

**COUNCIL  
30 NOVEMBER 2022**



**Present:**

Councillors Bhandari (Mayor), Mrs L Gibson (Deputy Mayor), Allen, Atkinson, Dr Barnard, Bettison OBE, Bidwell, D Birch, Mrs Birch, Brossard, Brown, Finch, Ms Gaw, Gbadebo, MJ Gibson, Green, Mrs Hamilton, Harrison, Mrs Hayes MBE, Heydon, Kennedy, Mrs Mattick, McLean, Mossom, Neil, Porter, Skinner, Temperton, Turrell, Virgo and Wade

**Present Virtually:**

Councillors Ms Hayes, Mrs Ingham, Mrs McKenzie, Mrs McKenzie-Boyle and Ms Merry

**Apologies for absence were received from:**

Councillors Angell, Brunel-Walker, Dudley, Kirke, Leake and Parker

**19. Minutes of Previous Meetings**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Council meetings held on 13 July and 28 September be approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record.

**20. Declarations of Interest**

Councillor Heydon declared an Affected Interest in agenda item 6, Executive Report in relation to the decision regarding the Market Street Site Settled Development Plan.

**21. Petition submitted under Council Procedure Rule 9**

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 (Public Participation), Council received a presentation and petition from Ms K O'Neal on behalf of Bracknell Climate Change Action Group.

Councillor Mrs Hayes MBE responded on behalf of the Council. The full text of the response is set out below:

"Mr Mayor, as the Executive Member for the Environment, and the lead Member for addressing Climate change, I would like to thank Ms O'Neal, and Bracknell Climate Action Group for this petition. This petition giving me a further opportunity to speak to council about this important issue, that has been a priority of this council since 2007.

It is a shame that Ms O'Neal, and her Group, missed my last speech on this topic in July. I understand the recording of the meeting is lost, so I am pleased to have a further opportunity to repeat my remarks, and with the indulgency of the Mayor, to highlight our record on this matter. Given that this is the same speech, in line with our council's policies; it is good to reuse and recycle.

Having looked at the points requested in the petition, clearly the requestor hasn't googled the phrase Bracknell Forest and climate change. Had they done so, the answers to her petition would have clearly presented themselves to them for review. Waste, Mr Mayor is something that we must all guard against.

Mr Mayor, the strategy is easily found on our website, along with the annual report on progress. This sitting alongside the videos of the meetings of the Climate Change Advisory Panel, meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Commission and a large number of policy documents, covering recycling, biodiversity, insulation, planning policy, walking and cycling; I could go on and on and on. Also, for those minded to read the odd council agenda, minutes detailing councillors discussions on this matter can easily be found there too. If help is needed to access the Internet, I am sure that our library staff would be more than willing to show how to get to such information, as part of our warm hub initiative.

In terms of this petition, I am hoping that this lack of knowledge is an access issue, rather than as Al Gore said, an inconvenient truth. That truth being that this council has a long and successful programme of addressing man-made climate change head on. In fact, Ms O'Neal spoke to the council's Overview and Scrutiny Commission, on 2nd December 2020, as part of the commission's scrutinisation of the draft strategy, whose highlights I will present again to council today, plus the many things we have done since. If Ms O'Neal has forgotten that session, the video of the meeting is on YouTube. I am sure that library staff can help with that too.

Although this is my second speech this year on this subject, it is also the second time a similar presentation has been made to the council that we are not doing enough. In January 2020, the council received a similar rule 9 petition from Extinction Rebellion Bracknell. The Leader, in this meeting reminded the petitioners that the council had in July 2019 past a cross party motion, that was proposed by myself and seconded by the Leader of the opposition. This motion says, "This Council strongly believes in the need to continue its work to address the impact of man-made Climate Change on our local communities. To this end, this Council asks the Executive to develop detailed action plans with measurable ambitious annual targets and an annual report to address this pressing matter to ensure that the Council meets the government target of eradicating its net contribution to climate change by 2050. Member may think that some of this sounds similar, as the petition asks us to do in 2022, what we agreed to and have been doing since 2019.

