

Council Minutes

Date: 15 July 2019

Time: 6.30 - 8.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillor P R Turner (in the Chair)

Councillors Mrs J A Adey, Mrs S Adoh, K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, M C Appleyard, M Asif, D H G Barnes, Ms A Baughan, Miss S Brown, H Bull, D J Carroll, M Clarke, Mrs L M Clarke OBE, M P Davy, C Etholen, R Farmer, R Gaffney, S Graham, A R Green, G C Hall, M Hanif, M Harris, M A Hashmi, A E Hill, M Hussain, M Hussain JP, D A Johncock, Mrs G A Jones, M E Knight, D Knights, Mrs J D Langley, A Lee, Mrs W J Mallen, N B Marshall, H L McCarthy, I L McEnnis, Ms C J Oliver, B E Pearce, G Peart, S K Raja, R Raja, J A Savage, R J Scott, N J B Teesdale, Mrs J E Teesdale, A Turner, Ms J D Wassell, D M Watson, R Wilson, L Wood and Ms K S Wood.

Also present: Honorary Aldermen J M Blanksby, P Cartwright & Mrs P Priestley.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Broadbent, A D Collingwood, C B Harriss, A Hussain, S Saddique, D A C Shakespeare OBE and C Whitehead and Honorary Aldermen E Collins & Mrs K Peatey.

11 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 1 April 2019 and the Annual Council on 20 May 2019 be confirmed as true records and signed by the Chairman.

12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

13 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman congratulated Councillor Graham Peart on his award of a BEM (British Empire Medal) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, for his services to the Community.

Councillor Peart responded indicating that he was not quite sure why he had been picked out, as he knew of many in the Community who contributed as much as himself. But he was pleased to accept the honour on behalf of the many, probably as many as a thousand, volunteers who week in week out contributed to the Community here in Wycombe District,

The Chairman then reported on his recent engagements carried out since the Annual Council;

- The Bucks Scouts and Girl Guiding Bucks Mission '00Bucks' at which 3,000 children and 2,000 adults attended a camp weekend, attendees coming from across Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes; and event 18 months in preparation;
- The official opening of the new Birtton Crematorium;
- Wycombe District Rural Forum Farm Tour at Hampden Bottom Farm, where farming and environmental issues were seen to co-exist to their mutual benefit;
- Armed Forces Day 2019, which had been the hottest day of the year so far;
- Two inspirational events: the Pipers Corner School Speech Day and the Royal Grammar School Seniors Prize giving ceremony; and
- The Wycombe Lotto 2nd birthday event where £20,000 raised was awarded amongst 20 diverse voluntary organisations across the District.

The Chairman also announced that he had great pleasure that evening in presenting to two representatives of the St John's Ambulance High Wycombe Branch: Henry Allen and Kendal Samuel, a memento to mark the 100th Anniversary of the Branch.

Mr Allen accepting, outlined the work of the Branch providing first aid locally and providing training in such. In the hundred years, millions of voluntary hours had been given, thousands had received first aid from their officers or from those trained by them. He remarked that it could well be that someone in your family had good reason to be thankful for the organisation.

14 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

a) Question from Mr T Snaith to the Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources.

High Wycombe Town Committee pays WDC a contribution from the annual precepts to manage resources and services for the un-parished wards. How much is paid to WDC for services and staff and what do the people of High Wycombe un-parished wards get for the investment?

Verbal reply given by Councillor D Watson (Cabinet Member for Finance & Resources).

Thank you Mr Snaith for your question, out of an overall budget this year of £15m, some £97K was allocated to manage resources and services in the un-parished areas, up from £92k last year. This covers salaries, direct expenses, Town

Committee commissioning and a small share of the High Wycombe overhead costs. This year it is split as follows:

1. Cemetery Management : £22k
2. Grounds and Green space maintenance : £36k
3. Financial Assistance to Voluntary Organisations : £6k
4. Management Overheads & Commissioning : £26k
5. Governance : £6k

I hope that this is of assistance.

Supplementary Question

In speaking to finance officers I have learnt of £43K levied against support admin for the Town, adding this to the £97K you mention, gives us a total over £120K the generally accepted cost of running a small town council. Do you agree that using this money for a Town Council would provide far more for the unparished wards?

