

COUNCIL
25 NOVEMBER 2015
7.30 - 8.35 PM



Present:

The Mayor (Councillor Mrs Dee Hamilton), Councillors Virgo (Deputy Mayor), Allen, Mrs Angell, Angell, Dr Barnard, Bettison, D Birch, Mrs Birch, G Birch, Brossard, Brunel-Walker, Finch, Finnie, Ms Gaw, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Hill, Mrs Ingham, King OBE, Leake, McCracken, Mrs McCracken, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Ms Merry, Ms Miller, Peacey, Phillips, Porter, Skinner, Mrs Temperton, Thompson, Tullett, Turrell, Wade and Worrall

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Dudley and Mrs Mattick

The meeting opened with a minute silence to mark the recent terrorist events in Paris.

25. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 16 September 2015 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

26. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

27. Mayor's Announcements

Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning

Councillor Dr Barnard was proud to introduce Rachel Kenyon, Adventure Education Worker and two participants of the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme Megan Currie and Katie Charlwood. He had attended the celebration evening where 100 youngsters had received their awards. Megan and Katie gave a presentation on their journey towards achieving their gold awards describing all the completed elements and the benefits they had received from completing it. The Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme would celebrate its 60th Anniversary in 2016 and everyone present was encouraged to get involved in the activities.

Councillor Dr Barnard had been pleased to attend the opening of Rise@GHC which was a specialist school for children on the autistic spectrum to support their education experience. He thanked everyone involved in its development including Keith Grainger, Principal of Gath Hill College and David Watkins, Chief Officer Performance and Resources who saw the project through to completion. He advised that the number of students attending Rise would increase gradually.

Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

Councillor D Birch advised the meeting that the Public Health team had received five shortlisting nominations for awards recognizing their good work. The successful nomination was for the significant improvement the team had made in the number of health checks being completed in the borough on 40 – 74 year olds. He asked the meeting to join him in congratulating John Nawrockyi, Director of Adult Social Care, Health and Housing; Lisa McNally, Consultant in Public Health and their team for becoming one of the top health check deliverers supporting the borough's residents to stay fit.

Executive Member for the Environment

Councillor Mrs Hayes was pleased to announce that the use of Member Initiative Fund monies to install defibrillators across the borough had been recognised by UK Heart Foundation. On 9 October the Council was awarded the Public Sector Organisation of the year and she congratulated all the Councillors who had used their allocation for this cause. Councillor Phillips who had initially suggested the initiative presented the Mayor with the glass award.

Councillor Mrs Hayes gave all Members a reusable shopping bag promoting recycling and encouraging the reduction of disposable bag use.

Executive Member for Finance and Transformation

Councillor Heydon was delighted to report that the Council had received an unqualified audit opinion in its Annual Audit Letter from the external auditors Ernst & Young. In addition, Ernst & Young had issued an unqualified conclusion on the Council's arrangements for securing value for money. Councillor Heydon stated that for the second year running the Annual Audit Letter contained no recommendations for improvement which was almost unprecedented within local government. He asked the meeting to join him in thanking the Borough Treasurer and his team for this near unique achievement.

Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Councillor McCracken reported that the Cemetery and Crematorium had raised £4321 from recycling materials, with agreement from bereaved families, and these monies had been donated to Thames Hospice.

The Members present joined Councillor McCracken in congratulating the Dog Warden team who had been recognised by the RSPCA and received two gold awards.

Councillor McCracken reflected that during the Summer Reading Challenge the borough's libraries had seen a high participation by young people with 54% girls and 45% boys. He added that Birch Hill library staff had been selected as judges for the Radio 2 short story competition.

Councillor McCracken congratulated staff at the Look Out for achieving the Quality Assurance Award which it had retained since 2006. They had also retained the Health and Safety award since 2001; Customer Service Excellence since 2008; Learning in an Outside Classroom since 2010 and the Platinum award for Loo of the Year since 1994.

Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor had visited a number of schools during Local Democracy Week and thanked all the officers and Councillors involved in the recent successful Takeover Challenge in which young people shadowed the Mayor, member of the Executive and senior officers.

The Mayor was delighted by the number of schools that participated by submitting entries into the Christmas card competition and had chosen the winning design by Molly Brookes from New Scotland Hill Primary School.

The Mayor advised the Members present that since the last Council meeting she and the Deputy Mayor had been busy attending engagements across the borough.

