

COUNCIL
11 JULY 2018
7.30 - 8.00 PM



Present:

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

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Angell, G Birch, Phillips and Skinner

Introduction from Mayor's Chaplain

The Mayor's Chaplain, Rev Jim Barlow, Interim Team Leader from the Bracknell Team Ministry introduced himself to the meeting and explained he was based at Holy Trinity Church so was engaging with the Bracknell town community within the exciting town centre development. Rev Barlow hoped that other ministers would be invited to open future Council meetings during Councillor Finch's year as Mayor.

9. Minutes of Previous Meetings

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 25 April and 23 May 2018 be approved, and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

10. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

11. Mayor's Announcements

Mayoral Update

The Mayor encouraged members to keep up to date with his activities through the Mayoral Facebook and Twitter pages.

Mayor's Charity 2018-19

Mary Durman and Heather Young, Joint Chief Executive Officers of Wokingham, Bracknell and Districts Mencap attended the meeting to update members on the work being undertaken by the charity.

They explained that the charity supported local people with autism and their families. The charity celebrated their 20th year in 2017 and had been in Bracknell since 2009. It was explained that though they were affiliated to the Royal Mencap Society they were a different organisation.

The charity provided a range of services including information, carer and family support, activities for children and adults with learning disabilities, siblings' support, activities for adults with autism, activities for carers as well as campaigning on local and national issues. Examples of activities were respite and shopping trips, supporting the transition process with older carers, providing support for younger carers through a youth club at Braybrooke Community Centre as well as social groups for adults.

They explained that they were honoured to have been chosen as the Mayor's charity and that any funding received would be used to keep their Gateway Award running which promoted fun, self-confidence and independence.

The Mayor thanked them for attending and was looking forward to working with them.

12. **Question submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 (Public Participation), a question was submitted by Mrs C Doran, resident of Crowthorne with regard to strategic gap in the Draft Local Plan on behalf of CVAG (Crowthorne Village Action Group). CVAG's chairman, Mr A Holley asked the following published question:

We are interested to note that the Executive is to be asked to make a Key Decision on 17th July, when authority is sought to carry out consultation on new sites that have emerged through the recent consultation on the Borough Local Plan.

You will of course know that the Crowthorne Village Action Group made a series of representations on the Draft Local Plan in March this year. We are particularly concerned, as a community, that the Strategic Gap between Crowthorne and Bracknell is not mentioned in the Draft Plan, and that in its place there is proposed to be a development site for 570 houses (Policy LP4, land at The Hideout and Beaufort Park), which will effectively occupy what will remain of the Gap following the development of the TRRL site.

You will know that local people would like to see this gap clearly maintained, and that they have taken comfort from the fact that its importance was underlined in the Council's Core Strategy of 2008, when it says;

These predominantly undeveloped areas are often subject to development pressures which if left unrestrained could over time lead to the merging of settlements and the loss of individual identity. In order to protect their existing open and undeveloped character, it is important that gaps are identified to steer development away from those settlements where coalescence is a real threat.

This was reinforced in the Inspector's Report on the SDL in 2013, and more recently by the Council's landscape consultants in their recommendations, which form part of the evidence base for the Draft Local Plan.

Our question, therefore is in two parts. First: Do you share the significance of this Strategic Gap – as with the five other Strategic Gaps which remain listed in paragraph 11.2.12 of the Draft Local Plan - to the wider community of Bracknell Forest, and their quality of life? Second: would you share our optimism that among the new sites which have emerged and which will be discussed by Executive on 17th July, there will be one or more which can be substituted for the site at Policy LP4, enabling the Council to provide for housing needs whilst respecting the longstanding policy of maintaining a strategic gap between Crowthorne and Bracknell.

In response Councillor Turrell stated that the Council recognises the importance of trying to maintain gaps between settlements in order to protect the identity and character of individual settlements. He added that there was also a need to accommodate growth.

He stated that comments made by the Inspectors dealing with the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Local Plan were made in the context of a historic level of growth. He considered that there was now a need to review existing policy constraints in order to identify sites suitable for accommodating further development and associated infrastructure and that was part of the role of the new Local Plan. The Council could only consider sites that are deliverable and developable and must ensure that a sustainable approach was pursued. He acknowledged that given the existing constraints and the limited extent of suitable and available land for development the Council needed to take some difficult decisions which may mean that it was preferable to build within existing strategic gaps. He added that the role of SANG land in providing physical separation should not be overlooked and on the larger sites the provision would be generous. He confirmed that the landscape studies referred to in the question remained an important part of the Council's evidence base for the emerging Local Plan.

In relation to the first part of the question he concluded that the proposals put forward in the Draft Bracknell Forest Local Plan were currently being reviewed in the light of comments received through the consultation which would include consideration of comments received on the current Strategic Gap and its role and extent.

In response to the second part of the question Councillor Turrell stated that council officers were in the process of summarising and considering the comments received during the consultation on the draft Local Plan during February and March 2018. Over 1,500 detailed comments had been received from around 475 individuals and organisations. On behalf of the Council he thanked everyone who had contributed either by making a submission or attending the staffed exhibitions held around the Borough.

He commented that planning for the Borough's future needs was a very important and sometimes controversial aspect of the Council's work. He acknowledged that the Council would not be able to meet the wishes of all those who had commented but would ensure that all the comments received were properly considered and changes were made to the plan where appropriate.

He reported that the final housing requirement that would need to be provided for in the new Local Plan was yet to be confirmed and it was also likely that a change in government policy would require another year to be added to the plan period for the Local Plan which could increase the number of new homes to be provided.