Supplementary Response

I will check out this £43K which I am not aware of. To my mind the District Council's allocation to the Town Committee is pretty low keeping down Council Tax. If a Town Council was established having its own clerk, finance officer, IT costs and overheads I suspect it would add up to far more than the current Town Committee. The shape of representation to come is subject to the Community Governance Review. People in the unparished area have done well; just £14.50 for Band D, any change would only increase that cost.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That pursuant to Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of Minute 5 of the JNC Staffing Matters Committee Meeting of 11 June 2019 as it contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1: Information relating to an individual.

[The distress that could be caused to the individual is not commensurate with the benefits of disclosure to the public.]

15 JNC STAFFING MATTERS COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the JNC Staffing Matters Committee held on 11 June 2019 be

received, and the recommendations as set out at minute number 5 be approved and adopted.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Meeting returned to Open session.

16 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS

a) Question from Councillor R Raja to the Leader of the Council or the Cabinet Member for Environment

The UK produced 11M Metric tonnes of Plastic waste in 2017 and recycled two thirds of it, or so it seemed. However, according to a report by the National Audit Office half of the UK's recyclable waste was sent overseas for recycling but much of it is likely to have ended up in landfill or the ocean instead. The dumping of our waste in the laps of poor countries has recently been exposed by TV programmes and newspaper articles which have shown that waste from the UK including from Local Authorities ends up as toxic mountains in third world countries where it causes birth defects, impaired immunity, respiratory diseases, cancers and other ailments, not to mention the devastating effects it has on wildlife and marine life.

Would the Leader of the Council /Cabinet Member for the Environment categorically assure us that no waste belonging to WDC is ending up in poor countries in the Far East on the pretext of being recycled there or are we guilty of large scale fly-tipping as well?

Verbal reply given by Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Environment)

Different types of plastic containers collected in Wycombe are formed into bales and then shipped to re-processors in the UK and Europe, sometimes further afield. The containers are then re-processed to provide raw materials for the manufacture of new products. Recent information from the Joint Waste Team shows that an average of only 10% of the containers collected in Wycombe may eventually leave the UK or Europe for recycling purposes. These destination countries could include Malaysia, Taiwan, Vietnam, the Philippines, Hong Kong, Indonesia and India.

All recycling materials collected from the kerbside by the Council's contractor and sent for sorting, bulking and onward transportation are subject to a regulatory process.

This regulatory 'duty of care' requires that waste is only ever transferred to an authorised dealer who has a valid registration as a carrier, broker or dealer of waste, or a waste management operator who has an environmental permit. Only reputable and compliant contractors are used.

Operators of MRFs (Material Recovery Facilities) like those used by the Council are required to keep records and report to the regulator details of what they send out, every three months. To check on all this, the Joint Waste Team has its own

programme of 'duty of care' visits. All contractors taking recycling from us are visited, and the officers satisfy themselves that the operators are meeting the requirements of the legislation and all the necessary documentation is up to date and compliant. The MRF used by the Council's contractor at the moment has recently been checked for this purpose and all was found to be in order.

90% of Wycombe's plastic containers that have been collected for recycling remain in the UK. This fact, along with our knowledge of the controls in place and our use of reputable contractors means that we can have confidence that the chance of any plastic container collected within Wycombe ending up in any of the world's oceans is remote.

Supplementary Question

It is reassuring to know that these policies are in place, but are they being followed to the dot? 10% going outside the EU is too much, I feared watching these recent TV documentaries that rubbish from Wycombe District would feature. I have not had the re-assurances I was seeking.

Supplementary Response

The major problem is when illegal waste is set in fire, we are confident in our operations.

b) Question from Councillor M Knight to the Leader of the Council

In October last year the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) published an influential report on climate change. This report warned of the serious and devastating consequences of global warming and the human contribution to the warming of the planet.