I was pleased to report that following the motion passed in this chamber in 2019; a motion that was unanimously supported by all Members of this council, that serious and hard work has been undertaken by Officers, Members and most importantly the residents of Bracknell Forest. We have not only delivered a climate change mitigation strategy that this council can be proud of, but one that has in its bones, in its DNA, the voices and aspirations of all the residents of this borough.

We are now rapidly approaching the third anniversary of this council agreeing our Climate Change Strategy. I would remind everyone that we workshopped our strategy just a few days before the first lockdown. We consulted via video, despite the second Covid peak and launched while we were still dealing with year one Covid. All of this to say that this is, and has been, at the heart of everything we do. Members will note in the strategy, that our history since the Nottingham Declaration of 2007, to which Bracknell Forest was a signatory, we have worked consistently to be a low carbon, sustainable community. This is not a new priority for this council, it is in its DNA. We have over the time, delivered at pace, a wide range of projects that have seen the borough's carbon emissions, not just the council's emissions, but the borough's emissions reduce considerably. In fact, on the second anniversary of our motion, we issued a press release, detailing this achievement. I had instructed Officers to send to Ms 'Neal's group this press release, so they will need to let me know if they didn't get the email. However, It said that, "compared to other local authorities in the South East of England, only Reading and Kent have reduced emissions by just a higher per cent than Bracknell Forest over the 14years.

Furthermore, only Reading, Brighton & Hove and East Sussex saw lower levels in 2019".

Mr Mayor, the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy department of central government, reported the borough area's Co2 emissions since 2005, had reduced by 42%. Just in the last year of measurement, we saw borough area emissions down by 18.2 kilo tonnes of Co2.

Bracknell Forest area's emissions per capita were 3.5 tonnes, which is lower than the 4.4 tonnes southeast England average and the 5.2 tonnes national average. So, I do not believe that Bracknell Forest is falling behind our neighbours, we are more leading the pack.

I would again thank our Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairman and Commissioners, who led the workshops which involved community representatives and Members in scrutinising our draft strategy in public. All whilst in the middle of the Covid emergency.

So, as I said in July, when I introduced the annual report, since January 2021, we have been busy implementing our strategy. This is a summation of the work that you as members have led, that you as members have overseen, that you as members have championed and I am grateful for your support. I would especially like to thank my colleagues on the Executive, who have shown true leadership in their portfolios, to take this agenda forward as a whole council priority.

I won't go through every achievement, as there are so many. But I will take this further opportunity to share with the council a few highlights from the report, covering the period January 2021 to March 2022 and update on some issues that have moved forward.

We are at the beginning of the journey to decarbonised transport solutions. Government has now confirmed that all new cars and vans, wholly powered by petrol and diesel, will not be sold in the UK from 2030. Therefore, I commend Cllr Turrell's work around Electric Vehicle charging points. On top of the current charging points around the borough, the council has, since my last report delivered 32 community charging points around the borough. These points will be in addition to the requirement on new builders, under Building Control regulations "Part L" requirement, that all new homes to have EV charging points, that as the UK continues to be at the forefront of the electric vehicle (EV) transition, we in Bracknell Forest will keep pace with this growing demand. The policy document is on our website.

I am also grateful for his team's support in getting pre-planning application approval to move forward with the first EV charging "petrol" station, which I am hoping will be the first in Berkshire. Our visit to the Oxford Charging hub was very interesting and I will remind Officers that we need a little shop and public toilets on our site. It is not just cars that need fuelling up at these locations! I will have a formal update on this project in the spring.

Winning the resources to decarbonise our buildings has been led by Cllr Heydon and his property team. They secured £929,000 of Salix funding for 39 schools, and other council buildings. They have also swapped our energy purchasing over to 100% green energy. This work has complemented by my own team's work around the decarbonisation of residents' homes. We have secured so far £1.9m in Green Homes Grant, of which £900,000 has already been spent on residents' homes, with good progress on spending the remaining funds on sustainable warmth projects for the least energy efficient homes. This work was recognised at the Southeast Energy Efficiency Awards. Members will note that at the Executive, on the 29th September,

we approved £1m of new money to invest in seven council buildings. The result of this investment will be a reduction in electricity and gas consumption by 67.7 per cent, in next year's consumption.

