

COUNCIL
30 NOVEMBER 2016
7.30 - 9.15 PM



Present:

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

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Ms Hayes

The Council observed a minute's silence to mark the sad death of Ian Mihell. He was elected as the Ward representative for Harmans Water in 2007 until 2011 but had previously been the Council's Borough Treasurer and had served as an officer for 18 years.

As the meeting began the Deputy Leader, Councillor D Birch asked the Members present to join him in thanking Alan Nash as he was retiring from his role as Borough Treasurer. The meeting showed their appreciation for his years of service in the Finance team and wished him luck with his next endeavours.

24. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 September 2016 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

26. Questions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 9

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 (Public Participation), two questions were submitted by Mr T and Mrs V Pearce residents of Lingwood, Old Bracknell on behalf of the Defend Our Community Services with regard to their concern about the proposed changes to library services.

The Mayor invited Mr and Mrs Pearce to put their questions to Councillor McCracken, Executive Member for Corporate Services, Community and Public. Mr Pearce asked the following published question:

- a) *With reference to the Council Libraries Review, which refers to the possibility of some libraries being relocated into Community Hubs/Community Centres, etc., staffed by volunteers. Would the Council agree that a pile of books on a table in a multi activity space is no longer a library in the sense that we know*

it? We need our libraries in properly equipped and staffed buildings not as an adjunct to a multi activity space.

Councillor McCracken thanked them for their questions as it gave him a chance to reaffirm public record which had been stated on seven occasions at the public consultation meetings. He stated that the Council was facing significant economic challenges but there were no plans to close libraries as they are recognised to be a focal point or a community hub within their locations. He confirmed that Community Centres came under within his Executive portfolio but that he had not had any relocation discussions with staff and there was no suggestion that libraries would be staffed exclusively by volunteers.

Mr Pearce asked a supplementary question regarding whether there would be a relocation of libraries and whether full time staff would lose their jobs. Councillor McCracken reiterated that there was no intention to move from the nine current locations but to make improvements by using volunteers. He reported that 30% of the more than 2,000 respondents to the consultation had indicated that they would be happy to volunteer. Councillor McCracken also advised that the Council was in addition looking at technological solutions to support extended hours, adding that this would release the qualified staff to be able to undertake other library activities.

Mrs Pearce asked the following published question:

- b) With reference to the Council Library Review would the Council agree that we should respect the great job our professional library staff do and appreciate that running a successful library goes far beyond stamping and handing out books. The relatively small savings accrued by cutting our excellent staff and replacing by volunteers, no matter how enthusiastic, could well prove to be a short sighted and counter productive. If more funding needs to be generated will the Council consider using some of its reserves rather than cutting the quality of our libraries, a central part of our community?*

Councillor McCracken replied that he considered Bracknell Forest had a first class professional library team and the proposals were seeking assistance from volunteers as previously described. The preferred option was to deliver the best possible library service with the reduced funding available. He confirmed that Reserves were already being used as part of the response to financial challenges.

In response to a supplementary question regarding whether there would a cut to the level of library staff, which it was stated had arisen during a public meeting, Councillor McCracken replied that he did not recall that had been said in a public forum and reiterated that the preferred option was about making the library service more efficient.

The Mayor thanked Mr and Mrs Pearce for attending the meeting.

27. Mayor's Announcements

Mayoral Business Forum

The Mayor was proud to report that on 18 November he had hosted a successful Business Breakfast with speakers including Tony Pidgley of Berkley Homes, Martin Taylor of Redwood Technologies and Victor Nicholls, Assistant Chief Executive and Councillor Brunel-Walker. The event had raised £2k for his nominated charity, St. Sebastian's Trust and was a fantastic networking event for all those who attended.