Since then over 100 councils have led the way in the UK by formally declaring a "climate emergency" and setting targets in place to reduce the use of fossil fuels and the release of carbon into the atmosphere. For example, Oxfordshire County Council has pledged to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Climate change is real and is already having a negative impact on the natural ecosystems, flora and fauna of our planet which in turn is presenting a risk to human life. It is essential that those of us with power do all we can, at all levels, to take action.

Do you agree with me that as a council we should be declaring a climate emergency and together working to identify actions which can alleviate the problem?

Verbal reply given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

Wycombe District Council is committed to protecting the environment. This is evidenced in a number of ways, for example, its strong recycling performance and the adoption of an air quality action plan. Also, through its Planning and Green Spaces services, Wycombe supports sustainable development, protects biodiversity and maintains the environment of the District to a high standard.

Many of these activities will have positive impacts on carbon dioxide emissions at district level and in particular the air quality actions supporting the shift to electric vehicles and those aimed at changing the behaviours of drivers should have positive effects.

Clearly, air pollution is also associated with a number of adverse health impacts, particularly for the most vulnerable in society, including children and older people and those with heart and lung conditions.

The Council has a good track record in those areas where it can have a direct influence, and it will always play its part. The Council is also supportive of national and international efforts to tackle climate change and I shall be asking officers to write to central government in support of the development of challenging targets for carbon emissions reductions.

Supplementary Question

I am not sure that is an answer to my question, do you think we should have specific targets? Will you support future motions in regards to such, brought before this Council?

Supplementary Response

I note that Oxford County Council have targets relating to 2030, it is difficult for us to set targets as we are only here until April next year; 2020. We clearly support such targets, but is this the right time to bring them in? We should leave them to the new Unitary Council.

c) Question from Councillor B Pearce to the Cabinet Member for Environment

Do you agree with me that Wycombe District Council and the travellers liaison office in Aylesbury, worked very efficiently and swiftly in removing the travellers from the Dean Street Recreation Ground in Marlow (I believe in less than 24 hours) and also when the same travellers descended on Fernie Fields Recreation Ground in less than 7 hours.

Can we therefore assume that this efficiency will continue if travellers descend on any other area in Wycombe District?

Verbal reply given by Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Environment)

All incursions are dealt with either by the Buckinghamshire Gypsy and Traveller Service or Thames Valley Police, usually both are contacted in the first instance.

Where incursions are dealt with by the Traveller Service they use powers under Section 77/78 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994. This is a specific legal process that must be followed which includes carrying out the necessary

welfare checks. This is not a quick process and can take around 7 - 10 days. Any eviction must be proportionate, legal and necessary.

Where cases are dealt with by Thames Valley Police they use powers under Section 61 of the CJPOA. This is a quicker process and can be used in situations where there is damage to land or property, threatening, abusive or insulting behaviour is demonstrated or there are more than six vehicles on the land. These powers are only available to the Police and it is for the Police to decide if it is appropriate to use these powers.

The cases you have referred to in your question were both dealt with by the Police using S.61 powers.

For your information the Council is considering applying for an injunction to speed up the process of eviction from Council owned land.

Supplementary Question

Did you know that Marlow Town Council has installed barriers to its recreation grounds? Should not Wycombe District Council install such on the Rye? If there was a Town Council would this not be done quicker? It was 9 days for removal from Kingsmead, how long will it take in respect of the Rye?

Supplementary Response

Barriers are all well and good but there are angle grinders! We have to have usable barriers to enable genuine users with vehicles (e.g. authorised events) to access the fields.

d) Question from Councillor M Hanif to the Cabinet Member for Environment

The incidents of fly-tipping appear to have increased since BCC started to make it difficult for residents to dispose of excess household rubbish by closing Re-cycling waste stations. Most residents see a clear link between closing of Recycling waste collection points and increased levels of fly-tipping, which blights residential areas and increases health risks and safety concerns. Also it is seen as a revenge of the consumer society we live in.

Would the Cabinet member for the Environment/Waste recycling agree there is indeed a link between closing of recycling waste collection points and increased levels of fly-tipping, accepting also that the council's waste management strategy is nothing short of shambles and is a result of this council being in cahoots with the BCC by not opposing the waste site closures or do you have another explanation for this mess?

