



Minutes

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 27 APRIL 2022 IN THE OCULUS, THE GATEWAY, AYLESBURY, COMMENCING AT 4.00 PM AND CONCLUDING AT 7.56 PM

MEMBERS PRESENT

Z Mohammed (Chairman of the Council), D Dhillon (Vice-Chairman of the Council), A Alam, M Angell, D Anthony, M Ayub, R Bagge, D Barnes, S Barrett, P Bass, K Bates, J Baum, P Birchley, D Blamires, 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, S Chhokar, J Chilver, L Clarke OBE, A Collingwood, M Collins, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, I Darby, T Dixon, T Egleton, C Etholen, P Fealey, M Flys, R Gaster, E Gemmell, P Gomm, D Goss, S Guy, G Hall, M Harker OBE, C Harriss, D Hayday, O Hayday, C Heap, T Hogg, G Hollis, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, P Irwin, S James, D Johncock, C Jones, J Jordan, S Kayani, P Kelly, R Khan, D King, M Knight, S Lambert, J MacBean, Cllr A Macpherson, I Macpherson, F Mahon, N Marshall, P Martin, R Matthews, Dr W Matthews, H Mordue, S Morgan, N Naylor, J Ng, R Newcombe, C Oliver, A Osibogun, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, S Raja, W Raja, M Rand, S Rouse, G Smith, L Smith BEM, M Smith, N Southworth, M Stannard, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, D Summers, M Tett, N Thomas, D Thompson, D Town, J Towns, A Turner, P Turner, G Wadhwa, A Waite, H Wallace, L Walsh, M Walsh, J Ward, J Wassell, J Waters, D Watson, A Wheelhouse, W Whyte, G Williams, S Wilson, M Winn, A Wood and K Wood

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Lady Howe (Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire)

Agenda Item

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors S Adoh, K Ashman, M Baldwin, A Baughan, A Bond, Q Chaudhry, A Christensen, E Culverhouse, M Dormer, P Drayton, M Fayyaz, T Green, P Griffin, G Harris, T Hunter-Watts, Mahboob Hussain, C Jackson, N Rana, G Sandy, Sir B Stanier, and L Sullivan. Apologies were also received from Ms D Brock, High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire.

1A MR TONY MOGFORD AND MR JOHN COLE

Tribute was paid to two past councillors, Mr Tony Mogford and Mr John Cole, who had recently passed away. The Chairman recorded sincere condolences to both families on their sad losses.

Mr Mogford had served on the Aylesbury Rural District Council and also been a Member of Aylesbury Vale District Council from 1974 to 1982, representing the Wendover Ward, and a County Council Member from 1970 to 1985 representing Aylesbury Rural No.5 (Wendover) Division.

Mr Mogford had been the first ever Chairman of Aylesbury Vale District Council in 1974-76. For 35 years he had been chairman of Wendover Community Trust (now the Lionel Abel Smith Trust). In 1999 he had received the MBE for education, and work in the community of Buckinghamshire.

Mr John Cole had been a Member of Aylesbury Vale District Council from 1999 to 2003 representing the Wendover Ward, who during his time on the Council sat on the Development, Economic Development and Environment Scrutiny Committee.

Members then observed a minute`s silence in memory of Tony Mogford and John Cole.

2 MINUTES

Councillor S Wilson stated that the previous minutes in respect of item 9, Capital Investment Strategy, did not mention some of the points he had raised during the debate. Councillor Wilson had highlighted to the Cabinet Member the need to understand the assumptions made behind Growth and democratic changes in Buckinghamshire as noted in section 2.2 of the relevant report. Councillor Wilson stated he had also mentioned that most of the forecast growth from 551,000 to 567,000 in 2033 would take place in the Aylesbury area. The current Local Plan indicated housing growth of 46,500 and an estimated population increase from 567,000 to 638,000 which he believed to be inaccurate figures on which to base the Capital Investment Strategy.

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2022 be approved as a correct record subject to the above change.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor R Carington declared a personal interest in agenda item 13, specifically the notice of motion on food poverty, as a trustee of the Buckinghamshire Food Partnership.

Councillor T Dixon declared a personal interest in agenda item 13, specifically the notice of motion on food poverty, as a trustee of the Aylesbury Food Bank.

Councillor S Raja declared a personal interest in agenda item 13, specifically the notice of motion on food poverty, as a trustee of the One Can Trust.

4 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed the appointment in April 2022 of the new High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, Ms D Brock, succeeding the previous High Sheriff, Mr G Anson. The Chairman wished Ms Brock well in the role. The Chairman reported that he had continued to be involved with the Council's tree planting initiatives and in March had attended Billett Fields, Black Park along with Councillors Harriss, Strachan, Jordan and Matthews on a day where 500 trees had been planted. Over 3,500 had been planted on that site in total.

The Chairman advised that the Chairman's church service had been held in Hambleden on 6 March and had been very well attended. The Chairman placed his thanks on record to the Reverend for allowing the event to happen and to all those who had attended.

The end of year Chairman's reception was scheduled for 9 May and invites for the event had been issued, the Chairman welcomed Members to attend where possible.

The Chairman also reported that he had been given a tour of the Princes Centre, in Princes Risborough, and recognized the hard work of staff and volunteers in making the centre, which looked after elderly residents and adults with learning difficulties and mental health issues, the great place it had become.

5 PETITIONS

There were none.

6 CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH

Buckinghamshire Council's Corporate Plan set out what the Council wanted to achieve and how this would be done, addressing the challenges faced and harnessing opportunities as they presented themselves.

The current plan had been approved in February 2020. A light-touch review of it had been undertaken to reflect key events and changes in priorities since the drafting of the plan in 2019/20. The revised plan reflected the impact of the pandemic on the Council's priorities, together with other key developments such as new national legislation.