I would like to commend Cllr Harrison on not only bringing forward a scheme to address vehicle idling around schools and other sensitive areas, but also for his work around the natural environment. Our parks and open spaces are key for building community and for social well-being. So, it is pleasing to report that the Parks and Countryside service has planted 2,795 trees over 20 sites as part of highways improvements and improvements to public green space. In addition, both the total areas of Habitats of Principal Importance and Local Wildlife Sites have increased by 50.97 and by 17.7 hectares respectively.

I would like to thank Cllr Barnard's department for organising the borough's first Schools Climate Change Conference. Part of our strategy seeks to engage young people in our objective of addressing man made climate change and climate change mitigation. This very successful conference has been supported with each school getting a £500 award to take forward the ideas that they generated at the conference. I hope to report on many innovative initiatives coming from this work. I also hope that this schools conference becomes an annual climate change schools conference.

Finally, Members will be aware that our flagship food waste recycling programme is now over a year old. This work was launched under our Greening our waste strategy. The Executive has received a first-year highlight report and as the Executive Member for this area, I am very proud of our residents for how they have embraced this change. The recycling rate for 2021/22 is now 56%. This is an increase of 13% compared to the previous year. There was a 33% reduction in kerbside residual waste following the introduction of three-weekly residual waste collections and the roll out of food waste caddies from March 2021. Our 56% recycling rate could see Bracknell Forest move 100 or more places up the 'recycling league table' for English local authorities, from 150th out of 338, to top 40. Members will know that I always like to be at the top of the charts! The landfill rate for 2021/22 is expected to be 7%, this has reduced by more than half compared to 2020/21.

Approximately 90% of houses across the borough are participating in the food waste recycling, this is one of the main reasons the amount of food collected has been so high.

Collections from flats has now started and our new food waste vehicle has just hit the road, joining "dame foodie dench". I thank Cllr Brunel-Walker's, communication team, who were key to our success around food waste and for running a nationally commended food waste and climate change campaign.

So, in closing, Mr Mayor, I thank the petitioner for giving me another opportunity to run through our history and history of achievement on this topic. Our position hasn't changed on declaring an emergency. That said, this issue has been urgent for the borough for well over a decade and a half. Also, we have already agreed to have measurable, ambitious, target-driven climate strategy. It says it in our 2019 motion.

Addressing man-made climate change has been a priority of this council for a number of years. In making this a priority, we have taken many tough decisions that have acted to protect and prioritise the environment, over what would have been cheaper and less challenging for our communities. All this to say, lots done but a lot more to do."

Councillor Mrs Hayes MBE provided notice to officers of her intention to bring forward a motion in relation to this matter at the next ordinary Council meeting to be held on 11 January 2023.

## 22. **Mayor's Announcements**

### Mayor's Opportunity Champion Awards Winners

The Mayor explained that this was a new initiative introduced to recognise Bracknell Forest residents who contribute in a selfless way to improve the wellbeing and access to opportunities for their fellow residents and community. Each month a winner will be selected and invited to share details of their work at the next full council meeting.

The June award was presented to Monika Taplin for running and cycling in various costumes to raise awareness and money for the charity Youthline.

The July award was presented to joint opportunity champions, Natalia Vil and Ashleigh Toomey for creating the VSI Razom Community Hub in Princess Square in aid of Ukrainian refugees.

The August award was presented to Alison Baker for her volunteering and work with the Parks Community Association.

### Mayor's Engagements

The Mayor explained that it had been a 'bittersweet' civic year starting with the celebrations in honor of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth's platinum Jubilee year and then the activity surrounding her passing, funeral and the proclamation of King Charles III.

The Mayor reported that he had attended multiple events on behalf of the borough including the Interfaith Forum with the Chief Executive, Reading Pride, The FA Cup Match at Bracknell Town Football Club and the unveiling of the commemorative Jubilee poppy.

The Mayor advised that information about past, present and upcoming engagements is being posted across social media so that the message of opportunity in and around Bracknell Forest continues to be shared.

