



## Council minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 23 February 2022 in Buckinghamshire Council, Gateway Offices, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury, HP19 8FF, commencing at 4.00 pm and concluding at 7.31 pm.

### Members present

Z Mohammed, D Dhillon, S Adoh, D Anthony, K Ashman, R Bagge, K Bates, A Baughan, J Baum, P Birchley, D Blamires, A Bond, M Bracken, C Branston, S Broadbent, N Brown, S Bowles, P Brazier, T Broom, T Butcher, M Caffrey, R Carington, D Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, J Chilver, A Christensen, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, E Culverhouse, I Darby, T Dixon, M Dormer, P Drayton, T Egleton, P Fealey, M Fayyaz, E Gemmell, P Gomm, D Goss, S Guy, G Hall, G Harris, M Harker OBE, C Harriss, O Hayday, C Heap, T Hogg, G Hollis, I Hussain, M Hussain JP, M Hussain, T Hussain, P Irwin, Cllr C Jackson, C Jones, J Jordan, P Kelly, R Khan, D King, M Knight, S Lambert, Cllr A Macpherson, I Macpherson, F Mahon, N Marshall, P Martin, Dr W Matthews, H Mordue, S Morgan, N Naylor, J Ng, R Newcombe, A Osibogun, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, W Raja, M Rand, S Rouse, G Sandy, G Smith, L Smith BEM, M Smith, B Stanier Bt, M Stannard, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, D Summers, M Tett, D Thompson, D Town, J Towns, A Turner, M Turner, A Waite, H Wallace, M Walsh, J Wassell, J Waters, A Wheelhouse, W Whyte, S Wilson, M Winn and A Wood

### Agenda Item

#### 1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors A Alam, M Ayub, M Baldwin, D Barnes, P Bass, S Chhokar, A Collingwood, M Collins, C Etholen, M Flys, R Gaffney, R Gaster, T Green, P Griffin, D Hayday, T Hunter-Watts, A Hussain, Maz Hussain, N Hussain, S James, D Johncock, S Kayani, J MacBean, R Matthews, C Oliver, Sarfaraz Raja, N Rana, J Rush, N Southworth, L Sullivan, N Thomas, P Turner, G Wadhwa, L Walsh, J Ward, D Watson, G Williams and K Wood. Apologies had also been received from the Lord Lieutenant (Lady Howe) and the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire (Mr George Anson).

#### 2 Minutes

Following clarification that motions took effect from the date at which they were passed, it was

**RESOLVED –**

**That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 24 November 2021 be approved as a correct record.**

**3 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest. The Chairman clarified that any payment of, or liability to pay, council tax did not create a disclosable pecuniary interest as defined in the national rules; hence being a council tax payer did not mean that Members would need a dispensation to take part in the business of setting the council tax or precept or local arrangements for council tax support (Agenda item 7).

**4 Chairman's Update**

The Chairman welcomed Members of the Council to the meeting. The Chairman thanked and recognised the hard work of all officers, contractors and Members who were involved in helping to minimise the disruption caused by the recent storms and who had gone above and beyond to help residents and keep vital services running.

The Chairman reported that the Council had been very active in tree planting over the past year and had planted many trees, both as part of the Queen's Green Canopy and the Buckinghamshire Council Tree Planting initiative. The Chairman looked forward to many more trees being planted over the coming months and years and advised that he would be planting a tree at one of the Council's civic venues on 11 March to recognise the 70<sup>th</sup> day of HM The Queen's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of service. The Chairman wished HM The Queen a speedy recovery from her recent illness.

The Chairman paid tribute to the hard work and dedication of the Children's Services team and Cabinet Member for the positive Ofsted report, moving from inadequate to requiring improvement to be good.

Members of the Council were thanked for their gift donations at the last full Council meeting which supported vulnerable and young people, these were very much appreciated by Inspire Bucks. Members of the Council were also thanked for their Easter Egg donations to support the Florence Nightingale Charity.

**5 Petitions**

There were none.

