

COUNCIL
16 SEPTEMBER 2015
7.30 - 9.00 PM



Present:

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

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Bettison, Brunel-Walker, Mrs Hayes MBE and Worrall

18. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 15 July 2015 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

19. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

20. Mayor's Announcements

Executive Member for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Councillor McCracken was pleased to report that the Bracknell Gymnastic senior men's team had won the British TeamGym Championships title and achieved the highest score on the trampette for the whole series. The women's team came second but also achieved the highest score on the trampette for the whole series. Two of the club's coaches were named 'master coaches' and were honoured for their success. Following their success the teams headed to the international training camp in Dundee and would be the first to be trained in completing triple somersaults. All Members present congratulated everyone involved on their success.

He advised the meeting that the borough now had eight nationally recognised parks which had been awarded Green Flag status with one park having retained this distinction for more than 10 years. The Members present joined him in thanking the Parks and Countryside team for their hard work.

Councillor McCracken read out to the meeting a letter from a parent whose son had participated in the Kwik Cricket competition and Members joined him in thanking Chris Vaal for his hard work in bringing this sporting event to the Borough.

Councillor McCracken advised the meeting that Bracknell Athletic Club had been recognised as the South East Region's Club of the year and would be going forward to be considered for the national award.

Councillor McCracken advised the meeting that since its launch in October last year 7,000 residents had signed up to have an online customer account with the Council.

Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning

Councillor Dr Barnard was pleased to announce that as part of National Heritage week Reading Crown Court hosted an Open Day on 13 September for members of the public and students from local schools to come and view the Crown Court and to speak to those who participate in the court service in the many different ways which are associated with the Criminal Justice System. As part of this event they invited local schools to enter a competition by submitting pieces of art associated with the justice system. The Home Secretary, The Rt. Hon. Theresa May, MP, judged the competition "Off to Court" and three of the six winners were from Ranelagh School. Members present joined him in congratulating Greg Stanger from Ranelagh whose piece also won the Judges Award.

Councillor Dr Barnard was pleased to report that eight new headteachers had been welcomed to Bracknell Forest and he had been impressed by their commitment to supporting the pupils to achieve their best. He added that 100 new Bracknell Forest teachers had met at the Education Centre and their obvious enthusiasm and commitment would only help continue the academic successes that the borough's schools had demonstrated over the Summer.

Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing

Councillor Birch was proud to announce that Alison Koen, Development Manager had been invited by Chief Inspector Dave Gilbert as the Local Policing Area (LPA) Commander to attend a commendation ceremony to recognise her work as Domestic Abuse Service Co-ordinator for people with learning disabilities. Councillor McCracken added that the service had been set up in 2011 and had undertaken research which had shown a major reduction in serious incidents. The project had made a good start but more work was continuing to progress it further. The Members congratulated Alison on her hard work.

Executive Member for Planning and Transport

Councillor Turrell was pleased to announce that the results for the Bracknell in Bloom competition had just been released. The project was now a community effort with Bracknell Forest Council working together with Bracknell Town Council, Bracknell Forest Homes, Bracknell Horticultural Association, Jeallots Hill Community Landshare Project and Residents' Associations to create more than just floral displays. The entries now focused more on community gardening, recycling and the neighbourhood areas. He was proud to announce that the Bracknell entry had been awarded Gold standard as had South Hill Park for the new park category. He thanked everyone involved in the Bracknell in Bloom Committee including Councillor Mrs Isabel Mattick. The Members present joined him in congratulating everyone involved.

Mayor's Charity 2015-16 – Make-A-Wish

The Mayor was pleased to announce that she was taking part in a personal challenge to lose £10 for 10lbs by 2016. She had approached local gyms and health professionals for health and exercise advice to help her achieve this. Members were asked whether they would like to join her in the challenge or to sponsor her activity.