### Household Support Fund

Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Child, Young People and Learning, reported that the Household Support Fund was being continued for the financial year covering 2023/24 and stated that the Council had already distributed over half a million pounds from this fund to Bracknell Forest residents since October 2021.

Councillor Dr Barnard explained that this scheme was now being widened and that those identified as being eligible would be contacted directly and receive payment before Christmas. Options for next year's funding was being considered in January to ensure that the grant continues to be used to support the borough's most vulnerable residents.

Councillor Dr Barnard wanted to thank the officers involved in putting this initiative in place and who have helped ensure its effectiveness.

## Winter Support

Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Social Care, Health and Housing, explained that there was recognition of the pressures households would face over the coming winter and wanted to highlight some of the initiatives the Council was putting in place to support residents' health and wellbeing.

Councillor Birch explained that seven sites across the borough have been established as Community Winter Hubs. These are warm spaces hosting various community facilities for residents to access should they need to and advised that there were other community spaces like these around the borough being run by community organisations and volunteers. He asked councillors to acquaint themselves with the various options available for their residents in their wards.

Councillor Birch also highlighted winter wellness activities that were free and open to residents to access during the winter period including advice around nutrition, mental health support and physical fitness.

Councillor Birch explained that the local support made available sits alongside the other packages of help being provided by central government and emphasised that any financial support is being paid directly to residents and people should be alert to any scams that may attempt to solicit bank account details.

Councillor Birch wanted to thank council officers for their assistance preparing these initiatives and the community-based volunteers who are assisting with the delivery of these activities.

## Cost of Living Support

Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance reported that in association with central government, the Council had administered support to both residents and local businesses in Bracknell Forest. Councillor Heydon advised that so far this year just under £5.5 million had been paid to Bracknell residents as part of the government's energy rebate scheme and that previously over £25 million had been paid as part of various business grants during the peak periods of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor Heydon thanked all council staff who had supported the delivery of these initiatives with specific recognition to those in Finance and Revenue Services for their work distributing the funds quickly while ensuring that proper audit procedures were maintained.

## 23. **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 13 July 2022. The Executive had met four times on 19 July, 20 September, 18 October and 15 November 2022.

The Leader highlighted the following matters that had been considered:

### Transformation & Finance | Revenue Expenditure Outturn 2021/22

- Executive noted revenue expenditure for 2021/22 was £74.068m (subject to audit)
- Represented -£1.020m underspend compared to the approved budget

- £1.019m returned to General Reserves
- General Reserves balance at 31 March 2022 was £11.346m (5% of Council's net budget)
- Noted the Council's Treasury Management performance during 2021/22.
- In accordance with the Prudential Code of Capital Finance it was recommended to Council

#### Transformation & Finance | Market Street Settled Development Plan

- Adoption of Settled Site Development Plan for Market Street, proposed by Bracknell Forest Cambium Partnership.
  - Setting out the final build form and quantum for development, number and nature of affordable properties and anticipated financial returns.
- Included the development of an additional 52 affordable rented homes, increasing the proportion of affordable homes to 56%.
- £0.500m from S106 to a nominated Registered Provider for the additional affordable rented homes.

#### Transformation & Finance | Bracknell Library

- Agreed the principle of relocating the library to Princess Square, creating a new library and cultural facility
- Linked to the final stages of the Deck and facilitating the future regeneration of the current library site
- Agreed the Council will enter into heads of terms for the lease, completion being subject to the Deck scheme being unconditionally committed to by Bracknell Regeneration Limited Partnership

#### Transformation & Finance | Depot Surplus Land

- Agreed that the exclusivity period relating to the surplus land at central depot site, granted to Bracknell Forest Cambium Partnership, be extended a further 12 months from 1 October 2022.

#### Adult Services, Health and Housing | Berkshire Community Equipment Service

- Berkshire Community Equipment Service (BCES) was commissioned through a S75 Joint Agreement across all Berkshire Unitary local authorities and NHS partners.
- Agreed to continue membership of the S75 Joint Agreement for a maximum period of five years.
- Procurement process is being led by West Berkshire Council, subject to review by BFC

#### Adult Services, Health and Housing | Bay House and Bar Close

- Agreed to spend up to £500k to Silva Homes from S106 affordable housing commuted fund
- Support the development of 51 additional social rented homes.

