



Council minutes

Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday 26 April 2023 in The Oculus, Buckinghamshire Council, Gatehouse Road, Aylesbury HP19 8FF, commencing at 4.00 pm and concluding at 7.41 pm.

Members present

D Dhillon, P Birchley, A Alam, K Ashman, M Ayub, R Bagge, M Baldwin, D Barnes, S Barrett, P Bass, K Bates, A Baughan, J Baum, A Bond, M Bracken, S Broadbent, S Bowles, P Brazier, T Broom, T Butcher, M Caffrey, D Carroll, B Chapple OBE, S Chapple, Q Chaudhry, S Chhokar, J Chilver, A Christensen, L Clarke OBE, A Collingwood, M Collins, P Cooper, C Cornell, A Cranmer, E Culverhouse, I Darby, T Dixon, M Dormer, P Drayton, T Egleton, C Etholen, P Fealey, M Flys, M Fayyaz, R Gaster, E Gemmell, P Gomm, D Goss, T Green, S Guy, G Hall, G Harris, M Harker OBE, C Harriss, D Hayday, O Hayday, C Heap, T Hogg, G Hollis, T Hunter-Watts, A Hussain, I Hussain, M Hussain, M Hussain, N Hussain, T Hussain, D Johncock, C Jones, J Jordan, S Kayani, D King, M Knight, S Lewin, J MacBean, Cllr A Macpherson, I Macpherson, F Mahon, N Marshall, R Matthews, Dr W Matthews, Z Mohammed, H Mordue, S Morgan, J Ng, R Newcombe, C Oliver, A Osibogun, A Poland-Goodyer, C Poll, W Raja, N Rana, M Rand, S Rouse, G Sandy, G Smith, L Smith BEM, M Smith, P Strachan, R Stuchbury, D Summers, M Tett, N Thomas, D Thompson, D Town, J Towns, M Turner, P Turner, G Wadhwa, A Waite, H Wallace, L Walsh, M Walsh, J Ward, J Waters, D Watson, A Wheelhouse, W Whyte, G Williams, M Winn and A Wood.

Agenda Item

1 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors S Adoh, D Anthony, D Blamires, N Brown, R Carington, R Gaffney, P Griffin, Mahboob Hussain JP, P Irwin, C Jackson, S James, P Kelly, R Khan BEM, S Lambert, P Martin, N Naylor, J Rush, S Raja, N Southworth, Sir Beville Stanier, M Stannard, L Sullivan, A Turner, J Wassell, S Wilson and K Wood. Apologies were also received from Lady Howe, Lord Lieutenant of Buckinghamshire, and Dame A Limb DBE DL, the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire.

2 Minutes

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Council meeting held on 22 February 2023 be approved as a correct record.

3 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

4 Chairman's Update

The Chairman detailed events that he had attended since the last Council meeting which had included a Family Drug and Alcohol seminar, 1st anniversary event on the invasion of Ukraine, Milton Keynes Mayor Civic Service and Awards ceremony, Bucks New University Chancellor day, High Sheriff Justice dinner, Gerrards Cross Town Civic Service, a number of citizenship ceremonies, Marlow Rugby Club concert featuring the Chiltern Music Academy, Buckinghamshire Council Annual Civic Service (High Wycombe), Aylesbury concert band, new High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire declaration of office event, a meeting with Honorary Alderman John Savage, Holi Festival (Aylesbury), Annual Scouts dinner, his Chairman's reception at The Gateway, Aston Clinton Community Centre opening ceremony, Amersham Community Board engagement event, Aylesbury Town Council St George's Day parade, and a British Empire Medal investiture ceremony. Mention was also made of the pin badges provided to Members that it was hoped they would wear with pride in the community.

The Vice Chairman of the Council also detailed events she had attended since the last Council meeting which included a number of citizenship ceremonies, the Chairman's Annual Civic Service in High Wycombe, the Chairman's reception at the Gateway, and in a private capacity the ceremony for the opening of the Aston Clinton Community Centre.

5 Petitions

There were none.

