



Council minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 24 November 2021 in Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF, commencing at 4.00 pm and concluding at 8.00 pm.

Members present

Z Mohammed (Chairman), D Dhillon (Vice-Chairman), S Adoh, K Ashman, M Baldwin, D Barnes, S Barrett, P Bass, K Bates, J Baum, P Birchley, D Blamires, A Bond, M Bracken, C Branston, S Broadbent, N Brown, S Bowles, P Brazier, T Broom, M Caffrey, R Carington, D Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, J Chilver, A Christensen, L Clarke OBE, M Collins, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, E Culverhouse, I Darby, T Dixon, M Dormer, P Drayton, C Etholen, P Fealey, R Gaffney, M Fayyaz, E Gemmell, P Gomm, D Goss, T Green, S Guy, G Hall, G Harris, M Harker OBE, C Harriss, D Hayday, O Hayday, C Heap, T Hogg, G Hollis, T Hunter-Watts, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, P Irwin, D Johncock, J Jordan, S Kayani, P Kelly, R Khan, D King, M Knight, J MacBean, A Macpherson, I Macpherson, F Mahon, N Marshall, P Martin, R Matthews, Dr W Matthews, S Morgan, N Naylor, R Newcombe, C Oliver, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, S Raja, N Rana, M Rand, S Rouse, G Sandy, G Smith, M Smith, N Southworth, B Stanier Bt, M Stannard, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, M Tett, N Thomas, D Thompson, D Town, A Turner, M Turner, P Turner, G Wadhwa, A Waite, M Walsh, J Ward, J Wassell, J Waters, D Watson, A Wheelhouse, G Williams, S Wilson, M Winn and A Wood.

Apologies

A Alam, M Angell, R Bagge, A Baughan, T Butcher, S Chhokar, A Collingwood, T Egleton, M Flys, P Griffin, M Hussain JP, Cllr C Jackson, C Jones, S Lambert, H Mordue, J Ng, A Osibogun, W Raja, J Rush, L Smith BEM, L Sullivan, D Summers, J Towns, H Wallace, L Walsh, W Whyte and K Wood.

Agenda Item

1 Chairman's opening remarks

The Chairman welcomed members, and Mr George Anson, the High Sheriff, to the meeting. The Chairman also welcomed the Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police (TVP), John Campbell. The Chief Constable was accompanied by three Local Police Area Commanders, Chief Superintendent Michael Loebenbery (Aylesbury Vale area), Superintendent Amy Clements (Chiltern and South Bucks area) and Superintendent Emma Burroughs (Wycombe area). Unfortunately, the Police and Crime Commissioner, Matthew Barber, was unable to attend the meeting and sent

apologies.

The Chairman extended deepest condolences on behalf of the council, members and officers, to the Leader, Councillor M Tett, and his family on the recent passing of Mrs Sue Tett, wife of the Leader of the Council.

2 Mrs Sandra Crook and Mr Frank Downes

Tribute was paid to two past councillors, Mrs Sandra Crook and Mr Frank Downes, who had recently passed away. The Chairman recorded sincere condolences to both families on their sad losses.

Sandra Crook was a Member of Wycombe District Council from May 1999 to May 2007, representing the Hazlemere Central Ward from 1999 to 2003, and then the Hazlemere South Ward from 2003 to 2007. Sandra was Cabinet Member for Internal Affairs from 2004 to 2006, and Vice-Chairman of the Audit Committee between 2002 to 2003. She also served on numerous committees including the Audit Committee, Personnel & Development Committee and the Joint Staff Committee.

Frank Downes was a past Buckinghamshire County Council and Wycombe District Council Councillor. Frank was a member of Buckinghamshire County Council from 2001 to 2013, representing the Stokenchurch electoral division from 2001 to 2005, and the Stokenchurch, Radnage and West Wycombe electoral division from 2005 to 2013. Frank was the Cabinet Member for Resources from 2005 to 2011.

Members then observed a minute's silence in memory of Sandra Crook and Frank Downes.

3 Past Chairman

The Chairman presented Mr Richard Scott, who was Chairman of the Shadow Authority for Buckinghamshire 2019 to 2020 and the first Chairman of the new Buckinghamshire Council 2020 to 2021, with his past Chairman's badge.

The Chairman spoke to Richard's long history of service. Richard had served over 45 years to the local community including being a Buckinghamshire County Councillor from 2009 to 2017, Wycombe District Councillor 2008 to 2019 (including Council Leader 2013 to 2015), Buckinghamshire Council 2019 to 2021, and has been and continues to be a Marlow Town Council Councillor since 2003.