He concluded that further technical work was being undertaken to address issues with all the major new proposed allocations as well as analysis of the comments made on the previous consultation. Based on this work, the Council would propose in the next version of the Local Plan what it considered to be the most appropriate and sustainable distribution of development on the available sites. He stated that it would be important to take a strategic approach for the whole Borough and therefore it would not be appropriate to give a view on whether it would be possible to substitute any potential new sites for ones in the Draft Local Plan.

Mr Holley asked as a supplementary question whether CVAG had support for recognising the policy of retaining strategic gaps wherever possible.

Councillor Turrell replied that yes he did support continuing to recognise the policy but this could only be done through thorough investigation of the alternative options.

13. **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 25 April 2018. The Executive had met twice on 8 May and 12 June 2018.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

Within the Transformation Programme:

- **Planning & Building Control Transformation Review**
 - New strategic vision was agreed based on improved timeliness of decision making, maximising web service and contact centre for lower level enquiries
 - There would be a dedicated S106 resource
 - The increased Special Protection Area (SPA) facilitation fees had been agreed previously.
- **Parks & Countryside**
 - Feasibility work being undertaken around creation of Horseshoe Lake Country Park
 - Potential for biomass burner for green waste
 - Increased charge for SPA mitigation

Council Structure & Performance Management:

- New management structure was agreed and endorsed by Employment Committee on 2 July. Pay ranges have been linked to 25th and 50th percentile of Korn Ferry public and not for profit sector database.
- Enhanced performance management arrangements were agreed by Employment Committee.

Major projects:

- Considered potential of joint venture partnership approach for Council owned sites.
- £2.448m capital investment in Bracknell Sports & Leisure Centre was recommended and agreed by Council on 23 May.

Key strategies:

- Re3 Waste Strategy 2018 – 2020 was endorsed which incorporated local collection recycling targets.
- Central/East Berkshire Draft Mineral & Waste Local Plan is a joint plan with Reading, Royal Borough Windsor & Maidenhead and Wokingham. The draft plan was agreed for consultation and had limited local impact as Planners Farm was the only site put forward. An eight week consultation was planned.

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked whether the joint venture partnership approach was in relation to retail, commercial or residential homes. Councillor Bettison OBE replied that this was open ended as some sites would suit more than one solution. He explained that the aim was to create a list of sites and then invite interested parties to submit proposals forward to see how the Council could benefit.

14. **Appointments to external organisations**

The Council considered the report which sought to clarify the current position regarding the appointment of Members to serve on the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority.

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

RESOLVED that the political balance requirements be waived in order to confirm the appointment of Councillors Dudley, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle and McCracken as the Council's representatives on the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority until May 2019.

15. **Standards Annual Report**

The Council considered the Standards Annual Report which set out the activity within the Council's Standards framework from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018.

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

RESOLVED that the Standards output in 2017/18 as set out in the agenda report be noted.

16. **Question Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 10**

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

At the Council meeting on 26 April 2017, I asked a question about responding to the consultation on the expansion to Heathrow Airport. The Council's response, signed by Councillor Turrell and Councillor Brunel-Walker, was submitted on 19 March 2018. This stated that the Council generally supports the proposed expansion but with some conditions and many questions. A decision has now been made and residents are asking what is the position of the Council.

Will this submission be publicised so that all can see , as promised last April, that it represents the interests of all residents?

Has a response been received concerning the many questions and conditions?

Councillor Turrell replied stating that Bracknell Forest Council acknowledges the economic benefits of Heathrow Airport to Bracknell Forest businesses and residents with nearly 2000 residents working there. However, he added that the expansion did raise both strategic and practical concerns for the Borough.

He stated that since the response the Government had voted in favour of the Airports National Policy Statement (NPS) and published its response to the consultation. It was now for the applicant (Heathrow Airport Limited) to develop proposals and seek development consent in accordance with the policies contained in the Airports NPS. There would be increased demand and movements from expansion and it would be important to ensure that the strategy demonstrated how these could be achieved whilst limiting impact on the surrounding area.

He continued that Bracknell Forest Council must work closely with Heathrow, including continued work at the Strategic Planning Group and the Airport Transport

Forum, to establish more detail on the opportunities and impacts for the Borough and how these relate to the surrounding area. This work, he stated, would inform the Council's responses to any further consultations as the proposals were progressed.

He stated that access to Heathrow was an important factor for companies considering expanding within or moving to Bracknell with adequate transport infrastructure being key. He reported that 70% of journeys from Bracknell Forest to the airport were by car or taxi as trains and buses had failed to provide sufficient capacity, flexibility or ease of use.

He reflected that car use and congestion had consequential implications for air quality which were currently stable in Bracknell Forest, with emissions in the Borough's two air quality management areas remaining at the lowest levels of exceedance. This would be affected by congestion or bigger air quality challenges nearer the airport. Similarly he noted that noise remained an issue in some parts of the borough despite technical improvements in aircraft over the years.

He stated that the next stage in the planning procedure for nationally significant infrastructure was obtaining a Development Consent Order which would importantly require a further process of consultation and discussion with communities. The Secretary of State would then conclude whether or not development consent should be granted, and the terms of any consent. This process, he explained, would also involve a public inquiry chaired by a planning inspector, to which representations could be made. He anticipated that this would be some time after 2020. It would be important to represent Bracknell Forest residents' concerns, and to work hard for the most effective measures to resolve or at least mitigate them.

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked a supplementary question querying whether all elected members could be given the opportunity to be involved in contributing to future Council responses to consultations through a gateway review for example so that all Bracknell Forest residents were represented.

Councillor Turrell agreed that he would ensure that an appropriate vehicle was put in place to capture members' views for submission of consultation responses on the future stages of the process.

Mayor's Poet

Before closing the meeting the Mayor invited members to join him in his office to hear the Mayor's poet recite some of her poems which she had created.

MAYOR