Redwood Technologies Group Ltd

The Mayor welcomed Martin Taylor, Co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer of Redwood Technologies to provide background about the company being awarded the Queen's award for innovation. Martin Taylor explained the growth of their business based at various locations within Bracknell. He described the basis of their business, its application and the scope of its applications used by its customers. In response to a question he confirmed that the company worked with local schools and the Peter Jones Enterprise to encourage students and to provide work experience. He confirmed in response to a question that part of their organisation had managed television telephone voting such as Pop Idol and Strictly Come Dancing but now supported selected Charity events such as Sports Relief in 2010 and interesting projects such as election surveys.

Relay for Life

The Mayor welcomed Rose Dalton, Chair of Ascot Relay for Life which had been awarded the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service this year. She explained to those present that it was an annual fundraising event held over a weekend which was a 24 hour team walking event to help fund finding a cure for cancer. The event had been running for ten years and had raised £122k from the 2016 event. They were aiming to reach their £1 million mark in 2017 and 28 teams had already registered for the event scheduled for 22 July 2017 at the Windsor Enclosure, Ascot Racecourse.

Local Democracy Events

The Mayor advised the meeting that he had attended 8 schools to promote local democracy and had participated in a number of different events with young people designed to get them talking about democracy. He was pleased to announce that there were more dates in the diary.

Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Councillor McCracken was pleased to announce that 28 primary and junior schools had participated in tag rugby event and he congratulated Ascot Heath Junior School for winning the final of the games.

Councillor McCracken advised the meeting that the Bracknell Half Marathon, which had run for 33 years, had secured three years of sponsorship from Lexicon.

Councillor McCracken asked everyone present to join him in congratulating two of the Corporate Services staff who had been shortlisted for awards recognizing their hard work and commitment in their fields. Donald Adams, Assistant Solicitor, had been shortlisted for Litigation Lawyer of the Year. Sarah Kingston's team, Revenue Services, was shortlisted for the Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation Most Improved Team of the year and were recognised for their improvements in collection, staff development and customer experience. Both teams were against much larger teams and the Members present acknowledged their achievement.

Councillor McCracken was proud to announce that Justin Whitlock, Enhanced IOM Case Manager, had received the John Latham Domestic Abuse Award from Thames Valley Police for his work combatting Domestic Violence and the work he had done to develop a programme called 'Plain talking' which provided 121 relationship support. The meeting joined Councillor McCracken in congratulating him on this recognition.

Talent within the Borough

The Mayor was pleased to announce that he had been impressed by Rob Onditi, a pupil at Garth Hill College who sang at a recent engagement and showed exceptional singing talent.

Executive Member for Planning and Transport

Councillor Turrell reported that work would be starting during the week commencing 12 December at Bracknell Train Station until April 2017. The works would provide additional ticket machines, toilet facilities and a waiting area. He thanked Stuart Jefferies, Transport Strategy & Implementation Manager, for all his work with South East Trains.

Councillor Turrell also reported that a National Highways & Transport Network public satisfaction survey had shown improved satisfaction with the road network including provision of cycle routes, speed control measures and road safety improvements to the A322 and A329 corridor. He recorded his thanks to the teams who have contributed to the improvements and in particular Antony Radford-Foley, Head of Highway Asset Management and Neil Mathews, Head of Transport Development.

Cinderella at South Hill Park

The Mayor encouraged everyone to attend the South Hill Park Pantomime, Cinderella, which was having its first show that evening.

Charity Meal

The Mayor encouraged colleagues to purchase tickets for his charity Burns Night meal which would be taking place on 10 February 2017 at Stirrups Country House Hotel in aid of his nominated charity St. Sebastian's Trust.

28. 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 14 September 2016. The Executive had met twice on 27 September 2016 and 18 October 2016.