The Mayor invited Members to her Charity curry night which was being held on Monday 29 February 2016 at the Tamarind Tree in Wokingham. Members were encouraged to attend and to donate any unwanted Christmas gifts to be used as raffle prizes.

The Mayor advised the meeting that she would be visiting a number of the borough's libraries to read seasonal stories to children and hoped the story-telling events would raise money for the charity. The Mayor added that an exciting baking event would be held in September but that more details would follow.

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

21. **Presentation from Thames Valley Police**

The Chief Constable, Francis Habgood, gave a presentation on significant policing issues across the borough and Police and Crime Commissioner, Anthony Stansfeld also attended to speak to Members about budgets and regional funding.

The Police and Crime Commissioner reported on the Thames Valley Police (TVP)'s performance against the PEEL Programme e.g. Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy. The force was rated good having low overall crime levels and maintaining high levels of victim satisfaction (89%). They were on track to achieve their required savings (£59m) and was acting to achieve fairness and legitimacy in most of its practices.

The Chief Constable reported that there were on average two household burglary per week and the detection rate three times the national rate at 385.8%. The increased figures relating to violent crimes could be linked the successful projects within the borough to increase awareness and reporting rates. Similarly the increase in rape reporting was a national trend to the increased media coverage and included an increase in historic cases being reported.

The Chief Constable advised the meeting that officers were called to deal with incidents involving mental health and it was hoped that successful practices which were used elsewhere would be introduced to Bracknell soon. He added that a multiagency safeguarding hub had been set up in Bracknell and the key issue was ensuring that everyone understood the signs of child sexual exploitation including hotel workers, teachers for example.

The Chief Constable explained that the force's increased presence on social media was extending their reach with Thames Valley alert not only circulating information but request help and support with live cases. All Members were encouraged to sign up if they had not already done so.

He added that they continued to face financial challenges and had used priority based budgeting to reduce costs and protect the frontline. They were exploring both opportunities to work with other partners and considering collaborative functions across forces to future proof their services. They were consulting on the possibility of a single senior management team between Bracknell and Wokingham areas.

The Chief Constable then responded to questions from the Council.

In response to a question regarding how budget cuts would impact Bracknell Forest residents, the Chief Constable explained that they would not find out the final budget settlement until December. Based on current assumptions they were confident that

they would be able to prepare a balanced budget unless they were impacted by the new complicated funding formula. In the long term they would need to transform the service for example using technology to deliver efficiencies. The Police and Crime Commissioner explained that the government were consulting on changing the method of allocating funding to forces and this would have a detrimental impact of the level of funding Bracknell Forest would receive. He had responded and met with the Home Secretary to explain his concerns.

In response to a question regarding the possibility of downgrading the model of emergency response vehicles the Chief Constable stated that this would not happen as they were currently in a contract with Vauxhall but the force used a range of vehicles depending on operational requirements which included unmarked smaller vehicles.

In response to a question regarding rural crime he stated that the publicised shift had already been implemented in Bracknell Forest and rural crime remained a key priority identified by the Community Safety Partnership and was therefore part of the Police and Crime Commissioner's plan.

In response to a question about redesigning the way people can access police services the Chief Constable reiterated that there had been significant investment in social media and that it had been used for quicker and greater spread of information, requests for feedback and there was future potential for redesigning the way people can access policing services for example allowing from an app on a mobile device or web-based reporting.

In response to a question about whether police stations were still required if officers were equipped with mobile technology the Chief Constable confirmed that the force had a longer term estate strategy. He recognised that officers needed a location to deploy from but it was possible that partner locations could be used.

Councillor Heydon stated that there had been three significant incidents in the Old Bracknell Ward area and he thanked local officers for resolving these issues promptly.

The Mayor thanked the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner for their attendance and informative presentations.

22. **Executive Report**

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Birch, presented the Leader's report on the work of the Executive since that reported at the Council meeting on 15 July 2015. The Executive had met once on 15 July 2015.

