

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF
THE COUNCIL
HELD ON 21 MAY 2015 FROM 7.30 PM TO 8.35 PM**

Members Present

Councillors: UllaKarin Clark (Mayor), Parry Batth (Deputy Mayor), Alistair Auty, Keith Baker, Laura Blumenthal, Chris Bowring, Prue Bray, David Chopping, Gary Cowan, Lindsay Ferris, Michael Firmager, Mike Gore, Guy Grandison, Kate Haines, Mike Haines, Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Pauline Helliard-Symons, Philip Houldsworth, Dianne King, John Jarvis, Nicky Jerrome, Norman Jorgensen, Pauline Jorgensen, John Kaiser, David Lee, Abdul Loyes, Tom McCann, Julian McGhee-Sumner, Ken Miall, Philip Mirfin, Stuart Munro, Ian Pittock, Bob Pitts, Barrie Patman, Anthony Pollock, Malcolm Richards, Angus Ross, Beth Rowland, Rachelle Shepherd-DuBey, David Sleight, Chris Smith, Wayne Smith, Alison Swaddle, Paul Swaddle, Simon Weeks, Bob Wyatt and Shahid Younis

1. ELECTION OF MAYOR FOR 2015/16

UllaKarin Clark, the current Mayor made a speech to the Council during which she welcomed Laura Blumenthal and John Jarvis as newly elected Members.

The Mayor explained that it had been a great honour for her and her family to have served as the Mayor for the previous two years and that throughout her second year she had been very ably supported by Parry Batth as Deputy Mayor. She expressed her gratitude for the advice and support she had received during this time from Andy Couldrick the Chief Executive,

Anne-Marie Bonwick, Civic Communications Officer, Anne Hunter, Democratic Services Manager and the Democratic Services Team. The Mayor also paid tribute to her husband Joseph Clark for his support.

The Mayor explained she had thoroughly enjoyed her representational duties having undertaken some 390 engagements and was particularly pleased to have been able to contribute to the networking project between local charities and businesses through her speed dating event which had offered charities better ways of improving their cost effectiveness and general expertise through partnerships with local business. This was within the context of the Council's restricted ability to support charities because of national fiscal limits.

In conclusion, the Mayor paid tribute to the residents of the Borough and the many local businesses that had supported her Mayoral charities during her term of office. In 2013/2014 this had been Building for the Future, an organisation that supported disabled children had been her charity. In 2014/2015 in association with More Arts, teenagers with creative talents had been supported, including through scholarships. The Mayor commented that she was delighted to report that £11,868 had been raised for her charity during the previous municipal year.

The Mayor called for nominations for the office of Mayor for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

It was proposed by UllaKarin Clark and seconded by Keith Baker that Parry Batth be elected as Mayor for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

It was unanimously agreed that Parry Batth should be elected as Mayor for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That Parry Baath be elected as Mayor for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

Parry Baath made the statutory acceptance of office pursuant to Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Parry Baath thanked the Council for electing him as Mayor which he regarded as a great honour. He paid tribute to UllaKarin Clark for her support and guidance during his term of office as Deputy Mayor. He had undertaken some 37 mayoral engagements and chaired two full Council meetings. This had been a learning experience, particularly chairing of Council for the first time, but thanked the Council and Officers for their support as well as his wife and consort Surinder.

The Mayor paid tribute to the support he had received as Deputy Mayor from friends and family within the Sikh community. He commented that he had been born in the Punjab, known as the being the bread basket of India and had grown up within a humble farming family. The Mayor stated that he felt particularly honoured, humbled and privileged to be the Mayor of the Wokingham Borough that also had deep routed farming links. He commented he would endeavour to serve with pride and humbleness to act as an ambassador for the Council and prompt the Council's value of the Borough being a great place to live and do business.

The Mayor commented that his chosen Mayoral charity for the municipal year would be ARC in light of the importance of the emotional health and wellbeing of the Borough's children, which had been identified as a priority by the Children's Strategic Partnership and the Health and Wellbeing Board. ARC provided counselling and support to young people and parents across the Borough.

2. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR FOR 2015/2016

The Mayor called for nominations for the office of Deputy Mayor for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

It was proposed by UllaKarin Clark and seconded by Lindsay Ferris that Bob Pitts be appointed as Deputy Mayor for the 2015/16 municipal year.

