

**COUNCIL**  
**30 NOVEMBER 2011**  
**7.30 - 10.40 PM**



**Present:**

The Mayor (Councillor Chris Turrell), Councillors Mrs McCracken (Deputy Mayor), Allen, Angell, Mrs Angell, Baily, Mrs Ballin, Dr Barnard, Bettison, Birch, Mrs Birch, Blatchford, Brossard, Ms Brown, Brunel-Walker, Davison, Finch, Finnie, Gbadebo, Harrison, Mrs Hayes, Ms Hayes, Heydon, Kendall, Kensall, Leake, McCracken, McLean, Ms Miller, Mrs Pile, Porter, Sargeant, Mrs Temperton, Thompson, Wade, Ward, Ms Whitbread and Worrall

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Mrs Barnard, Dudley, Virgo and Ms Wilson

**25. Minutes of Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 September 2011 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**

Queen's Visit

The Mayor was pleased to be able to welcome HM the Queen with the Duke of Edinburgh, the Duke of York and HM King Constantine and Queen Anne Marie of the Hellenes to the borough as they visited Wellington College on Monday 17th October. HM the Queen officially opened the Round Square International Conference.

Award for Local Alzheimer's Group

The Mayor congratulated Ascot Area Alzheimer's (Triple A) Support Group who were presented The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service by the Duchess of Gloucester. Groups were nominated by the members of the public who had been helped personally or witnessed the benefit of a group's work within the local community.

Award for borough resident

The Mayor was pleased to announce that a resident of the borough, Athena Giddings, was a finalist for the Breakthrough Award at The Prince's Trust Celebrate Success Awards. The Awards honour the achievements of disadvantaged young people supported by The Trust who have succeeded against the odds, improved their chances in life and had a positive impact on their local community.

### Jennett's Park

The Mayor reported that he had attended the opening of Jennett's Park Community Centre and that this is now the heart of the estate. The Mayor was also proud to have been present at the opening of Jennett's Park CE Primary School by the Secretary for Education the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP and the Bishop of Reading.

### Christmas Light Switch On

The Mayor congratulated Bracknell Regeneration Partnership for the successful event to switch on the town's Christmas lights held on Sunday 27 November.

### School Carol Service

The Mayor was looking forward to the annual School's Carol Service which was being held on Sunday 4 December at 5pm at Bracknell Leisure Centre.

### Charity Collection

The Mayor announced that he was holding two collection days for his charity, Age Concern Bracknell Forest, on Thursday 8 and Friday 9 December at the Meadows in Sandhurst. Any volunteers were asked to contact the Mayor's PA, Sue Brunt.

### Masquerades Ball

The Mayor announced that he was hosting a Masquerades Ball in aid of his charity on Saturday 11 February. Tickets would be £30 for a single, £50 for a double and could be purchased through the Mayor's PA, Sue Brunt.

### Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development

Councillor Mrs Ballin was pleased to show the Members present images of the new Salt Barn and snow plough which was now fully stocked and operational. Councillor Mrs Ballin also encouraged residents to get prepared for bad weather.

### Executive Member for Children and Young People

Councillor Dr Barnard congratulated and thanked staff and volunteers for their hard work as the annual Children's Services Ofsted inspection had judged Bracknell Forest as 'performs well' which was a great result.

### Executive Member for the Environment

Councillor Mrs Hayes was very proud to congratulate Scottish & Southern Energy who had been awarded £22.8m from OFGEM's Low Carbon Network Fund for its innovative "New Thames Valley Vision" project. The New Thames Valley Vision is a 5 year project (2012-2017) located in Bracknell Forest. Bracknell Forest Council was one of the founding members of the successful partnership which supported SSE with other partners including GE, Honeywell and University of Reading. The general aim of the Low Carbon Network Fund is to encourage electricity network companies to test and anticipate the power distribution challenges of a low carbon economy.

Councillor Mrs Hayes was pleased to report that Longshot Lane had received 99% 'good' or 'very good' responses in a recent satisfaction survey of its users. The cleanliness of the site and the helpful staff were recognised and Councillor Mrs Hayes thanked both the staff and residents for these excellent results.