#### Adult Services, Health and Housing | National Drug Strategy

- Agreed to a Berkshire East geography for the Combatting Drugs Partnership that will look to deliver against the priorities set out in the National Drug Strategy
- Stuart Lines, Director of Public Health for Berkshire East will be the Senior Responsible Officer.

- A temporary post will be created to support the establishment of the Berkshire East Combatting Drugs Partnership
- Next steps will be to undertake a needs assessment and develop a local strategy that delivers against the national priorities.
- Cllr Dale Birch, the appropriate Executive Member was appointed to the Combatting Drugs Partnership

#### Council Strategy & Community Cohesion | Corporate Business Change Programme

- The Business Change and Transformation programme has been refocussed
- Responding to any major policy and legislative changes.
- Addressing any serious service weaknesses.
- Supporting the organisation to move towards long term financial sustainability

#### Council Strategy & Community Cohesion | Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review Letter

- Noted the annual review letter that provides with an overview of the council's performance in complaint handling, covering 2021/22
- 12 detailed investigations were conducted which is higher than last year, but below our CIPFA neighbours

#### Planning and Transport | Overview and Scrutiny Review – Integrated Enforcement

- Executive were presented with the findings of the Environment and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel's review into enforcement services

#### Environment | Greening Energy Use Reducing Cost

- Approved £785k investment into invest to save schemes, including £245k enabling works, that will reduce the council's carbon footprint

#### Children, Young People and Learning | Overview and Scrutiny Review of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Report

- Received the findings of the Education, Skills and Growth Overview and Scrutiny Panel's review into Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

#### Children, Young People and Learning | Financial Hardship Action Plan and Household Support Fund (Phase 3)

- Agreed the proposed routes for distributing the Household Support Fund:
  - Supermarket vouchers to Free School Meal pupils
  - Offering local food banks additional funding
  - Purchase supermarket vouchers to distribute to low-income families
  - Enhancing the local welfare scheme provision.
- Agreed the new Financial Hardship Action Plan setting out a strategic and sustainable approach to supporting residents experiencing hardship

#### Children, Young People and Learning | SEND Written Statement of Action update

- The Written Statement of Action was accepted as fit for purpose by Ofsted in July 2022
- The first quarterly review meeting with the Department for Education and NHS England took place on 10 October 2022

- Implementation of the plan is happening at pace and was recognised
- Since the meeting, a bid to the 2022 free special school capital fund had been submitted, seeking funding for two special schools in the Borough

#### Culture, Delivery and Public Protection | Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-24

- Executive endorsed the Domestic Abuse Strategy, which addresses a priority for the Community Safety Partnership
- Four priorities would inform key areas of work, these are:
  - Prevention and Early Intervention
  - Provision of Services
  - Enforcement and Management of Perpetrators
  - Working in Partnership

#### Culture, Delivery and Public Protection | Review of Contaminated Land Strategy

- Executive approved the updated Contaminated Land Strategy
- Last updated in 2012 the legislation requires periodic reviews
- Minor layout and legislative updates were proposed
- No significant changes to the Council's overall strategy were made.

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

- Treasury Management
- Market Place Settled Development Plan

Councillor Temperton asked how the deficit of £9.3 million shown in the unusable reserve known as the 'dedicated school grant adjustment' would be balanced given increases in inflation, energy price bills and staff costs. Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning responded that it is an issue that is going to be considered at the upcoming schools forum and that he will ensure that a written response is provided to Councillor Temperton after that discussion.

Councillor Bidwell noted that the level of Council reserves was quite high and asked if any consideration had been given to using some of that money to help support people who needed additional help. Councillor Bettison OBE, Leader of the Council responded that the reserves quoted in the report at 5% are slightly higher than the prescribed minimum of 4% and didn't consider them excessive. He explained that the Council is now in the process of setting a budget for the coming financial year and stated that the reserves and how those are used will be a feature of that budget.