Verbal reply given by Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Environment)

On the 1st of April this year Bucks County Council closed Bledlow Ridge Household Recycling Centre, reduced the opening hours of others and introduced charges for disposal of non-household waste such as rubble and soil.

In the first 3 months since these changes there appears to have been a small decrease in fly-tips in April, a small increase in May and a further increase in June. These figures are taken from Fix My Street which is on the County Council's website and it is possible that a single fly tip may have been reported several times. In addition, the closure of the recycling centre and the debate around fly-tipping has received a lot of media attention and it is likely that this will have increased awareness and usage of Fix My Street.

Having regard to this I would take the view that 3 months data is insufficient to suggest a long term trend. However, the matter needs to be closely monitored and I have asked officers to do this and keep me informed. I will also ask for the matter to be discussed at the next Joint Waste Committee meeting. I can assure you that Council is NOT in cahoots with the County Council and the closure of the household waste recycling site, change of hours and charging was a decision made by the County Council as the disposal authority. In fact the Joint Waste Committee of Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks wrote to Bucks County Council voicing our collective concerns.

As you will have seen, if you read your Wycombe District Times, an article showing that over 75% of waste which is taken to household recycling centres is still free to dispose of and perhaps this message needs to be emphasised to residents.

Supplementary Question

Do you not agree that this is short sighted and not cost effective, when you make it difficult to dispose of waste, you are more likely to experience fly tipping which is far more expensive to put right?

Supplementary Response

I have answered already that this is a question for Buckinghamshire County Council.

e) **Question from Councillor S Graham to the Cabinet Member for Environment**

The Bucks Free of 21st June 2019 carried a picture of over grown bushes along John Hall Way, High Wycombe.

The picture showed the overgrown bushes covering a large part of the footpath, which means that people have to step on the road and this would be especially difficult for anyone in a wheelchair.

Would the Cabinet member for Environment agree with me that this is an unacceptable state of affairs and can she tell me of any steps she has taken to ensure that overgrown bushes are cleared from roads and sidewalks on a regular basis before they cause an obstruction, especially during the summer months?

Verbal reply given by Councillor Mrs J Adey (Cabinet Member for Environment)

This question is really one for Bucks County Council. In the instance cited it was unfortunate that the overgrown vegetation was not picked up as a part of the monthly inspection regime that is in place for John Hall Way.

However, following notification of the issue an ad-hoc inspection was carried out, the severity of the incursion noted and a works order was raised and actioned promptly. The Transport for Bucks Highways Inspectors have been reminded of the need to ensure that footpaths are not blocked by vegetation.

As an aside, much of the vegetation that does impinge on the public highway does emanate from residents' gardens. I should therefore urge residents to manage their vegetation such that it is not allowed to grow over the public highway to ensure the safe passage of pedestrians is not compromised.

Supplementary Question

If you look across the District you see that many sidewalks are overgrown, should these not be remedied?

Supplementary Response

Again as said it is a Bucks County Council matter I would suggest taking it up with them.

f) Question from Councillor M Asif to the Leader of the Council

We will have a considerable number of challenges and decisions to make as we move towards a unitary council.

Does the leader agree with me that the officers are key to a successful delivery and that we have the team in place to do this?

Verbal reply given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

I agree with Cllr Asif that we have a considerable number of challenges and decisions to make as we transition to the Unitary Council. An overarching Programme Governance structure has been put in place, led by Rachel Shimmin, *Buckinghamshire County Council Chief Executive* and the designated Implementation Executive for the Shadow Authority, and with senior officer representatives from all five Councils. All five Councils are also represented by officers on the Unitary Programme Boards and Project Work streams. The overall Programme is supported by the Unitary Programme Management Office.

Officers are key to supporting our transition and to maintaining the provision of essential public services during transition. We are indeed fortunate that we have an officer group with a wealth of experience and skills to support the transition to the new Council. Provision has been made to support the transition programme and continuity of services. The Shadow Executive and senior managers need to ensure, and keep under constant review, our capacity to manage and deliver this change. We as Members can also make a contribution by being mindful of the considerable workloads arising to officers in delivering change and maintaining services to our residents and customers.