**6 Chief Financial Officer's Statutory Report**

The Chairman welcomed Mr R Ambrose, the Council's Section 151 Officer to the meeting. Mr Ambrose presented his report, highlighting that the Medium Term Financial Plan had been subject to frequent and rigorous challenge and review during its development, including the public meetings of the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry group held in January 2022.

Members were informed that the budget proposals recommended by the Cabinet

were robust and sustainable. Although there continued to be uncertainty beyond 2022/23, a three-year budgeting process had been undertaken, in line with the timeframes of the government's Spending Review announced in October 2021. This medium-term financial planning process ensured that the annual budget for 2022/23 had been developed within the context of longer-term sustainability. This enabled risks and issues to be considered over a longer time period and to develop prudent estimates in order to understand the extent of the budgeting challenge ahead. In addition, the multi-year process allowed for the development of longer-term savings proposals, to ensure that the full benefits of becoming a Unitary Council could be realised.

The opening position on General Fund reserves (unallocated) for financial year 2022/23 was forecast to be £47.1m. This balance represents 6.6% of the gross operating budget (excluding the Dedicated Schools Grant). Earmarked reserves were sufficient to cover all expected commitments against them, including approximately £10.4m for the cost of transformation as the new Council further developed its future operating model.

Following a concern raised around the ability of the Council to cope with significant risks to the budget, particularly around school transport for children with Special Educational Needs, Mr Ambrose explained that whilst there were a range of uncertainties including potential covid impact, complexity of needs changing, increased demand on services and lack of clarity on Government funding from 2023/24, for what was known at the present time the budget was robust.

#### **RESOLVED –**

**That the report be noted.**

#### **0 2022/23 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme**

The Chairman invited Councillor M Tett, Leader of Buckinghamshire Council, to introduce the report to Members on the proposed 2022/23 revenue budget and capital programme for Buckinghamshire Council. It was noted that the Council Tax Resolution (Appendix 4) was found in the supplementary agenda pack.

The following key points were highlighted:

- Councillor Tett thanked all those who had helped shape the budget, this included majority members of the Portfolio Challenge groups, Cabinet Members, the cross-party Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group, the Chief Executive and her Senior Leadership Team as well as the Section 151 Officer.
- The budget had been prepared in a time of uncertainty, with the effects of Covid still present and the unexpected Omicron variant that appeared last December having further impacted Council services and finances. Areas of uncertainty which would have far reaching budgetary implications included social and economic recovery; the Levelling Up White Paper; uncertainties around social care, both in volume and complexity and the potential instability in the provider market; levels of commuting and the effect on parking income, and future office working styles. There were further uncertainties around inflation, and energy costs.

- The Council had to respond to these changes and support residents as they occurred. This would involve a significant focus on retraining and new skills to enable people to transition into jobs in new growth sectors of the economy.
- Part of the uncertainty from Covid meant that just a one-year Revenue budget had been produced for 2021/22. A four-year Capital Budget had, however been produced. This year a return to a three-year Revenue budget was proposed to give greater certainty to services, residents and community and voluntary groups. The overall revenue budget, with each Portfolios element expanded, could be found in **Appendix 1**, whilst the overall Capital Programme could be seen in **Appendix 2**.
- Details of all proposed budget changes could be found in **Appendix 3**.
- The Council had only been given a one-year financial settlement by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This brought significant risk as it was suspected that one of the key reasons for a single year settlement was the prospect of a reform of the financing of local government.
- Whilst Covid had disrupted some services, the Council had delivered a number of key achievements. Councillor Tett highlighted the new Chilterns Lifestyle Centre, £100m Road and pavement investment programme, launch of the Climate Change Strategy with 550,000 trees being planted, statement of intent to move to electric waste vehicles, new EV charging points, excellent flytipping enforcement, welcoming some of the Afghan refugees and the Helping Hand programme which supported financially challenged residents.
- Many Councils had seen income streams decrease significantly and incur vast expenditure. Councillor Tett acknowledged a number of other local authorities had been issued a section 114 notice, highlighting the importance of prudent and wise spending of tax payers money.
- Adults and Children's Social Care remained the two biggest areas of expenditure, representing approximately 60% of all non-school service expenditure. Whilst central Government claimed costs for Adults Social Care, including the social care precepts, would be 'cost neutral', there were areas that remained to be discussed. This included the impact of the removal of the ability of the care sector to cross subsidise between bulk purchases by Councils and self-funders as well as the ability of Councils to meet the 'Fair Cost of Care' which was expected to be higher than the rates Councils currently pay.
- To mitigate risks, cautious contingencies had been proposed. Within the budget there were proposals for near £44m of efficiencies and savings, along with some increased income from charges which would be very challenging to deliver.
- Due to the pressures of increased expenditure a small amount of unallocated General Fund Reserves would be used to balance the budget in 2023/24, although it was anticipated this would be a one off occurrence. General Fund reserves were forecast to be £47m (2022/23) then £45.6m for 2023/24 and 2024/25 respectively.
- Over £524m would be spent over the next four years through an ambitious Capital Programme. The Council was committed to clearing every drain annually, commencing the regeneration of town centres, providing affordable housing, purchasing more energy efficient waste vehicles and working on the provision of a new Household Recycling Site in the north of the county.