### Executive Member for Education

Councillor Kendall was pleased to announce that Birch Hill Primary School had moved from Special Measures to receive a 'good' Ofsted inspection. The annual Children's Services Ofsted assessment had shown that the majority of primary schools were good or outstanding. The Local Authority had provided good targeted support and the one remaining inadequate school was making good progress.

### Executive Members for Culture, Corporate Services and Public Protection

Councillor McCracken was pleased to announce that the Council's Communications team had received two gold awards from the Chartered Institute of Public Relations for the work it did during the Swinley Forest fires to keep residents, motorists, leisure centre users and the media informed and for its excellent 'Welcome to the Borough' publication.

Councillor McCracken announced to the meeting that the 'Tell Us Once' service was now in operation. The new service means that the bereaved tell us information and four Government Offices and 11 council departments would be contacted. Feedback from those who had already used the service had been very positive.

Councillor McCracken was pleased to confirm that the Olympic Flame would pass through Bracknell on Tuesday 10 July 2012 on its journey from Oxford to Reading. The route was not yet confirmed but residents were encouraged to come and witness the special occasion.

Councillor McCracken was delighted to report that there had been a record attendance at the annual Primary Schools Cross Country event. 600 children had taken part at the popular event on 18 November at South Hill Park.

Councillor McCracken was pleased to announce the completion of the main contract for the £4 million restoration project of South Hill Park's grounds

### Welcome Back

On behalf of the whole Council the Mayor welcomed both Councillor Baily and Councillor Kendall back to the Chamber.

## 28. **Presentation from Chief Constable, Thames Valley Police**

The Chief Constable, Sara Thornton, gave a presentation on significant policing issues across the Borough.

The Chief Constable emphasised the following points:

- Significant progress had been made on cutting bureaucracy by reducing the number of forms to be completed by officers;
- There was a commitment to a visible presence by police in the area and therefore this would not be reduced in the next four years;
- The reduction in serious acquisitive crime in Bracknell Forest was significant at 24%;
- Reducing violence against the person included domestic violence and had been reduced by 28%;
- It was recognised that antisocial behaviour undermines the quality of life and 11% of people surveyed perceived that there was a high level of antisocial

behaviour in their area. This was below half the perception in other areas and Operation Lion Club was successfully helping to reduce this further;

- Satisfaction levels of victims surveyed continued to improve, particularly with victims of vehicle crime;
- The identified funding shortfall of £52 million over four years had been resolved.
- As part of the productivity strategy specialist units had been combined with Hampshire and further options were being considered. It was explained that changes to the Local Policing Model had meant a reduction in the middle level of management and therefore associated costs. Non staffing costs were also being reviewed to ensure value for money on building and fleet costs for example.

The Chief Constable then responded to questions from the Council on her presentation.

In response to a question from Councillor Angell concerns that people were losing faith in reporting certain crimes the Chief Constable confirmed that survey results demonstrated a reduction in crime reporting across both actual reports and those within the victim survey, suggesting that the level of reporting was consistent and not falling. She explained that there were diverse reasons for this. Targeted campaigns were used to encourage reporting by certain victims for example domestic violence and encouraging third person reporting was appropriate in other areas such as hate crime.

A concern was raised by Councillor Dr Barnard that the reduced summary of the DASH form used for domestic abuse incidents being provided to Children's Services did not include vital information. In response it was explained that the new process was to support shared services across 6 authority areas, to ensure that only relevant information was being shared and that the particular issue was incomplete forms resulting in missing data rather than the forms themselves.

In response to a query by Councillor Brossard regarding whether the Police would continue to participate in Neighbourhood Action Groups following the change in structure and loss of support from April next year the Chief Constable assured Members that they would not see any difference in support. The Chief Constable was asked by Councillor Kensall what the advantages were of a review of neighbourhood areas to reduce from 14 to six areas. The Chief Constable responded that this which would strengthen operational resilience in smaller neighbourhood policing teams and provide better supervision within each area. Existing Neighbourhood Action Groups could amalgamate to match the new boundaries but it was acknowledged that there was no expectation that all would choose to do this.

