

COUNCIL
24 APRIL 2019
7.30 - 8.00 PM



Present:

The Mayor (Councillor Alvin Finch), Councillors Mrs McKenzie (Deputy Mayor), Allen, Mrs Angell, Angell, Ashman, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, D Birch, Mrs Birch, G Birch, Brossard, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, 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, Skinner, Mrs Temperton, Thompson, Tullett, Turrell, Virgo, Wade and Worrall

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Finnie and Phillips

44. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 27 February 2019 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

45. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

46. Mayor's Announcements

Everyone Active

Councillor McCracken informed members that the internal renovations at Bracknell Leisure Centre were now complete following Everyone Active's first year on site. The leisure centre now offered a larger gym and studio, and refurbished changing rooms and café. Members were encouraged to go and visit the new facilities.

21st Anniversary Trees

Councillor McCracken reported that Councillors had been planting commemorative trees in towns and parishes across the Borough to celebrate the 21st anniversary of Bracknell Forest Council as a Unitary Authority.

Loo of the Year

Councillor McCracken reported that the Council had again, for the 25th consecutive year, won the Loo of the Year award for the facilities at The Look Out, retaining its Platinum status.

Crowthorne Fire Station

Councillor Dudley informed members that Crowthorne Fire Station was being rebuilt to become a tri-service station, housing Fire, Police and South Central Ambulance Service. The new station would include a community room for local use. Councillor Dudley thanked Wellington College for accommodating the Fire Service during the building work.

Mayoress Diane Finch

Councillor Bettison led Members in remembering the late Mayoress, who had passed away on 23 March 2019.

Diane Finch had been a well-known figure across the Borough, having worked in healthcare, secretarial roles and with the parish councils. She had also been a keen volunteer with the Cub Scouts. Diane had also been a member of Garth Conservatives with her husband, Councillor Alvin Finch, and had stood for the Conservatives at a number of local elections. Councillor Bettison commented that she would be greatly missed.

Members stepping down

Councillor Bettison recognised the service of those Councillors who were not standing for re-election; Councillors Mrs Angell, Finnie, McCracken, Mrs McCracken, Peacey, Philips, Thompson and Worrall. These Councillors had served a combined total of 153 years, and Councillor Bettison commented that the efforts of these individuals was recognised and appreciated.

Mayoral Facebook page

The Mayor reminded Members that they could view updates of his recent engagements on his Facebook page.

47. **Questions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 9**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 (Public Participation), a question was submitted by Mr S Hearn, resident of Ladybank, Hanworth.

The Mayor invited Mr Hearn to put the following published question to Councillor Allen, Chairman of Governance and Audit:

As you will be aware, there is a large number of people across the country who are concerned with the increase of tolerance towards racist comments that are being shared on various social media platforms and also within our national press. This is in conjunction with sharing of extremist ideology and bullying behaviours that are not compatible with what is expected of elected members chosen to represent the electorate.

What, if any, processes does the Council have in place for members of the public to raise concerns about a councillor's behaviour or standards of conduct, and what does the Council do to ensure that any process it has is transparent?

Councillor Allen responded to say that the Council took Councillor conduct very seriously, and that the Member Code of Conduct was freely available on the Council website. All Councillors were offered training on conduct as part of their induction, and there was a mandatory requirement for members to sign a copy of the Code of Conduct prior to taking office.

Where a member of the public or of Council staff felt that the Code of Conduct had been breached, they were able to lodge a complaint through the Council website. All complaints were received by the Council's Monitoring Officer – a role which was currently delivered by the Borough Solicitor – who would decide whether a formal investigation was required. This decision would be taken in discussion with the Independent Person to ensure impartiality.

Full Council received a Standards Annual Report to update on the number of complaints against Members and their outcomes.

Councillor Allen noted that the Code of Conduct was part of the Council's Constitution, which was a living document under constant review. Council was able to make changes to this document, and to the criteria for granting disposals.

The Committee for Standards in Public Life issued a report to Government in January 2019 setting out various proposals relating to the national standards framework. The government is expected to respond to the recommendation set out in the report towards the end of the year, and any arising legislative changes would be implemented in its internal Standards Framework.

In response to a supplementary question regarding whether the processes and outcomes were available in the public domain, the Borough Solicitor answered on Councillor Allen's behalf to state that the process would remain confidential until a hearing was called. Hearings would be held under the procedure for Council meetings, but the hearing would be held in private if it was likely that confidential or exempt information would be disclosed. The outcomes of all hearings would be made public.

48. **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 16 January 2019. The Executive had met twice since the last Council meeting, on 12 March 2019 and 9 April 2019.

The Council noted the Executive decisions detailed in the report. The Leader highlighted the following matters which had been considered by the Executive:

- The Bracknell Forest Public Health arrangement had been re-integrated to the pan-Berkshire arrangement, with a Shared Director of Public Health and a Consultant in Public Health who would lead within the Bracknell Forest management structure.
- Integrated Continuing Health Care would be implemented across East Berkshire in a pilot for 2019/20, and Bracknell Forest would become trusted assessor. It was hoped that the system would establish a seamless service between services.
- Work to develop the Heathlands site had been challenged by volatile local market conditions. The Council was undertaking joint work with the CCG and Frimley Healthcare Foundation Trust on this matter.
- The Planning and Transport Capital programmes had been agreed for Integrated Transport and Highways Maintenance.
- The Building Maintenance report and service programme plan had been agreed.

Arising from a question from Councillor Mrs Temperton, Councillor D Birch commented that a business plan was being developed for Heathlands to be completed by October 2019. It was hoped that building would commence later in this year, or early in 2020.

49. **Champions' Annual Report**

The Council received the Champions' Annual Report for 2018/19, and thanked the Champions for their work.

50. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report**

Councillor Leake presented the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2018/19.

Councillor Leake thanked all Members for their support and contributions to Overview and Scrutiny work during the year, and thanked officers involved for their work and commitment.

In response to a question from Councillor Mrs Temperton, it was noted that the Task and Finish Group relating to Primary Care Patient Experience hoped to have a first draft report shortly to summarise their findings. The project had been delayed by a project to film videos in GP surgeries.

On the proposition of Councillor Leake, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Commission, and seconded by Councillor Angell, it was **RESOLVED** that

- 1 the 2018/19 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission be adopted;
- 2 the commitment, role and value of the Overview and Scrutiny function be acknowledged and that non-executive Members continue to be supported in their role.

MAYOR