- Within the budget there was a commitment to strategic projects such as the Ring Roads around Aylesbury, the Abbey barn scheme and the Aylesbury Eastern Link Road, amongst others.
- The Basic Council tax increase proposed was 1.99% despite general inflation in excess of 5%, in addition to which the Council would be accepting the Government's proposal to raise a Social Care precept of 2%. After 2022/23 the budget assumed that the Social Care precept would be capped at no more than 1%. Both of these taxes equated to an extra £1.23p per week for an average Band D Council tax payer. The recently announced Council Tax Rebate would help with the rising energy costs for those residents paying council tax in properties up to and including Band D. A discretionary fund was expected to target people in need who were above or below the eligibility.

Councillor Tett commended the budget to Council and moved the recommendations as per the report. This was seconded by Councillor S Bowles.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, the Chairman then invited Councillor Lambert, as Leader of the Alliance Group (main opposition group) to comment on the budget proposals. The following main points were noted:

- Mr Lambert thanked the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group for their work in scrutinising the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme in addition to thanking officers across services for their efforts throughout the various challenges of the past year.
- That savings identified in the unitary business case were not yet being realised, and whilst the budget was balanced for 2022/23, reserves would be required for 2023/24.
- A concern was raised that decisions were being made by a small number of Members and that the proposed budget did not reflect all Members' priorities.
- That Community Boards were key for local engagement and there was disappointment that the Boards funding had been reduced during the current financial year and within the proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 onwards. This affected the ability to fund important community projects and the Council's relationship with partners.
- That the Better Lives Strategy did not match with the Government intention to allow private paying residents access to the same rates paid by the local authority, and that as a result the Council would require a significant amount of additional expertise on the care market. The budget did not include an allowance to employ a number of additional procurement specialists.
- That more should be done to transfer assets to town and parish councils under covenants to improve areas such as playing pitches and outdoor gyms which improve health and wellbeing, thus reducing burden on public health spend. Further, expedited devolution would enable the removal of 'special expenses' lines within the budget.
- VCS organisations were key to delivering key aspects of support to residents and should have a good level of consistent grants throughout the revenue budget period.