6 Presentation from the Buckinghamshire Fire & Rescue Service, Chief Fire Officer

Jason Thelwell, the Chief Fire Officer and Chief Executive of Bucks Fire and Rescue Service was in attendance to present to Members on the work of the Fire Service. Mr Thelwell was introduced by Councillor Rouse, Chairman of the Bucks Milton Keynes Fire Authority (BMKFA), who provided some context to the presentation. The BMKFA had set three priorities for the Fire Service over the last year, namely:

- To increase the whole establishment of the Service, thanks to additional funding obtained when Cllr L Clarke was Chairman of the BMKFA.
- To ensure that it moved to a sustainable financial footing, to enable it to invest and continue to transform the Service for the benefit of residents in Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes.
- To demonstrate continued improvement in the protection and service provided to residents. This included addresses the areas of improvement that HM Inspectorate had set out in 2021.

The following key points were highlighted during the presentation:

- The Vision – making Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes the safest areas in England in which to live, work and travel.
- Incidents attended in Buckinghamshire (excluding co-responders) in 2022/23.

- Data on accidental dwelling fires per 1,000 dwellings, which was significantly below the England average.
- Data and information on fire related fatalities and injuries at accidental dwelling fires.
- Data on the Home Fire Safety Visits (HFSV) undertaken.
- Information on road traffic accidents attended.
- Information on the workforce, noting that it was the intention to have a wholetime strength of 300 staff within the next 2 months.
- Financial Information on the precept flexibility (which had allowed for a £5 per year increase in Council tax for a Band D property), Urban Search and Rescue team (USAR) team funding (which thanks to local MPs lobbying the Minister had seen funding agreed for the next 2 years with an additional bid made to the Treasury), on pay inflation and future issues which included that a White Paper for reform of the Fire Service was 'imminent', looking at the culture of the Fire Service, and on collaboration across the Thames Valley.

Thanks were expressed by Members for the hard work of the Fire Service and its staff for all that they did to protect and keep the public safe. Details of the question / answer session to the Chief Fire Officer and Councillor Rouse were as follows:

- (i) That the increase in Council tax would raise an additional £2-3m that would help to recruit more staff.
- (ii) Details were provided of how the Fire Service had responded to austerity and a reduction in staff numbers from 2010. Largely due to the positive approach, flexibility and different working practices adopted by staff, it had been possible to maintain the number of Fire Engines that the Service operated.
- (iii) Details were provided on apprenticeships that were offered in all departments of the Fire Service.
- (iv) That the Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Fire Service had one of the lowest precepts in the country (3rd or 4th lowest out of over 45 Fire Services).
- (v) That while the Fire Service regularly held exercises with HS2, e.g. for the USAR team to be able to respond to fire/safety emergencies in the long rail tunnels being built through the Chilterns, however, no additional funding was provided by HS2.
- (vi) That the Fire Service would be updating the Community Risk Management Plan to be able to respond to events such as 19 July last year (hottest day of the year) and was investing in equipment to be able to respond to events such as fighting wildfires.
- (vii) Information was provided on what the Fire Service was doing to identify and root out bullying, harassment, intimidation and other poor workplace practices and behaviours, including what was being done to respond to the recent HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services report. Anyone who had an issue was advised to report it to the Fire Service. The Deputy Chief Fire Officer had been fortnightly meetings over the past 5 years with the Head of HR to discuss every grievance and disciplinary issue that had been raised. If instances of bullying and harassment were found then staff

would be sacked, as had happened in the past, as it was stated that there was no place for such behaviours in the modern Fire Service or in any workplace. Enhanced DBS checks were also made of all front-line staff, including fire fighters, which had resulted in some applications to join the Fire Service being rejected, or information reported to other Fire Services if it was felt that was required.