#### Treasury Management

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

**RESOLVED** that the Treasury Management performance in 2021/22 as set out in Annexe B of the agenda report be noted.

#### Market Place Settled Development Plan

Having declared an interest Councillor Heydon left the meeting before the item began.

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

**RESOLVED** that an equal share of funding needed to undertake the development be approved up to a peak requirement of £12.5m and land drawdown when conditions have been met.

24. **Councillor Code of Conduct**

The Council considered the proposed changes to the Councillor Code of Conduct

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chair of Governance and Audit Committee seconded by Councillor Wade it was

**RESOLVED** that Council approve the changes to the Councillor Code of Conduct as set out in Appendix C of the report and agree to the constitution being amended accordingly.

25. **Special Severance Payments-Statutory Guidance**

The Council considered the recommendation regarding the special severance payments – statutory guidance

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chair of Governance and Audit Committee seconded by Councillor Wade, the Council

**NOTED** the contents of the Statutory Guidance on the making and disclosure of special severance payments by Local Authorities (Appendix A)

**APPROVED** the delegations set out in Appendix B relating the granting of Special Severance Payments, for inclusion in the Constitution and;

**NOTED** the contents of the pro forma document (Appendix C) used for all special severance cases submitted for approval in accordance with the delegations set out in Appendix B.

26. **Pay Policy Statement 2022**

The Council considered the recommendation regarding the Pay Policy Statement 2022.

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chair of Governance and Audit Committee seconded by Councillor Heydon it was

**RESOLVED** that Council had reviewed and agreed the Pay Policy Statement for 2022/23.

27. **Appointments and Attendance at Meetings**

The Council considered the recommendation regarding appointments and attendance at meetings

On the proposition of Councillor Allen, Chair of Governance and Audit Committee seconded by Councillor Mrs Birch it was

**RESOLVED** That Heather Quillish be appointed to the role of Independent Person for a four-year term of office until 30 November 2026.

That should the Independent Person be unavailable or have a conflict of interest while there is a vacancy for a Reserve Independent Person, an Independent Person from a neighbouring authority will be asked to undertake the role.

That Victoria Hill is appointed to the role of Primary Parent Governor Representative on the Overview & Scrutiny Commission, and that the Commission is asked to formally appoint Victoria Hill to the Education, Skills & Growth Overview & Scrutiny Panel, both terms of office to run for four years until 30 November 2026.

That Councillor Mrs McKenzie's absence from council meetings due to her ill health is approved until the date of the council elections on 4 May 2023.

28. **Meetings Schedule**

The Council considered the recommendation relating to the Meetings Schedule for 2023/2024.

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

**RESOLVED** that the schedule of meetings 2023/24 as set out in the annex to the report was approved.

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

Councillor Temperton asked Councillor Birch, Executive Member for Adult Services, Health and Housing the following published question:

*Heathlands was opened in April to ensure Bracknell Residents receive the Specialist care and attention they need. We all welcomed and celebrated this. August and the CQC (Care Quality Commission) inspection declared the rating Inadequate- not safe, not effective, not well led with improvements needed in care and in service response. The report was damning and concerned some of our most vulnerable residents.*

*What has been done to ensure all the improvements are put in place within the time scale specified?*

In response Councillor Birch stated that Heathlands delivers more than just dementia care and that the CQC inspection was only in relation to the dementia care element of the site and that the Council is not responsible for delivering dementia nursing care at Heathlands. However, Council officers and partners in the NHS had been undertaking detailed and intensive work to support the operator, that being Windsar Care, to make the necessary improvements.

Councillor Birch stated that Windsar Care, as the registered provider, are responsible for developing and delivering the improvement plan that they had agreed with the Care Quality Commission and that the plan outlines actions in response to each of the issues identified by the inspection. Council officers are providing support and advice as needed and monitoring the provider's improvement journey. Delivery of each part of the plan has been overseen by a representative from one of the following teams – Care Home Quality Team, Medical Optimisation in Care Homes, Safeguarding, Community Mental Health and Commissioning. The plan is reviewed by Windsar Care initially and then shared jointly for the Council to assist.