- That additional investment was required within the Childrens' and Education portfolio on targeted support to reduce the attainment gap within Buckinghamshire.
- That climate change should have been a line item included within every portfolio's budget.
- That additional work was required to ensure adequate infrastructure was in place across Buckinghamshire for high level EV charging.
- Further detail should have been contained in the budget around the Household Recycling Centre plans in Buckingham and Princes Risborough.
- The Buckinghamshire Local Plan required stability in the workforce producing it and more should have been included within the budget around planning recruitment and 'grow your own' schemes.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Lambert for his comments and invited Councillor Wilson to speak on behalf of the IMPACT Alliance grouping. The following main points were noted:

- Councillor Wilson thanked the Officers for their hard work on the budget.
- Concern was expressed that the budget had been presented prior to a new Corporate Plan being produced. Further concern was that 40% of the Councils performance KPIs for the latest quarter were amber or red rated, of which 75% were red.
- That Cabinet Members had promised to deliver strategies that had indeterminate delivery dates and opportunities to achieve savings were being delayed. Councillor Wilson used the example of repurposing or fully leveraging council owned properties needing to be expedited.
- Better Buckinghamshire savings should be delivered and then delivered again. Where a service achieved a saving in year 1, it should not be presumed that these services continually receive the same budget year on year.
- That special expenses should not be labelled 'special' indefinitely and removing these would free up headroom for vital services.
- That Adult and Childrens Social Care was moving in the right direction and the Social Work Academy was an excellent initiative which could be developed further.
- With so many community organisations reliant on Council funding, Community Board and Voluntary Sector Grant, cuts could have significant consequences for children, communities and the environment.
- Concerns were raised that EV charging funding levels bore no resemblance to the scale of the requirement; that funding was inadequate for the local plan if there were to be significant changes in the upcoming White Paper; and around the modelling presumptions for the uptake of green waste collection in High Wycombe.
- That a more urgent approach to Climate Change was required. Members and residents required education, cross portfolio working was key, brown before green was needed for developments, vehicle emissions needed to be minimised through better transport policies and tighter roadwork windows and a reduction in food use should be encouraged. The Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy needed to be costed and funded correctly.

At the conclusion, the Chairman thanked Councillor Wilson for his comments.

The Chairman then opened up debate on the budget and invited questions and comments from Members. The following issues were highlighted and responded to by the Leader or Cabinet Members:

- Playing pitches and devolution of assets to town and parish councils.
- The importance of meaningful well paid jobs and access to training for residents across Buckinghamshire.
- Special expenses and the High Wycombe Governance review of the unparished area.
- EV charging points and the allocated £200k per annum contained within the budget.
- The large percentage increases of Aylesbury and Amersham Town Councils precept levels respectively.
- The new Domestic Abuse Act, its importance to vulnerable families and its budget implications.
- Investments in roads and pavements.
- Community Boards and their important roles in supporting the Council's localism agenda, including what they could achieve on the budgets proposed.
- The heavy traffic congestion in Aylesbury and importance of the link roads.
- £12m electricity grid re-enforcement works commencing this coming year in and around Aylesbury
- Pockets of deprivation within Buckinghamshire.
- Children's Services continuing to improve on their 'needs requirement to be good' Ofsted rating.
- The significant capital investment in growing school place capacity.
- The proposed household recycling centre in the North of the county to support the housing growth in the area.

The Chairman thanked everyone for their questions and comments and reminded members that there was a legal requirement for a recorded vote to be taken on the budget. The Chairman also informed Members that he intended to take a recorded vote, en bloc, for all of the budget recommendations.

The vote was recorded as follows:

**FOR (78):** Councillors Adoh, Anthony, Ashman, Bagge, Baum, Birchley, Blamires, Bond, Bowles, Bracken, Branston, Brazier, Broadbent, Broom, Brown, Butcher, Caffrey, Carington, Carroll, B Chapple, S Chapple, Chaudry, Chilver, Cornell, Cranmer, Culverhouse, Dhillon, Dormer, Egleton, Gomm, Goss, Hall, Harker, G Harris, C Harriss, Heap, Hogg, Mahboob Hussain, Irwin, Jackson, Jones, Jordan, Kelly, King, A Macpherson, I Macpherson, Mahon, Marshall, Martin, W Matthews, Mohammed, Mordue, Naylor, Newcombe, Ng, Osibogun, Poll, Rand, Rouse, Sandy, L Smith, Stanier, Stannard, Strachan, Summers, Tett, Thompson, Town, Towns, A Turner, M Turner, Waite, Wallace, M Walsh, Waters, Whyte, Winn and A Wood.