RESOLVED: That Bob Pitts be elected as Deputy Mayor for the 2015/16 Municipal Year.

Bob Pitts made the statutory acceptance of office pursuant to Section 83 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Bob Pitts thanked the Council for appointing him and commented that he was honoured to take the office of Deputy Mayor and would do his best to uphold the values of the Council.

3. MINUTES

It was noted that unfortunately, the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19 March 2015 had been omitted from the Agenda and the previously agreed minutes from February included in error. The approval of the minutes was therefore deferred to the next meeting.

4. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Mark Ashwell, John Halsall, Tim Holton, Nick Ray, Chris Singleton, Bill Soane and Rob Stanton.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Mayor invited members of the public to submit questions to the appropriate Members.

6.1 Narendra Bahulekar had asked the Executive Member for Children's Services the following question:

Question

This year has seen a substantial increase in the demand for entry level infant school places in Earley, particularly in the middle of Maiden Erlegh. We represent parents who live in the small triangle between Aldryngton, Loddon and Hawkedon Schools, all of which are within a few minutes' walk and whose children were unable to secure a school place at our catchment or preferred schools. You identified the requirement for an increase and have extended Hawkedon School to meet part of that perceived need. Due to high levels of demand for good education for our children, and the effect this is having on local demographics, more places are required than first anticipated. Numbers are unclear but we understand that virtually another form of entry may be required. What action can you take to alleviate our concerns, as parents, and what assurances can we have that suitable places will be found for us within reasonable walking distance of our homes?

Answer

Historically school place planning in particular for primary schools was completed on an annual cycle. This led to an over reliance on bulge classes and responses to initial offers to parents. This led to a less sustainable and planned school estate and various drains on the Dedicated Schools Grant.

Our Primary Strategy 2013-2016 set a more strategic approach and helped successfully resolve school place issues in identified priority areas of the Borough. Our Primary Strategy was due to be refreshed for this Autumn. We are pleased to report that we are ahead of schedule in developing our refreshed strategy

Subject to the ongoing work around the refresh I anticipate that additional capacity will be required to meet local demand for places in September 2016. However, we expect fewer children in the 2017 Reception year across the Borough because of a fall (both local and national) in the number of children born in the 2012/13 academic year. The refresh will therefore consider the case for a permanent school expansion in light of this change and other evidence. Officers will work with local schools, members and the community to develop the best way to address these issues.

Part of the challenge (then and now) relates to the popularity of Earley schools, particularly with Reading as opposed to Wokingham residents. Whiteknights and Earley St Peters are relatively lacking in popularity with Wokingham residents (26 and 30 first preferences respectively from WBC parents when both can take 60 and 70 school children in reception). If not chosen these school places are then offered to children living in Reading Borough, where parents had expressed a preference for these schools. This has meant Earley places were not available for children living in Earley. If we could encourage Earley parents to consider these two schools more, this would have made an impact this year and potentially many fewer diverts.

For this years admissions; approximately 29 children from across Earley have been offered places at schools in adjoining areas. This number will though change between now and September, when the new academic year starts, as waiting lists clear and individual family circumstances change. We have had experience of this with schools in Wokingham when we had this situation a couple of years back, this does genuinely happen. Offers have been made to well resourced schools for those parents, and I believe you are one of them in this situation, offering permanent places in areas that adjoin Earley. Where these are beyond walking distance we will help parents get their children there. The average home to school distance (radial distance) to a diverted school is 1.9 miles (ranging from just over a mile to just over 3 miles).

Senior Officers have met, and will be meeting again any Earley parent who wishes to over the next few weeks, to ensure we have explored all options. Officers will also continue to support parents in providing regular updates on waiting lists and supporting travel and admissions enquiries.

This afternoon I can report that a delegation of Earley Members have also met with Officers and have resolved to set up a Task and Finish Group to review this matter for this year and also next year where there is also an increase in numbers before the drop off in numbers again in birth rate.

Supplementary Question

Given that the Council has access to the Borough data for the number of children claiming free 15 hours of EYFS childcare, how and why has this data not been utilised to correctly predict the number of reception school places required within the same area which now leaves Earley with approximately 30 children without a school place within their own community?