The Leader introduced a draft of the refreshed Corporate Plan that could be seen attached at Appendix 1 to the Council report. The plan was intended to cover the period until 2025, in accordance with the current Council term, and would continue to be subject to an annual refresh. The review and refresh also accorded with recommendation 1 of the 2022 Budget Scrutiny Inquiry to review the Corporate Plan prior to the end of the financial year.

During the debate, Members highlighted the following points:

- Members supported the Corporate Plan refresh and encouraged wider engagement with members on future refreshes of the plan to ensure it covered all areas adequately.
- it was suggested that the refresh of the Corporate Plan would have been beneficial for members of the Budget Scrutiny Inquiry Group to have seen prior to the undertaking of the budget scrutiny exercise. The national uncertainties and pressures residents faced including high inflation were raised and a member expressed dissatisfaction with the way population figures had to be calculated for different strategies of the Council which meant that figures could appear inconsistent across published documents.
- that they welcomed close working with Town and Parish Councils and requested more detail as to how this would happen.
- The Leader highlighted that the Corporate Plan was a living document that would continue to evolve and reflect the economy and challenges Buckinghamshire faced as it continued the journey out of the covid pandemic. There were detailed metrics that underpinned each of the action plans within the Corporate Plan and Town and Parish Councils were recognised as key partners who the council would continue to work closely with.

The Leader moved the recommendation to adopt the Corporate Plan for the period 2020-25. This was seconded by Councillor D Barnes.

RESOLVED –

That the refreshed Corporate Plan for the period 2020-25 be ADOPTED.

7 HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Transitional Arrangements No.2 Regulations 2008 required a new Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy to be in place by 1 April 2022. Following delays arising from the pandemic and service restructure, work had been undertaken to develop a new draft strategy for consideration and adoption. The Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had been updated and notified of the timetable for adopting the Strategy by the end of April 2022.

The Cabinet Member for Housing, Homelessness and Regulatory Services reported that the Strategy would replace the existing legacy Councils Strategies. A series of stakeholder events had been held during November and December. A draft of the Strategy had been considered by Cabinet in February 2022 and had then been subject to a public consultation process from 21 February to 21 March. The consultation had generated a total of 28 responses, which had shown a very high and consistent level of support for the draft strategy.

Following the completion of the public consultation exercise, the Council had reviewed the draft Strategy document and made a small number of amendments and additions to it. No changes had been made to the key themes and priorities. A small number of areas had been expanded to provide clarification in response to feedback and a small number of additional actions had been included in the Action Plan to provide more details and reflect comments received during the consultation.

A copy of the Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy 2022-2025 was included with the agenda, and comprised of the following sections:

Appendix 1 – A strategy document setting out key findings and the high level priorities and action plan going forward.

Appendix 2 – An evidence base showing the current position including key information on housing and homelessness in Buckinghamshire and emerging themes and challenges. This document also includes a summary of the stakeholder consultation exercise that took place to support preparation of the strategy

The Strategy had been assembled to provide an overview of the current and future homelessness situation in Buckinghamshire and high level priorities and actions for the next three years 2022 – 2025. It would be reviewed annually to ensure that it was fit for purpose. Once adopted, the Council would move forward in updating and revising its existing Homelessness Service Operational Action Plans which sat beneath the Strategy and set out the detail of how the Council and its partners would operationally deliver the priorities in the strategy.

During the debate, points highlighted included:

- that partners had been widely consulted on the strategy. Thanks were expressed to those Members who had attended the Members forum on housing and homelessness and who had made comments which had helped inform the strategy. The figures in the report highlighted the issues Buckinghamshire faced and all those involved with the rough sleepers initiative were applauded for the significant work undertaken since Buckinghamshire became a unitary authority. During 2019/20, an 86% decrease in rough sleepers in Buckinghamshire was seen, which was the second highest in the country. The importance of addressing housing and homelessness was emphasised and it was recognised that there remained work to do.
- the importance of early intervention in preventing homelessness was stressed. Thanks were paid to the housing officer team for their ongoing work in supporting residents.

Some disappointment was expressed that only 28 responses had been received to the consultation. It was suggested that a wider campaign to encourage responses would be useful in future on significant strategies such as this.

- Members placed on record their thanks to the housing officer team who had provided exemplary support to residents.
- Members were advised that in adopting the strategy, priorities could regularly be revisited and adjusted as necessary to inform the actions taken on the ground.

Councillor Naylor moved the recommendation to adopt the Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy for the period 2022-25. This was seconded by Councillor M Winn.

RESOLVED –

That the Buckinghamshire Council Homelessness Strategy 2022-2025 be ADOPTED.

8 ELECTORAL REVIEW OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) had held a consultation on the second stage of the electoral review of Buckinghamshire Council seeking views on a pattern of wards that should apply from the 2025 local election.

This followed the previous consultation on 'council size' by the LGBCE. The Commission was minded to recommend a membership of 98 councillors so proposals were therefore being sought on a pattern of Wards equivalent (so far as possible) to that number of Councillors. As the 'council size' was determined at an earlier stage of the Commission's process, this question could not be re-opened.

While the second stage of the consultation had run until 4 April the LGBCE had confirmed that it would be willing for full Council to formally to approve a submission at its scheduled meeting on 27 April. However, the LGBCE had requested a draft proposal by the end of 4 April and as delegated by Council, a draft submission was made to the Commission by the Standards & General Purposes Committee on 30 March 2022. The draft submission was included as Appendix 1 to this Council report. The Committee had recommended to Council to endorse the draft submission as the Council's formal submission.

In arriving at a draft submission, the Committee had been supported by a cross-party Electoral Review Working Group of the Committee. The Group met twice during February and March to work up the broad set of draft proposals for consideration by the Committee. The draft proposal was agreed by Committee on 17 March. Prior to this, the LGBCE had been invited to deliver briefings to all Buckinghamshire Councillors, and to Parish and Town Councils.