**AGAINST (21):** Councillors Baughan, Christensen, Cooper, Dixon, Drayton, Fayyaz, Gemmell, Guy, I Hussain, Majid Hussain, T Hussain, Khan, Knight, Lambert, Morgan, Poland-Goodyer, W Raja, G Smith, M Smith, Wassell and Wilson

**ABSTENTIONS (4):** Councillors Cllrs Bates, O Hayday, Stuchbury and Wheelhouse

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme (Appendices 1-3) be approved.**
- (2) That the Council Tax Resolution (Appendix 4) be approved.**
- (3) That the ‘Special Expenses’ budgets, precepts and associated services for Aylesbury Town, High Wycombe Town and West Wycombe Church Yard (Appendices 5 & 6) be approved.**
- (4) That Cabinet be delegated authority to make decisions to add up to £100m to the capital programme, to be funded by Prudential Borrowing.**
- (5) That the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy (Appendix 7) be approved.**
- (6) That authority be delegated to the Leader, in consultation with the s.151 Officer, to make any technical changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme as required from legislation concerning the £150 Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme, together with any changes required to implement any new discretionary schemes linked to the discretionary funding allocated**

*Note: Councillors I Darby, P Fealey and G Hollis left the meeting prior to the recorded vote taking place.*

## **8 Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23**

Councillor T Butcher, Deputy Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets introduced Buckinghamshire Council’s Treasury Management Strategy 2022-23, which was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that it was a requirement for each local authority to approve a Treasury Management Strategy by 1 April each year. This strategy had been developed in line with the CIPFA code of practice.

Following a competitive tendering process, Link Treasury Services Limited (Link) were appointed as the Council’s treasury advisor with effect from 1 August 2021. This appointment had resulted in the Treasury Management Strategy being presented in an alternative way to that which Members may have been used to in the past. Changes to the Treasury Management Survey included introducing the definition of specified and non-specified investments. Specified investments were those with a high level of credit quality and subject to a maturity limit of one year or had less than a year left to run to maturity if originally they were classified as being nonspecified investments solely due to the maturity period exceeding one year. Nonspecified investments were those with less high credit quality, may be for periods in excess of one year, and/or are more complex instruments which require greater consideration by Members and officers before being authorised for use.



The Council had also determined that it would only use approved counterparties from the UK and from countries with a minimum sovereign credit rating of AA- from Fitch (or equivalent), previously the minimum sovereign credit rating was AA. The cash limit for AA+, AA and AA- sovereign rated foreign countries is £10m per country. The cash limit for AAA sovereign rated countries is £20m per country. In addition, no more than a total of £40m will be placed with any non-UK countries at any time.

The Strategy had been discussed at length by the Audit and Governance Committee and recommended on to Council for approval.

Members raised questions around exchange rate fluctuations; investments in other local authorities; and investments in countries with known political or human rights issues. Councillor Butcher advised that there was no exchange rate exposure for any of the Council's investments, that any investment in local authorities came with a Government guarantee and there had been no cases of local authorities having not repaid loans. If a section 114 notice had been issued against a local authority any investment opportunity would be referred to the Councils section 151 Officer. Assurance was given that there was no investment exposure to Russia, Hong Kong or Qatar as the Council's policy is to invest only in AAA rated sovereign rated countries.

Councillor Butcher moved the recommendation to approve the Treasury Management Strategy. This was seconded by Councillor Newcombe.

**RESOLVED –**

- (1) That the Treasury Management Strategy 2022-23 be approved.**
- (2) That the operational boundary for external borrowing, the authorised limit for external borrowing, the maturity structure of borrowing and the upper limit for principal sums invested for longer than 365 days be approved.**

**9 Capital and Investment Strategy <sup>1</sup>**

Councillor J Chilver, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources, Property and Assets introduced the draft Capital and Investment Strategy 2022/23, attached as Appendix 1 to the report. It was noted that the council was required to approve its capital and investment strategy on an annual basis and that it had been developed in line with the CIPFA and MHCLG guidance.