Mr Richard Scott then addressed the council, and expressed thanks to the Chairman for the badge. Mr Scott described his time as Chairman during the covid-19 pandemic and the challenges this posed to the role. As Mayor of Marlow, Mr Scott would continue to carry out his civic duties, and wear his past Chairman's badge with pride.

4 Minutes

An amendment was made to the minute item 8. Members noted that the question to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor S Broadbent, relating to traffic

congestion and parking (i) was with reference to Wooburn and Bourne End and not Hazelmere.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the council meeting held on 15 September 2021, be agreed as correct record, subject to the additional information, as noted.

5 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

6 Chairman's Update

Members were advised of a number of events attended by the Chairman recently.

- The chairman spoke of Remembrance Sunday events that were held across the county, thanked all including the many members of the public and others that attended, and paid tribute to those that had sacrificed their lives in war. The Chairman's Office was pleased to be able to support members with the provision of wreaths for Remembrance events across Buckinghamshire.
- The Chairman attended the Chilterns MS Centre in Wendover and encouraged members to show support for the work of the centre.
- The Chairman congratulated Councillor M Walsh, ward member for The Risboroughs, who had been recognised as Councillor of the Year by the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) at the Star Council Awards 2021.
- Members were encouraged to visit the Community Support Team stand in The Oculus, to sign the White Ribbon Pledge to end violence against women and girls, and show support by picking up a white ribbon to wear on White Ribbon Day (25 November 2021).
- The Chairman had attended the Road Deaths Memorial Service ran by TVP to pay tribute to those that had lost their lives in road traffic incidents.
- The Chairman was leading on a tree planting initiative week commencing 29 November 2021 and would be planting trees over the week.

7 Petitions

Two petitions were presented to Full Council.

Councillor P Fealey presented an e-petition on behalf of constituents requesting that pre-planning webpages are improved. The Chairman accepted and referred the petition to the Cabinet Member Planning and Regeneration for response. The Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Councillor G Williams, thanked

residents for their work on the petition and advised that he would provide a written response to the petition in due course.

Councillor P Martin presented an e-petition on behalf of constituents relating to sewage discharge in Buckinghamshire. The Chairman accepted and referred the petition to Councillor B Chapple OBE, Chairman of the Transport, Environment and Climate Change Select Committee. Councillor Chapple wished to reassure the petitioner that the select committee would consider the matter of pollution and rivers in the county, next year.

8 Presentation from the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable

John Campbell QPM, Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police, was in attendance to present to members on the work of TVP in Buckinghamshire over the last year. The Chief Constable was accompanied by three Local Police Area Commanders, Chief Superintendent Michael Loebenbery (Aylesbury Vale area), Superintendent Amy Clements (Chiltern and South Bucks area) and Superintendent Emma Burroughs (Wycombe area). The following key points were highlighted:

- Over the past year, TVP had welcomed a new Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) in May 2021, and there had been a number of changes to roles and responsibilities within the Force.
- The Chief Constable gave an overview of the work of TVP over the past year, which included but was not limited to, responding to major incidents, supporting local and national distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), supporting a number of high profile events, and lawful business and peaceful protests. Further, responding to high volumes of covid-19 calls and issuing Fixed Penalty Notices in relation to crime and covid-19.
- Over the past 12 months, there had been a reduction in residential burglary (46%), knife crime (18%), robbery (21%) and serious violence (18%), and an increase in positive outcomes (7%).
- A number of operation and projects were happening to support crime prevention and disruption in Buckinghamshire. This included but was not limited to, fraud in the digital environment, speed enforcement, anti-social behaviour, preventing sexual violence and cross border crime, and disrupting illegal activity.
- The team were looking at how to tackle open space drug dealing.
- 101 call wait times for October 2021 had been longer than the year average, and was something that the Chief Constable was looking at improving. Over the year to date, the average time to answer a 101 call was 1 minute 48 seconds.
- Recruitment work to increase diversity in the Force was ongoing. The Force

had doubled the number of recruits from black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) backgrounds over the past year.

- Members were given an overview of the work of teams, operations and projects in the Aylesbury and Wycombe areas specifically.
- It was noted that the Chiltern and South Bucks and Wycombe Local Policing Area's (LPAs) were due to be merged in April 2022 to make efficiencies and maximise opportunities. This would also enable the Force to work more consistently with the council.