The next formal phase of the review would be the consultation by the Commission on its proposed way forward. If Recommendation 2 was approved by Council, the Committee would intend that the Electoral Review Working Group would continue throughout the next phases of the review to advise the Committee.

In arriving at its draft submission, the Committee had regard to the LGBCE's published guidance and the three statutory criteria for determining a pattern of wards, namely:

- (i) Delivering electoral equality for local voters - given the total forecast electorate of 443,064 by 2027, the average number of electors per councillor, for this review, is 1 councillor per 4,521 electors. The Committee had therefore sought to keep within +/- 10% of that notional figure.
- (ii) Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities.

(iii) Promoting effective and convenient local government.

The Committee had proposed a pattern of 50 Wards based, largely, on two-member representation for each Ward, achieving 98 councillors overall. The draft submission was at Appendix 1. This gave a list of proposed wards and their names together with maps showing them, plus the underlying electorate data.

The Committee had been mindful that 'one size' did not fit all which had resulted in a proposal that includes a mix of one- and two-member representation per ward. In certain cases, the existing Ward structures had not been sustainable, due to factors such as projected development and electorate forecasts up to 2027. As such, the proposals include several suggested changes to boundaries, having regard to community identity and effective governance although many existing Ward arrangements had also been kept where they already reflected good community identity. Changes were marked accordingly in the Annex to this report.

The Committee was aware that there were a small number of areas where further detailed work on certain boundaries was potentially necessary to achieve better community identity. These would be considered further in more detail in the next phases of the review, alongside the Commission. The Committee had been mindful that Buckinghamshire was also a member-led authority which saw its democratic relationship with the electorate and local communities as pivotal to Buckinghamshire's future.

The Committee had considered it important for the Wards to have sufficient Member resilience to sustain this community-based approach and to support the continued operation of the 16 innovative Community Boards. This had included being mindful that the Council's experience of multi-member wards, since the inception of the Council, had been broadly positive, with certain geographies and community dynamics particularly benefitting from this collaborative approach, regardless of political affiliation. As such, having reviewed the basis of the wards and the communities within them, the Committee had felt it right to continue this, where appropriate, based on consolidating community identity and governance.

During the debate, points highlighted included:

- Members paid thanks to officers and Members for all their work in reaching this stage.
- that the review should not have used the current warding arrangements as its starting point and should have started afresh recognising communities and their differences.
- that Wexham was geographically quite different to Denham. Residents had concerns they would not be as well represented as they were presently by being paired with Stoke Poges.
- objections were raised by Members to the proposed arrangements for Booker, Castlefield and Cressex wards which it was felt had been separated without reflecting feedback from local members, the local geography and the wants of the community.
- an issue was raised over the population growth numbers that had been used to aid the formation of ward boundaries. It was stated that the implied growth of 32,000 electors between 2022 and 2027 did not reflect the figures contained within the Corporate Plan, although the numbers published by the Boundary Commission, which had been provided by the Council followed guidance, which set out strict criteria.
- it was emphasised that the second phase of the review was a two stage consultation, the first being on general warding patterns and the second to look at the details of where boundaries lie. The Standards & General Purposes Committee was open to submissions from Members and to holding conversations in an effort to reach a position where the majority were content with the proposals.

Councillor T Broom moved the three recommendations as noted in the report. These were seconded by Councillor B Chapple OBE.

Councillor J Wassell proposed a recorded vote be taken, for which the threshold was met.

The vote was recorded as follows:

FOR (93): Councillors Alam, Angell, Anthony, Ayub, Bagge, Barnes, Barrett, Bass, Baum, Birchley, Blamires, Bracken, Branston, Brazier, Broadbent, Broom, Brown, Butcher, Caffrey, Carington, Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Chhokar, Chilver, Clarke OBE, Collins, Cornell, Cranmer, Darby, Dhillon, Egleton, Etholen, Fealey, Flys, Gaster, Gomm, Goss, Hall, Harker OBE, Harriss, Heap, A Hussain, Maz Hussain, Irwin, Johncock, Jones, Jordan, Kelly, King, MacBean, A Macpherson, I Macpherson, Mahon, Marshall, Martin, R Matthews, W Matthews, Mohammed, Mordue, Naylor, Newcombe, Ng, Oliver, Osibogun, Poll, Sarfaraz Raja, Rand, Rouse, L Smith BEM, Southworth, Stannard, Strachan, Summers, Tett, Thomas, Thompson, Town, Towns, A Turner, P Turner, Waite, Wallace, L Walsh, M Walsh, Ward, Waters, Watson, Whyte, Williams, Winn, A Wood and K Wood.

AGAINST (25): Councillors Bates, Cooper, Dixon, Gemmell, Guy, D Hayday, O Hayday, I Hussain, Majid Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, James, Kayani, Knight, Lambert, Morgan, Poland-Goodyer, W Raja, G Smith, M Smith, Stuchbury, Wadhwa, Wassell, Wheelhouse and Wilson

ABSTAIN (1): Councillor Hogg

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the final submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on the future pattern of wards for Buckinghamshire Council be APPROVED, based on the draft submission at Appendix 1 from the Standards and General Purposes Committee.**
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Standards & General Purposes Committee for agreeing with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England the detail of the precise location of boundaries arising from the Council's proposal, consistent with achieving the overall terms of the final submission.**
- (3) That the Standards and General Purposes Committee be asked to report back to Council with any recommendations arising from any response or proposal from the Commission which would otherwise be inconsistent with the Council's submission.**

Note: Councillors Collingwood, Hollis and R Khan were not present at the time of the recorded vote.

9 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

Under section 9P of the Local Government Act 2000 the Council was required to prepare and keep up to date a Constitution containing the standing orders of the Council and such other information as was required or was desirable. On 27 February 2020 Buckinghamshire Council Shadow Authority had adopted the Buckinghamshire Council Constitution to have effect from 1 April 2020. The constitution had been reviewed in April 2021.