Supplementary Answer

It is very difficult to triangulate all of the data, but the Council uses lots of different factors to find out exactly where we think children will be coming into our school places; but it is not an exact science. We are one of the authorities that lead on this and we are extremely good at getting this data right. This year has seen a change in what we were expecting. The Council uses birth data, but we also asked Health Visitors for their data because they undertake two year old checks.

The Council can also use data such as you have suggested. The problem is that we also have inward migration and residents selling their homes as well. This varies across the Borough. So it is not an exact science and it is possible to get changes that have these different occurrences that are not predicted. I am sorry about that and I am sorry that this has affected you and your family.

6.2 Clive Jones had asked the Executive Member for Planning and Highways the following question:

Question

In June 2014 the Liberal Democrat Roads Minister Susan Kramer gave Wokingham Borough council an extra £728,000 to fix potholes in the Borough. Enough for over 10,000 potholes.

Can you tell me how much of this money has been spent in each ward fixing potholes and how much remains to be spent?

Answer

I am somewhat surprised you did not use Baroness Kramer of Richmond Park's proper title. She must be an exceptional person as she was elevated to the Lords after five years as a Member of Parliament being beaten by a Conservative on her second standing.

The other issue is that the money was allocated no doubt, after some form of consultation within the Government and I assume this would have included some Conservative input or sign off along the way. It was not as if it was her own money, although no doubt she could have afforded it having been a Vice-President of an American bank before coming a Liberal Democrat MP and a Baroness when that failed. I believe she also voted against your policy on an elected second chamber. I do not know why.

All of the money has been spent although a small element of the costs has yet to be finalised with the contractor.

Central government was anxious to avoid monies being spent on temporary pothole repairs, instead favouring permanent repairs as the first choice. The programme generally comprise small patching and larger surfacing works where numerous, localised, small-repairs or plugging might have been funded in the order of 10,000 potholes, but permanent repairs were made wherever possible. Where a number of defects existed in a road it has occasionally resulted in larger-scale patching or resurfacing of sections of road, something that the revenue budget alone does not always allow for.

The Borough's highways are not generally defined by Wards but do have a Parish element in their designation (although of course roads do still cross Parish boundaries).

A list of spends in each parish is as follows:

Parish	Value (£)
Arborfield	9,951
Barkham	13,556
Charvil	6,312
Earley (including a section of the A3290)	136,638
Finchampstead	196,420
Hurst	2,375
Remenham	4,5947
Ruscombe	2,523
Shinfield	46,058
Sonning	1,716
Swallowfield	60,932
Twyford	3,545
Wargrave	18,531
Winnersh	16,328
Wokingham	111,650
Wokingham Without	76,819
Woodley	20,362
Grand Total	728,313

A web page has been created and is currently being updated. This includes example photographs of some of the works.

7. PETITIONS

There were no petitions presented.

8. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER - PARLIAMENTARY, BOROUGH AND PARISH ELECTIONS 7 MAY 2015

The Council considered a report from Andrew Moulton, the Council's Head of Governance and Improvement Services in his role as Returning Officer in respect of the Elections held on 7 May 2015, as set out on Agenda pages 29 to 34.

In proposing the noting of the report, Pauline Jorgensen paid tribute to Andrew Moulton, Alison Wood the Deputy Returning Officer and the Elections Team for the way in which the electoral process had been conducted and providing a really good service during the election period. This was echoed by Prue Bray, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group.

RESOLVED: That the Returning Officer's report be noted.

9. MAYOR'S OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor informed Members that sadly John Bingham who was one of the Council's Independent Persons had passed away on 7 May 2015.

10. STATEMENTS FROM THE LEADER OF COUNCIL/EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Keith Baker, Leader of the Council made the following statement:

Firstly, Mr Mayor, I would like to add my thanks on what is a very, very momentous occasion for this Council. You are the first Sikh Mayor that we have had and that is really ground breaking. So congratulations.

I would also like to welcome Laura Blumenthal and John Jarvis to the Council Chamber. I am sure that they will be in for an interesting time as they learn the ropes and we go through the year.