- (viii) That the public should contact their local Fire Station or Aylesbury if they were aware of a vulnerable resident who they believe would benefit from a HFSV.
- (ix) That it was likely that the White Paper would raise issues such as operational independence, a College of Fire for the advancement of staff and a Fire Standards Board to raise standards within Services, which were all seen as positive measures.
- (x) Councillor Rouse commented on a likely proposal in the White Paper for oversight of Fire Services to move from local Fire Authorities to Police and Crime Commissioners. The Fire Authority and the LGA had both responded to a consultation that the case for this change was not strong enough, and that oversight should remain locally with Fire Authorities.

The Chairman expressed thanks to the Chief Fire Officer for his presentation and responding to Members' questions. The Chief Fire Officer thanked Members for their continued support for the work of the Fire Service and his staff.

7 Electoral Review - response to consultation on four Wards in South Buckinghamshire

Council received a report that explained that it had been expected that, on 28 February 2023, the Local Government Boundary Commission would publish its final proposals for the pattern of wards for Buckinghamshire Council. Instead, the Commission had launched a limited further consultation on revised proposals for four wards in the south-east of the county. These amendments were made by the Commission in response to a significant number of objections to their previous proposals in this area. The Commission believed the revisions achieved the best balance of their criteria: community identity, acceptable electoral variance, effective local government and their wish to minimise the number of parishes that would be split across Buckinghamshire wards.

The Commission had not indicated what position it had taken on the remainder of the county. Instead, it now intended to publish the final recommendations on all wards on 30 May. The further consultation had officially ended on 11 April but the Commission had given the Council an extension to 26 April to enable it to consider the matter.

As in previous stages, the Standards and General Purposes Committee had received recommendations from the cross-party Electoral Review Working Group formed under the Committee. Drop-in sessions for Ward members had been arranged with

the Chairman and Deputy Chairman of the Working Group. The Working Group recommended acceptance of the Commission's proposals. On 13 April, the Committee had agreed likewise and this was the recommendation now before Council.

Annex 1 summarised the key changes envisaged by the Commission, that were:

- A. To reverse the proposed extension of Chalfont St Peter southwards into Gerrards Cross Parish: based on "strong community-based evidence"
- B. Consequently, to reduce the number of Chalfont St Peter councillors by one: to achieve acceptable electoral variance for that ward (10%)
- C. To restore New Denham from Iver to Gerrards Cross & Denham: based on feedback that there were no "strong community or geographic links" between New Denham and Iver Parish. (The revision now aligns with this Council's original submission)
- D. To place Hedgerley and Fulmer within Farnhams & Stoke Poges: restoring Denham wholly to Gerrards Cross & Denham would result in that ward being out of variance; however, placing Fulmer & Hedgerley within the Farnhams & Stoke Poges Ward would achieve balance for both wards but would do so by expanding the latter from two members to three.
- E. To pluralise 'Farnham' to demonstrate that both Farnham Royal and Farnham Common are included in the name "Farnhams & Stoke Poges".

These changes would result in one fewer councillor overall, 97 instead of the previously proposed 98. The Commission had indicated, throughout the review, that the "98" number may marginally increase or decrease depending on the final balance of criteria for each Ward.

It was notable, from A-E of the proposed changes, that the revised proposals were interlocked, with a decision for one Ward having some impact on another. This demonstrated the consideration at the heart of an electoral review: achieving a balance of the relevant criteria for each ward and for its neighbours.

The Commission considered their revisions achieve a working balance of the criteria: only one Ward would exceed the variance, others coming well within it or at the acceptable limit of it; only one parish (Chalfont St Peter) would cross a Buckinghamshire Ward boundary; and each reflected an acceptable balance of community identity.

During the debate, points highlighted included:

- One Councillor stated that the proposals would negatively impact the strong links between Fulmer and Gerrards Cross and cause harm to community cohesion and effective governance, although it was commented that the Ward boundaries were 'soft' boundaries for the purposes of electoral representation and would not stop communities from across the boundary from continuing to work with each other.
- That it was unfortunate that the latest consultation would mean there were 97

rather than 98 Councillors representing the Council from 2025, although it was highlighted that the Commission had stated that the final Councillor numbers would possibly be 98 but could be plus/minus one Councillor number depending on the outcomes of the Warding arrangements.

