

COUNCIL
29 NOVEMBER 2017
7.30 - 9.02 PM



Present:

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

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors G Birch, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Ms Hayes, Mrs Kennedy, McLean and Ms Miller

26. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 September 2017 be approved, and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

27. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

28. Mayor's Announcements

Presentation from Waitrose

The Mayor welcomed Rob Collins, Managing Director from Waitrose to speak about the Lexicon opening, Waitrose's approach to apprentices and the anticipated impact of Brexit.

The Managing Director advised the meeting that Waitrose had a long association with Bracknell as they had originally opened their headquarters here in 1972. At the time it was a modern distribution centre at the heart of 30 stores. He reported that Bracknell continued to be an integral part of the business with four thousand business partners working there. 100 shops were distributed to from the Bracknell site which equated to a third of the estate.

He explained that traditionally apprenticeships were offered opportunities to get into a role however Waitrose's approach was different as they supported partners to develop skills and progress through the organisation. They recognised that partner's skills needed to change to respond to technology and changes in customer demand. There were 80 apprentices in the business last year with 500 expected next year and a plan was in place to see thousands by 2020 in both their shops and the headquarters.

The Managing Director emphasised that in relation to Brexit there were a lot of unknown factors but what was known was the significant impact of the exchange rate on cost of goods and recruitment of workers for seasonal work. In relation to food and

farming he stated that Waitrose's approach would remain unchanged e.g. high animal welfare, workers to be treated decently, soil would be bought with care and that the United Kingdom should maintain the lead on food and farming. Waitrose had four key priorities: food safety, animal welfare standards, clarity of food labelling and competitiveness of UK market. He believed there would also be opportunities to build upon areas where Waitrose already excelled.

He recognised that their Bracknell store opening was the first phase in the regeneration of the town centre. He congratulated Bracknell Forest on their vision for the town centre. Since its opening they had seen a 14% increase in footfall. Waitrose were planning to open a new development kitchen at the headquarters site in 2018. He concluded by thanking the Council for making the business feel welcome.

In response to Members' queries, the Managing Director made the following points:

- Since 2009 Waitrose had reduced Waitrose packaging by 50% and had agreed that by September 2025 all plastic would be fully recyclable or compostable.
- Waitrose was working to reduce obesity by reducing salt in its products and had worked on reducing sugar in the last two years by 10 to 30 % whilst retaining flavour. He considered that Waitrose had lead the way in food labelling and had further exciting plans in 2018 to focus on health.
- He reported that Waitrose was working on innovative new packaging solutions and to educate customers to change their expectations.
- He stated that they had achieved an 80% reduction in their carbon footprint with initiatives such as water cooled refrigeration which was more expensive to install but had a lower CO2 footprint. They were also working on ways to reduce carbon footprint associated with their vehicles and reducing mileage travelled.
- It was explained that partners within Waitrose stores were able to decide which charities and local organisations would be included in the community matters token boxes.

The Mayor thanked Mr Collins for attending and providing an insight into the Waitrose business.

Naming Waste Truck Raffle

The Mayor was pleased to announce that a raffle had been held to name two waste trucks and the official naming ceremony would be on 5 December 2017 when the names would be revealed. The Mayor thanked the Council's staff for their brilliant support of her charity, the Firefighters Charity.

Charity Event – Fuego Experience

The Mayor thanked those who supported had supported her charity night at Fuego on 21 November 2017 where there had been wonderful food and entertainment. The successful evening had raised £3,375 for the Firefighters Charity.

Mayoral Charity Collection days

The Mayor reminded members present that the Charity Collections rotas had been sent out to all councillors requesting participation in the event. The collections would be held at the Meadows on 7 December and in the Lexicon on 16 December 2017. The Mayor was pleased to confirm that College Town Junior School would be singing

carols in the Meadows and cast members from Camberley Theatre's Peter Pan would be attending. The Mayor hoped that she would be joined at the Lexicon collection by the Community Choir and cast members from South Hill Park's Beauty and the Beast production.

Firehouse Curry Night

The Mayor asked Members to join her for her next Charity event, a Nepalese Curry Night being held at Bracknell Fire Station on 27 January 2018 with the Bracknell Nepalese society providing the entertainment.

Mayor's Business Forum

Members had been sent a 'save the date' for the Mayor's Business Forum which was being held on 23 February 2018 with a focus on Apprenticeships. Expressions of interest were being requested by 31 December 2017.

Celebration of Success Awards

The Mayor reflected that she had spent a wonderful evening at Garth Hill College on 23 November at their Celebration of Success Awards evening.