A question and answer session followed the presentation. Thanks were expressed by members for the hard work of officers and all that they did to protect the public.

- (i) **Protecting the public at Halloween and Bonfire Night** – members were advised that a focus on education prior to these events was important in preventing incidents of anti-social behaviour, as well as the monitoring of the sale of fireworks.
- (ii) **Taxi services** – TVP recognised that taxi drivers and services were a key part of the community providing a service that many people relied on.
- (iii) **Time taken to answer 101 calls** – it was noted that reference numbers were given to some callers depending on the nature of their call. The year average time taken to answer a 101 call was 1 minute 30 seconds, but there were peaks and troughs, including some unacceptable delays. The Chief Constable was paying close attention to time taken to answer 101 calls and improving these times. It was noted that the Force had made considerable progress on improving time taken to answer calls.
- (iv) **Mental health** – members were advised that some work had been done by the Force to support those with mental health problems but more work needed to be done. A triage pathway was in place, and mental health nurses accompany officers when called out to avoid people with mental health problems going into custody.
- (v) **Hare coursing in rural areas** – it was noted that a rural crime taskforce would be put in place in 2022 to tackle rural crimes. It was noted that neighbourhood teams dealt with crime in specific areas, and the rural crime taskforce would supplement neighbourhood teams to enable more focus on rural crimes including targeting hare coursing. There had been some recent successes with hare coursing where individuals had also been charged with money laundering as part of the criminal activities that they had been involved in.
- (vi) **Enforcing speed limits** – on average 200,000 tickets were issued across Thames Valley per year, where 2.4 million people live. On average, there were 75 – 80 road deaths per year in Thames Valley. The Force had a Road Policing Unit to tackle serious road offences, as well as mobile cameras.

Tickets relate to not only speeding, but mobile phone use, drink driving and no seatbelts.

- (vii) **Neighbourhood policing and action groups in High Wycombe** – members were informed that neighbourhood action groups were in existence in Wycombe and Superintendent Emma Burroughs had recently attended the Wooburn group. The Force were keen to be involved in groups and officers also attended Community Board meetings. Supt Burrows encouraged the member to contact her with details on his particular meeting, so that officers could arrange to attend.
- (viii) **The role of Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs)** – IAGs, which were made up of members of the public, check and challenge, as well as support the Force. Community Scrutiny Boards have recently been established to also check and challenge the Force on specific topics.
- (ix) **Improving communications to councillors following an incident** – TVP wanted to use councillor's voices to support police response to incidents. Communication strategies were in place for when incidents occur, which include communications to members. With regards to the specific incident the member was referring to, unfortunately officer's had not been correctly briefed on councillor communications on this particular occasion; this was a one-off and would not happen again.
- (x) **20mph speed limits** – members were advised that if 20mph speed limits were enshrined in law, then the Force would play a role in enforcing any breaches of that law. The Chief Constable could not guarantee an officer patrolling areas in the event that 20mph speed limits were introduced. It was also advised that there were complexities around introducing 20mph limits. By way of example, a 20mph limit had been introduced outside of a school and, consequently, speeding had increased in the area as 20mph was seen as an upper limit. The Chief Constable spoke of a number of effective road traffic management measures, and would encourage any local authority to look at the consequences of the impact of introducing a 20mph speed limit.
- (xi) **Merging Chiltern and South Bucks and Wycombe LPAs** – Supt Burrows welcomed the invitation to meet with Chesham, Chess Valley and Chiltern Ridges councillors to discuss the merger in further detail and future approaches to consultations.
- (xii) **Tackling night racing** – members were informed that TVP have operations tackling this issue. Neighbourhood teams regularly work to disrupt this activity, as well as the Road Policing Team. Supt Burrows would look into the issues specifically relating to Stoke Poges and Wexham.

The Chairman expressed thanks to the Chief Constable and Superintendents for their presentation. The Chief Constable thanked members for their continued support for the work of officers.

