

COUNCIL
25 APRIL 2018
7.30 - 9.10 PM



Present:

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

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Ms Miller and Virgo

Minutes silence

The Mayor's Chaplain, Rev Martin, opened the proceedings with a prayer and lead the meeting in observing a minutes silence to recognise the sad passing of a previous Bracknell Forest Councillor, Miss Brenda Wilson.

54. Minutes of Previous Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 28 February 2018 be approved, and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

55. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

56. Mayor's Announcements

IESE Awards

Dr Langdon, Chairman of IESE, attended the meeting to congratulate the Council on its success in achieving the Gold Award in two categories: Council of the Year and Community Improvement Regeneration. He presented the glass awards to the Mayor and praised the Council for its recent achievements.

College Town Junior School Recycling Initiatives

Caroline Pragnell, Outdoor Learning Coordinator from College Town Junior School, attended the meeting to update members about the work the school had been doing to improve recycling activity in the school. The school had incorporated outdoor based learning which meant that the pupils were using all their senses to become enthused about the environment around them. There were a range of activities at the school including as Eco Rangers which focused on three key areas: environment, horticulture and Time Out. Community Days had supported the school through work with National Trust, Wildlife Trust and Waitrose. Responding to questions she

explained that food waste was a particular issue and the solutions being used on the site; the school has a green house to propagate seedlings and the pupils are also able to cook the food that they have grown.

Councillor Mrs Hayes, Executive Member for Environment, encouraged other schools to visit College town Junior School to see what could be achieved and thanked the staff team for all they had done.

The Mayor thanked Ms Pragnell for her presentation and for answering Members' questions.

Mayor's Charity Events

The Mayor was proud to announce that her Quiz night had raised £665 and the Sky Dive had raised £9,000K for the Fire Fighters Charity. She thanked the 19 people who had taken part. She was pleased to announce that the Golf Day was sold out and she thanked residents for their support including, John from Birch Hill, who had raised £495 in sponsorship to cut his hair.

Future events

The Mayor advised members that tickets were available for her end of year celebration being held at the Coppid Beech hotel on 11 May. The event would have a different format and she hope everyone would be able to join her to be entertained.

The Mayor concluded that she was looking forward to the Pride of Bracknell Awards which were taking place on Friday 27 April.

Executive Member for Culture, Communities and Public Protection

Councillor McCracken advised the meeting that the counter at the Look Out Café had been refurbished to create a more efficient experience for customers and he encouraged members to visit.

Councillor McCracken had attended with the Mayor the Library volunteer celebration which recognised the 100 volunteers who had joined the service and thanked them for their hard work.

He was pleased to announce that the 2018 Lexicon Half Marathon had sold out. He encouraged members to attend to support the runners who were starting and finishing in the Town Centre on 13 May.

He concluded by reporting that Coral Reef had seen 154k visitors between October 2017 and January 2018. A significant increase from the 112k that had visited in the same period in 2015/16.

Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning

Councillor Dr Barnard was happy to state that the Governors Conference was a success with over 100 governors attending. The conference covered a range of topics - including a good presentation by Vic Goddard, headteacher of Passmores academy who urged attendees to remember they were educating the students they have, not had or would like to have.

Commuters' Champion

Councillor Harrison was pleased to announce that part of his annual report was now out of date. South Western Railway planned to half the number of stops from four to two at Martins Heron but ward councilors had encouraged residents to get involve din the consultation and the service was now going to be restored.

57. **Deputation Submitted Under Council Procedure Rule 9**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 (Public Participation), a deputation was submitted by Mr T Parker, resident of Great Hollands North with regard to street lighting on behalf of Bracknell Liberal Democrats and the residents of Wildridings and Easthampstead:

“The Council’s changes to street lighting in residential areas, costing some £7m across the borough, including £405k in Wildridings and Great Hollands alone, have caused great concern regarding safety and security amongst residents due to inadequacies in the design of both the lampposts and the lights themselves. Therefore, I urge the Council to complete a review regarding the effectiveness of the installed lighting in residential areas of Wildridings and Easthampstead and either:

a. Remediate the lighting deficiencies; or

b. Inform residents in a published statement why they believe the lighting to be adequate”.