Actions included in the plan include training, audits of practice and medication procedures, developing and auditing support plan, recruitment of skilled staff including a new manager and new deputy manager and many other things. Each action is validated before it is signed off with joint review meetings taking place on a fortnightly basis.

Councillor Birch explained that to ensure that people within the facility are safe the council had undertaken a range of specific safeguarding activities. These included reviews of staffing rotas and risk assessments, welfare visits, targeted medication training, observations, and individual safeguarding meetings. Weekly council meetings are being chaired by the Assistant Director for Commissioning to review progress, analyse risks, and to consider necessary actions.

Councillor explained that the CQC had re-inspected Heathlands in the first week of November and that the Council was awaiting the outcome of this inspection but, stands ready to provide further assistance to the operator should it be needed. Windsar Care as the operator will be the first to see the report and will then share it with the council so no comments regarding the outcome of that inspection could be shared at this time.

Councillor Temperton appreciated all that had been done and hoped for a positive outcome to the latest inspection. She asked whether the monitoring and support provided by council officers would continue after the publication of the report to ensure that the changes implemented were sustained.

Councillor Birch replied that it is the practice of the Council to monitor and provide assistance to all its care homes and that would continue as part of the Council's normal, regular and rigorous monitoring of all care providers in the borough.

Councillor Neil asked Councillor Harrison, Executive Member for Culture, Delivery and Public Protection the following published question:

*In every area where we knock on doors, residents report blatant drug dealing, intimidation, unchecked anti-social behaviour, and so on. People used to report these issues but as nothing happens in response to their calls, they now tell us they have given up reporting in. What can the Council do to restore confidence in community safety and neighbourhood policing?*

In response Councillor Harrison advised that it may not always be obvious to those reporting crime and anti-social behaviour that those reports are being acted upon. However, all reports are important as it helps police and partners develop a clear picture of where crime and disorder is taking place in the borough. This helps them plan their activities and prioritise resources according to highest levels of threat, harm and risk. If reports are not made, police and other agencies will be unaware of issues. Any information regarding the issue is useful and as much detail as possible is encouraged.

Councillor Harrison reported some local success stories around the reporting of anti-social behaviour that had helped the police respond to the issue. Highlighting Councillor Mrs Birch's work in Hanworth around car meets and racing as well as Councillor McKenzie-Boyle's work in Crowthorne bringing together different agencies to secure funding for youth outreach work in the area to tackle the causes of crime.

Councillor Harrison advised that he had raised issues of police resourcing in meetings with the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner to try and support

the recruitment of Police Community Support Officers to bolster local community policing.

Councillor Neil thanked Councillor Harrison for his response and asked how Councillors could reassure residents around what is happening and how they are being supported.

Councillor Bidwell asked Councillor Dr Barnard, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning the following published question:

*Presumably the Youth Centre in Braccan Walk is now open for all. What is being provided there? And what has been the uptake?*

Councillor Dr Barnard advised that Braccan Walk Youth Centre became operational in April 2021 and that the Centre receives referrals from a wide range of sources and is actively engaged with schools, multi-agency partners, and stakeholders across the borough, working closely with young people and their carers.

Councillor Dr Barnard explained that the centre provides structured group activities and bespoke individual sessions for young people offering support and guidance in response to their personalised plans based on assessments completed by the youth workers and provides open access for young people over school holidays.

Councillor Dr Barnard advised that this model was designed based on the feedback from young people and partners and that the following groups were being run from the centre:

#### **Princes Trust Employment Project**

A 12-week programme supporting young people into employment, sessions provided for 12 young people daily.

#### **Sexual Health Drop in**

Drop-in sessions for young people who require information around positive relationships and sexual health. This session has a doctor present. 52 clinics have been held at the Centre since January 2022 with 151 young people having attended to date.

#### **Young Carers Drop in**

Sessions aimed at young carers aged 13+ to provide a safe space to explore their young caring roles and to have some free time away from their families. On average 10 young people a week attend the sessions. 6 young carers have successfully completed their First aid Certificate whilst attending.