Supplementary Question

We have all been informed that the Chief Executive is leaving at the end of this month. I agree in respect of her immense contribution to the Council, but should this departure be before the staff are assisted through the changes with the new Unitary Authority?

Supplementary Response

The Chairman allowed Ms Satterford to respond in respect of this supplementary question.

As you will know the recruitment of the new chief executive for the Unitary Authority is underway, interviews are this Thursday and Friday, with ratification next Tuesday. At that point we will have a new Chief Executive, a new person to steer the new organisation. I am grateful that the Council supports my departure.

The new Chief Executive can plan long term, they will need an extremely able team of officers to manage the transformation. The District Chief Executive role is very much over.

Thank you Chairman for allowing me to speak on this item.

g) Question from Councillor K Ahmed to the Leader of the Council

On the 31st July 2019 we celebrate the 100 year anniversary of the Addison Act, which paved the way for large-scale council housing. We must now be mindful of the 200,000 people in temporary housing across the UK and the 1.2 million households on social housing waiting lists.

In High Wycombe there is a lack of new social housing being built. Social housing has been sold off under the Right to Buy scheme without being replaced, leaving people in Wycombe without the opportunity to rent at an affordable price. Can I ask if the leader is happy with the general state of social housing in Wycombe and what she has done to address these issues, in light of additional borrowing available from central government?

Verbal reply given by Councillor Ms K Wood (Leader of the Council)

A quote from 'Inside Housing' professional magazine for housing summarises the current position well:

“ There may still be a myriad of challenges to face when it comes to providing good quality, genuinely affordable housing for those most in need, but without the passing of an Act of Parliament 100 years ago, the sector [we work in today] may never have come to exist. That alone is worth celebrating.”

Currently, we as a Council have relatively low numbers of household in temporary accommodation compared with local authorities in the south east with the last published figures in December 2018; 1.09 persons per 1,000 households in TA compared with a South East Average of 2.36. Milton Keynes had 6.86, Slough had a last published figure of 8.26, with Luton 16.33 by way of a comparison. This does not mean we are resting on our laurels though, as we are moving forward with our plans for new temporary accommodation which will be a vast improvement on our current provision.

In regard to new social housing, a large number of new social rented homes are being built with 197 affordable homes delivered in the district in 2018/19 with more currently being developed and delivered by our partner Registered Providers. All new build social housing is let at an affordable or a social rent and is capped at local housing allowance levels to ensure rents are affordable to local residents.

As such, we are happy with the general state of social housing and with the partnership work carried out by our experienced officers with the large number of Registered Providers who have homes and offices, in the district.

Supplementary Question

We relieved ourselves of the burden of social housing with the sell off to Red Kite. Wycombe District has not done enough to address social housing issues. Red Kite has used its stock to support a fancy private enterprise project 'twenty 11', in respect of Social Housing are not the people of Wycombe worse off?

Supplementary Response

We are expecting approximately 100 affordable homes to be provided this financial year (19/20) from at least 4 different registered providers of housing. This is not all new build with around 84 new build and around 16 purchase schemes funded by WDC.

We are investing over £2.5m of Wycombe District Council's funds including s106 developer contributions to deliver these new homes. I think we are doing pretty well.

I would add that the housing stock was not sold off it was transferred.

Questions 8 to 10 were not put as the 30 minutes time period had expired. In accordance with Standing Orders, a written reply would be sent to the questioner by the appropriate Member within 10 working days, and would also be appended to the minutes of the meeting.

17 PETITIONS

No petitions were received by the deadline of Monday 8 July 2019.

18 CABINET

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of 8 July 2019 be received, and the recommendation as set out at minute number 9 be approved and adopted.

19 PLANNING COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings of the Planning Committee of 6 March 2019, 3 April 2019, 23 April 2019 and 22 May 2019 be received.

20 REGULATORY & APPEALS COMMITTEE

Minute 39 – Community Governance Review - Update

A Member enquired as to the progress of the initial report due for publication in the middle of July. The Chairman assured Members that the subsequent consultation was still on schedule as outlined.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee of 13 May 2019 be received, and the recommendations as set out at minute number 38 be approved and adopted.