Mayoral Charity events

The Mayor advised the members present that she had been visiting a number of the borough's libraries and reading seasonal stories to children to raise money for her charity.

The Mayor updated Members that her 'Pounds for Pounds Challenge' was continuing and thanked her fitness coaches for all their help.

The Mayor was pleased to report that the Bake-A-Wish cake sale had made £140 for her Make-A-Wish and further cake sales would follow.

The Mayor reminded Members that the annual Carol Concert was being held on Sunday 6 December and requested that if there were any volunteers able to help with the Charity collection at the end of the event that they notify the Mayor's office.

The Mayor asked anyone able to support her annual Charity collection day at the Meadows on Thursday 10 December to contact the Mayor's office for more details.

The Mayor announced that Make-A-Wish would be benefitting from the charity initiative 'Text Santa' which includes a number of fundraising activities.

28. Executive Report

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison, presented his report on the work of the Executive since that reported at the Council meeting on 16 September 2015. The Executive had met three times on 22 September, 20 October and 17 November 2015.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

- The Council Plan 2015 – 19 translates the Conservative manifesto into a coherent policy framework for the Council recognising the need for reduced public expenditure. The Plan introduces new narrative focussing on individual choice and responsibility; clear prioritisation and living within the Council's means.
- The process to appoint school providers had been agreed for both the Binfield Learning Village and Amen Corner North.
- Proposals had been agreed for Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub which would be based in Easthampstead House.

- Examination and test results had been noted.
- Consultation on Draft Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) had been launched to run until 30 November. The new document builds on the existing policies and addresses: school pick up, garage provision, lower car ownership areas and the balance between on street and off street parking costs.
- Invest to save proposal to replace all street lights with LED was recommended to Council. The £7.3m investment delivers minimum £8m savings over 20 years and savings may be higher if fuel prices increase. 2857 tonnes of CO² would be saved each year
- The Local Enforcement Plan had been agreed which set out clear standards and processes to be applied.
- The Highways Infrastructure Asset Management Plan had been agreed. The Plan set out maintenance policies with a focus on priorities identified by Department for Transport. It was noted that the Plan set the framework but not the level of spending.
- The Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered to respond to reductions in public expenditure by the Government with the framework for addressing this gap set by the Council Plan.
- Reduction in subsidy for discretionary Garden waste collection service had been agreed by increasing charge to £40.
- Consultation conducted on £70 fixed penalty for intentionally/knowingly failing to notify changes affecting Council Tax liability.
- Revised debt collection policies had been agreed for non-payment of Council Tax & Business Rates.
- Consultation on re-commissioning Heathlands Residential Care Home and Day Care Centre in private sector. Recognised that close liaison with residents and families essential but that current building does not meet modern standards or future resident expectation. It was noted that occupation was currently at less than 50%.
- Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report had been reviewed.
- A pan Berkshire Smoking Cessation contract had been agreed.
- The outcome of the Care Act 2015 consultation had been considered. The Council would continue to charge for residential and nursing care. As joint financial assessments are no longer allowed under the Care Act the assessment of couples would change as the Council was required to assess individuals. Changes for Universal or Discretionary Deferred Payments had been agreed and there would be no charges for any support to carers.
- In response to the Control of Horses Act 2015 a new policy had been approved to deal with horses grazing in public places. This would only apply to Council land (including Town & Parish Councils).

The agenda report and supplementary report contained recommendations that the Council was asked to resolve in respect of the following matters:

- Invest to Save: LED Streetlights
- Statement of Licensing Policy
- Statement of Gambling Principles

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked why key enforcement triggers were omitted from the Local Enforcement Plan such as building a school and opening a shop once threshold numbers of properties had been built. Councillor Turrell committed to providing her with a response in writing but indicated that the Local Enforcement Plan related to smaller applications as the triggers referred to in larger developments were tied up to S106 agreements.

Invest to Save: LED Streetlights

On the proposition of Councillor Turrell, Executive Member for Planning and Transport, seconded by Councillor Heydon it was

RESOLVED that:

- i) a supplementary capital approval of £7.3m be approved for the replacement of the borough's existing streetlights with LED lights.

Statement of Licensing Policy and Statement of Gambling Principles

On the proposition of Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection, seconded by Councillor Allen it was

RESOLVED that:

- ii) the Licensing Policy (attached as Annex A to the Supplementary Executive report) be approved.
- iii) the Statement of Gambling Principles (Attached as Annex B to the Supplementary Executive report) be adopted with effect from 31 January 2016.