The meeting joined the Leader in welcoming two new senior officers to the Council: Nikki Edwards, Director, Children, Young People and Learning and Stuart McKellar, Borough Treasurer. The Leader also took the opportunity to welcome Councillor Kennedy to her first Council meeting having been elected in October.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

- It was proposed to Council to join together Regulatory Services with Wokingham and West Berkshire which would provide long term resilience and savings. A Joint Committee would be set up with each authority represented by two Councillors.
- The Commercial Property Investment Strategy was recommended to Council which would support the Council's financial planning and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- The five year Government funded Priority Schools Building Programme would run from 2016 – 2021 and would result in major rebuild/refurbishment projects

based upon need. Bids had been submitted in January 2015 and the bids for Brakenhale and Edgbarrow School had been successful. Bracknell Forest Council would deliver the Edgbarrow project and the Education Funding Agency (EFA) would deliver the Brakenhale project.

- The basis for the Housing Strategy consultation had been agreed including:
 - looking at Council role in intervening in market
 - Downshire Homes Limited role
 - National Landlord Association led review of private rented sector
 - engaging with pension funds etc to develop private renting opportunities
 - establishing a Bracknell Forest Extra Care & Retirement Village Developers Forum
- Significant changes to Housing Allocation Policy had been agreed including:
 - the increase to the residency requirement to 4 years but those currently with 3 year residency would be exempt
 - offers of private rented housing to discharge homeless duty
 - special arrangements for families with children taken into care
 - maximum of 3 lettings per annum under “right to move”
- New Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme was agreed for working age households with the discount to be focused on income levels which maximised Incentive to Work.
- Nomination rights to South Hill Park Trust had been removed to allow greater flexibility for the Trust in attracting appropriate skills which was closely linked to progress with Arts Transformation Review.
- Following comprehensive consultation on community access at Edgbarrow and Sandhurst Sports Centres the sites would be under the direct management of the schools from April 2017. The majority of consultation respondents supported for ‘no change’ but there was minimal support for the resulting price increases.
- The two year Residents’ Parking Scheme trial was introduced around the town centre in 2015. A consultation was undertaken on extending the scheme on a self funding basis and in many areas the majority were against paying for scheme therefore to recognise local preferences the proposals were redrawn to focus on areas where residents supported scheme. This would be kept under review post the opening of the Lexicon.
- A Joint Minerals & Waste Plan would be developed with Wokingham, Reading and Windsor & Maidenhead and the new Local Development Scheme (LDS) recognised the new timetable. The Joint Plan would provide important protection against unwanted extraction and Hampshire Services had appointed to undertake work on behalf of the three authorities.

Councillor McCracken confirmed, in response to a question, that the Pest Control Service was being deleted as there was no requirement for the Council to offer this.

Councillor McCracken advised, in response to a question, that a new liaison arrangement between the Council, landowners and the Police was being developed by the Community Safety Team which would replace the current link that the Council’s Licensing Officers provided for incidents of unauthorised encampments.

In response to a question, Councillor Bettison OBE confirmed that the Corporate Property Investment Strategy was to borrow £20 million every year for the next three years to purchase commercial property.

The agenda report contained recommendations that the Council was asked to resolve.

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

RESOLVED that

- (i) the arrangements set out in Appendix A to the Executive report be authorised, including the creation of a Joint Committee for the strategic policy and oversight of the delivery of public protection services with Wokingham Borough Council and West Berkshire Council through the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) with effect from 9 January 2017,
- (i) the Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Borough Treasurer and Director of Environment, Culture & Communities, be authorised to finalise the terms of the PPP as set out in the draft Inter Authority Agreement between the three Councils (Appendix A of the Executive report) and to make any necessary drafting or other amendments to the terms of the draft Agreement which are necessary to reach final agreement but do not materially affect the intent and substance of the Agreement,
- (ii) the Joint Committee be authorised to determine policy, strategy and oversee the performance monitoring and management of the new PPP and have the powers set out in the terms of reference contained in Schedule 1 of the draft Inter Authority Agreement in Appendix A of the Executive report,
- (iii) the Council's representatives on the Joint Committee would be the Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection and the Chairman of the Licensing and Safety Committee with any Member of the Executive being able to act as a substitute,
- (iv) all existing service specific specialist equipment and the associated ongoing liability be transferred to West Berkshire from the 13 January 2017,
- (v) any associated existing contracts with the Council be transferred to West Berkshire to administer on this Council's behalf until such time as they can be renegotiated,
- (vi) as a consequence of this proposal, the disabled facilities grants, Home Improvement Loans, home energy functions and all associated staff and budgets be transferred to the ASCHH Department, as soon as it is practical to do so,