The Chairman of the Regulatory & Appeals Committee in presenting the minutes pointed that in respect of Minute 40 'Change of Meeting Date' the date of the next meeting featured had been further changed in that it was now scheduled for Wednesday 31 July 2019.

21 AUDIT COMMITTEE

Minute 6 – Ernst Young Audit Progress Report (Verbal)

A Member enquired as to whether Ernst Young would receive any penalty for non-performance. The Chairman responded that this was under consideration, but it was to be noted that Wycombe District Council was not a direct customer of Ernst Young, which complicated matters.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Audit Committee of 30 May 2019 be received.

22 HIGH WYCOMBE TOWN COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the High Wycombe Town Committee of 11 June 2019 be received.

23 IMPROVEMENT & REVIEW COMMISSION

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Improvement & Review Commission of 12 June 2019 be received.

24 PERSONNEL & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Personnel & Development Committee of 4 July 2019 be received.

25 NOTICES OF MOTION

To consider the following Notices of Motion submitted by the deadline.

The following Notice of Motion was submitted by Councillor K Ahmed and seconded by Councillor B Pearce.

I move that this council will bring Wycombe Market back under the direct control of Wycombe District Council by giving the required three months' notice and resume the management of its own markets.

Councillor Ahmed requested that he be permitted to present his remarks on the motion after all other speakers. This the Chairman permitted.

Councillor Pearce (seconder) then spoke indicating that he had spoken at great lengths to the market traders about two months ago and some last week. All indicated that if matters are not taken in hand and swiftly, there would be no market within six months.

They had also stated that the Council should take over the day to day running of the market.

Councillor Pearce indicated that all knew about market forces and the affect online shopping was having upon the High Street and shopping centres but some local markets were doing exceedingly well and were very successful.

The markets in Thame, Aylesbury and Princes Risborough, all had an excellent reputation whilst Marlow had a very diverse market and it was probably no

coincidence that they all had Town Councils and to the best of his knowledge, the said councils ran the aforementioned markets.

If drastic improvements were not made virtually immediately, there would not be a High Wycombe Market for much longer which would be a great shame as High Wycombe was actually classed as a market town and there would not be a need for the Chartered Trustees tour of the market anymore.

Members discussed the motion and made the following remarks and contributions to the debate:

- It was felt that the motion was premature, Members of the High Wycombe Town Committee were due to receive an update from officers on the Market at the next scheduled meeting of the Committee (Tuesday 10 September 2019);
- It was agreed that the provision of food on the market was to be considered and the affect this had on business rate paying food retailers in the Town Centre;
- It was confirmed that the current Market Contract ran to 31.3.2021. There was indeed a three month notice at the end of contract i.e. from 1.1.2021. But only then. If notice was given before then the Council could be in breach of contract;
- A Member noted that without the food provision there would effectively be no market, additionally noting that was not the running of the Market something that the new Unitary Council should hand over to any new Town Council if established?
- A Member reported the presence of only 4 non food stalls on a recent Tuesday and remarked that the state of the High Street did not help the Market's vibrancy either;
- Despite the strange timing of the motion it could not be ignored that something needed to be done, a recent University of Leeds study ' Markets for People' was referenced which advocated market revitalisation not just involving food provision and gentrification, but markets as a means of community inclusion providing invaluable low cost trading units;
- The lack of use of plastic packaging by market traders in fruit and vegetables as opposed to the supermarkets was commended; and
- It was confirmed that the successful Marlow market was operated by 'Transition Town Marlow' volunteers; including market stall-holders who had self-interest as a motive along with a considerable degree of ownership;

Councillor Ahmed, the motion proposer then gave his reasons for the motion emphasising the control of the Market by a remote company based well away from

the town whilst much more vibrant, thriving markets in the County we all under local / Town Council control.

Seventy traders at the start of the contractors' tenure had dwindled to less than twenty.

Dwindling footfall to high pitch rates meant that traders were losing the will to come to High Wycombe to trade. The matter was now critical and action needed to be taken. The Market also had a historic importance dating back to the early 13th Century a charter being granted to the burgesses of the town by Henry III.