29. **Council Plan**

The Council considered the report regarding the Council Plan for 2015-19. The following amendments were suggested:

- Under the 'People live active and healthy lifestyles' section the performance indicator regarding the number of young people who engage with KOOTH would be expanded to include reference to Youth line and other related support available.
- Under the 'People live active and healthy lifestyles' section the performance indicator regarding the length of waiting time for access to online counselling would also be expanded to include reference to Youth line and other related support available.
- Under the 'People have the life skills and education opportunities they need to thrive' section the key measure of success regarding children and young people with Special Educational Needs would be expanded to read "are supported to achieve their potential"

On the proposition of Councillor Bettison, Leader of the Council seconded by Councillor D Birch it was

RESOLVED that

- i) the Council Plan be incorporated within the Policy Framework and
- ii) the Council Plan 2015-2019 attached as Annex A to the agenda report, subject to the amendments above, be approved.

30. Recommendation of the Governance and Audit Committee

The Council considered the report regarding proposed changes to the Council's constitution to remove reference to a Sustainable Community Plan from the Policy Framework as recommended by the Governance & Audit Committee at its meeting on 23 September 2015.

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chairman of Governance and Audit Committee seconded by Councillor King OBE it was

RESOLVED that the Monitoring Officer be authorised to remove reference to the Sustainable Community Plan from the Policy Framework set out in Part 2: Section 3 of the Constitution, and to make any consequential changes to the Constitution that might be required (as per Annexes A and B of the agenda report).

31. Membership of External Organisations

The Council considered the report seeking the Council's approval to the appointment of Council representatives on South Hill Park Trust and noting the Leader's appointment of Councillor Turrell as representative and Councillor Brossard as his substitute to PATROL.

On the proposition of Councillor Bettison, Leader of the Council seconded by Councillor Angell it was

RESOLVED that:

- i) Councillors Mrs Hayes and Thompson be appointed to the South Hill Park Trust Board for a four year term of office;
- ii) existing and future four year terms of office for representatives to the South Hill Park Trust Board be amended to be co-terminus with the Council's Annual General Meeting; and
- iii) the Leader's appointments to PATROL as described in paragraph 5.11 of the agenda report be noted.

32. Schedule of Meetings 2016/17

The Council considered a report seeking approval of the Schedule of Meetings for 2016/17.

On the proposition of Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection seconded by Councillor D Birch it was

RESOLVED that the Schedule of Meetings for 2016/17 as set out in the annex to the agenda report be approved.

33. **Questions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10**

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning the following published question:

At full Council 16 July 2014, I raised concerns about the children in Bracknell Forest who care for their parents and siblings- Young Carers. They often have lower attendance and considerably lower GCSE achievement than their peers. There are 160 known Young Carers in Bracknell Forest. In the reply, their attendance figures were given but no data had ever been collected on their GCSE results. I was assured that these children would now be recognised as vulnerable and monitored.

The September 2015 Quarterly Service report refers to academic achievements by all other children but not Young Carers.

Have interventions been introduced in schools to help Young Carers improve their life chances ?

What are the attendance figures, both for secondary and primary Young Carers compared to their peers?

What are their GCSE and KS2 results compared to their peers?

Councillor Dr Barnard had prepared a detailed written response including statistical information which was presented to Councillor Mrs Temperton. Councillor Dr Barnard confirmed a copy of his response would be circulated to Members electronically. He stated that data was included relating to test results but that it was key to help schools to support young carers to make life choices. He added that some young carers had benefitted from residential activities to help them build confidence. He respected and valued the privacy of the borough's young carers and recognised that each carer and their situation was very different. He recognised the additional strain on young carers to maintain their attendance which would impact on their attainment. He cautioned Members when looking at the information that small cohorts were involved therefore a few carers struggling to attend would have a significant impact on the statistics.

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked a supplementary question about whether missing data on results from 2014 could be provided for comparison to see if interventions were working. Councillor Dr Barnard agreed to provide the additional requested information and stated that there was a clear pathway around the school system to increase attainment and progress but that success varies from year to year. He added that Ofsted does not look at small groups but all the pupils within a school. He considered the focus should be helping young people be in the right place to learn rather than their background. He acknowledged that the Council was only able to monitor the young carers that they were aware of.

MAYOR