When asked by Councillor Brossard about the continuing use of the system of Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras throughout the Borough the Chief Constable reported that there was a small team working through the Head Quarters across 7 days but they were only able to provide night cover 50% of the time. The Chief Constable had been very grateful to Bracknell Forest for their financial support to set this up. LPA Area Commander Simon Bowden had been able to provide an additional person to support this work until April 2013 on a local project called Lamp Lighter.

The Chief Constable was reminded by Councillor McCracken of previous conversations on the subject and was asked to reassure the Council that there would be no diminution in the commitment to managing prolific offenders. It was explained that despite becoming a shared service the Integrated Offender Management service

was working with probation to deal with ten top tier offenders. In addition LPA Area Commander Simon Bowden had identified an additional officer and this was extended to working with 24 offenders.

In response to a further concern expressed by Councillor McCracken about the impact of sharing the police officer dedicated to Bracknell Forest's Youth Offending Service with Wokingham the Chief Constable explained that this provision was required by law and that the specific duties to be carried out only took less than 50% of the officers' time. She confirmed that Thames Valley Police were also committed to offender management and provided an additional £600,000 to Youth Offending Teams in their area.

In response to a final question by Councillor McCracken the Chief Constable confirmed that the Community Safety Partnership had information sharing protocols in place for sharing information on serious alcohol or drug related incidents with Bracknell Forest Council and other strategic agencies.

The Mayor thanked the Chief Constable for her presentation and for answering Members questions.

## 29. **Deputation Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 9**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 (Public Participation), a statement calling for action was submitted by Mrs C Doran resident of Dukes Ride, Crowthorne on behalf of a deputation of three local residents groups with regard to their concern about the proposed Site Allocation Development Plan Document (SADPD).

The full text of the statement was as below:

*"The Campaign for Responsible Development, a coalition of three local residents groups, Binfield Village Protection Society, Northern Arc Action Group and the Crowthorne Village Action Group, call upon the council members not to adopt the SADPD in its current form for these reasons:-*

- *The overall number of houses is based on pre 2006 data and does not reflect the economic downturn and weakened housing market in which many buyers are unable to get mortgages.*
- *Environmental damage under the Council's 2006-2026 housing plans would be extensive and permanent – with 3000 houses being built on green land and a further 1000 on woodland, destroying an estimated 20,000 trees.*
- *Local villages would lose their traditional individual identities through the loss or erosion of green gaps separating built-up areas, resulting in urban sprawl.*
- *The high densities proposed would have a heavy negative impact on all local infrastructure, leading to gridlock during peak hour traffic, both on local roads and the surrounding arterial roads, including the A329M and A322 Bagshot Road.*
- *We query how the Council proposes to fund the additional infrastructure programmes proposed.*
- *The plans do not achieve Government aims for sustainable development which preserves open spaces of public value, minimises impact on natural resources, and minimises the need to travel.*

*We ask Council Members not to adopt the current document but instead instruct its planning officers to reconsider all the development sites available, with the aim of minimising loss of green spaces, preserving the gaps between individual communities*

*and, in particular, prioritising and vigorously pursuing the efficient re-use of existing long-term empty buildings, especially in and around Bracknell town centre”.*

The Mayor invited Andy Holley to make the submission to the meeting on behalf of the deputation, following which one Member asked a factual question.

The Mayor accepted the petition which was submitted at the conclusion of the presentation and Councillor Bettison advised that in accordance with the petition scheme this would be passed to the Head of Democratic and Registration Services to be dealt with appropriately.

Councillor Bettison formally thanked Mr Holley for the submission and confirmed that Councillors would bear in mind the deputation’s points when the related recommendations were being considered during the next item.

The Mayor thanked Mr Holley for attending the meeting.