Coral Reef Official Opening

Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection was pleased to announce that the Countess of Wessex had officially opened the refurbished Coral Reef on 29 November 2017. He reported that she had had a tour of the site including the new flumes, talked to staff and said that she was looking forward to bringing her family for a visit. He added that the refurbished site had a new roof, 5 new flumes and had seen 75,000 visitors in its first six weeks. This represented a 34% increase on the same period before the refurbishment. He thanked everyone for agreeing to the investment for this key site.

The Mayor gave certificates of thanks for their involvement in the project to:

- Councillor McCracken as Executive Member
- Vincent Paliczka, Director of Environment, Culture and Communities
- Damian James, Programme Manager and
- Kamay Toor, Capital Projects Manager

Visit England

Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection was proud to report that the Look Out attraction had retained its accreditation in the Visit England visitor attraction quality scheme. He reported the brilliant achievement that not only had the site received 200 points overall from a possible 225 points but in the staff category they had received 98% of the marks available.

Care Quality Commission (CQC) review

Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing reported the outcome of the Care Quality Commission (CQC) review of Bracknell Forest Council's adult social care services and health and wellbeing board in September. Councillor D Birch added that this was undertaken whilst the service was continuing on its transformation programme. He stated that this was part of central

government's request to carry out local area reviews in a bid to free up hospital beds across the country. The review looked at how effectively the local health and care system works to ensure a resident's health and care journey into and out of hospital is provided in a timely and effective way. The CQC inspectors looked at the council's joint working with health partners as well as care providers in the voluntary and private sector. Whilst the review was intended to identify any gaps or problems the conclusion was that vulnerable people in Bracknell Forest received safe, good quality health and social care when they need it.

National Productivity Investment Fund

Councillor Turrell, Executive Member for Planning and Transport congratulated Neil Mathews, Head of Transport Development and Stuart Jefferies, Transport Strategy & Implementation Manager for their successful bid to secure funding to extend the dueling of the A322 Downshire Way.

National Takeover Day

Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning thanked everyone who was involved in Takeover Day which had been held on Friday 24 November 2017.

Christmas Carol Concert

Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning was pleased to report that the annual School's Carol Concert event had been attended by 20 primary schools and had seen the largest choir at the event to date. He thanked everyone for getting involved with special thanks to Berkshire Maestros who took the lead organising this event for the first time.

29. **Question Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 9**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 (Public Participation), a question was submitted by Mr T Neill, resident of Woodmere, Harmans Water ward with regard to disabled parking charges. In Mr Neill's absence the Chief Executive read the published question to Councillor Bettison OBE, Leader of the Council:

Department for Work and Pensions and Office of National Statistics figures, compiled by The Papworth Trust in the report ['Disability Facts and Figures 2016'](#), show:

- *That disabled adults aged from 25 to retirement age are twice as likely as their nondisabled counterparts to live in low income households.*
- *That 55% of disabled people reported having no savings, and that disabled people's day to day living costs are 25% higher than those of non-disabled people.*
- *That 40% of disabled children in the UK live in poverty, and that almost a third of those are classified as living in 'severe poverty'.*

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recently concluded that the UK Government has 'totally neglected' disabled people, and has described 'grave and systematic violations' of the rights of disabled people in the UK.

Speaking for the Council, why are you happy that disabled visitors to Bracknell are charged for parking?

In response Councillor Bettison OBE replied that although there are people who believe that all services provided by the council should be free that is simply not possible. He stated that the Council sought to recover costs directly from those who use services such as a swim at the sports centre, a dropped kerb to their property, a care professional at home, or somewhere to park in the new town centre and not from the general Council Tax or Business Rate payer.

He advised the meeting that the Council manages three multi-storey car parks in the town centre which are barrier entry controlled. Practically, the barriers mean that there is no way the Council could provide free parking in these car parks for disabled visitors to Bracknell. He added that this would be the same nationally within car parks whether operated by a Council or private operators using this very common system of car park management control.

He reported that all BFC car parks in the Town Centre make provision for disabled parking but all require the car park users to pay the set rates. He considered that everyone who uses the car parks was treated the same. Within the High Street car park additional provision had been made to help cater for the pickup and drop off needs of those using Shopmobility.

Within Bracknell town centre there are a few non barrier controlled car parking areas where it is possible to recognise the use of the Blue Badge and give free parking in bays marked for disabled parking. However the Leader noted that eligibility for a Blue Badge did not require any means test. He reflected that national media reported that the Blue Badge scheme was open to abuse. He stated that the Council would welcome the introduction of a more robust national Blue Badge Scheme that included a test of resources as this would enable all councils to take proper account of a person's means and regulate accordingly.