Before I talk about my Executive for the coming year I would like to make a few comments on the recent "triple" elections. Due to the parliamentary elections many of us had a direct exposure of more than one local authority. Inevitably this leads to a comparison of each authority on their ability to run elections. I can say based on my experience and I believe of others, is that Wokingham is far ahead of these other authorities in the key areas of resident interaction and ability to run a complex operation. On behalf of all residents and candidates I would like to put on record our extreme thanks to Andrew Moulton, Alison Wood and her team for their sensitivity to residents' issues, general helpfulness and smooth operation. I know that our neighbouring authorities could certainly learn a lot from them as I keep on telling them again and again.

What happened on 7th May was exceptional and the resulting success for the Conservative Party was a crystal clear endorsement of our policies both nationally and locally. Let me highlight just one of those local policies. For the second year in a row the Liberal Democrats had as a key election message opposition to the regeneration of the Town Centre, especially around Elms Field. Again, for the second year in a row their views were totally rejected by the electorate. Last year the Liberal Democrats dismissed the result saying that the low turnout meant it was not a true reflection of resident's views

as so many did not vote. Clearly with turnouts being above 70% in all town and Borough wards they cannot use that excuse this time!

In fact the rejection of their views on the town centre regeneration was emphatic by a huge margin. Just looking at the wards within Wokingham Town shows how much that rejection actually was. For the Borough the Conservatives had 48% of the vote compared to the Liberal Democrat vote of 23%. A similar comparison of the Town elections was not as easy as the Liberal Democrats only managed to nominate 3 out of the 25 candidates required. They were all standing in one ward leaving 7 wards without a single Liberal Democrat candidate. So much for their passion to defend Elms Field! However, there were other candidates so using them as the opposition the Conservatives had 52% of the vote whilst the opposition had 36% of the vote.

I hope now that the Liberal Democrats will accept this comprehensive rejection of their regeneration views and work with us going forward. Councillor Bray often lectures us in this Chamber that we do not listen to residents' views. They have a great opportunity in the opposition leader's speech to demonstrate that they do listen. They can do this by acknowledging that residents do want the regeneration, including Elms Field, to go ahead and that they will cease their total opposition and instead work with us to refine and improve the plans.

Now let me turn to my Executive including the Deputies. I can announce that there is no change in the Executive either in the membership or their portfolios. There are a couple of changes in the Deputy positions with Councillor Halsall taking on the Deputy role for Highways and Planning from Councillor Richards. My thanks to Councillor Richards and his predecessor Councillor Singleton for their efforts over the last year. I have also reviewed the role of the Deputy for Communications and have decided that this is no longer needed.

The next year is going to be a difficult but interesting one. We do not know what the financial landscape is going to look like but one certainty is that money will be "short". Remember we are the lowest funded authority in the country. Notwithstanding that we will do our utmost to make the savings required whilst protecting key services. On the economic development front the introduction of a Deputy focussing on this area is beginning to get some traction both in the wider area through the LEP and more locally through assisting business start ups. In the next year we will build on this and keep that momentum going.

I have already spoken at length about the town centre regeneration, but there are other aspects to this portfolio. Community development and the voluntary sector have not had much focus over previous years and so I wanted to change this going forward. The Deputy for regeneration now has a specific role with the voluntary sector. The initial objective over the next year is to provide council with better visibility of the voluntary and community activity across our Borough. This third sector plays a vital part in many of our residents' lives and needs to be recognised, supported and developed.

Education is extremely important to both residents and the Council and we will continue to have a strong focus this coming year. We will build on our strengths and formal partnerships to raise awareness, understand the changing patterns of the needs of children and young people and effectively meet them. We will improve emotional health services in partnership with Health, by leading with the police the Safeguarding Children's Board, the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and deliver an integrated and holistic offer

for children with special needs and disability. The school in the south, scheduled to open in September 2016, is progressing well with great involvement from parents, residents and providers alongside the Council. We expect to hold a strategic review of primary places throughout the Borough with a view to building potentially several new primary schools over the next few years.

As most of you know we have the highest car ownership in the country which means we have to build extra capacity through new roads. The next year will see the projects for the six new roads being progressed. This will include extensive consultation, as already carried out on a couple of them, to help us shape the roads both in terms of location but also in terms of design. The two new park and ride facilities should be completed and the "Greenways" project linking cycleways and footpaths will be progressed.

From an environmental perspective the impact of flooding will be a major focus this coming year. This will include a "Flooding Action Plan" plus flood relief for the A327. The other major area will be our country parks with a Country Parks Strategy being completed as well.