### 30. **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 21 September 2011. The Executive had met twice on 18 October and 15 November 2011.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

- **Medium Term Objectives**
  - Six overarching priorities had been retained with 11 Medium Term Objectives. 73 Key actions underpinned the Objectives to provide a four year strategic policy direction and implement manifesto pledges.
- **Polling Place Review**
  - There was minimal change proposed with a new Polling Place at Jennett’s Park Community Centre and a change from Easthampstead House Polling Place to the Kerith Centre
- **Adult Services, Health & Housing: Modernising Older People’s Services**
  - Key elements included:
    - a. future of Ladybank Older Persons Home
    - b. development of new extra care housing
    - c. strengthen intermediate care
    - d. enhance capacity in Community Response & Reablement team
    - e. changing home support for people with long term conditions
  - New service model for Emergency Duty Service had been agreed for all six Berkshire authorities
  - Plans to implement Government reforms to Blue Badges from January 2012 had been agreed
  - A new pool agreement for Community Equipment Services had been agreed from March 2012 with six Berkshire authorities and the PCT. The service would be hosted by Slough and greater choice would be given by a developed specification including both traditional and new retail models.
- Major contracts were awarded for Agency Staff, Cleaning and the Meadow Vale Primary School building
- **External Inspections**
  - Fostering Service received ‘good’ overall judgement
  - Annual Audit Letter declared both audit of accounts and value for money were ‘sound’
  - Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000: Proportionate policy on Directed Surveillance and use of Covert Human Intelligence Services

agreed and it was noted that there was a very limited use in Bracknell Forest.

- Other issues:
  - Academies: strong ambition for ‘all schools to be good schools’, this was a fast changing environment and there was an ongoing dialogue with schools in the borough
  - The Faith and Belief in Action report had been funded by the Challenge and Innovation Fund and was a very positive picture of a coherent community.

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

- The Council’s Medium Term Objectives
- Polling District and Polling Place Review
- Site Allocation Development Plan Document – Publication and Submission

### The Council’s Medium Term Objectives

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

**RESOLVED** that the priorities and medium term objectives set out at Appendix 3 to the associated report be approved.

### Polling District and Polling Place Review

On the proposition of Councillor Mrs Ballin, Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development seconded by Councillor Birch it was

**RESOLVED** that

- i) no changes be made to the following Polling Districts and Polling Places which meet the statutory criteria and provide reasonable and accessible facilities:

BA	BG	BM	CN	SP	WN	WV	WZ
BD	BH	BN	CS	SQ	WP	WW	
BE	BJ	BP	SJ	WG	WQ	WX	
BF	BK	BW	SO	WM	WS	WY	

- ii) no changes be made to polling districts BB (Binfield) and BL (Harmans Water) which also meet the statutory criteria and provide reasonable and accessible facilities, but that they be kept under review as developments progress.
- iii) the new Jennett’s Park Community Centre be designated as the Polling Place for BQ.;
- iv) no change be made to Polling District BT but that the Kerith Centre buildings be designated as the new Polling Place;
- v) the Polling Districts and Polling Places for the Borough of Bracknell Forest are approved as set out at Annex C to the associated report with effect from 1 December 2011.

## Site Allocation Development Plan Document – Publication and Submission

Councillor Mrs Ballin made an undertaking to respond to the statement by the deputation in writing.

Following a lengthy debate on the proposition of Councillor Mrs Ballin, Executive Member for Planning, Transport and Economic Development seconded by Councillor Birch it was

**RESOLVED** that

- i) The Draft Submission SADPD, the Proposals Map changes and all supporting documents, be formally submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination; and,
- ii) The process for consultation set out in paragraph 2.1.7 is approved.

Councillors Baily, Harrison, Leake, McLean, Mrs Pile and Sargeant requested that their votes against the motion be recorded.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned for ten minutes.

### 31. **Severance Policy Options**

The Council considered the Council report regarding the future approach for the Council's Severance Policy.

On the proposition of Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Resources and Assets, seconded by Councillor McLean it was

**RESOLVED** that

- i) the use of actual weekly pay levels for redundancy purposes be retained;
- ii) the policy of paying statutory weeks only to those with immediate access to pension be retained;
- iii) the current x 2.5 multiplier of the statutory table for those with no immediate access to pension be reduced to a multiplier of x 1.75;
- iv) the policy of awarding added years to pensions only in exceptional circumstances be continued; and
- v) the new policy take effect from 1 December 2011.

Councillors Mrs Temperton and Ms Brown requested that their votes against part iii) of the motion be recorded.