The Leader responded that this was a national, not a local issue and that this needed to be raised at a national level so that any solution could be applied not just for those visitors to Bracknell but also to the benefit of eligible Bracknell Forest residents wishing to visit other places.

The Leader stated that the Council supported many services and projects which support and empower people with disabilities, which included investing in a Disabled Go online access guide for the borough with information about over 500 venues to benefit anyone with a disability living, working or visiting Bracknell Forest. He added that the Council had also developed guidance for retailers in the new town centre to ensure that they provide excellent customer service for people with disabilities and, working with BRP, involved people with disabilities in having a say on the design and layout of the town centre. The Leader concluded that he was happy that disabled people visiting Bracknell found a disability friendly community that, according to the Bracknell Forest resident's survey, live and work closely together.

30. **Executive Report**

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison OBE, presented his report on the work of the Executive since that reported at the Council meeting on 13 September 2017. The Executive had met three times on 26 September, 17 October and 21 November 2017.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison OBE, presented his report on the work of the Executive since that reported at the Council meeting on 13 September 2017. The Executive had met three times on 26 September, 17 October and 21 November 2017.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

- Commercial Investment Strategy had been considered which set out the long term investment in business properties in the Borough. The recent expansion of the strategy was delivering £2m income per annum and £50m had been invested to date. The clear investment criteria covered: property condition, quality and strength of tenant, length of lease and the exit strategy. An additional £30m investment was recommended to Council to increase the net revenue return to £3m per annum.
- The Procurement plans for property and motor insurance had been agreed.
- The contract for leisure management was a key transformation project in 2017 and covered the management (not ownership) of: Bracknell Sports and Leisure Centre, Coral Reef and Downshire Golf Course. The contract would result in capital investment of >£1m and also revenue savings of around £600k per annum.
- The Residential Nursing Care contract was considered with a reduction of 205 residential and nursing beds since 2013/14 resulting in a significant increase in placement costs. The agreement was to enter into up to 4 contracts for 22 beds to limit costs.
- Funding for the Heathlands Elderly Mental Infirm (EMI) scheme was discussed. The scheme and funding was agreed in February and the budget included health funding via Sustainable Transformation Partnership (STP) however the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead position remained uncertain. Funding of up to £7m needed to guarantee schemes viability and £3.1m would be funded by CCG. This investment was recommended to Council.
- Safeguarding Annual report was noted.
- The phased approach to restructuring the Children, Young People & Learning and Adult Social Care, Health & Housing Directorates into a new "People" Directorate was noted.
- A pan Berkshire National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR) Pilot bid was coordinated and submitted by Bracknell Forest which could generate £35m of additional funding. 70% of the funding would be allocated to Local Enterprise Partnership to implement agreed infrastructure projects.
- Tree strategy was agreed.
- The Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2017-2019 was agreed and recommended to Council.
- Following services being rated as good by Ofsted, with important areas of outstanding practice, five areas for further improvement were included in the agreed Post Ofsted Action Plan.

- LSCB Annual Report was noted.
- Special Education Needs and Disability Improvement Strategy was agreed and five priorities were agreed by all stakeholders.

In relation to the Elderly Mental Infirm funding Councillor Mrs Temperton queried why Bracknell Forest was contributing more than the other partners. In reply Councillor D Birch explained that the final split had not yet been finalised but would be dependant upon the division of the use of beds available as Bracknell Forest was keep to have a larger proportion in order to support people with learning disabilities.

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked whether the closure of two Council-run residential nursing care homes had added to the reduction in residential and nursing beds quoted in the report. Councillor D Birch acknowledged that they had but a fall in demand had made those particular sites untenable. The sites were no longer fit for purpose so had been recycled and better buildings were being built based on consultation feedback on what people want.

On the proposition of Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing, seconded by Councillor Dr Barnard, it was

RESOLVED that the provision of up to £7m of capital funding as Bracknell Forest's contribution to the Heathlands EMI scheme, noting that £3m of this will be met by the CCG in some way so will not fall as a cost to the Council as detailed in section 4 of Appendix B, be approved

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

RESOLVED that the Youth Justice Strategic Plan 2017-19 be approved.

On the proposition of Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance, seconded by Councillor McCracken, it was

RESOLVED that further capital sums of up to £30m are made available to support the Commercial Property Investment Strategy achieving its target level of £3m on-going additional revenue income as detailed in Appendix E of the agenda supplementary report.