The Capital and Investment Strategy provided the framework within which to deliver the Council's Corporate Plan objectives through the effective investment of its limited capital resources. As well as the Councils immediate statutory responsibilities, the strategy also reflected the important role that it had to play in the regeneration and growth, affordable housing and climate change agendas, especially in the context of a post-Covid recovery and the significant housing growth

in the area.

Members raised questions around demographic change and growth assumptions; repurposing of the Council's property estate; consistency in using wording from the Council's Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy across all Council strategies; Community Infrastructure Levy funds from developments in the former Wycombe district area; and the Council's stance on providing social housing.

Councillor Chilver advised that demographic change and housing growth figures were based on the latest data supplied to the Council and was used to calculate school places, amongst other areas. This data needed to be included as much of the funding received for housing growth was covered by the Government Housing Infrastructure fund. Whilst the overall total may not be as predicted, there were significant demographic changes in areas such as the older population requiring additional support for care and in areas such as the disabled facilities grant.

A report on the Council's Estates Strategy would be presented to Cabinet in the Summer, this would set out the Council's plans on property rationalisation. The pace of delivery was constrained as there was a need to collect data and evidence on office usage post-covid and pilot projects were due to be rolled out in certain office spaces as part of the Work Smart Strategy. The Estates Strategy would also integrate with the Town Centre Regeneration Strategies. Councillor Chilver advised that the Council had successfully let vacant office space at Easton Street, High Wycombe, 66 High Street, Aylesbury, KGVH House, Amersham and Queen Victoria Road, High Wycombe offices.

Councillor Chilver reported that reference was made within the Strategy to the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy, with the strategy detailing how mitigations would be delivered including, building rationalisation, energy efficiencies in buildings, using electric vehicles, solar car ports and the tree planting initiative.

CIL contributions in the former Wycombe district area were included in the capital budget as a source of income, although unlike S106 agreements these were not guaranteed and the Council had to bid for it. Town and Parish Councils also received an element of CIL and this was included within the strategy.

In relation to affordable housing, Councillor Chilver advised that the Council was working on achieving the right balance of providing affordable properties and key worker housing whilst delivering capital receipts on property holdings. A significant amount was included in the capital budget for delivery of housing on Council land and a number of projects were in the pipeline. A position paper on affordable housing would be presented to Cabinet in the coming months.

Councillor Chilver moved the recommendation to approve the Capital and Investment Strategy. This was seconded by Councillor Newcombe.

**RESOLVED –**

**That the Capital and Investment Strategy 2022-23, detailed at Appendix 1, be approved.**

**10 Report on Public Sector Audit Appointment (PSAA)**

Council received a report, similar to one that had been considered by the Audit and Governance Committee on 25 January 2022, that set out proposals for appointing the external auditor to the Council for the accounts for the five-year period from 2023/24. The current auditor, Grant Thornton, had been appointed as external auditors of the new unitary authority by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) until the end of 2022/23. The auditor appointed at the end of the procurement process would undertake the statutory audit of accounts and Value for Money assessment of the Council in each financial year, in accordance with all relevant codes of practice and guidance. The appointed auditor would also be responsible for investigating questions raised by electors and had powers and responsibilities in relation to Public Interest Reports and statutory recommendations.

The Council had a choice of the way that it appointed its external auditors, via the following options:

- (i) Option 1: National Auditor Appointment Scheme - opt into the arrangements offered by PSAA – benefits, that were explained at Section 3 of the report.
- (ii) Option 2: Own procurement arrangement following the procedures in the Act – Challenges, that were detailed in Section 4 of the report.
- (iii) Option 3: To act jointly with other authorities to procure an auditor following the procedures in the Act – the challenges were the same as for Option 2, detailed in Section 4 of the report.

Following consideration of the report by the Audit and Governance Committee, their recommendation to full Council was that Option 1 should be approved.