The power to change the Constitution was reserved to full Council via recommendation from the Standards and General Purposes Committee. The Monitoring Officer also had delegated authority to make amendments to ensure the Council conducted itself lawfully, and to make

minor amendments where appropriate.

A Constitution Members Working Group consisting of the Chairmen and Vice-chairmen of both the Audit and Governance Committee and the Standards and General Purposes Committee had met a number of times to consider proposed changes and provide initial comments to help inform the review of the Constitution as required by full Council. Feedback from appropriate members and officers to the proposals had also been obtained. The proposals for changes to the Constitution (Appendix 1 to the Council report) had been submitted to the Audit and Governance Committee on 22 March 2022 and then the Standards and General Purposes Committee on 14 April 2022. The appendix also included comments made in relation to the proposals.

The changes were set out in principle in Appendix 1 to allow drafting of the proposed changes to take account of member feedback, further legal input or ensure other affected parts of the Constitution can be amended accordingly.

During the debate, points highlighted included:

- The incorporation of Community Boards Terms of Reference into the Constitution which would reflect the current best practices from their first two years of operation. It was raised that the sixteen boards all operated in slightly different ways so the Terms of Reference would provide a base set of rules and regulations which the Constitution Members Working Group would review prior to approval.
- There was a concern raised around Members being permitted to ask only one question of Cabinet within the Cabinet procedure rules as this was not conducive to holding Cabinet Members to account.
- There was a further concern around permitting the Chairman of the Council to remove items from the agenda as this could affect the level of democracy in meetings, although it was clarified that this would be in special circumstances, such as when a meeting ran significantly over time.
- Council was reminded that the Constitution Members Working Group would meet to review all officer wording prior to any change being put forward to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion in the Constitution.

Councillor T Broom moved the three recommendations as noted in the report. These were seconded by Councillor R Newcombe.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the changes to the Constitution be APPROVED, as detailed at Appendix 1 to the Council report.**
- (2) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to determine the final amendments in relation to any ‘in principal’ proposals which are adopted with the approval of the Constitution Members Working Group.**
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution with the adopted proposals and the final amendments of ‘in principle’ proposals together with any associated necessary incidental amendments.**

10 SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

Members considered the Annual reports authored by each of the 6 Chairmen of the Select Committees which reflected on the work and the outcomes achieved over the past year. The reports detailed and examined the role and the key areas of work undertaken by each of the Select Committees together with its future programmes of work. The information was provided

at Appendix 1 to the Council report.

The six Select Committees the Council operated were Children's and Education, Communities and Localism, Finance and Resources, Growth, Infrastructure and Housing, Health and Adult Social Care and Transport, Environment and Climate Change. In addition to reviewing key areas of work at each of their meetings, Committees responded to consultations, questioned external partners, and held a number of inquiries and rapid reviews to help drive improvements. These included the Budget Scrutiny inquiry, an ongoing inquiry in to primary care networks across Buckinghamshire and rapid reviews in to Community Boards, Member engagement in planning and Social Worker recruitment and retention.

Councillor R Bagge, Chairman of the Finance and Resources Committee presented the report and commented that the Council operated a very robust scrutiny framework holding the Executive to account and that the process at Buckinghamshire was highly regarded by other councils, and by the LGA. He took the opportunity to express his thanks to the Cabinet Members and officers for their time and for answering, often challenging questions regarding the scrutiny function.

RESOLVED –

That the Annual Report of the Select Committees for 2021-2022 be noted.

11 AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE ANNUAL REPORT

Councillor R Newcombe, Chairman of the Audit and Governance Committee introduced the annual report prepared to inform the Council of the work carried out by the Council's Audit and Governance Committee during the 2021/22 financial year. The content and presentation of this report met the requirements of the CIPFA Audit Committees Guidance 2018 to report to full Council on a regular basis on the Committee's performance in relation to the terms of reference and the effectiveness of the Committee in meeting its purpose.

The report included information:

- That the Committee had met six times during the year.
- That the Risk Management Group, a sub-group of the Audit and Governance Committee, had met seven times during the financial year to review the strategic and key directorate risks facing the authority and the internal controls and governance in place to manage those risks to demonstrate how risk management is embedded within Services.
- On the Committee's Work Programme which sought to look at levels of risk and the priorities of the Council in then approving the programme audit and assurance work undertaken in the highest risk areas. For example, the Audit Manager had continued leading on the assurance arrangements over the Covid-19 grants received by Buckinghamshire Council, and the Investigations Team have assisted with the controls over the payments of business grants.
- That throughout the year, the Committee had continued to receive valued professional reports, support and advice from Corporate Finance, Treasury Management, Risk Management, Procurement, Internal Audit and from our External Auditors.
- That the Committee was responsible for approving and monitoring the Council's Whistleblowing Policy, Anti-Fraud and Corruption Policy and Money Laundering Policy, as well as approving the Council's Financial Statements and Annual Governance Statement.
- That the Committee approved the terms of reference for Internal Audit (Internal Audit Charter), the Business Assurance Strategy including the Annual Internal Audit Plan, and the Counter Fraud Plan.
- That the Committee provided challenge to the external auditors to ensure the Council was receiving value for money. There had been increased requirements put on external auditors

by the Financial Reporting on Council in recent years following some failures within both the public and private sector which had compounded the delay. This had been part of that reason that only 9% of authorities across the country completed their accounts by the due date.

- That during 2021/22 the Committee had considered a motion, referred by full Council, relating the Climate Change risk management. It had been agreed by the committee that the Council had already acknowledged the importance of climate change and that the Strategic Risk Register already reflected the risks to the Council's responsibilities associated with climate change.
- That the Committee undertook the scrutiny role for the development of the Treasury Management strategy prior to its presentation to Council for approval. It received mid-term and annual reports on the extent of compliance with the approved Treasury Management strategy and an analysis of the performance against the targets set. During the year it recommended the Treasury Management strategy and performance monitoring reports for Council approval.