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

RESOLVED –

(1) That the Council's response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England further consultation on warding arrangements be APPROVED, as summarized at paragraph 2.3 and in Annex 1 of the Council report, and as recommended by the Standards and General Purposes Committee.

(2) That the Service Director for Legal and Democratic Services be authorized to submit the response to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on behalf of the Council.

8 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.

Councillor M Harker OBE, Chairman of the Communities and Localism Select Committee presented the report and highlighted a number of pieces of scrutiny work undertaken over the last year:

- The Communities and Localism SC and the Growth, Infrastructure and Housing SC held a joint meeting to look at the visitor economy.
- The Transport, Environment and Climate Change (TECC) SC and the Communities and Localism SC both held meetings where HS2 and East West Rail were held to account. The Communities and Localism SC had specifically looked at community engagement aspects, whilst the TECC SC continued to play a role in monitoring the projects.
- A comprehensive budget scrutiny exercise had been undertaken in January, making 9 recommendations to Cabinet on the budget.
- The Children's and Education SC had undertaken a review of SEND pathways, including talking to various stakeholders.

- The Health and Adult Social Care SC had recently completed a review looking at the dementia journey in Buckinghamshire.
- The review of pollution in rivers and chalk streams undertaken by the TECC SC last year had been recognised by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny as an exemplar piece of work.

It was also 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. The Member took the opportunity to express her 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 2022-2023 be noted.

9 Reports from Cabinet Members

This 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

The Leader reported that as well as the additional £5m released from General Fund Reserves for 2023/24 Highways road maintenance at the budget meeting, the Government had also now provided £2.3m for highways road maintenance. The Leader had written to the Government to lobby for further funding for road maintenance and had also lobbied local MPs. The Government had responded that they were in constant dialogue with the Treasury about the issue of funding for roads but there were no imminent plans to increase funding.

The Leader received comments and questions on highways road maintenance, levelling up, remuneration for teaching staff and on how the Council might generate additional income in the future. Members were informed:

- That it was a priority for the Council to deploy the additional £7.3m funding this year for additional highways road maintenance.
- That the 3 main priority areas for levelling up were central Aylesbury, central Wycombe, and parts of Chesham. This was led by the Place Based partnership that was chaired by the Chief Executive.
- That the money available for levelling up was as agreed at the budget meeting, although it would be important to leverage use of the funds to ensure that maximum benefits were achieved from that money.
- That the funding for teaching assistants was entirely done through schools, many of which were now academies, and it was up to them to determine what they paid staff from the funding provided from central Government.
- That a Member working party was being established to look at ideas for the Council to generate new income streams.

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

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions on assisting young people, support for Head Teachers, waiting times for autism diagnoses, SEND provision, schools funding and on children's homes. Members were informed:

- On the ways that local Members could assist young people in their areas with issues such as employment opportunities and upskilling themselves, which would include introducing a Member shadowing scheme, a new skills programme, and ensuring that local Members were able to be a conduit between the Council and local businesses and schools.
- That a skills / careers fair would be held at the Elgiva theatre, Chesham on 23 September. This would not only open up opportunities for young people but also for returners to work, re-skilling people, and for early retirees who might wish to come back to work.
- On what the Council was doing to support Head Teachers. This included increasing the number of educational psychologists employed from 12 to 20, who were available at all times to go in and advise head teachers and teaching staff with issues such as setting up counselling and trauma groups. The Council was also looking at what support could be provided from within local communities (collaborative working) and was ensuring that the Council maintained efforts to support families.
- That the Council would be working a lot more collaboratively with partners going forward to try to reduce waiting times for autism / ADHD diagnoses and had secured extra funding from partners to help deal with assessments and setting up treatments. An assurance had also been received that more staff would be recruited. An early help strategy would also assist in identifying issues earlier.
- Joint Care Quality Commission and Ofsted inspection of the local area SEND provision (in Scrutiny Annual Report) – it was confirmed that the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) had been submitted.
- On the work being done to recognise Bucks schools, teachers and everyone who worked in education in the county, which would include an inaugural School Awards held in June at Pinewood studios. There would be 12 award categories including new teacher of the year, teacher of the year, senior leadership head, health and wellbeing award, and a community award. Sponsorship had also been received from 12 sponsors to support the awards.
- That the Council was not able to provide additional monies to schools to assist for projects such as solar panels or heat pumps to help reduce energy costs. However, the Council would continue to lobby the DFE for extra funding for schools. Schools were also recommended to explore whether their local communities and Community Boards were able to support projects.
- That it was particularly pleasing that two of the children's homes set up by the Council had received an outstanding rating.
- That support could be provided to the Buckingham Town Council when they put together their next Neighbourhood Plan.