32. **Employees Code of Conduct Amendment**

The Council considered the Council report regarding a minor amendment to the Employees Code of Conduct in respect of the disclosure of information received during the tendering process.

On the proposition of Councillor Ward, Executive Member for Finance, Resources and Assets, seconded by Councillor McCracken it was

**RESOLVED** that the alteration to the Employees Code of Conduct proposed in Section 5 of the agenda report be adopted.

33. **Amendments to the Council's Constitution**

The Council considered the Council report regarding proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution in order to establish a Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny and confer on Overview and Scrutiny Panels the power to approve reports and recommendations for submission to the Executive, full Council and other organisations.

On the proposition of Councillor Ward, Chairman of Governance and Audit Committee, seconded by Councillor McCracken it was

**RESOLVED** that

- i) the Council's Constitution be amended to permit a scheme for Public Participation for meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Panels and that, subject to the amendment referred to in paragraph 5.1 of the agenda report, the draft scheme shown as Annexe A to the agenda report be approved; and
- ii) the Council's Constitution be amended to provide that Overview and Scrutiny Panels may adopt reports and make recommendations to the Executive, Council and other organisations.

34. **Absence from Council meetings of Councillor Ms Wilson**

The Council considered whether to exercise its powers under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 to approve Councillor Ms Wilson's absence from meetings since 20 July 2011 as a result of her illness.

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

**RESOLVED** that

- i) the current position in respect of Councillor Ms Wilson be noted; and
- ii) pursuant to section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972 Councillor Ms Wilson's failure to attend Council since 20 July 2011 by reason of her illness be approved.

35. **Schedule of Meetings 2012-13**

The Council considered the report regarding the proposed Schedule of Meetings for 2012/13.

On being put to the meeting it was **RESOLVED** that the schedule of meetings 2012/13 set out in the annex to the agenda report be approved.

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

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

*High deposits and the paucity of mortgage lending have resulted in an increase in demand for rented accommodation and a consequential rise in rentable values. Many of the lower income families have been priced out of the market. The Council has evidence that 60% of its homeless families were evicted by landlords wishing to reclaim their property.*

*What plans does the Council have to address this pressing issue?*

In response Councillor Birch stated that the Bracknell Forest Council has a very good record of dealing with homelessness. To help process policy has been put in place so that housing benefits can be paid directly to the landlord rather than recipient. The Council is able to pay loans to help people to find a house and works closely with landlords and letting agents to help maintain tenancy.

In response to a supplementary question on why there was no reference to supporting homelessness in the new Medium Term Objectives Councillor Birch stated that he felt this was covered by the commitment to provide a range of appropriate housing.

- (ii) Councillor Ms Brown asked Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing the following published question

*The number of our homeless families being placed in one room bed and breakfast accommodation outside the Borough, in Slough and Farnborough, is increasing. On November 15 there were 9 such families. Besides landlord eviction the other main causes of homelessness are partner break up, parental eviction, violence and mortgage arrears. In the present economic climate, these problems are unlikely to go away.*

*What will the Council do to house our homeless within the Borough?*

In response Councillor Birch stated that the Council was already investing to provide accommodation. He stated that as part of prevention work if an officer found residents were becoming homeless the Council would try to help them get their own home through the cash incentive scheme 'My Home Buy'. Any families accommodated outside of the borough are on a temporary basis and the Council is working with Bracknell Forest Homes to look at a number of additional places to help people at an early stage. The priority is to help people stay in the borough.

In response to a supplementary question regarding what the Council does to help maintain regular attendance at schools for families accommodated

outside the borough Councillor Birch explained that pupils were transported back to their school at a cost to the Council. He added that this was one of the reasons why housing people within the borough was more cost effective.

37. **Motion Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 11**

Motion 04/2011 was moved and seconded by Councillor Mrs Ballin and Councillor Bettison respectively as follows:

*“Bracknell Forest Council welcomes the Boundary Commission for England’s initial proposals for the Bracknell and Windsor parliamentary constituencies as part of the Coalition Government’s undertaking to our residents”.*

On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

**MAYOR**