

COUNCIL
11 SEPTEMBER 2019
7.30 - 10.20 PM



Present:

Councillors Mrs McKenzie (Mayor), Ms Merry (Deputy Mayor), Allen, Angell, Atkinson, Bhandari, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Brown, Brunel-Walker, Finch, Gbadebo, Mrs L Gibson, MJ Gibson, Green, Mrs Hamilton, Mrs Ingham, Kennedy, Kirke, Leake, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle, McLean, Mrs Mattick, Mossom, Neil, Parker, Porter, Skinner, Temperton, Tullett, Turrell and Wade

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Dudley, Ms Gaw, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Ms Hayes, Heydon and Virgo

21. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 17 July 2019 be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

22. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

23. Chief Constables' Presentation

Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Matt Barber gave a presentation on the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) role and responsibilities and strategic priorities within the Thames Valley Police and Crime Plan 2017-21. He highlighted the Victims First service as well as an overview of the crime figures across the Thames Valley and an explanation of the waiting times for callers using the 101 service to report incidents.

Chief Constable, John Campbell and Local Police Area Commander, Felicity Parker gave a presentation on the local policing issues and crime figures within Bracknell Forest. The complexity of issues surrounding policing were explained in the context of the Thames Valley Police Strategic Plan for 2019/20. It was explained that their priority was on preventing crime and responding to offences involving vulnerable residents. It was acknowledged that having neighbourhood officers that were familiar to residents and accessible and were present in the community was important.

In response to a question regarding what specific actions Councillors could undertake to ensure that crime and policing challenges within their neighbourhoods were being tackled and reported it was reiterated that the Police were the operational arm but they relied on local information. All Councillors were encouraged to keep in touch with their local PCSO so that problem solving could be started at the earliest opportunity and to let them know if more information about police activity was needed to be shared.

In response to a question regarding Thames Valley Police's support of the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme it was reported that it was a significant decision to accredit people and the Police have to ensure that the appropriate

processes and training were in place and also review the application to ensure that its use is proportionate.

In response to an enquiry about how the police tackle antisocial behaviour it was reiterated that they were working with the Community Safety Partnership and the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer within the Council. Councillors were asked to report any hot spots within the area so that problem solving could be undertaken to reduce it.

In response to a question regarding the impact the Northern parishes would see following the announcement that Thames Valley Police would be recruiting 600 additional police officers it was explained that the focus would be to recruit well to maintain standards. The priority would be those force units who had seen a reduction in officers with a focus on local policing and the Local Area Commander would make an assessment as to where these resources should be allocated.

Following questions relating to overt drug-dealing at Westmorland Park and other nearby sites regarding how the local Policing team were engaging with residents and taking steps to stop this it was explained that there may have been covert activity which could not be shared. Examples had been given in the presentation about the range of responses which could be deployed and Councillors were encouraged to report concerns to the local team to improve their intelligence base and response to incidents.

Clarification was sought on the poor inspection judgements relating to crime reporting data and it was confirmed that Thames Valley Police was one of 44 forces which had fallen short of the inspectorate's standards. A practical example of the challenge of maintaining data integrity was given and it was explained that the threshold between being considered good versus inadequate was very narrow. Members were reassured that the direction of travel on this measure was good but because rules kept changing they never expected to reach 100%.

In response to a question on poor handling of scam investigations it was reiterated that the priority for Thames valley Police was where vulnerable people were involved. It was explained that they have a well established economic crime team who were successful at getting money back from fraudsters and some examples of success were provided.

The Community team were congratulated on their work at local events in the area acting as ambassadors for the force with all ages.

It was queried why there was not a dedicated team supporting Windsor rather than local officers being pulled into the neighbouring borough. The Local Area Commander explained that Thames Valley Police do have officers servicing the Windsor guard but PCSOs were always available to engage with people and based locally. She added that she was working with the operations department so that less Bracknell people are being taken – although this was an important part of the work this needed to be shared with other forces.

It was explained in response to a question that additional funding would only reduce crime if it was linked to officers being available.

In response to a question about how targets were set it was explained that trends, data and performance statistics were tracked and although it was aspirational to reduce crime to zero a realistic target was set but that not all crime targets were about reduction as increasing reporting was also a success measure.

When asked about the regretful number of assaults on officers and the sentencing policies the Chief Constable said it was not for the Police to criticise judiciary outcomes but instead focus on providing training and equipment to protect officers.

The Mayor thanked the Chief Constable, Local Police Area Commander and the Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner for their attendance and informative presentations.

24. **Mayor's Announcements**

Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT)

Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing was pleased to report that an unannounced inspection had been carried out on the Council's Drug and Alcohol Action Team (DAAT) and the result was good in all areas. He stated that this was a great message for clients of the service who could have real confidence in the service and he hoped that it would encourage others to engage with the service to receive support.

Dogs for Good

Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing reported that Ned had joined Lexi as part of the Dogs for Good team and had quickly become a valued member of the team.

Breakthrough

Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing explained that Breakthrough was a project working with young people with learning difficulties aged between 16-24 to enter the workplace. Working with Bracknell and Wokingham College the project has supported three clients to increase their employment skills, mock interviews, undertake voluntary projects before undertaking work placements. The Council joined him in wishing the team every success.

Business Improvement District

Councillor Brunel-Walker, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance, was pleased to report that as a result of working with businesses within the Southern and Western business areas the creation of a Business Improvement District was being proposed. Businesses would be balloted on 3 October with the result available on 1 November. The Business Improvement District contribution would be set at 1.5% of the rateable value protecting smaller businesses and would generate up to £7k which would be spent in those areas. He thanked Annekan Priesack, Transformation Project Manager, who had worked tirelessly to get the project to this stage.