Cabinet Member for Culture and Leisure – Councillor Clive Harriss

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions on Little Marlow Lakes Country Park, Higginson Park, skills/training opportunities for prisoners and on the new Leisure Strategy. Members were informed:

- That there wasn't any particular update information to provide on the Officer Working party and the development of a viable business case for Little Marlow Lakes Country Park, although the CM would be happy to provide the Member with a written response.
- That the Member would be provided with information on when work would start to replace the play area in Higginson Park, Marlow.
- On what the Council was doing, primarily through the library service, to offer courses and skills training for prisoners.
- That a report on the pitch playing strategy and the new Leisure Strategy (Cabinet report) would both come forward in the next 3 months.

Cabinet Member for Transport – Councillor Steve Broadbent

The Cabinet Member (CM) received comments and questions on a wide range of transport related issues. Members were informed:

- That the pothole pro (specialist) machine was now out on the network fixing potholes.
- That the CM was aware of the pavement "disrepair" issue raised by a Member and that it had been assessed by two technicians. All pavement repairs were made in line with the Highways Safety inspection policy which helped prioritise where the £2m annual funding for footway schemes/repairs would take place.
- On the issues that had delayed a repair of lighting in St Marys Square, Aylesbury. The Member was asked to contact the Cabinet Member about the gully clearing issues in Kingsbury.
- That big improvements had been made to the 'Fix My Street' system including better messaging for people who had reported issues. It was possible that the improvements work had removed some duplicate reports and Members were asked to contact the Cabinet Member if they had a particular issue.
- On an update on the A4010, and that the Council was still waiting for DFT guidance on the scope of Local Transport Plan 5. The work of the North West Chilterns Community Board working group on a locally inspired transport strategy for that area was welcomed and would be helpful in shaping the overall future vision.
- Thanks were given for the work of the Council in relation to schemes to reduce traffic speeding in Rutland Avenue, Castlefield.
- That updates and enhancements done to the 'Fix My Street' system would hopefully improve and making messaging more accurate, e.g. rather than stating that a job was done, it would report when temporary fixes/repairs had been done, which would later be re-visited to do a permanent repair.
- That work on developing the Parking Strategy was ongoing.

- On the work of the parking enforcement teams, including that there were a number of unfilled vacancies.
- That the Council had received Government funding for the on-street vehicle charging trial in Wendover, that would happen this year. A complication was that channels cut into footpaths and using existing structures such as lamp posts or bollards required planning permission. Members were encouraged to inform the team of any sites that thought suitable for on-street charging. The Council's EV Charging Plan was focussed on putting points into publicly available spaces rather than workplaces timescales, although employers were also encouraged to provide workplace vehicle charging for their employees.
- On the recent closures of Eastern Street and Swan car park due to anti-social behaviour.
- That the CM empathised with the Member about utility companies putting up too many traffic lights in some areas (vicinity of Cressex Business Park was mentioned) which then led traffic gridlock. It was stated that one of the biggest reasons, apart from safety, for revoking permits was traffic management concerns. The Council continued to monitor utility companies to ensure they complied with permit conditions.
- That any assessments looking at 20 m.p.h. speed limits would be undertaken according to DFT guidelines. If it met the guidelines, had local support, and had the necessary funding then it could proceed. The information for any application would be gathered in accordance with the Council's policy so would not be impacted by the change of contractor from TFB to Buckinghamshire Transport.
- That the CM shared the concerns of the Member about increased vehicle movements through Buckinghamshire due to drivers trying to avoid the expanded ULEZ zone. The Mayor of London had failed to share any traffic modelling data of any impacts in response to requests. The CM had written to the mayor objecting to the financial burdens that the scheme would impose on the people of Buckinghamshire and the disproportionate impact on those on lower incomes. Independent studies had found that the scheme would have negligible impact on vehicle emissions in the Greater London area. The Leader of the Council also stated that the Council strongly opposed the introduction of the new scheme and that he had instructed Officers that the Mayor of London would not be permitted to put any of his signage on Buckinghamshire Council owned property.
- With an update on the Active Travel Plan for Buckingham.
- That he would ask whether a review of the salting route for Tingewick Road was necessary due to changed circumstances.
- That he would check for the Member on the priority of the road in Hazlemere for Civil Enforcement Officer visits.
- With an update on EV charging in Marlow and some of the future plans for the county.