Councillor R Newcombe, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee, moved the recommendation to approve the appointment of the external auditors (Option 1). This was seconded by Councillor D Goss.

**RESOLVED –**

**That the Council opt into the arrangements offered by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the appointment of External Auditors from April 2023 (Option 1), as endorsed by the Audit and Governance Committee on 25 January 2022.**

**11 New Statement of Licensing Policy under the Gambling Act 2005**

Council received a report, similar to one considered by the Licensing Committee on 2 February 2022. In accordance with the Gambling Act 2005 the Buckinghamshire Council, in its role as Licensing Authority, was responsible for regulating certain premises-based gambling activities within the Council's area. The Council carried out this function by granting premises licence and permits and receiving notices and registrations for gambling-based activities. The Council was also responsible for the

associated enforcement activity to ensure compliance under the Act. The Council's full functions under the Act were shown in Section 8 of the draft Policy, Appendix 1 to the Council report.

The predominant gambling activities regulated by Buckinghamshire Council related to betting shops, adult gaming centres, bingo premises, gaming and gaming machines and registering small society lotteries. The Council shared responsibility for regulating gambling activities with the Gambling Commission. The Gambling Commission are the national regulator for gambling and were responsible for issuing operator licences and personal licences (where required), regulating online gambling and the National Lottery, and issuing guidance to local licensing authorities.

Under section 349 of the Act, the Council was required to prepare and publish a Statement of Licensing Policy, ('Policy'), which set out its approach to the consideration and determination of applications made under the Act and any subsequent necessary compliance and enforcement action. As with the Licensing Act 2003, the way the Council performed its duties under the Act was guided by prescribed objectives. For the purposes of regulating gambling activities these objectives were:

- (i) preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder, or being used to support crime.
- (ii) ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way.
- (iii) protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

The Council's licensing service was currently operating under separate legacy policies and fees, reflecting the four former District Council areas. Under the terms of the transitional legislation, Buckinghamshire Council had two years to prepare and publish a new single policy under the Act and align service provision. The deadline for publication and implementation of the new Policy was no later than 1 April 2022. The new Policy must be published at least four weeks before it is effective, the deadline for publication of the Policy was therefore 4 March 2022.

Following a five-week period of public consultation, a new Policy had been drafted and approved by the Licensing Committee with a recommendation that it now be adopted by the Council.

Councillor N Naylor, Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services, moved the recommendation that the Statement of Licensing Policy for Buckinghamshire Council under the Gambling Act 2005, be approved and adopted. This was seconded by Councillor H Wallace, Chairman of the Licensing Committee.

**RESOLVED –**

**That the Statement of Licensing Policy for Buckinghamshire Council under the Gambling Act 2005, be APPROVED and ADOPTED, to take effect from 1 April 2022.**

**12 Report for information - Key Decisions Report**

Full Council received for information a list of decisions taken by Cabinet Members since the last Council meeting.

**13 Date of Next Meeting**

4pm, Wednesday 27 April 2022.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that the following correction was made to the Capital and Investment Strategy subsequent to the Council meeting. Paragraph 2.2.1 in the strategy (page 272 of the agenda) is replaced with the following paragraph:

“The population of Buckinghamshire has grown on average by 0.7% each year for the last two decades. In real terms, there were 68,740 more people in the county in 2020 than there were at the turn of the millennium. Population in the county is expected to continue to grow for the next two decades and the Council needs to take account of these changes in planning its future service provision. The Council in partnership with other agencies, the Local Enterprise Partnership, in particular, has responsibility for facilitating the infrastructure to promote economic growth. The latest available ONS data predicts that the population will rise from 545,925 in 2020 to 567,303 by 2033 (Source: ONS 2018 MYE Sub National Population Projections). Analysis of current planning permissions and local plan sites indicate housing growth of up to 32,000 additional dwellings in Buckinghamshire between 2020 to 2033 which, if delivered to expected timeframes, would lead to population increases well beyond those currently predicted by the ONS. This level of development not only has implications for new infrastructure but also for the wear and tear on existing infrastructure.”