Whilst these are all outward facing activities the constant drive to improve internal services will continue. This will cover things like improved access to services and better responsiveness to residents. We will investigate every opportunity to save money through shared services with other local authorities. Transparency and governance for our companies will continue to be improved as we move into a different phase of their evolution.

Finally, I would like to say that these are only the highlights of our plans for the coming year. If you wish to find out more please do not hesitate to contact the relevant Executive Member.

Prue Bray, the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group made the following statement:

Mr Mayor, I would like to congratulate both you and your Deputy on your positions and we look forward to many exciting council meetings under your control.

I think we know that the elections earlier this month were not kind to the Liberal Democrats and locally, Dee Tomlin and Kay Gilder, two long serving and diligent councillors lost their seats. I would like to pay tribute to them for all their hard work on behalf of residents for over 20 years. They did not deserve to lose. The Conservatives gained two seats. I was going to say that this does not mean residents endorse everything they do, but clearly the Leader of the Council believes that is exactly what it proves. How people voted in these local elections had more to do with national politics and fear of a Labour/SNP Government than it did with local issues. You may pretend all you like, the wider world knows. Dee and Kay lost their seats not because of anything that they had done, but because of the General Election.

Now it is clear that the local election results are going to encourage Conservatives on this Council that they can do whatever they like. The Leader of the Council's speech seems to indicate this is exactly what they do think. We know there is considerable opposition to the Council's plan for the Town Centre, but contrary to what the Leader of the Council said we have never opposed regeneration per se and neither do the majority of residents. We recognise that something has to happen to the town centre and we have said that over and over again so please do not misrepresent our position. We do not agree with building

on Elms Field and neither do a large section of the population. No doubt you are going to continue with it, that is your prerogative but the manner in which you do it could be a little bit more gracious than you have shown so far this evening. The Leader of the Council did however skip over the relatively good performance by the Liberal Democrats on Wokingham Town Council and neglected to mention that the Conservatives actually lost three Wokingham Town Council seats, two to independents and one to a Liberal Democrat. We will continue to fight hard to protect Elms Field and the other things that we believe are wrong with your plans we will continue to oppose in the coming year.

We also know that a lot people are unhappy with the state of the roads. The traffic, the parking and highways generally, that they have significant and justified concerns about the high levels of congestion on the roads of our Borough and about the routes of the proposed new roads. These concerns are reflected in our case work and in the calls and emails that we get from residents. You can therefore expect us to fight hard for something better on highways issues this year.

I have referred to the fact that it would be a mistake to think that gaining two seats from the Liberal Democrats was a ringing endorsement for the way the Conservatives are running this Council. But it would also be a mistake to think that the results of the elections mean that the Liberal Democrats are finished as a political party either locally or nationally. Party membership locally and nationally has risen about a third since polling day. These are new people, not former members who have re-joined. Why have they come forward now? Because they have recognised the need to stand up for liberal values, now more than ever, because like the councillors in this Liberal Democrat Group they believe in liberalism, in tolerance, humanity and community. They believe that civil liberties matter, that society should look after its disadvantaged and that as it says in preamble to our Party's Constitution that no one should be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We may be fewer in number this year, but we know what we stand for and we are fully prepared to carry on fighting for what we believe in and I look forward to what promised to be an interesting year.

11. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

In accordance with the agreed procedure the Mayor invited Members to submit questions to the appropriate Members

11.1 Gary Cowan had asked the Leader of Council the following question: Question

I was advised by a resident on 24th February this year that a very substantial tree with a tree preservation order on it located on Sheerlands Road along with a significant established ancient hedgerow and conifer hedge which was approximately 10 foot high and 60 foot long were removed and the following day a substantial 6 foot high fence was erected in their place. The new fence resulted in the removal of two gates which had been there for more than 30 years and were established rights of way.

The following day I notified Wokingham Borough Council of this but my concern is that the problem impacts on several departments within the council from Highways to rights of way to planning, enforcement, land ownership, Trees and landscape and no doubt legal. In addition the size of the substantial tree meant it may also have required a felling licence which I understand can only be issued by the Forestry Commission.