9 Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2021-22

Members considered the Buckinghamshire Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2021 – 2022. The Cabinet Member spoke to the report, which set out details of progress made against agreed outcomes for children and young people, priorities and future challenges for the partnership for 2021 – 2022. Further, the plan highlighted partnership arrangements and the budget position for the Youth Offending Service Partnership. The following key points were highlighted:

- The council were required to produce a plan each year with the aim of stopping offending, re-offending and reduce custody.
- In response to a question as to how closely the education department was working with individuals with Individual Health Care Plans (IHCP), members were advised that, since last year, targeted advisors were put into schools to identify individuals involved and provide support. The member was encouraged to contact the Cabinet Member directly for more detailed information.
- The Cabinet Member agreed that future reports should give focus to young people obtaining justice, as well as preventing offending.
- In response to a question as to how children’s mental health was looked after, the Cabinet Member informed members that this was the most important part of the programme and that there was a great deal of mental health support available. Some of the provisions in place included trained mental health advisors in schools, and psychologists who are able advise children and teachers around mental health issues.
- It was noted that a 3% budget cut was set out within the report but lacked detail on what exactly would be cut. Members were reassured that any cuts would not impact on young people and the council would maintain its duty to young people. Savings could be made through, by way of example, efficiencies, realignment of staffing responsibilities, collaboration with partners, and access to funding through partners.

Resolved:

that the 2021 – 2022 Youth Justice Strategic Plan be agreed.

10 Buckinghamshire Council Licensing Policy Statement

Members considered the draft Licensing Policy Statement for Buckinghamshire Council. The following key points were highlighted:

- Local authorities were required by law to publish a Licensing Policy Statement.
- The Licensing Committee considered and agreed to recommend the draft

statement to Full Council at their meeting 20 October 2021.

- In response to a question as to how the policy would be applied retrospectively, the member was advised to write to the Cabinet Member, who would respond in writing due to the technical nature of the question.
- In response to a question as to how the issues of single plastics could be addressed through licensing, the member was advised to write to the Cabinet Member, who would respond in writing.
- It was suggested that the environmental aspects referred to in the report be strengthened. The member was advised to write to the Cabinet Member, who would compose a response in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment.
- It was asked whether a risk assessment had been done in relation to para 4.1 and the change to 24-hour licensing. The Cabinet Member advised that the university status of Buckingham had been taken into account, and the behaviour of students was such that it was deemed acceptable to bring forward the changes. It was noted that Buckinghamshire Town Council had been consulted on the proposed changes.

Resolved:

1. that the draft Licensing Policy Statement for Buckinghamshire Council as required under the Licensing Act 2003 for publication, prior to a proposed implementation date of 1 February 2022 be agreed; and
2. that the Head of Service for Licensing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services, be authorised to change the implementation date of the Policy if necessary to any date on or before 1 April 2022.

Note 1: a comfort break was taken from 17.53 to 18.05.

11 Reports from Cabinet Members

Members received reports from Cabinet Members. There was an opportunity for members to ask questions of individual Cabinet Members about matters and issues affecting their portfolios.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Martin Tett

- (i) **Future investment in Chesham** - a levelling up fund bid had been submitted to government focussing on regeneration in Chesham, however this had not been approved. It was noted that none of the levelling up fund bids that had been submitted by Buckinghamshire Council had been approved by government. The Leader would continue to submit bids at every opportunity to support regeneration across the county.

- (ii) **Local ward member consultation on decisions affecting their wards** – the Leader reiterated that Buckinghamshire Council was a member-led authority. It was noted that there was a requirement for local members to be consulted on all cabinet reports, and that the Leader had previously rejected reports where local member views had not been included within reports.
- (iii) **Suitable support for Afghan families** – members were advised that suitable support had been put in place for Afghan families that had resettled in Buckinghamshire. It was noted that a constraint was finding suitable accommodation in the family’s ideal location, as accommodation was difficult to find; the council worked closely with families to meet their needs.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Gareth Williams

The Cabinet Member encouraged members to complete the planning survey that had been circulated via the select committee, which would help to inform the council what members wanted to see from the planning service.

- (i) **Backlog in planning applications** – it was noted that figures for backlogs differed depending on area (e.g., enforcement, major applications). There was a 42% increase in applications received by the council year on year. The team had done a phenomenal job of reducing backlogs and turnover of applications was 25% up on last year. The Cabinet Member recognised there was more work to do and had directed teams to work on backlogs specifically.
- (ii) **Buckinghamshire Design Code** – the council had been given £50,000 funding from government as part of a pilot scheme which had funded ‘Bucks Place’, an online design tool. Comments from Bucks Place would feed into the formation of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan.
- (iii) **Winslow group** – the Cabinet Member welcomed the invitation to meet with the group to discuss development in Winslow.

Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Steven Broadbent

One of the council’s key priorities was the clearing of drains and gullies, which the council had invested significant sums into the budget to supporting. The Cabinet Member was pleased to announce that half of the 85,000 gullies across the county were cleared, and teams continued to deliver the outstanding works at pace.