The Deputy Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

- Recruitment and retention in children's social care
 - The initial retention incentives were agreed in July 2014.
 - The Children's Social Care Programme Board had been established to develop a wider response and included changes to salary structure and working practices.
 - These changes had been endorsed by the Employment Committee.

- Acquisition of Emergency Temporary Accommodation
 - The Council had an opportunity to reduce local reliance on Bed and Breakfast accommodation which would reduce costs and reduce the disruption to families especially those with school age children.
 - Member had sight of the business plan summary within a confidential annex.

- Care Act Consultation approved to consider the following issues:
 - continued charging for residential and nursing care
 - changes to policy on financial assessment of couples
 - charging interest and administrative fees of universal deferred payments
 - charging “self funders” for setting up care arrangements

- Local Council Tax Benefits Scheme Consultation approved to consider the following issues:
 - Working age households to receive maximum of 80% support for Council Tax liability
 - Increase in disregards to allow households to retain more income
 - National minimum wage to be used as minimum self employed income after 12 months
 - Child maintenance payments to be included in income calculation

- Housing Related Support services for Older People
 - Two housing support contracts had been awarded relating to assessments and peripatetic/floating support
 - Received the Safe Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board Annual Report

- Capital and Revenue Outturns 2014/15
 - Capital outturn was £25.4m which was 98% of the cash budget
 - Carry forwards had been agreed
 - School capital programme was amended to reflect the late Department for Education funding notification
 - Revenue outturn was £85.801m
 - 17th consecutive year that the Council had delivered its services within budget

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

- Recruitment and retention in children’s social care
- Acquisition of Emergency Temporary Accommodation
- Capital and Revenue Outturns 2014/15

In response to Councillor Mrs Temperton’s question about Syrian refugees Councillor Birch replied that no direct approach had been made to the Council by the government about the expectations on the Council’s services but the Council would respond appropriately as everyone had been moved by the crisis.

Recruitment and Retention in Children’s Social Care

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

RESOLVED that a new 2015-16 capital budget of £0.1m to invest in ICT technologies to enhance mobile working and improve efficiency in Children's Social Care be approved.

Acquisition of Emergency Temporary Accommodation

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

RESOLVED that a supplementary capital estimate of £850k to cover the purchase and ancillary costs to provide emergency temporary accommodation be approved.

Capital and Revenue Outturns 2014/15

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

RESOLVED that the virements over £100k (Annexe E of the agenda report) be approved.

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

RESOLVED that the Treasury Management Annual Report 2014/15 (Annexe B of the agenda report) be approved.

23. **Food Law Enforcement Plan 2015-16**

The Council considered the report asking them to approve the Food Law Enforcement Plan 2015-16 in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

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

RESOLVED that the supporting information in the report be noted and that the Food Law Enforcement Plan for 2015-16 be ratified.

24. **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:

Four years ago the Bracknell Forest Youth were consulted about the reorganisation of Youth Provision. As a result, they were promised a new state of the art Youth Hub in Bracknell Town Centre.

The Council has been working to deliver this Youth Hub at Cooper's Hill for at least the last two years.

Will it be delivered and when?

In response Councillor Dr Barnard stated that the Council was committed to delivering a Youth Hub that had been consulted on four years ago. These were complex commercial discussions as the hub would need to be delivered with no cost to the Council either in construction or ongoing provision cost. Commercial conversations on viable options were ongoing but the Council was not willing to compromise on its vision. He added that he believed it was still deliverable on the original terms and was an exciting project with potential partners including Round House and Red Bull Theatres. The target date was for an Executive decision in November or December.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Mrs Temperton about whether principal partners had committed to the project Councillor Dr Barnard replied that their commitment was in principle but that no one had yet signed. The Council was not prepared to deviate from the original vision to create a sustainable service and discussions were hinged on this key principle but they were receiving advice and guidance to bring the project forward.

MAYOR