Due to the many departments involved can I ask you as Leader of the Council would you please take responsibility for ensuring that all the relevant departments investigate this

matter and report directly to you as it seems to fall into several Executive members portfolios which could only complicate investigation

Answer

Thank you for your question Councillor Cowan. As you correctly state this issue entails the work of a number of our teams. I can confirm that I am working closely with everyone involved and I will make sure you are kept up to date as things progress.

Before I get to the specific incident here I would like to make a few general comments about ignoring a Tree Preservation Order or a TPO and cutting down that tree can only be considered as an act of outright vandalism. There is a reason why a TPO is on a tree as it will be an exceptional specimen of that type of tree and needs to be preserved for all to see; the amenity value of it. Almost without exception the tree will be a mature sample which means it will be a big tree.

Too often people who do this simply laugh at the law as the fine will be derisory and all they need to do is to plant a sapling as a replacement which will be tiny in comparison to the original tree. As Leader I am already urging all the relevant sections involved to prosecute any future perpetrators to the maximum allowable by law.

Even then it will be totally unsatisfactory as it will take generations for any replacement planting to reach the same quality of the cut down tree. However, that is a deficiency in the law rather than the Council. Now let me turn to this specific incident.

The tree was covered by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) and a Tree Replacement Notice is being prepared which will be served on the private landowner to secure an appropriate replacement. Unfortunately, the hedge that has been removed was not protected.

The fence that has been erected on the land is within the public highway. We have written to the person who erected the fence requesting its removal from highway land.

The gate allowed access to an open area beyond the property. The removal of the gate does not need permission from the Council. If the replacement of the gate with a fence restricts residents' access generally, this is a private matter between these individuals as unfortunately there is no public right of way over this land.

A number of different sections of the Council have worked together to establish the above position and co-ordination of the issues rests within the Head of Development Management and Regulatory Services. Any action taken will include the Council's own legal team. This will ensure that there is a coordinated approach to address all of the issues and you as local Member and the relevant Executive Members will be kept informed of progress.

Supplementary Question

You say that cutting down a Tree Preservation Order, (TPO) tree is an act of vandalism and I would agree with that. In my opinion, this case is an example of environmental vandalism on an epic scale, the like of which I have not seen or heard of in the 50 odd years that I have lived in Berkshire. It was a much loved tree that was 40ft high with a superb canopy, with a TPO and set against a backdrop of an established 14ft rural hedge that stretched for several hundred yards.

My reason for specifically asking you the question was to ensure that the involved departments all came together, but this has not really happened because on 5 May I got an email from an Officer which suggested that we might wish to secure replacement planting and that this would give us a more certain result with less expense to the public purse than a prosecution. In your last paragraph you say that I will be kept informed of progress, yet I reported this matter on 24 February and I have had some contact with one particular Officer, but nothing from anyone else that you refer to in your answer.

As I said the tree was well over 40ft and has been removed. The question would be:

- What actions are available to us now over and above what you suggest?
- What action is there to deal with removal of the fence? You say that nothing can be done.
- The pile of logs from the felled tree would indicate that an amount of tree to be removed which would require a Forestry Commission permitted licence which I did bring to the attention of the Council. Did the Council go to the Forestry Commission and suggest that this tree required a Forestry Commission license to fell it?
- You do say that the fence will be removed and replaced, but obviously nothing will be there to replace the two access gates which actually went from highway land to highway land. They do not involve private land.
- What action will be taken against the company that cut down the TPO tree? They do have an involvement in this.
- What message does this send out to residents and more importantly, when we are building 13,300 houses and it appears we do nothing when a TPO tree is cut down? I believe acting this way, when the public purse is more important than environmental vandalism, has set a precedent that shames us all.

Supplementary Answer

Thank you for the multiple supplementary questions. Clearly there are too many to answer here, so I will make the commitment that by the end of next week you will get a full written answer.

12. POLITICAL BALANCE OF THE COUNCIL AND ALLOCATION AND APPOINTMENT TO SEATS ON COUNCIL COMMITTEES/PANELS/BOARDS

The Council considered a revised report, which was tabled at the meeting, on the political balance of the Council the appointment to the Council's Committees/Panels/Board in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups.

The report set out a number of recommendations which the Council was asked to consider.

It was proposed by Keith Baker and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that the recommendations be approved.