31. **Affected Interests and related matters**

The Council considered a report to amend provisions relating to Affected Interests in the Council's Code of Conduct for Members following recommendations of the Code of Conduct Working Group which convened on 27 June 2017.

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

RESOLVED that:

- i) the recommendations of the Code of Conduct Working Group set out in Paragraph 5.16 and in the Appendix of the agenda report be adopted.

32. **Establishment of an Appointment Committee**

The Council considered a report informing Members of initial steps being taken towards streamlining of the Council's senior leadership team and sought to establish a Committee to undertake a number of Chief Officer appointments as the initial phase of moving towards an integrated "People Directorate".

On the proposition of Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning and seconded by Councillor D Birch it was:

RESOLVED that:

- i) a Committee of the Council of five members (4:1), (plus up to five substitute members) be appointed, with the following terms of reference:

"To interview and appoint on behalf of the Council to Chief Officer posts within the current Directorates of Children, Young People & Learning and Adult Social Care, Health & Housing";

- ii) Councillors Dr Barnard, D Birch, Mrs Birch, McLean and Mrs Temperton be confirmed as the nominated members; and
- iii) Councillors Leake, Thompson and Virgo be confirmed as the substitute members.

33. Membership of Overview and Scrutiny Commission

The Council considered a report setting out the revised position regarding the appointment of Members to serve on the Overview and Scrutiny Commission since Annual Council on 24 May 2017 and the Council meeting on 12 July 2017.

On the proposition of Councillor Leake, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Commission and seconded by Councillor Angell it was:

RESOLVED that:

- i) the size and allocation of seats of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission be agreed as set out in paragraph 5 of the agenda report; and
- ii) Councillors Peacey and Virgo be appointed as members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission.

34. Schedule of meetings 2018 - 19

The Council considered a report to enable arrangements for the next municipal year's meetings to be put in place and assist members plan their diaries for the year ahead.

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

RESOLVED that the schedule of meetings 2018/19 as set out in the annex to the agenda report be approved.

35. Question Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked Councillor Turrell, Executive Member for Planning and Transport the following published question:

The residents of Bracknell Forest have a real concern about the availability of affordable homes to rent and to buy. There is building going on all around the borough and the Council's policy is for 25% of the completions to be 'affordable'. In the first quarter of this year, only five 'affordable' homes were completed, in the second quarter only eight. The latest plans accepted for the Old Wick Hill site has allowed just six 'affordable' homes from a total of 61. This is only 10%.

What is being done to ensure more 'affordable' homes are built to both rent and to buy?

How is the Council ensuring that these homes are indeed 'affordable' for the majority of our existing residents?

If the cap on Council borrowing is lifted, as it seems likely, will the Council build so-called 'social housing'- homes at lower rents?

Councillor Turrell replied that the council's planning policy position with regard to Affordable Housing was that on sites of more than 15 new homes, where planning permission was required, the Council expected to see the delivery of 25% of those homes being Affordable. He clarified that this was in line with the Government's definition of what constitutes affordable housing but the 25% was subject to viability.

He added that over the life of the current Local Plan (since 2006) the Council had secured above this target at 27 % affordable housing of total completions.

He explained that this was due to some schemes being completely affordable and others bringing forward more than the 25% requirement for example at Jennets Park. He added that recent examples of policy compliant scheme were Blue Mountain and Amen Corner North. A recent example of a fully affordable scheme which was granted permission was the 200 affordable homes for Market Street, Bracknell.

He noted that there were circumstances where affordable housing could be offset and the Council was obliged to take this into account as this is a national policy. This had been the case at the Wick Hill site where there were existing buildings on this site and a reduction in provision to 10% was therefore obtained legitimately.

He stated that there was a clear and long-standing record of delivery of Affordable housing in Bracknell Forest and the consultation on the new Local Plan would include the suggested planning approach to Affordable housing.

Councillor Birch contributed that as part of the housing stock transfer to Bracknell Forest Homes it was agreed to provide 250 affordable homes out of the capital receipt however 400 homes had been provided. In February 2008 it was agreed to close the housing revenue account and there was no intention to reopen it. He added that Downshire Homes had been in operation for two years and had bought existing affordable homes with the rent covering the purchase cost so the Council was already investing in social rent accommodation.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Mrs Temperton about why Wokingham Borough Council was able to deliver significantly more affordable homes in the last two years Councillor Turrell replied that this was as a result of many factors. It depended what permissions were put in, which permissions were granted, which sites were delivered (as development was not delivered at a consistent pace) and that Wokingham is a bigger borough than Bracknell Forest.

MAYOR