minister has announced the Government’s intention to raise Right to Buy discounts to make it attractive to tenants across England. The money raised will then be used to pay off the debt, and to fund more affordable housing. Under this new plan, for every home bought under Right to Buy a new affordable home will be built – over and above our existing plans.

DCLG have advised that they will set out detailed proposals in the forthcoming

Housing Strategy. Their intention is that the offer will apply to tenants with the Right to Buy and Preserved Right to Buy. DCLG have said that they will work with providers to ensure that the changes do not have a detrimental financial impact on providers whose tenants have the Preserved Right to Buy.

When further details of the new arrangement emerge we will advise accordingly.”

#### **Supplementary Question**

“Will the Council take up the Government Scheme announced this week to develop former MOD land for housing development with the priority placed on affordable zero carbon rated properties.”

#### **Supplementary Response**

“We will provide all of our proposals within the housing strategy. We will be happy to put the issue to Members when further details arrive.”

#### **(g) Question from Councillor S Parker to the Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“During a recent presentation to Council Members, Jenny Ferrigno, the chair of the shadow board of the Red Kite Housing Association stated that a considerable quantity of property to be transferred failed to meet the decent homes standard as set by government.

Can you explain how a cash positive Council has allowed this situation to arise?”

#### **Response from Councillor D J Carroll, Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“The decision taken by tenants to pursue Transfer was based on a number of factors, one of which was that Decent Homes could not be met or retained. The Red Kite Standard then emerged as a higher standard that could be achieved.

There was 11% of the housing stock non decent last year. CLG were advised WDC would not meet Decent Homes because under the current HRA rules the resources were not enough to reach Decent Homes and then maintain the levels of investment required to sustain this even under self financing.”

#### **Supplementary Question**

“11% of the stock failed to reach the required standard last year, amounting to approx 700 properties. Would you agree that the Council failed to meet and fulfil its commitment to bring homes up to decent home standard before transfer.”

#### **Supplementary Response**

“The money was not there to be had; it had been skimmed off back to government.”

**(h) Question from Councillor Ms J D Wassell to Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“Why did the Cabinet Member do a U turn on the decision of his predecessor to replace the Saunderton Lodge hostel with temporary housing in the local community?”

I was categorically informed by the previous incumbent at Full Council earlier this year that this sensible decision had been made, following a full option appraisal.”

**Response from Councillor D J Carroll, Deputy Leader (Homes & Housing and External Partnerships)**

“Cabinet in July agreed the findings of a Strategic Review to retain Saunderton Lodge and, after stock transfer, explore opportunities for greater collaboration with other local authorities and conduct a feasibility study into the best options for Saunderton Lodge and the future provision of temporary accommodation.

I confirm that these remain our intentions and that the approach remains consistent. Having visited there last week, I want to say thank you to the staff for their hard work. It is a great facility for vulnerable people.”

The Chairman advised that under S.O.11 (11) all remaining Members questions would receive a written reply.

**40 PETITIONS**

A total of five petitions were received.

These read as follows:-

**(i) Meadow Close Open Spaces**

We are appalled at Wycombe District Council’s proposal to sell the land to Red Kite Housing Association. We want the land to be maintained and remain open space for use of all residents and public space.

We, the undersigned, petition Wycombe District Council to ensure that land remains in the care of Wycombe District Council.

**(ii) Wycombe Marsh Memorial and Gardens**

We are appalled at Wycombe District Council’s proposal to sell the land to Red Kite Housing Association. We want the land and memorial to be maintained and remain part of the heritage of High Wycombe.

We, the undersigned, petition Wycombe District Council to ensure that land and memorial remains in the care of Wycombe District Council.

**(iii) Play Area The Pastures**

We, the undersigned, object to the plans to transfer the play area at The Pastures, Disraeli Ward to Red Kite Housing Association as part of the tenant led housing transfer planned for December 2011.

We call upon the Council to:-

- 1) Reject this proposed sale and keep ownership with the Council.
- 2) To take on the responsibility for the maintenance and refurbishment of the play area.
- 3) Fully consult with local residents on any future proposals for the play area and surrounding open space.

**(iv) Baring Road / Hicks Farm Wood**

We, the undersigned residents of Totteridge, High Wycombe petition Wycombe District Council that we do not want Baring Road playing field / play area and the Hicks Farm Wood Green Space to be transferred to the Red Kite Housing Association. We request that these two areas remain in ownership with Wycombe District Council. We further request that the designation of Nature Reserve is applied for, in relation to Hicks Farm Wood.