#### **Elevate**

A team based at Braccan Walk to support young people who are not in employment education and learning. The sessions have on average 12 young people attending.

#### **LGBTQ+ Drop in**

The sessions are aimed at young people who require support and space to explore and discover themselves in a safe environment. As part of the planning and assessment for young people to safely access the group there is work completed with a youth worker prior to attending the group. There are 25 young people who regularly access the group.

#### **College Drop In**

To support young people with additional needs who have recently started college. The group provides young people with an opportunity to seek support from peers and to meet staff to support them with the transition to college and an opportunity to discuss issues with college, home, and relationships. 12 young people attending weekly.

### **Youth Work 1-1 Sessions**

Youth workers provide bespoke individual sessions for young people based on specific needs using the 1-1 rooms regularly to meet young people open to the service. There are 35 young people regularly accessing individual sessions.

### **Youth Justice Team & Makesafe Team**

Both teams are making regular weekly usage of the centre, independently meeting young people and providing ongoing support around criminal behaviour and exploitation.

### **SILSIP – (Say It Loud, Say It Proud)**

The leaving care team and SILSIP are regularly accessing the building providing regular evening sessions and some holiday work.

The plan is to consolidate upon the programme and provide a broader range of activities working with our partners to broaden experiences and develop services further and with a broader reach across the borough.

Councillor Dr Barnard provided a general update around future planning and explained that work had recently started to look at the broader youth offer in Bracknell Forest with a view to ensuring that our offer meets the needs of all the children/ young people in the borough.

Councillor Bidwell thanked Councillor Dr Barnard for his response but, stated that he did not believe that his question had been responded to and further clarified that he was asking specifically about the uptake of the youth centre element of the Braccan walk site.

Councillor Dr Barnard explained that he had gone through, in detail, the number of young people attending each of the various services at the Bracknell Youth Hub. and that the model of service offered was that of integrated delivery with the range of services available forming part of the wider youth centre offer.

Councillor Dr Barnard explained that a universal, all-access youth hub was not the delivery model designed but, discussions were being had about further expanding the services on offer in the future.

Councillor Brown asked Councillor Heydon, Executive Member for Transformation and Finance the following published question:

*I recently met with senior council officers at the Priestwood Square Neighbourhood Shopping Centre to highlight the serious repairs required to the fabric of the buildings there. Considering the limited budget of £85K being made available for 'tidying' all of Bracknell's neighbourhood shopping centres, what is the realistic cost to restore them all to a state of good repair?*

In response Councillor Heydon advised that he had consulted officers on the meetings findings and understood that it had been explained to Councillor Brown that there were some items to be rectified but these were serious repairs and some of the items discussed were the responsibility of either the tenants or landlords and not the Council.

Councillor Heydon explained that all property is being moved into a corporate landlord model whereby property professionals take on responsibility for these matters. He explained that all Council property is subject to a five-year condition survey which establishes the quality of the estate and prioritises what work has to be done. This is then input into the annual Planned Maintenance and Routine Maintenance schedules, budgets, and capital budgets if necessary. This is continuously monitored as emergency and other repairs are frequently needed. Councillor Heydon gave the recent example of work undertaken at Priestwood Shopping Centre which saw the replacement of all the guttering.

Councillor Heydon explained that recent focus had been on the need to deliver the Lexicon and that following that attention was switching to the various neighbourhood centres across the borough. Councillor Heydon stated that to do both simultaneously would not have been possible in relation to both costs and resources.

Councillor Heydon stated that he felt 'Tidying' was an appropriate word in relation to this issue as it referred to small works needed to keep neighbourhoods in good repair. He explained that the total planned and reactive maintenance budgets for this were £2.25 million per annum across the Council's estate, excluding Schools and that the £85k fund must be considered within context.

Councillor Brown explained that she did not think the issues she's raised are superficial and asked whether Councillor Heydon considered sodden and black damp proof courses as not very serious?

Councillor Heydon replied that he did but that these were identified as part of the site condition survey and that a number of those issues were not the responsibility of the Council which had been explained the Councillor Brown at the time.

**CHAIR**

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