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

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions on autism, the new CQC inspection regime and adult social care funding. Members were informed:

- That the integrated commissioning team were undertaking work looking at an all-age autism strategy, which would look at a partnership approach to working. The CM would be mindful on how Members could be best involved to input local knowledge to this work and the strategy.
- With an update on what the Council was doing to ensure that services were operating at a level that would comply with the new CQC assurance/inspection regime. An all-Member briefing in July would focus on informing Members on the CQC inspection regime.
- With an update on adult social care funding, including that it had been examined as part of the budget scrutiny process earlier in the year.

Cabinet Member for Planning and Regeneration – Councillor Peter Strachan

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions on local markets, the Buckinghamshire Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans, Member call-ins and on 2 specific planning issues. Members were informed:

- The CM agreed that local markets had an important role to play in the post-Covid recovery and welcomed the news on the Gerrards Cross street market starting this month and that it would meet going forward on the 2nd Sunday of each month.
- That the Council's position was unchanged in using brown before green for developments. The Council was still waiting for future housing allocations information from Government and would continue to keep Members updated.
- With an update on the development of the Buckinghamshire Local Plan.
- That the Council was supportive of Parish Councils developing Neighbourhood Plans, which would help to protect them from speculative planning applications.
- That planning committee dates were place holders in the calendar of meetings, and it cost nothing to cancel a meeting if there was no business to transact. The CM would write to the Member with information about the number of Member call-ins that had been received.
- That if a Member wrote to him about a particular issue relating to hedgerows in Ickford that he would respond.
- That if a Member wrote to him with a specific issue relating to sewage and drainage provision for new developments that he would respond.

There were no questions for the Cabinet Member for Accessible Housing and Resources – Councillor John Chilver

Cabinet Member for Communities – Councillor Steve Bowles

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions on High Wycombe,

Community Board funding, the VCSE Resilience Fund, digital food vouchers, assets of community value and on the PSPO extension for Buckingham Town Centre. Members were informed:

- That the right time to consider any Community Governance Review relating to the unparished area in Wycombe could be following the local Government boundary review of Buckinghamshire that was currently being undertaken and would be known by the end of May 2023. It was stated that engagement with High Wycombe was often done through the High Wycombe Town Committee and the Community Board.
- That it would be appropriate for a Community Board to consider a grant application from a school for a project to help reduce energy costs.
- About the Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Sector Resilience Fund that could provide support and award grants to organisations suffering from increased operating costs due to cost-of-living pressures, with additional priority given to organisations aiming to reduce inequalities amongst residents living in the most disadvantaged areas of the county.
- That if a Member wrote to him about an area in a part of High Wycombe that would benefit from the Helping Hands scheme that he would refer it to the relevant team.
- That if a Member wrote to him about digital food vouchers, i.e. how many used/redeemed and their effectiveness, then he would respond.
- That if a Member wrote to him about assets of community value and the Council's role in issues such as the sale of pubs/community shops closing in villages, then he would respond.
- That he would be responding to Buckingham Town Council in relation to the Public Space Protection Order extension for Buckingham Town Centre.