Councillor Newcombe reported that the Annual Statement of Accounts 2020/21 had not yet been completely audited for reasons as detailed in the report, although in addition to these reasons, there was very recently an additional national issue concerning highways issues which meant that auditors were unwilling to sign off any further statements of accounts until the issue was resolved. The earliest this was now expected would be June.

Councillor Newcombe placed on record his thanks to the Chief Auditor and the Business Assurance team, highlighting the opinion of CIPFA that highlighted the good practice of the internal audit service in establishing practices as part of the formation of a new authority alongside the issues that arose as a result of Covid.

Following comments raised, it was clarified that the Councils statement of accounts were not linked to any published 'rich lists' and Councillor Newcombe agreed that Community Boards should be internally audited at the earliest opportunity as they were a new concept, with funding responsibilities.

RESOLVED –

That the Audit and Governance Committee Annual Report be NOTED.

12 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

Members paid tribute to the work of the Leader, Chief Executive and Officers for their work in making the Helping Hand for Ukraine project such a success. The response was said to have been outstanding and the Council was an exemplar in its efforts to welcome refugees and support Ukraine.

The Leader thanked the officer team for their fantastic work, this included the Chief Executive who chaired weekly meetings with the Council's important partners. Homes of those welcoming refugees were being fully inspected, relevant checks were undertaken, detailed welcome packs in English, Ukrainian and Russian had been made available, and refugees were being supported in accessing bank accounts, schooling and English language classes. Many of the Ukrainians already in Buckinghamshire were very keen on entering employment and links were made with

Buckinghamshire Business First to liaise with local employers and support as best they can.

Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Environment, Councillor Peter Strachan

Councillor Strachan received questions on Wycombe bin collections and green waste charge and carbon reduction.

Members were advised that the collection routes had been revised to provide a more agile, efficient system. The new rounds would commence in May and those residents who would be affected had been informed. The Cabinet Member confirmed that residents would be made fully aware of green waste charges being introduced and agreed to report back to an individual Member around the legality of introducing charges within the Wycombe waste contract that was entered prior to the unitary authority coming in to being.

Councillor Strachan also invited a Member to contact him with any query relating to the last report of the IPCC and how this impacted Buckinghamshire.

Cabinet Member for Communities, Councillor Steve Bowles

Councillor A Hussain, Deputy Cabinet Member for Community Safety presented the report in Councillor Bowles absence and received questions on the voluntary sector grants member working group and the household support fund.

Councillor Hussain agreed that either he or Councillor Bowles would contact an individual Member to advise of the progress on the formation of the cross party voluntary sector grants member working group.

The Leader responded in relation to the household support fund explaining that a report would be presented to Cabinet, it was anticipated that the expected £2.4m would be received by the Council relatively quickly and would be of great support to residents in significant financial difficulty. The Leader was confident that all of these funds would be used by the set deadline of 30 September 2022.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure, Councillor Clive Harriss

Councillor Harriss received questions and comments on the potential for a Bernwood to Oxfordshire cycleway, the Playing Pitch Strategy, Court Garden Leisure Centre, and trees planted in Buckingham.

The Cabinet Member advised that it remained an aspiration to have a cycleway running to Haddenham and Thame Parkway train station and engineers had been instructed to look at the best possible route so that the Council can speak to landowners and move it forward. There also needed to be agreement from Oxfordshire County Council due to the route going through the county.

It was confirmed that the Playing Pitch Strategy looked at the entirety of Buckinghamshire so where there were some areas short of football pitch provision, other areas were oversupplied. The Deputy Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure advised that there would be liaison with Aylesbury Town Council and cross party Members to agree the best way forward and the strategy would be shared as soon as available.

The Cabinet Member advised that he would look into the issue raised of ridges along the floor of the newly refurbished swimming pool at Court Garden and report back to the local Ward Member.

Councillor Harriss shared the disappointment of Members at tree vandalism in Buckingham and stated that where trees were lost, the Council would look to replace them and to take steps to address the vandalism.

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

Councillor Cranmer reported that the Council remained very involved with Ofsted and expected a further report on 29 April 2022 for which a series of Members briefings had been arranged. This report was in relation to a local area Ofsted care and quality inspection, which involved the Council and its partners. Councillor Cranmer received questions on secondary school provision in Burnham, CAMHS waiting lists, school inspection numbers, and home to school transport for Ukrainian children.

In relation to the possibility of a new non selective school in Burnham which did not discriminate against local children, Councillor Cranmer explained that the situation was out of the Councils hands as it was the Department for Education that had previously closed the school in Burnham, and they would not authorise the Council to open a school in the area due to insufficient numbers. The Council had plans but required funding to progress these in the future.

Councillor Cranmer invited an individual Member to follow up his question on CAMHS waiting lists following the meeting.

It was noted that school inspections were reported as having 17 published, although the breakdown of results did not total 17 within the written report, the Cabinet Member reported that more school inspections had taken place since the report and she would provide an up to date picture to interested Members.

The Cabinet Member emphasised that every Ukrainian child would get a place in school, with the best efforts being made to ensure the school was either the same as the host families children or geographically very close to where they were residing. If schools had to be opened in village halls or other locations this would be done. The transport issues were recognised as often hosts could not provide transport. At present the Council could not offer support where schools were far from host homes. Some areas were attempting to raise funds for community buses but they must be in possession of the appropriate licence.

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

Councillor Chilver received questions and comments on the highways around Green Park Activity, Broom Hill engine shed, Grange Farm and apprenticeships.

The Cabinet Member advised that new accommodation blocks were long overdue at Green Park and the new blocks would provide excellent facilities for young people. Councillor Chilver agreed to speak with the tenants about students using safer routes when walking on the nearby roads in the interim and he would liaise with the appropriate teams in the Council around longer term plans.