Mayoral Announcements

The Mayor reminded Members that her Civic Service was being held on Sunday 22 September at 3pm at the St. Michaels and St. Mary Church, Easthampstead.

The Mayor added that Members could follow the events she was attending on social media with her upcoming activities listed in Democracy Snapshot.

25. **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 17 July 2019. The Executive had met once since the last Council meeting on 23 July 2019.

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

- £750k had been included in the capital programme for the Town Centre based Youth Centre. It was an important manifesto commitment to develop a new facility in the Braccan Walk car park. It was agreed to establish a working group with young people involved to progress its design.
- New Safeguarding Partnership Arrangements had been agreed. New multi-agency arrangements were required under Children and Social Work Act 2017 and it was agreed to focus on Bracknell Forest only with a joint adults and children's Safeguarding Board. The Board would include all statutory decision makers with an Independent Chair (currently advertised). The Sub group structure was agreed which included Pan Berkshire & East Berkshire co-operation.
- The five year Parking Management & Enforcement Strategy had been agreed which encouraged off street parking and the best use of available parking space and enforcement of parking regulations fairly and efficiently. The Strategy included contract renewal for town centre car park management.
- The Executive considered the 2018/19 budget outturn. The Revenue outturn expenditure was £81.27m and this was the 21st year the Council had delivered within budget. Virements of over £100k and the Treasury Management strategy were recommended to Council. The Capital outturn was £63,475m.
- The Homes England Grant offer to help remediate the Strongs Heath former Landfill site on London Road site had been accepted subject to feasibility and procurement of a development partner. The feasibility would be jointly funded with other Berkshire Unitary authorities.
- The Executive considered Quarter 4 of the Corporate Performance Overview Report and more than 76% of key objectives and performance indicators were green.

Councillor Temperton stated she had been impressed by the diverse group of young people that had previously been involved in consultation on the Youth Centre. She asked how this would continue to develop the plans. Councillor Dr Barnard responded that Darren Berry has started to establish a working group involving the Youth Council and harder to reach groups. He stated that young people were at the heart of the project.

Councillor Temperton said that she understood that the Strongs Heath site was still relatively young as research indicated that sites required 30 years for settlement of gas emissions for example. The Leader explained that local authorities were running out of previously developed sites and wanted to avoid using green field sites. Previously used landfill sites took 30 years to settle and 300 years for all traces to disappear. He continued that what was being proposed was landfill mining which meant that the landfill was literally dug out to be dealt with and replaced with

remediated inert content. He concluded that part of the process would be to evaluate what techniques were on offer and there would be many opportunities to get involved.

Revenue Expenditure Outturn 2018/19

On the proposition of Councillor Bettison, Leader of the Council, seconded by Councillor Allen

it was **RESOLVED** that:

- i) virements relating to the 2018/19 budget that are over £0.100m as detailed in Annexe E, within the attached Appendix A be approved; and
- ii) the Treasury Management performance in 2018/19 as set out in Annexe B, within the attached Appendix A be approved.

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

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked Councillor Bettison OBE, Leader of the Council the following published question:

As the deadline for Brexit is fast approaching, will the Leader give an update on the Council's preparations and especially the effects a 'no-deal' Brexit would have on our residents.

In response Councillor Bettison OBE stated that the position of the UK in relation to leaving the EU on 31 October remained uncertain. Therefore, the Council was taking proportionate steps to ensure that services and the local community would experience minimal disruptions.

He added that a comprehensive action plan has been developed to prepare services and the community for Brexit. He stated that this built upon what he reported to Council in the Spring. A dedicated working group had been established to collate information from across the organisation and to complete scenario planning for potential no deal situations and worse case scenarios. He reported that this provided effective communication channels directly from services to the joint emergency planning team, corporate management team and onwards to national bodies.

He advised that the Council were planning for Brexit scenarios in line with guidance and information provided through the connections with the local resilience forum, regional chief executives' network and the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government.

He presented a diagram to the meeting showing the structure that had been put in place and how it fitted in the wider national picture.

He reported that the Council had been allocated an additional £105k funding to support preparations for exiting the EU and that this was in addition to the previously allocated £210k. This money would be used to support the Council's continued and timely planning for Brexit, providing additional staffing resources, expertise and resilience where needed.

He concluded in relation to the Council's response that internally, all services had been considering areas of business continuity such as disruption to IT, workforce and supply. Risks specific to Brexit had also been captured in a specific risk register, which was reviewed and updated regularly. Work was ongoing within services to

liaise with partners and contractors to ensure that Brexit plans are in place with defined communication channels.

He concluded that any residents who would like further information should visit the Council's website where a specific page provided information on preparing the UK for leaving the EU. <https://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/preparing-uk-exit-eu>

He would circulate to a copy of report and the chart to every member and endeavour to keep members informed of activity after 31 October.

Councillor Temperton thanked the Leader for his report.

27. Motions Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 11

Motion 04/2019 was moved and seconded by Councillors Temperton and Brown respectively as follows:

I call upon this Council to ask the Executive to do a full review of domestic parking throughout Bracknell Forest, working with partners, our local communities and their councillors, and to propose solutions where possible.

On being put to the vote the motion fell.

Motion 5/2019 moved and seconded by Councillors Turrell and Councillor Brunel-Walker respectively as follows:

This Council requests that the Executive ensures effective planning to secure housing, infrastructure and employment, to enable us to take full advantage of exceptional circumstances for growth, and will promote its policies to enable free enterprise to generate community-focussed growth of our local economy, and support our goal of carbon neutrality by 2050.

On being put to the vote the motion was carried.

CHAIRMAN