Upon being put to a vote it was

RESOLVED: That the motion be rejected.

Councillor A Hill asked that it be minuted that he had abstained from the vote on this matter.

26 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 11.2

There were no questions submitted under Standing Order 11.2

27 URGENT ITEM: APPOINTMENT AND DESIGNATION OF THE COUNCIL'S MONITORING OFFICER

The Council had before it an urgent item in respect of the appointment and designation of the Council's Monitoring Officer.

In Accordance with Section 100B of the Local Government Act 1972, this item was considered an urgent item as there was a necessity to decide upon the designation of the statutory role of Monitoring Officer in light of the resignation of the existing post-holder and her departure from the authority.

It was noted that the role of Monitoring Officer was a statutory requirement and served as the guardian of the Council's Constitution and the decision-making process. The role was responsible for advising the Council on the legality of decisions and providing guidance to Councillors and officers on the Council's Constitution and its powers. It also had a responsibility to report breaches and possible breaches of law or maladministration to the Council.

The role of the Council's Monitoring Officer currently resided with the post of District Solicitor. Following the resignation of the existing post holder and due to the demands of transition it had been decided to separate the role from that of District Solicitor for the remaining life of the Council.

In order to ensure the delivery of a number of key tasks during the transition period to the new Buckinghamshire Unitary Authority on 1 April 2020, it was proposed that the function of the Monitoring Officer be designated to the role of Principal Solicitor (Litigation, Contracts & Property). The holder of this post was a highly experienced and skilled officer who was a current Deputy Monitoring Officer.

This would free up the existing role to focus on management responsibilities during the transition to unitary and in particular the work in establishing the new legal services function for the County Council which would be provided through Wycombe District Council alongside colleagues in Chiltern and South Bucks District Councils from 1st October 2019. A recruitment exercise had been carried out in accordance with vacancy protocol and an appointment has been made to the management role. It was proposed to change the title of the post to District Lawyer to reflect the appointment.

Members were in agreement with these proposals regarding the appointment and designation of the Council's Monitoring Officer and;

RESOLVED: That the post of Principal Solicitor (Litigation, Contracts & Property) be designated the statutory role of the Council's Monitoring Officer with immediate effect, and the Head of Democratic, Legal & Policy Services be authorised to update the Council's Constitution accordingly.

28 COMMITTEE CHANGES / APPOINTMENTS

The following appointment to an outside body as set out in the summons was noted:

- Councillor Graham Peart BEM - Standing Deputy - Thames Valley Police & Crime Panel.

29 URGENT ACTION TAKEN BY CABINET OF INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

The Individual Cabinet Member Decisions as set out in the summons and featured below were noted.

- 2 May 2019 – Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (Minor Amendments) – **3/2019** Cabinet Member for Housing
- 9 May 2019 – Wycombe District Council Wellbeing Statement – **4/2019** Cabinet Member for Community

- 10 May 2019 – Community Support Grants – Service Level Agreements (Community Services) – **5/2019** Cabinet Member for Community
- 28 June 2019 – 58 West End Road, High Wycombe, Property Disposal and Replacement by the Buckinghamshire Housing Association – **6/2019** Cabinet Member for Housing

30 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

In speaking to this agenda item the Leader of the Council remarked that she had needed two versions of her announcement ready for tonight depending on the decision taken by the Council earlier that evening.

Ms Wood then publically announced the decision taken by the Council earlier that evening regarding the Chief Executive role. With the establishment of the new Buckinghamshire Council fast moving its way towards 1st April 2020, the role of Wycombe District Council Chief Executive had already and would continue to diminish over the final months. The Council had therefore agreed to make that role redundant and that at her request, Chief Executive, Karen Satterford was to leave the Council on 31st July.

We would still have a strong leadership team in place to continue to deliver all of Wycombe services whilst we still existed and to ensure a smooth transfer to the new unitary. John East the interim Corporate Director would take on the role to steer the Council through until next March. He would be ably supported by the Council's excellent Heads of Service who had many years' experience and skills. The Leader was confident that the Council's dedicated staff would continue to deliver their best for this Council, and residents through to March 2020 and hopefully beyond.