Councillor Turrell responded to the deputation by thanking Mr Parker his submission welcoming feedback from our residents. He reported that in 2015, it was agreed to replace 13000 lanterns and 1000 columns over a three-year period by the Council's contractors, Ringway. Lighting was trialled in Owlsmoor prior to the main work starting and residents were written to in advance of work starting in their area. He stated that the advantages of changing to LED lighting was a reduced carbon footprint, reduced light-pollution and lights were no longer shining through bedroom windows. He added that there are significant cost savings through reduced energy use, more accurate timings for lights being on and that brightness of lights could be adjusted for certain timed periods. There were also significant savings associated with maintenance. The system is self-reporting, using digital systems, so engineers were able to locate and rectify faults quickly.

There were still a number of phases of the project to be carried out. He explained that lanterns were replaced on existing columns but the opportunity was being taken to replace concrete columns at the end of their life and aluminium columns which had not lasted as well as other types. He explained that once lanterns were changed the area was scouted to check that they were working and to pick up on other issues such as overhanging greenery and configuration. The new lighting is more directional, and was focussed on roads and pathways.

He added that in some areas, such as Wildridings, Great Hollands, Birch Hill and Hanworth, where streets were built on a courtyard pattern rather than the traditional layout, configuration had been identified as an issue, leading to some dark spots being created. These were being assessed to inform future work . Wall-mounted lamps were also being replaced with columns. He thanked Councillors for their pro-active work helping to deal with concerns raised by residents, and initiating remedial work.

He stated that the website is the most accurate source of information about the project. When residents were reporting concerns he asked that they give specific

details. He thanked residents who had been in touch. Issues were being resolved quickly where possible or were being batched for later phases of the project which would be undertaken later in the year.

He concluded by confirming the Council's commitment to ensure that the scheme was right for the benefit of all residents.

58. **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 28 February 2018. The Executive had met twice on 13 March and 10 April 2018.

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

- The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPASPD) – Adoption. The review aimed to consolidate different policies into one document, update and increase SANG costs to remove S106 cross-subsidisation, introduce reduced rates for affordable housing and new SANG capacity with additional income. The public consultation on draft had taken place during January/February and 63 consultation responses were received which resulted in a number of changes.
- The Capital programme for integrated transport 2018/19 had been approved. The programme supports priorities in Local Transport Plan and further Government funding of £3.29m had been secured for the conversion of Downshrie Way to a dual carriageway.
- The Highway Maintenance Works Programme 2018/19 was agreed.
- The Executive agreed that Easthampstead Park Conference Centre (EPCC) be sold to a high quality hotel and conference centre operator. EPCC transferred to Bracknell Forest Council in 1998 and had a history of variety of uses, poor maintenance and limited public access. Although some improvements were made by Bracknell Forest Council the annual losses of around £250k plus £4m backlog of maintenance work made its future unviable. Christie and Co were engaged to test market for hotel/conference centre operator to purchase the facility and four initial bids were received with three best and final offers. Key conditions of the sale would be that all existing booking would be honoured, staff would be transferred under TUPE and there would be no housing. There would be protection in the Draft Local Plan until at least 2034.
- The Council Plan Overview Report (CPOR) noted that the Lexicon now had >8m visitors, there had been an 18% increase in bus usage, 32% reduction in reported shoplifting and 27% reduction in criminal damage.
- The CPOR also reflected that there had been a number of recruitment & retention challenges with staff in demand following the success of the Lexicon and Ofsted and CQC, inspections. Korn Ferry & Penna were providing support to develop a response.

- The Housing Strategy 2018-2036 had been agreed. Its key priorities were supporting the vibrant housing market, increasing % of affordable housing, providing the right homes for vulnerable people, contributing to sustainable communities and using Downshire Homes Ltd to reduce Council costs by providing housing to vulnerable people.

In relation to Easthampstead Park Conference Centre the Leader agreed with Councillor Mrs Temperton's concerns that the building should be restored sympathetically and maintained. He stated that measures were being put in place to prevent the property being sold on quickly or 'flipped' but added that as the sale was subject to contract he was unable to give details publically but he was happy to meet with Councillor Mrs Temperton to discuss this further.

Following the damage caused by the snow and icy conditions Councillor Mrs Temperton queried whether there was a systematic survey of the Council's roads or whether the Council relied upon residents and Ward Councillors to report issues. Councillor Turrell replied on the Leader's behalf that it was a mixture of the two approaches with regular inspections taking place supplemented by assessment of reported pot holes. The Leader encouraged residents to report pot holes and Councillor Heydon added that the most effective way to do this was through residents' online accounts so that they could track the progress of the repair.

59. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2017/18**

The Council considered the Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny which informed Members of progress made in respect of the operation and development of Overview and Scrutiny in Bracknell Forest during 2017/18.

Councillor Leake thanked the members of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission as well as the Panels for the work they have done. He reflected that in 2017/18 their work was focused on the Transformation programme and enhancing services for residents. He added that the programme required the Council to make changes that were risky and Overview and Scrutiny recognised these risks and were monitoring progress carefully. The officer team would be complete at the start of May.

He concluded that the Commission had decided to restructure its Panels and combine the Adult Social Care & Housing Panel with the Health Overview and Scrutiny Panel in order to develop a composite view across both areas.

On the proposition of Councillor Leake, Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Commission, seconded by Councillor Angell, it was

RESOLVED that:

- i) the 2017/18 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission be adopted;
- ii) the Constitution be amended to reflect the changes referred to in paragraph 5.4 as set out in Appendix A of the report; and
- iii) 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.

60. **Member Development Annual Report 2017/18**

The Council considered the Member Development Annual Report which appraised all Members of the Member Development activities and their outcomes during 2017-18 and sought approval of the updated Member Development Strategy 2016-2020. Councillor Allen, Chairman of the Member Development Charter Steering Group was pleased to announce that the Council had achieved reaccreditation of Charter Plus status for Member Development. He thanked all the members and partner organisations involved in the assessment day as well as the officer team for delivering the member development programme.

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chairman of the Member Development Charter Steering Group, seconded by Councillor McCracken, it was

RESOLVED that:

- i) the Member Development Strategy 2016 – 2020 be approved; and
- ii) the Member Development Annual Report 2017 - 18 be noted.

61. **Champions' Annual Report 2017/18**

The Council considered the Annual Report which appraised Members of the work undertaken by the Council's four Champions during the year 2017-18. The report informed Members of activities and their outcomes.

On the proposition of Councillor Finnie, Voluntary Sector Champion seconded by Councillor Thompson it was

RESOLVED that the Champions' Annual Report 2017/18 be noted.

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

Councillor Mrs Temperton asked Councillor D Birch, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing the following published question:

The Homelessness Reduction Act extends existing homelessness protection to anyone who is homeless or at risk of being homeless irrespective of their priority need; including single homeless people and childless couples.

Extending the period of threat of homelessness from 28 days to 56 days will enable the Council more time to do preventative work, but after this time, the eligible applicant will be owed a duty to be housed. This accommodation must also be available for at least 6 months.

What temporary accommodation is available to meet any such increase in homelessness duty and what subsequent extra permanent housing is being secured?

In response Councillor D Birch stated that the Council had prevent homelessness for 80% of all households threatened with becoming homeless. The Homelessness Reduction Act would increase the number of households the Council would work with, work with them for longer and increase their prospects of not becoming homeless. He stated that the combined welfare and housing services within Bracknell Forest was unique. All caseworkers had undertaken motivational training to discuss with applicants what they could achieve of their own goals to stay at home. He reported the range of support in place such as technology to help families with their

finances, the range of temporary emergency housing and that accommodation was across the borough to reduce disruption to schooling. He concluded that the success of Downshire Homes Ltd, of which he was a Board member, in purchasing properties across the borough helped to keep the pressure down but developers needed to continue to develop the houses that had been approved.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Mrs Temperton that given the current pressure whether the Council would be able to respond to increasing number and accommodate them in bed and breakfast or need private landlords. Councillor D Birch clarified that the performance measure referred to related to number of nights spent in bed and breakfast rather than individuals or families. He stated that the number of individuals or families being accommodated in Bed and Breakfast had peaked at 15 in September 2017 but this reduced to 10 in October and in the first three months of the year had been at 6 in January, 9 in February and 6 in March.

63. Farewell to Easthampstead House

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Bettison OBE, addressed the meeting to mark the occasion as the last ever Council meeting in Easthampstead House. The project to consolidate into Time Square was nearing completion as the last team moved out of Easthampstead House. He looked forward to hearing people's comments about the new council chamber which had been designed within Time Square with a new layout including a public area along one side of the Chamber.

MAYOR

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