The Cabinet Member spoke positively of the completion of the Broom Hill engine shed site and advised that there had been a good deal of interest and that he was confident good paying tenants would be found.

It was confirmed that Grange Farm was on the market through Carter Jonas to seek a new tenant who would bring the site into good order, if Members knew of any interested party they were invited to send details through to Councillor Chilver who would forward them on appropriately.

Councillor Chilver reassured Members that the Council would continue to support those wanting to get into work and education and spoke highly of the Kick Start scheme which had a good conversion rate to full time staff.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing, Councillor Angela Macpherson

Local Members paid thanks to the Cabinet Member for co-ordination of agencies and managing the difficult situation in relation to the recent tragedy in Bourne End. Councillor A Macpherson thanked the officers for their work and advised that whilst the police investigation was ongoing the Council continued to work closely with all parties.

In response to a query about care homes receiving negative Care & Quality Commission reports, the Cabinet Member reassured Members that Adult Social Care took all reports of poor quality and safeguarding concerns in settings very seriously. Monthly surveillance meetings were held with all partners to address concerns including the Care & Quality Commission, and where required action plans were developed and if necessary the Council would discontinue placements of Council funded residents.

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

Councillor Naylor received questions on the previous injunction in Wycombe to protect green open spaces from Gypsy and Traveller incursions and social housing.

The Cabinet Member advised that there were no plans to re-enter the injunction in Wycombe at this time, however he would look into this and report back to the relevant Member.

Councillor Naylor confirmed that the Affordable Housing Position Statement would be presented to Cabinet on 10 May, and invited Members to send him queries they had on this matter.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration, Councillor Gareth Williams

Councillor Williams placed on record his congratulations to the Planning Enforcement team who had the second best enforcement stats nationally outside of London. Significant improvements on staffing recruitment had been made, with people keen to join the Council. As a result, planning applications were being determined quicker. Consultants and agency staff would continue in contracts to keep supporting the Council getting through the backlog of applications. Good feedback on Member Surgeries had been received on strategic sites bringing members, developers and planning officers together and it was hoped these would be rolled out more widely across the county.

In response to questions raised, Councillor Williams advised that the planning service was looking at various methods of calculating housing need for the Local Plan and close working with MPs and others was ongoing to ensure the correct number for the area. The Cabinet Member also advised Members that they would have the opportunity to be involved with the oversight of the local plan. Member Briefings would be held more frequently as the plan progressed and it would be subject to scrutiny and oversight from the cross party Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee. There was a high level of engagement with the community and partners and the Council was committed to proper consultation on all potential site opportunities.

Cabinet Member for Transport, Councillor Steve Broadbent

Councillor Broadbent received questions on the A418 road, street lighting, and Network Rail underpasses.

The Cabinet Member sympathised with residents of Wing residing by the A418, which was a key part of the strategic road network designed to take significant HGV movements. Improvements to East West connectivity were being looked at which may alleviate the problem. England's Economic Heartland had recently published their transport strategy and the Oxford to Milton Keynes route, included this corridor which could lead to improvements. At present however, there were no active plans or funding to deliver alternative routes around Wing.

Councillor Broadbent advised that work continued on the roll out of street lighting replacement columns and LED lighting and emphasised the importance of illuminating highways and where in place, bollards.

Members were invited to contact the Cabinet Member if they were aware of underpasses that were the responsibility of Network Rail that were being left unmaintained, so that he could make appropriate representations to Network Rail.

13 NOTICES OF MOTION

(i) Food Poverty

The original motion was proposed by Councillor Melanie Smith and seconded by Councillor Robin Stuchbury as set out below.

“This Council believes that no family or child living in a fair society should rely on food banks to offset low income and economic hardship. These views are shared throughout the local authority and elected members.

Council calls on Cabinet to use its influence with national government to gain additional funding to implement the 14 recommendations of the National Food Strategy of July 2021, and to urgently establish a task and finish group with a cross-portfolio brief and including cross party members to analyse the current situation and to make recommendations of action to mitigate any worsening of circumstances for our residents.

As part of the task and finish group Cabinet should ensure:

- that a named cabinet member is assigned to lead on this study.
- the cabinet member receives the support and resources to complete the task.
- the cabinet member provides regular updates to all members on progress.
- the group produce a report detailing their findings and making recommendations for action.
- the report is completed in 3 months including recommendations for action and details of costings.
- the report is disseminated to all members.
- as part of the follow up, local members are consulted about the next steps.”

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor M Tett, seconded by Councillor G Williams, 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 amendment was:

“This Council believes that no family or child living in a fair society should rely on food banks to offset low income and economic hardship. These views are shared throughout the local

authority and elected members.

Council calls on Cabinet to:

- use its influence with national government to **ask them to consider** ~~gain additional funding to implement~~ the 14 recommendations of the National Food Strategy of July 2021, **whilst recognising that their full implementation are issues for national, not local government and would require a significant extra financial expenditure which would need to be funded.**
- recognise and congratulate the Government on its many initiatives towards supporting local Buckinghamshire people during the current cost of living pressures. These include:
 - Raising the national Minimum Wage
 - Increasing taper relief so that working people on Universal Credit can retain more of their additional income
 - Reducing Fuel Duty on petrol and diesel
 - Raising the threshold at which people start paying National Insurance
 - Providing £150 per household in Bands A to D to help towards increased energy costs
 - Providing Buckinghamshire Council with £2.4m for additional Household Support. This will enable us to help with food, energy, water bills, other essential costs and in exceptional circumstances, rent.
 - Providing Buckinghamshire Council with an extra £1.2 government grant. This will enable us to pay £150 to households in Bands E-H that either have a qualifying benefit or who have a severe mental impairment. This is an additional 3,100 households. Lastly, we will pay an additional £25 per household who are on a qualifying benefit.
- ~~and to urgently establish~~ continue work on its 'Levelling Up' policy within Buckinghamshire. This to include access to healthy food for low income households. ~~a task and finish group with a cross portfolio brief and including cross party members to~~ **Cabinet should** analyse the current situation and ~~to~~ make recommendations ~~of a~~ **as to how long term changes to the opportunities and aspirations of local people can be made, and in particular to facilitate the creation and securing of well-paid employment in Buckinghamshire's economy.** ~~action to mitigate any worsening of circumstances for our residents.~~