RESOLVED:

That Council:

- 1) having reviewed the representation of the political groups on the Council, confirms that it has 47 Conservative Group Members, 5 Liberal Democrat Group Members, 1 Independent Member and 1 Labour Member (as set out in Para 1.1);
- 2) approves the appointment and composition of Committees and Boards as set out in Para 2.1;

- 3) approved the allocation of seats on Committees and Boards on the basis that, of the 94 seats (as set out in Para 3.5), 83 be allocated to the Conservative Group and 11 be allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group;
- 4) approves the proposals submitted by the respective Group Leaders and that those Members be appointed to the Committees and Boards as set out in Appendix 1;
- 5) agree that the principles of proportionality be applied when Members are appointed to Sub Committees, Panels or Working Groups;
- 6) note the appointment of the Independent Person to assist the work of the Standards Committee as set out in Appendix 1;
- 7) note the elected Member representatives on the Health and Wellbeing Board, as set out in Appendix 1, as nominated by the Leader of Council in accordance with Section 194 of the Health and Social Care Act 2012.

13. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMEN AND VICE-CHAIRMEN OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES AND BOARDS 2015/2016

The Council considered the appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council Committees/Panels/Boards in accordance with the wishes of the Political Groups, as set out in Appendix 2, circulated at the meeting.

It was proposed by Keith Baker and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that the appointments be approved.

RESOLVED: That the appointment of Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council Committees/Panels/Boards be agreed, as set out in Appendix 2 to these minutes.

14. APPOINTMENT TO PANELS/WORKING GROUPS/JOINT COMMITTEES AND VARIOUS BODIES 2015/16

Members were asked to refer to a list of each political groups' nominations to various Panels, Working Groups, Joint Committees and Various Bodies as circulated at the meeting as Appendix 3.

It was proposed by Keith Baker and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that the list of nominations set out in Appendix 3 be approved.

RESOLVED: That Members be appointed to the Council's Panels/Working Groups/Joint Committee and Various Bodies as set out in Appendix 3 to these Minutes.

15. APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2015/16

Members were asked to refer to a list of each political groups' nomination to various Outside Bodies as circulated at the meeting at Appendix 4.

It was proposed by Keith Baker and seconded by Pauline Jorgensen that the list of nominations set out in Appendix 4 be approved.

RESOLVED: That Members be appointed to the Outside Bodies as set out in Appendix 4 to these Minutes.

16. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Council considered a report on proposed changes to the Council Constitution including changes to the Council Rules of Procedure, Committees of the Council, a revised Code of Conduct for Councillors and changes to a number of documents relating to Officers; including the Officers' Code of Conduct.

It was proposed by Paul Swaddle and seconded by Prue Bray that the proposed changes be approved.

RESOLVED: That the following changes to the Council's Constitution be approved:

1) Chapter 4.2 – Council Rules of Procedure

(a) The addition of a new paragraph to Rule 4.2.15.5 Recorded Votes as follows:

“A recorded vote will be required on any business relating to approving the budget, setting the council tax or issuing precepts. This also includes any amendments proposed to any of these items of business.”

(b) The addition of a new Rule 4.2.24 Statements from the Council Owned Companies as set out in the report;

2) Chapter 4.4 – Committees of the Council – Health and Wellbeing Board

(a) Delete “b) Adults Strategic Partnership” from Rule 4.4.44;

(b) The following additional paragraph be added:

“4.4.45 Health and Wellbeing Board Sub-Committees

The Health and Wellbeing Board has the ability to set up sub committees to undertake any of its functions. The Health and Wellbeing Board will agree the terms of reference and membership of any such sub-committee and any such terms of reference will subsequently be included in the Council's Constitution.”

3) Chapter 5.5 – Protocol for Decision Making by Individual Executive Members

The addition of the following to Rule 5.5.1:

“o) Designation of a neighbourhood area following consultation with the local Ward Member(s) and appropriate Town or Parish Council.”

4) Chapter 9.2 – Code of Conduct for Councillors

Revised version of Chapter 9.2 as attached at Appendix 1 to the report;

5) Section 11 – Officers

Revised versions of the following documents as attached at Appendix 2 to the report:

Chapter 11.4 – Officers' Code of Conduct

Chapter 11.5 – Officer Employment Procedure Rules

Chapter 11.6 – Delegated Powers Relating to Staffing Matters

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