Karen had played a significant role in establishing the framework of the implementation team for the new unitary. Now that this was in place, with the interim Chief Executive in the lead role, and the Chief Executive for the new Council due to be appointed soon, her role was diminishing significantly, and this Council had agreed to her request to be allowed to leave early. What was happening here was mirroring what had happened in Dorset as they progressed to Unitary. This would of course provide a saving to this Council in allowing her early departure.

Turning to Karen, the Leader paid tribute to her work with this Council. There would be time before she went to say proper goodbyes and embarrass her fully, but for now the Leader outlined that Karen had given over 13 years' service to this Council and over 40 years in local government, with 18 of those as a Chief Executive. This Council had achieved so much over this time with Karen at the helm. Wycombe District Council was a well-run, highly respected and envied Council especially in local government circles, with its achievements and its innovative and challenging work. Wycombe was financially sound, with no borrowing, good reserves and had kept its Council tax down, only raising it a couple of times in the last 8 years. We

had a history of regenerating our District and our town with far too many successes to list at that point without being there all evening.

This hadn't happened by chance. Whilst members made the decisions, someone had to ensure that those decisions happened. Karen had led and steered this Council to its position during her time here, with her inclusive, inspiring and motivational leadership. Guiding Members to do the best for the District with sound advice and wise counsel, Karen was well respected by all who know her and her passion for Wycombe was never in doubt. She was always on the side of the staff, the Members and the Council and her wisdom and foresight were invaluable. The Leader could not thank her enough for the support and advice she had given her as Leader during her term and was sure that went for all the other Leaders and Members she had worked with.

On behalf of this Council the Leader wished to publically put on record her thanks to Karen for her years of excellent service to this Council and to wish her all the best for the future and whatever she chose to do next.

What Members probably did not know if even at this stage of her career, was that she had that evening once again put Wycombe District Council first before her own personal wishes. As that this evening was actually Karen's birthday, and Councillor Ms Wood was sure Karen would far rather be celebrating elsewhere than at this Council meeting!

As a slight recompense for being here, the Leader then presented Karen with a bouquet as a small token from all for her birthday!

In response Karen thanked Councillor Ms Wood for her kind words. Karen emphasised that she had come into Local Government 40 years ago as she had wanted to improve people's lives. Her first job had been at Haringey in London where she had seen at first hand the terrible living conditions of some residents.

Karen remarked that she had come to live in High Wycombe well before she had come to work here. Moving here whilst employed as a director at Wokingham Council, never for 5 minutes had she dreamt of becoming Wycombe's Chief Executive.

When employed by Wycombe not only did she live here but she actually found herself to be living in the then Leader's ward!

It had been an honour and a privilege to work with 4 excellent Leaders. Karen was immensely proud of the staff, many behind the scenes that Members did not necessarily see that often.

Wycombe District Council was in fact like a family; with a culture of respect between Members, between staff and between the two.

Wycombe had built a national reputation for:

- regeneration;

- financial prudence;
- extensive development projects;
- no borrowing (which often amazed other authorities); and
- one of the lowest council taxes in the country.

Some statistics to note from the 13 ½ years were:

- nearly a million visitors to the Council's Sports & Leisure centres last year;
- since 2011 recycling rates of 53%;
- though always too many, one of the lowest temporary accommodation levels nationally;
- planning exceeding all government targets;
- 350,000 website sessions in the 1st 3 months of the year;
- 145,000 phone calls dealt with last year;
- staff sickness was consistently low; and
- 25 elections in 18 years as a Chief Executive and Returning Officer.

Karen remarked that not only was she proud to have been Chief Executive at Wycombe, but proud to have been the 1st female Chief Executive. Unfortunately she was to be the last Chief Executive too. She was proud of her recruitment and promotion of women and ethnic minorities to management posts here at Wycombe.

Karen remarked that there would be time for more relaxed goodbyes at a later informal event.

Chairman

The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:

Peter Druce	- Democratic Services
John East	- Interim Corporate Director
Ian Hunt	- Democratic Services Manager
John McMillan	- Head of HR, ICT & Customer Services
Karen Satterford	- Chief Executive