**(v) Pimms Grove**

We, the undersigned residents petition Wycombe District Council that we do not want the Pimms Grove Village Green or the road of Pimms Grove to be transferred to the Red Kite Housing Association. We request that this area remains in the ownership of Wycombe District Council and continues to retain village green status.

**41 CABINET - 18 JULY 2011**

**Minute 17 – Wycombe Sports Centre**

A Member sought confirmation that consultation on the replacement of the Sports Centre referred to earlier had included the general public and future users. Another Member asked for confirmation that the Sports Centre consultation would be robust in light of that regarding the stadium. The Leader assured Council that this was ongoing and would involve user groups, and the wider general public, with a view to incorporating their views and ideas within any further plans for the site.

**Minute 20 – Review of Housing Options, Strategic Housing and Enabling, Saunderton Lodge and Rayners Avenue**

A Member raised the issue of Saunderton Lodge which she considered was not fit for purpose, especially for children in line with Every Child Matters. She expressed her hope that this would be looked at quickly to get the facility into the town centre. The Leader replied that resolution (iii) did state that options would be looked at.

**Minute 21 – High Speed Rail**

A Member queried if the Council could be challenged on this as the impact on WDC would be very small. The Leader confirmed that the expenditure had been legal as there was potential for a large impact on the district, especially if the route was changed.

### **Minute 23 – Wycombe Museum**

A Member highlighted his concern over the possible loss of the unique old railway station building on the current site, which had been built by Brunel in 1854. It was emphasised that every effort should be taken to preserve the building which had the potential to attract a great deal of tourism.

The Member's sentiments and passion was shared by the Leader of the Council who felt that the building in question should be enhanced and redeveloped.

A Member queried whether BCC had been approached regarding the transfer of the museum which she thought, like libraries, came under the remit of the County. The Leader replied that the current proposals were considered the best way forward.

### **Minute 31c – Housing Asset Transfer (Green Space and Play Areas)**

The Chairman of the High Wycombe Town Committee said that this matter had been discussed at length at his committee though the outcome had not been fully consensual. He considered that the impact of the recommendation at 31(c) on the Wycombe Town precept would be unacceptable.

The Leader stated that he wished to amend the recommendation to read (c) Subject to the outcome of detailed negotiations with Red Kite and a further report to Cabinet in November, the land in (i)(a) above save for the Judo Centre and Community Woodland areas be treated as Special Expenses.

Other Members questioned the current consultation by Public Notice and also that the consultation was only on the Public Open Spaces. The Leader explained that this was a legal requirement.

It was proposed by Councillor T Snaith and supported by 7 other Members as required by S.O.16.6, that a recorded vote be taken on the amended recommendation. There was thereupon recorded the following:-

#### **In favour of the recommendation:-**

Councillors Mrs J A Adey, Z Ahmed, M Angell, D H G Barnes, W J Bendyshe-Brown, D J Carroll, A D Collingwood, R B Colomb, M A Foster, J M Gibbs, A R Green, A E Hill, A Hussain JP, M Hussain JP, D A Johncock, Mrs G A Jones, S P Lacey, Mrs J D Langley, Mrs W J Mallen, J A Malliff, N B Marshall, Mrs D V E Morgan, Ms M L Neudecker, J L Richards OBE, J A Savage, R J Scott, Mrs J E Teesdale, D M Watson, and R Wilson.

#### **Against on the recommendation:-**

Councillors K Ahmed, I Bates, C A Ditta, R M H Farmer, S Graham, Ms V Groulef, M Hanif, M E Knight, Ms R Knight, Ms P L Lee, S F Parker, B E Pearce, C Shafique MBE, T Snaith, and Ms J D Wassell.

#### **Abstentions**

Councillors G C Hall and A Turner.

#### **Total:**

In Favour:- 29

Against:- 15

Abstention:- 2

The amended recommendation was carried.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 18 July 2011 be received and the recommendation as set out at Minute 31c and amended at the meeting be approved and adopted.

## **42 CABINET - 5 SEPTEMBER 2011**

### **Minute 36 – Council Priorities and the Corporate Plan 2011-2015**

A Member expressed her concern that homelessness was not included as a Priority and suggested that these be amended to include Saunderton Lodge. The Leader reiterated that options for Saunderton Lodge were being looked at. The Council Priorities and the Corporate Plan, however, had to be looked at in terms of the district as a whole.

Another Member commented that the Council had not met its targets for affordable housing and asked how it would ensure that it did so this time. The Leader stated that the Council had met its targets.