~~As part of the task and finish group~~ Cabinet should ensure:

- that **the Leader continues to have oversight of the development of the Levelling Up policy** ~~a named cabinet member is assigned to lead on this study~~
- the ~~cabinet member~~ **project** receives the support and resources to complete the task
- the ~~cabinet member~~ **Leader reports back to Cabinet** ~~provides regular updates to all members~~ on progress
- the ~~group~~ **study** produces a report detailing ~~their~~ **the** findings and ~~making~~ **makes** recommendations for action
- the report is completed in 3 months including recommendations for action and details of costings. **The recommendations to be within the current resources approved by council in its Budget.**
- the report is ~~disseminated~~ **published** to all members

- as part of the follow up, local members are consulted, **as is routine, on recommendations that affect their Wards. about the next steps**"

Speaking to the motion, and in acceptance of the amendment, Councillor M Smith spoke of the Sheffield University study which noted High Wycombe as one of the most deprived in the country in relation to food poverty and the striking local and national figures relating to food deprivation. Aylesbury also had a significant issue with food poverty and it was expected that this would become worse as the cost of living crisis, and energy price hikes worsened. Councillor M Smith highlighted that a significant amount of applications to the Household Support Fund had not been approved and said that it should not take emergency funding to feed residents in need. Councillor M Smith emphasised that every child should have access to healthy, affordable food and recognised that nutritional meals were vital to development. The amendments to the motion were accepted to ensure something meaningful was done for the residents of Buckinghamshire.

The Leader stressed the importance of all Members coming together to put residents first and support those most disadvantaged within the community. He spoke of the Council being one of the first in the country to start rolling out Council Tax refunds for those in Council tax bands A to D. The Council also had access to a discretionary fund to support those in Council tax bands E to H and who were entitled to help. Attention was drawn to the Council's Helping Hand scheme, staffed by dedicated officers who support residents, work with food banks, community fridges and community cafes as well as to the significant financial support to supplement schemes provided by national government. The Leader also spoke highly of the Financial Insecurity Partnership in Buckinghamshire which helped people who were struggling with managing benefits, debt management and gaining employment skills.

During the debate, Members raised a number of issues, all supporting the motion. Comments raised included:

- Highlighting the excellent work of food banks and their staff in Buckinghamshire
- Paying tribute to teaching staff who supplied food to children in need
- Recognising community projects providing hot meals
- Being cautious of figures quoted in national statistics
- Food costs potentially significantly increasing further
- Encouraging engagement with Members who had significant experience of working within the food industry
- The importance of separating out national and local issues and focusing on what the Council could do to help residents
- The work Buckinghamshire Council already does, including the Financial Insecurity Partnership, Bucks Food Partnership, Helping Hands scheme and the excellent work on data provided by the Public Health team.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Stuchbury spoke of the importance of ensuring every child in Buckinghamshire would not go hungry.

It was proposed by Councillor M Smith, and seconded by Councillor R Stuchbury that the substantive motion be put to a vote, which was **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED -

That full Council call on Cabinet to:

- (1) Use its influence with national government to ask them to consider the 14 recommendations of the National Food Strategy of July 2021, whilst recognising that

their full implementation are issues for national, not local government and would require a significant extra financial expenditure which would need to be funded.

- (2) Recognise and congratulate the Government on its many initiatives towards supporting local Buckinghamshire people during the current cost of living pressures.
- (3) Continue work on its 'Levelling Up' policy within Buckinghamshire. This to include access to healthy food for low income households. Cabinet should analyse the current situation and make recommendations as to how long term changes to the opportunities and aspirations of local people can be made, and in particular to facilitate the creation and securing of well-paid employment in Buckinghamshire's economy.
- (4) Ensure:
 - (a) that the Leader continues to have oversight of the development of the Levelling Up policy
 - (b) the project receives the support and resources to complete the task
 - (c) the Leader reports back to Cabinet progress
 - (d) the study produces a report detailing the findings and makes recommendations for action
 - (e) the report is completed in 3 months including recommendations for action and details of costings. The recommendations to be within the current resources approved by council in its Budget.
 - (f) the report is published to all members
 - (g) as part of the follow up, local members are consulted, as is routine, on recommendations that affect their Wards.

(ii) Mobilise community investments to tackle climate change

The motion was proposed by Councillor Steven Lambert and seconded by Councillor Ed Gemmell

"Full Council notes:

1. That this council noted that climate change is a global emergency following a Motion to Council.
2. The motion committed the Council to achieve net zero carbon impact by 2050.
3. The council has been progressing a package of low carbon opportunities arising from the Carbon Audit report, such as tree planting and reviewing carbon emissions among other things.
4. A new low risk model called Community Municipal Investments [CMI] has been developed by Leeds University and Abundance Investments platform with UK Government and EU support. This concept had the support of several local authorities including Bristol City Council.
5. This model of green bonds with a local authority guarantee is proven to mobilise local and other investment and channels local savings into local projects with low risk and a modest return to investors [2] and after the first issue further calls can be automated.
6. This Council notes that the Local Government Association presents it as a model for mobilising widespread private investment to decarbonise localities.