Cabinet Member for Homelessness and Regulatory Services – Councillor Mark Winn

The Cabinet Member updated Members on the actions being taken by the Council and the Environmental Health team regarding damp and mould in private rental and housing association accommodation. The team had dealt with 99 cases in 2021/22 which had risen to 211 cases in 2022/23. The EH team's plans for the forthcoming winter period would be discussed at a forthcoming Growth, Infrastructure and Housing Select Committee. The Cabinet Member received comments and questions on a wide range of issues. Members were informed:

- On what the Council was doing to ensure that taxi drivers were complying with the conditions of their licences and to ensure the safety of the general public travelling with them, particularly as they transported many vulnerable people.
- On the provision for the homeless in the Wycombe area, and that the Bridge Court development in Bridge Road (58 temporary places) would open very soon. An open day for Councillors to visit the development would be arranged.
- That the mention in his CM report of French travellers simply indicated where the people had travelled from. His report had also mentioned that the

travellers had been very polite and had moved on quickly.

- On the current draft policy relating to licensed activities such as dog breeding and boarding kennels, and riding schools, and which set out the steps the Council would be taking to ensure that these businesses were run by fit and proper persons. Members and the public were encouraged to comment on the draft policy.
- That it was initially planned to use both Bridge Road and Saunderton Lodge for temporary accommodation, but the Lodge would be closing at some point in the future. A scheme had come forward for the Star Blocks, Castlefield (owned by the Red Kite Housing Association) but been found to be unaffordable. The Council was waiting for further plans from the Housing Association.
- That the majority of cases of damp / mould investigated by the Council related to housing association accommodation.
- That the best way for people to report damp / mould issues to the Council was via the Environmental Health team. The CM asked for Members to let him know of instances where people may have been referred back to their local Councillor.
- That one of the limiting factors of Bucks Home Choice was the lack of social housing. It was helpful if residents were as flexible as possible when offered social housing although it was appreciated this was not always possible. An update was provided on the work being done to provide more social housing, including that a Housing Strategy would be brought forward in the Summer.
- That the CM report had been referred more to regulating street trading in public accessible areas than to cold calling premises.
- On the once a weekly Registrar Service visits to Buckingham (held in the library), which had had to be discontinued during the pandemic. The Service was currently recruiting and was hopeful to reinstate the weekly visits to Buckingham later this year.

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change – Councillor Gareth Williams

The Cabinet Member received comments and questions on tree planting, Bledlow Ridge HRC and on waste collections. Members were informed:

- That 145,000 trees had been planted by the Council in the last planting season, with this being done with a variety of partners including local groups and with the Forestry Commission. The CM also mentioned how local groups and the community could get involved to support tree planting efforts and that he was supportive of a Chalfont St Giles community orchard.
- That the Council was committed to establishing the Wing Wood with the Forestry Commission on a 51 hectare site, that would include planting 132K trees (109K already planted), a couple of ponds, a community orchard, hazel coppicing and some latticing.
- On the Bledlow Ridge Household Recycling Centre that had re-opened after being closed for 4 years. The HRC was working well and being used by local Bucks residents. Some of the biodiversity offsets built included 150 metres

- of hedging put in, in partnership with Chiltern Rangers.
- That if a Member wrote to the CM about a persistent problem with waste collections in non-standards areas that he would respond.
- On some of the actions that the Council was undertaking to protect mature / established trees including placing a TPO on an ancient woodland that was threatened by HS2. Mention was also made of recent action taken at Hazlemere forest. It was explained that TPOs were the legal mechanism, subject to satisfying certain requirements, used by the Council to protect trees.

10 Questions on Notice from Members

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

11 Report for information - Key Decisions Report

A list of decisions taken by Cabinet Members since the last Full Council meeting on 22 February 2023 were received and noted.

12 Date of Next Meeting

The next full Council meeting (Annual Council) would take place on Wednesday 17 May 2023 at 4pm.