### **Minute 37 – Leisure Centre Management Contracts**

A Member queried the future of the Council in light of the proposals to contract out Leisure Centres and Waste. The Leader clarified that the proposals relating to the Leisure Centres were regarding an extension to the existing contract, in order to enable flexibility when proposals for a new centre at Handy Cross were finalised.

### **Minute 38 – Draft Planning Policy Framework – Response to Government Consultation**

A Member rose to ask the Leader to continue to urge the government to make progress and support the use of brownfield sites.

### **Minute 39 – Community Facilities Strategy Update**

A Member asked what contingency plans were in place to provide facilities if CIL or S106 funding could not deliver.

The Leader explained that without the strategy, CIL or S106 funding would not be forthcoming.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5 September 2011 be received and the recommendations as set out at Minute 36 be approved and adopted.

## **43 IMPROVEMENT AND REVIEW COMMISSION - 18 AUGUST 2011**

### **Minute 16 – Chairman's Closing Remarks**

A Member expressed concern over the remarks of the Chairman of the Improvement and Review Commission, who had stated that call ins were intended to be used in exceptional cases. The Member felt that this was an unfortunate choice of words, as it was felt that call ins presented an opportunity for thorough discussion and examination of policy decisions, and as such it should be encouraged.



**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Review Commission held on 18 August 2011 be received.

**44 IMPROVEMENT AND REVIEW COMMISSION - 21 SEPTEMBER 2011**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement and Review Commission held on 21 September 2011 be received, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Gibbs as being present as a Standing Deputy.

**45 AUDIT COMMITTEE - 22 SEPTEMBER 2011**

**Minute 20 – Approval of Statement of Accounts 2010/11**

A Member drew attention to the underspend in the HRA the previous year and his concern that some of this was an underspend on such things as fire safety measures. He pointed out that the Council was still responsible for fire safety up until transfer.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee held on 22 September 2011 be received.

**46 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - 12 JULY 2011**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 12 July 2011 be received.

**47 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE - 13 SEPTEMBER 2011**

**Minute 17 – Proposal for Housing Assets Transfer – Green Space and Play Areas**

A Member referring back to a question to the Deputy Leader (Housing and External Partnerships) earlier in the meeting, asked if the Chairman of the Committee considered that the Cabinet would fund the requests of the Committee.

The Chairman of the Committee said that he could not answer on behalf of the Cabinet but reinforced his view that it was unacceptable for Green Spaces and Play Areas to be funded from Special Expenses, a proposal which would see an 8-9% increase in Council Tax for the residents of High Wycombe Town. Other Members expressed their belief that the assets should remain with the Council, funded from the General Fund.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee held on 13 September 2011 be received.

**48 PLANNING COMMITTEE - 20 JULY 2011**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 20 July 2011 be received.

**49 PLANNING COMMITTEE - 17 AUGUST 2011**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 17 August 2011 be received.

**50 PLANNING COMMITTEE - 14 SEPTEMBER 2011**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 14 September 2011 be received.

**51 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 11.2**

There were none.

**52 CHIEF OFFICER'S REPORT - APPOINTMENT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

**a) Designation of Monitoring Officer**

The Council was informed that following an internal advertisement, the vacancy of Monitoring Officer had been filled by David Ruddock, on the basis of a 1 year contract, with the flexibility to extend for 1 further year. This would be effective from 23 November 2011, subject to the Council approving his designation as Monitoring Officer.

**RESOLVED:** That Mr David Ruddock be designated as the Council's Monitoring Officer for a period of up to 2 years with effect from 23 November 2011.

**b) Urgent Report of the Returning Officer**

The Returning Officer formally reported that Councillor Bate had resigned as a Member of the Council with effect from 30 September 2011. Members were informed that a provisional date of 24 November had been set for the Bye Election.

**RESOLVED:** That the urgent report of the Returning Officer be noted.

**53 URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY CABINET OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER**

It was reported that an urgent exempt decision had been taken by the Leader of the Council since the last meeting.

"To agree to pay compensation to the Tenant of 7 Collins House, Desborough Road, High Wycombe, in the sum as set out in paragraph 11 of the report, as full and final settlement of any claims by the Tenant in connection with their lease of the subject premises, subject to the deductions and reductions referred to in the report."

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Chairman

**The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:**

Karen Satterford - Chief Executive  
Susan Rogers - Democratic Services Manager  
Iram Malik - Democratic Services Officer