Full Council believes:

1. That offering local savers and other ethical investors a way to support the County's journey to carbon neutrality mobilises community engagement in the process of change, attracts significant sums for named projects, and should be developed.
2. That offering security and a modest rate of interest through municipal bonds is an established way to develop local infrastructure .
3. That CMIs can help us amass funds on a regular basis develop a series of practical

projects for a low carbon transition now in partnership with others which will be popular with local savers. This mobilises capital that could otherwise leave the County.

4. The Cabinet should prioritise CMIs as part of the package of investments that will create positive economic opportunities and carbon neutrality while building community wealth.
5. Buckinghamshire should join the other pioneering Councils of CMI in developing local opportunities for local investors.

Full Council resolves:

1. To call on the Leader and Cabinet to begin development of Community Municipal Investments for the County.
2. That the Council promotes CMI as a way residents and institutions can be engaged and actively involved in contributing to a zero carbon city.
3. Requests Officers to identify carbon saving projects suited to CMI investment in conjunction with local government, business and community partners in Buckinghamshire.”

An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor M Tett, seconded by Councillor J Chilver, 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 amendment was:

“Full Council notes:

1. That this council noted that climate change is a global emergency following a Motion to Council
2. The motion committed the Council to achieve net zero carbon impact by 2050
3. The council has been progressing a package of low carbon opportunities arising from the Carbon Audit report, such as tree planting and reviewing carbon emissions among other things.
4. A new low risk model called Community Municipal Investments [CMI] has been developed by Leeds University and Abundance Investments platform with UK Government and EU support. This concept had the support of several local authorities including Bristol City Council.
5. This model of green bonds with a local authority guarantee is proven to mobilise local and other investment and channels local savings into local projects with low risk and a modest return to investors [2] and after the first issue further calls can be automated.
6. This Council notes that the Local Government Association presents it as a model for mobilising widespread private investment to decarbonise localities.
- 7. That full council passed the council’s forward Capital programme at its last meeting and all future investments must be within those authorised by full council and have a business case that meets current council policy.**

Full Council believes:

1. That offering local savers and other ethical investors a way to support the County’s journey to carbon neutrality mobilises community engagement in the process of change, attracts significant sums for named projects, and ~~should~~ **may** be developed **where appropriate**.
2. That offering security and a modest rate of interest through municipal bonds is an established way to develop local infrastructure.
3. That CMIs can **complement existing PWLB borrowing to** help us amass funds ~~on a regular~~

~~basis as required to deliver existing planned~~ develop a series of practical projects for a low carbon transition now in partnership with others which will be popular with local savers. This mobilises capital that could otherwise leave the County.

4. The Cabinet should ~~prioritise~~ **consider** CMIs as part of the package of investments **alongside PWLB loans** that will create positive economic opportunities and carbon neutrality while building community wealth.

5. Buckinghamshire should join the other pioneering Councils of CMI in ~~developing~~ **exploring existing planned** local opportunities for local investors.

Full Council resolves:

1. To call on the Leader and Cabinet to ~~begin development~~ **consider where there may be opportunities for** of Community Municipal Investments for the County.

2. That, **where appropriate**, the Council promotes CMI as a way residents and institutions can be engaged and actively involved in contributing to a zero carbon ~~city~~ **county**.

3. Requests Officers to ~~identify~~ **consider whether there are any existing planned Buckinghamshire Council** carbon saving projects suited to CMI investment in conjunction with local government, business and community partners in Buckinghamshire.”

Speaking to the motion, and in acceptance of the amendment, Councillor S Lambert advised Council of a number of other local authorities who already utilised CMIs to good effect and the range of opportunities these presented to Buckinghamshire. Councillor Lambert urged Members to consider the removal of the words ‘existing’ and ‘planned’ from items 3, 4 and 5 of the amendment to avoid restricting the Council on its potential actions, however the amendment in full was accepted by the proposer and seconder as issued with the supplementary agenda.

During the debate, Members raised a number of issues, the majority in support of the substantive motion. Comments raised included:

- Recognising the innovative way of investing and tackling climate change
- Concerns around the Council borrowing additional money, particularly in the face of rising inflation
- Approving the motion would allow the Council to deliver additional projects that could have a significant positive impact on residents
- The Council’s duty to taxpayers to minimise borrowing costs and to keep external costs low
- Capital and revenue budgets had been approved for the financial year as had the Treasury Management Strategy which set out rules and guidelines for borrowing. Costs of administering the scheme also needed to be considered
- Prudent financial management distinguished Buckinghamshire Council from other local authorities.
- Appropriate checks and safeguards remained vital.

In seconding the motion, Councillor Gemmell highlighted that the Council could set its own interest rate and needed to take action to address climate change now. He encouraged exploring all opportunities to push climate change back and this provided an extra tool to support the Council in doing so, would potentially save the Council money and through obtaining community involvement, could help inspire the Climate Change and Air Quality Strategy of the Council.

Councillor Lambert concluded by highlighting concerns that the budget relied on borrowing to be balanced in its latter years and that the use of CMIs could assist the Council in addressing financial challenges.

It was proposed by Councillor S Lambert, and seconded by Councillor E Gemmell that the substantive motion be put to a vote, which was **CARRIED**.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That Full Council call on the Leader and Cabinet to consider where there may be opportunities for Community Municipal Investments for the County.
- (2) That, where appropriate, the Council promotes CMI as a way residents and institutions can be engaged and actively involved in contributing to a zero carbon county.
- (3) That Officers be requested to consider whether there are any existing planned Buckinghamshire Council carbon saving projects suited to CMI investment in conjunction with local government, business and community partners in Buckinghamshire.

14 QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

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

15 REPORT FOR INFORMATION - KEY DECISIONS REPORT

A list of decisions taken by Cabinet Members since the last Full Council meeting on 25 February 2022 were received and noted.

16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Council meeting was scheduled to take place on Wednesday 20 July 2022 at 4pm. The annual meeting of Council would be taking place on Wednesday 18th May 2022 at 4pm.