- (i) **Gully clearing in Gerrards Cross** – a graphic would soon be uploaded onto the members portal detailing gully clearing progress by ward.
- (ii) **Timeline for repairing street lights** – it was noted that since April 2021, approximately 795 street lights had been repaired, and work was ongoing. Street lights were also going through an LED replacement process, which was well underway. From next month, an update was being rolled out to

FixMyStreet which would see improvements to reporting street lighting issues specifically, including details on when replacements might be due.

- (iii) **Temporary lights and abandoned cars in High Wycombe** – it was noted that lots of work was happening on the roads by the council, but also statutory undertakers (e.g., utilities companies), and on occasion, works continued beyond the specified work period. Members were encouraged to report any delayed works so that the council could investigate. The member was advised to report the locations of abandoned cars to the team so that officers could investigate.
- (iv) **Road permits** – members were advised that when scheduled works took place, assessments were done in advance. All local ward members were sent information on works relating to their ward area, and were encouraged to share this information with residents. In case of emergency works, companies had the right to work on the road immediately.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Clive Harriss

- (i) **The Rye, High Wycombe** – the Cabinet Member was made aware that the football pitch at The Rye had been water logged and meant that football teams had had to use a pitch further afield. The Cabinet Member would look into alternative sites for football matches to take place.
- (ii) **Play Streets Pilot Scheme, Aylesbury West** – Councillor Sarah James was recognised for her work on the Play Streets Pilot Scheme in Aylesbury West.

Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services, Councillor Anita Cranmer

- (i) **Ofsted rating** – Ofsted were expected to visit imminently. The service had been on an improvement journey and the Cabinet Member was optimistic that the service had improved.
- (ii) **Secondary school results** – it was asked how the secondary school results incident could be prevented from happening again. Members were advised that this was an unfortunate incident in which an IT system had failed. A new system had been put in place and members were reassured that this would never happen again.

Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets, Councillor John Chilver

- (i) **Customer Service call waiting times** – The Cabinet Member recognised that there had been some unacceptable delays in time taken to answer calls. It was noted that the summer period had been particularly busy with calls relating to waste and council tax. Data on call waiting times was monitored closely, and call waiting times had reduced over the past couple of months. A number of measures were in place to make contact with the council as easy and accessible as possible.

- (ii) **Loans** – the loans referred to related to the former legacy authorities, and funded their capital programmes as opposed to individual projects which made them difficult to identify.
- (iii) **Devolution of assets to Aylesbury Town Council** – the Cabinet Member welcomed discussions with Aylesbury Town Council on any proposals they might have for devolution of assets.
- (iv) **Community board funding, and management of the council's properties** – the member was asked to direct the question to the Cabinet Member for Communities.

Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Angela Macpherson

The Cabinet Member advised that the council received further detail on the government's proposed social care reforms last week, and explained the impact the proposals would have on the service. Once the government's white paper was received, the Cabinet Member would arrange a full member briefing on the paper and what it meant for the council.

- (i) **Workforce pressures** – this was a key issue for the council as well as other local authorities across the country. Vacancies did cause significant pressures, however the council were working hard to recruit staff and had plans in place to address recruitment and retention, including a Workforce Strategy. The council support educational opportunities for staff (social work degree/ apprenticeship/ cadet scheme) to help bring people into the service, as well as career progression opportunities. It was noted that the winter period would bring significant pressure.
- (ii) **Safeguarding Campaign, and the issue of scams** - the Cabinet Member was congratulated on the success of the Safeguarding Campaign thus far. It was noted that referrals had increased as a result of the campaign, which would continue until February 2022. The council were also supporting the national campaign. The Cabinet Member would provide a detailed response to the member as to how the council was working to address the issue of scams.
- (iii) **Access to GPs** – this issue had recently been raised at the Health & Wellbeing Board. GPs in attendance had explained the huge workload they were dealing with and recognised the call wait times that residents faced, and that service could be improved. The Cabinet Member urged members to listen to the webcast of the discussion at the Health & Wellbeing Board meeting for further information.
- (iv) **Care sector staff and vaccinations** – members noted that vaccination numbers were reasonably high for Buckinghamshire care staff. However, mandatory vaccination for care staff would have an impact on staffing levels. The Cabinet Member would provide the member with vacancy figures.

**Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services,
Councillor Nick Naylor**

- (i) **Taxi licensing policy** – a driver/ council liaison group had been established to further discuss the policy with the taxi industry. Some concessions had been made in some areas, but not in others, particularly with regards to safety and child safety.
- (ii) **Social housing** – the member was asked to write to the Cabinet Member in relation to the proposal for social housing at the specific site, who would look into the matter along with the Cabinet Member for Planning Regeneration.

Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Steve Bowles

The Cabinet Member expressed thanks to members for showing their support to end violence against women and young girls, at the white ribbon stall. The council had plans to develop a strategy with specific focus on ending abuse against women and young girls. Councillor Bowles would be talking to listeners of Wycombe Sound on 25 November specifically about this issue.

Members were advised of the enormous amount of work going on around Armed Forces. The council had reinforced its support for Armed Forces by signing the Armed Forces Covenant in July 2020, which was a commitment to ensuring that no Armed Forces personnel were disadvantaged. Members noted that Buckinghamshire had a significant Armed Forces community. Members were encouraged to get involved in groups, events and activities, and were advised that increased member engagement would enable the council to 'go for gold'.

- (i) **Community Board funding** – members were advised that an email had been received by Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of Community Boards to inform them that, given budgetary pressures including significant risk in social care services and home to school transport pressures, as well as scenarios for Buckinghamshire in the impending government spending review, it was the Cabinet's intention to take back £3.5 million of rolled over funds. Members noted that 225 projects had been approved for funding to a total cost of £1.46m, with existing match funding of £1.2m (total value £2.66m). There were £1.4m worth of projects in the pipeline which included projects committed last year. There remained a large amount of unallocated funding. The decision to take back funds had not been taken lightly; the Cabinet remained committed to community boards which were a keystone of the localism agenda.
- (ii) **Devolution of buildings** – a member meeting recently took place regarding devolution of community centres to Aylesbury Town Council. The council were currently going through the process of looking at devolving Meadowcroft Community Centre to the town council. It was hoped that that community centre would be the first of many community centres devolved

to the town council.

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, Councillor Peter Strachan

The Cabinet Member was pleased to announce that effective 13 December 2021 separate food collections would resume in High Wycombe and Amersham; residents would be informed over the coming days. A member briefing note would be circulated week commencing 29 November 2021 to enable members to advise residents on the matter. Members welcomed the good news.

- (i) **Greatmoor energy from waste plant** – members were asked to write to the Cabinet Member who would arrange visits to the plant on their behalf.
- (ii) **Charging for green waste collections** – members were advised that no decision had been made in relation to charging for green waste collections in High Wycombe. Members would be informed if any changes to charges were made.
- (iii) **Protecting Buckinghamshire’s mature trees** - the Cabinet Member recognised the importance of maintaining Buckinghamshire’s existing mature trees, and advised members that protections for trees were supported in planning. Tree planting was one of sixty items on the council’s action plan within the climate change strategy; the Cabinet Member informed members he would be planting trees tomorrow (25 November 2021).
- (iv) **CO2 emissions from Greatmoor energy from waste plant** – the member was advised to write to the Cabinet Member for the detail on emissions from the plant.

12 Notices of Motion

- (i) Environment Bill

The motion was proposed by Councillor Robin Stuchbury and seconded by Councillor Stuart Wilson -

Buckinghamshire Council is a riparian owner of large sections of river within the County, it has two of the UK’s major rivers, the River Thames and the River Ouse, and also highly sensitive chalk streams within South Buckinghamshire. As a Council we want to do everything we can to maintain the ecology contained within those areas alongside protecting public health.

Recently the Government voted for more moderate measures in the Environment Bill than those proposed by the House of Lords which would have restricted the discharge of raw sewage into our water courses and place a legal duty on water companies to invest in the necessary infrastructure to protect and improve our waterways.

“This Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and

Environment to:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to all Buckinghamshire Members of Parliament, expressing our grave concern about the weakened legislation that fails to markedly restrict the discharge of raw sewage into our rivers and streams; and to
2. Write to the Chief Executive(s) of those water companies with sewage treatment works discharging raw sewage into the Thames, Ouse, Wye and other waterways across Buckinghamshire to seek assurance that they will pursue a programme of capital investment that will “demonstrate improvements in the sewerage systems and progressive reductions in the harm caused by untreated sewage discharges” per the Lords’ Amendment.”

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Martin Tett, seconded by Councillor Peter Strachan, and accepted by the proposer and seconder of the original motion. The amendment was then put to the meeting as the substantive motion. The wording of the first two introductory paragraphs were unchanged.