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

RESOLVED that

- (i) the Commercial Property Investment Strategy as set out in Appendix B of the Executive report be adopted and implemented,

- (ii) a supplementary capital approval of £20m in 2016/17 to support commercial property purchases to effect the policy be approved,
- (iii) further investment in commercial property be included in the draft capital programme for 2017/18 and 2018/19 (£20m in each year)
- (iv) the Constitution be amended to give effect to the revised Terms of Reference of the Executive Committee as set out in Appendix B of the Executive report to include authorisation of Property Investment expenditure.

29. **Governance and Audit Recommendations**

The Council considered the report regarding proposed changes to the Constitution, and the endorsement of a new standards and complaints procedure including the dissolution of the current Standards Committee.

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chairman of the Governance and Audit Committee and seconded by Councillor Heydon:

RESOLVED that:

- i) the changes to Delegations of Chief Officer: Planning, Transport and Countryside and The Protocol for Members in Dealing with Planning Matters set out in the Appendix A to the agenda report be adopted;
- ii) the dissolution of the Standards Committee and the adoption of revised terms of reference of the Governance & Audit Committee be agreed, to include consideration of Standards issues as set out in Appendix B of the agenda report;
- iii) the procedure for dealing with Councillor Code of Conduct complaints as set out in Appendix C of the agenda report be approved;
- iv) the procedure for dealing with dispensation requests by Councillors who would otherwise be prevented from participating at meetings of the Council, Executive or Committee due to the existence of an Affected or Disclosable Pecuniary Interest as set out in Appendix D of the agenda report be approved;
- v) authority be delegated to the Borough Solicitor to make appropriate amendments to the constitution so as to give effect to its decisions in respect of the above; and
- vi) David St John be appointed to fill the Independent Member vacancy on the Governance & Audit Committee arising from the resignation of the previous incumbent.

30. **Calendar of Meetings**

The Council considered the report on the proposed schedule of meetings 2017/18.

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

RESOLVED that the Schedule of Meetings for 2017/18 as set out in the annex to the agenda report be approved.

31. Membership of Committees and Outside Appointments

The Council considered the report seeking the Council's approval to the appointment of Members to fill vacancies on committees and an external organisation following the resignation of Philip King OBE and pre-existing vacancies.

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

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Councillor Leake be appointed to the membership vacancy on the Governance & Audit Committee;
- (ii) Nominated Councillors be appointed to the substitute member vacancies on the following committees:
 - Overview and Scrutiny Commission – Councillor Peacey
 - Appeals Committee – Councillor Peacey
 - Edgbarrow & Sandhurst Sports Centre Management Committee – Councillor D Birch
 - Electoral Review Steering Group – Councillor Brossard
- (iii) the Leader's actions be noted as set out in paragraphs 5.7 and 5.8 of the agenda report and on the tabled report.

32. Questions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing the following published question:

The 2016/17 revenue budget included a saving of £1.5m from reviewing and recommissioning adult social care packages.

How far have these savings been achieved and what has been their impact on the clients?

In response Councillor D Birch stated that the savings were being achieved as it was a work in progress and £498k was being saved to date. In terms of the impact on clients 46% had required no change to their support packages whereas 28% had been altered due to the needs that the client was presenting at the point of the review. The effect therefore on each individual was minimal as the eligibility criteria has not changed.

Councillor Mrs Temperton queried whether this project was now part of the Transformation of the Council and whether regular reports would be shared on progress. Councillor D Birch confirmed that it was following the principles of transformation and shared the details of a case study review of an individual's care package which had resulted in a 20% saving.

MAYOR