“This Council calls on the Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment to:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to all Buckinghamshire Members of Parliament, expressing our grave concern about the weakened legislation that fails to markedly restrict the discharge of raw sewage into our rivers and streams; and to **making known the concerns of this Council and emphasising the importance of the Government bringing forward a clear strategy for ceasing this environmentally damaging practice as a matter of priority**
2. Write to the Chief Executive(s) of those water companies with sewage treatment works discharging raw sewage into the Thames, Ouse, Wye and other waterways across Buckinghamshire to seek assurance that they will pursue a programme of capital investment that will “demonstrate improvements in the sewerage systems and progressive reductions in the harm caused by untreated sewage discharges” per the Lords’ Amendment.”

It was proposed by Councillor J Macbean, and seconded by Councillor S Bowles that the substantive motion be put to a vote, which was **carried**. By a show of hands, it was -

Resolved:

that the Leader and Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment:

1. Write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and to all Buckinghamshire Members of Parliament, making known the concerns of this Council and emphasising the importance of the Government bringing forward a clear strategy for ceasing this environmentally damaging

practice as a matter of priority.

2. Write to the Chief Executive(s) of those water companies with sewage treatment works discharging raw sewage into the Thames, Ouse, Wye and other waterways across Buckinghamshire to seek assurance that they will pursue a programme of capital investment that will “demonstrate improvements in the sewerage systems and progressive reductions in the harm caused by untreated sewage discharges” per the Lords’ Amendment.”

(ii) Speed limits

The motion was proposed by Councillor Steven Broadbent and seconded by Councillor Martin Tett –

This council notes that Thames Valley Police have changed their previous stance of opposing reductions in speed limits. Thames Valley Police, whilst now supportive in principle of 20mph, do so on the basis that to be effective it must be in the ‘right location’ and have a suitable physical environment to ensure 20mph is adhered to i.e. they are self-enforcing. Thames Valley Police are clear that they will not currently be pro-actively enforcing revised limits.

This council also notes that whilst 20mph speed limits are initially popular with many residents, research by the Department for Transport shows that there has only been a small reduction in median speed (less than 1mph) where these have been introduced. There is also insufficient evidence to conclude that there has been a significant change in collisions and casualties following the introduction of 20mph limits in residential areas. Evidence suggests that average speeds tend to fall to compliant levels only on roads where previous average speeds were already low, i.e., around 24 mph

Neighbouring Oxfordshire County Council estimate that to replace the majority of 30mph limits with 20mph, investing in signage only, in line with their new policy and approach, will require a capital programme in the region of £8M. It also notes that without physical changes to the road, speed compliance may be poor.

“This Council therefore resolves that any proposed reductions in speed limits to 20mph should be funded by the applicant(s), and be assessed by and supported by the Council’s Road Safety team and all local members. It also requires that all schemes should meet the DfT’s criteria for 20mph limits and be self-enforcing. No expectation should be generated that the Thames Valley Police or the Buckinghamshire Council will enforce these schemes.

In view of the potential cost of eligible schemes the council will normally only implement them where/when resources are available and when the requesting parish, town council or Committee contributes towards the cost of implementation.”

Councillor S Broadbent advised members that the proposed motion strengthened the process for 20mph speed limits where schemes met Department for Transport

(DfT) guidelines. He described the measures that made 20mph zones effective, and explained that 20mph speed limits should only be put in place where they would be effective, and where they would not be a burden to the police. It was noted that a DfT assessment of zones with 20mph limits indicated that, on average, there was a 1mph reduction in speed of travel in those areas. Recent speed assessments in areas of Buckinghamshire reflected the national assessment findings. The Cabinet Member recognised the concern of residents with regards to speed, and urged speed watching to continue. The budget relating to road safety had been trebled this year, but it was not expected to fund 20mph speed limits where deemed unlikely to be effective in managing speed.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Martin Tett, spoke to the motion and described the complexities of 20mph speed limits. Councillor Tett advised members that where 20mph speed limits were proposed, it was recommended that local ward members sign off proposals before they are taken forward. Further, that the Road Safety Team have determined that any such proposals enhance road safety.

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Peter Cooper, and seconded by Councillor Stuart Wilson -

~~“This council notes that Thames Valley Police have changed their previous stance of opposing the implementation of 20mph speed limits, although TVP will not currently be pro-actively enforcing them. Thames Valley Police, whilst now supportive in principle of 20mph, do so on the basis that to be effective it must be in the ‘right location’ and have a suitable physical environment to ensure 20mph is adhered to i.e. they are self-enforcing. Thames Valley Police are clear that they will not currently be pro-actively enforcing revised limits.~~

This council also notes that ~~whilst~~ 20mph speed limits are ~~initially~~ popular with **Town and Parish Councils and their many residents**, research by the Department for Transport shows that there has only been a small reduction in median speed (less than 1mph) where these have been introduced. **and that there is strong evidence from organisations such as ROSPA to conclude that pedestrian fatalities reduce from 8% with vehicle speed of 30mph, to 1.5% at 20mph.** ~~There is also insufficient evidence to conclude that~~ There has been a significant **change reduction** in collisions and casualties following the introduction of 20mph limits. ~~in residential areas.~~ **It is also noted that 20mph limits in residential areas contribute positively to quieter, safer and cleaner neighbourhoods and help promote healthy environmentally friendly forms of transport, such as walking and cycling.** Evidence suggests that average speeds tend to fall to compliant levels only on roads where previous average speeds were already low, i.e., around 24 mph

Furthermore, many UK local authorities including neighbouring Oxfordshire County Council, **now have a county-wide 20mph speed limit policy for residential areas.** Oxfordshire estimate that to ~~replace~~ **reduce** the majority of 30mph limits with **to 20mph, investing in signage only, in line with their new policy and approach,** will require a capital ~~programme~~ **investment** in the region of £8M **spread**

over the whole period of its implementation. By means of its policy SLP1, Oxfordshire County Council will promote 20mph as the default limit for residential, villages and retail areas to ensure speeds are appropriate to the nature of the environment and location. ~~It also notes that without physical changes to the road, speed compliance may be poor.~~

~~“This Council therefore resolves that any proposed reductions in speed limits to 20mph~~ to support the principle of 20mph speed limits on the understanding that schemes promoted by Town or Parish Councils should be assessed and supported by the Buckinghamshire Council’s Road Safety team and all relevant local members, and should be funded by the applicant(s). It also requires that all schemes should meet the DfT’s criteria for 20mph limits and be largely self-enforcing. ~~No expectation should be generated that the Thames Valley Police or the Buckinghamshire Council will enforce these schemes.~~

In view of the potential cost of eligible schemes the council will normally only implement them where/when resources are available and when the requesting parish, town council or Committee contributes towards the cost of implementation.”

Councillor Peter Cooper spoke to the amended motion, and explained how 20mph speed limits could contribute to making communities better and safer places to live, as well as greener through encouraging walking and cycling.

It was felt by some members that the amendment suggested that 20mph speed limits were an effective measure in reducing speeding, contrary to evidence and academic research. It was also felt that the amendment lacked evidence in its suggestion that 20mph speed limits would bring environmental benefits, and that lower speeds did not necessarily equate to lower emissions. It was noted that the original motion made clear DfT guidance on 20mph speed limits. The council were investing approximately £2.6m in active travel in this year alone.

Other members felt that the amendment strengthened the motion, and changed the tone of the motion to a more positive tone which encouraged work in the best interest of communities. Members were advised that research showed that a 1mph reduction in speed achieved a reduction in collisions. The original and amended motions were clear that the applicant(s) should cover the costs of such schemes.

By a show of hands, the amendment was **lost** at a vote.

Members then spoke to the original motion. Further explanation was given to the expense that such blanket schemes could cost to the taxpayer. The Cabinet Member for Transport reiterated that the right solutions to speeding should be put in place at the right time with the right funding.

By a show of hands, the original motion was **carried** at a vote.

Resolved:

that any proposed reductions in speed limits to 20mph should be funded by the applicant(s), and be assessed by and supported by the Council's Road Safety team and all local members. It also requires that all schemes should meet the DfT's criteria for 20mph limits and be self-enforcing. No expectation should be generated that the Thames Valley Police or the Buckinghamshire Council will enforce these schemes.

In view of the potential cost of eligible schemes the council will normally only implement them where/when resources are available and when the requesting parish, town council or Committee contributes towards the cost of implementation.

13 Questions on Notice from Members

The written responses to questions from members, published as a supplement to the agenda, were noted.

14 Report for information - Key Decisions Report

A list of decisions taken by the Leader since the last Full Council meeting on 15 September 2021 were received and noted.

15 Date of Next Meeting

4pm, Wednesday 23 February 2022.