

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 19 APRIL 2018

PRESENT:- The Worshipful The Mayor in the Chair; Councillors Junab Ali, Steve Allsopp, Abdul Amin, John Ballman, Ray Ballman, Alan Bishop, Emma Bushell, Wayne Crabbe, Malcolm Davies, Mark Dempsey, Paul Dixon, Oliver Donachie, Toby Elliott, Claire Ellis, Steph Exell, Emma Faramarzi, Fionuala Foley, Brian Ford, Mary Friend, Jim Grant, John Haines, Dale Heenan, Russell Holland, Fay Howard, Colin Lovell, Mary Martin, Nick Martin, Cathy Martyn, Gemma McCracken, Jane Milner-Barry, Des Moffatt, Derique Montaut, Stan Pajak, Barbara Parry, Kevin Parry, Garry Perkins, David Renard, James Robbins, Eric Shaw, Carol Shelley, Kevin Small, Gary Sumner, Timothy Swinyard, Caryl Sydney-Smith, Vera Tomlinson, Joe Tray, Chris Watts, Nadine Watts, Peter Watts, Steve Weisinger, Keith Williams, Robert Wright and Julie Wright.

91. Presentation - Maisie Sly

The Mayor welcomed Maisie Sly, her parents, Elizabeth and Gilson, Brother, Jack, and Sister, Chloe, to the Council and, on behalf of the Council, congratulated Maisie on her role in starring in the film “The Silent Child” which won “Best Live Action Short Film” at this year’s Oscar ceremony. The Mayor then made a presentation to Maisie in recognition of her achievement.

92. Minutes Silence

The Worshipful The Mayor reported the recent deaths of former Councillors Tony Huzzey, a former Chair of the Policy and Resources Committee and Leader of the majority Group on Thamesdown Borough Council, and William Morton, a member of Swindon Borough Council and invited the Chamber to join her in a Minutes Silence as a sign of respect.

93. Retiring Members

The Worshipful The Mayor reported that Councillors Colin Lovell, Gemma McCracken, Derique Montaut, Eric Shaw, Joe Tray and David Wood are not seeking re-election at the forthcoming elections to be held on Thursday 3rd May 2018, and on behalf of the Council, thanked those Councillors for their service to the Council and people of Swindon. The Mayor invited retiring Members to address the Council.

The Mayor also wished good luck to all those Members, seeking re-election in the forthcoming elections, regardless of their political party.

94. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Matthew Courtliff.

95. Communications

The Chief Executive reported that no communications had been received.

96.

Minutes

Resolved – That, subject to the deletion of Councillor Jane Milner-Barry from the list of Councillors voting in Minute 85, the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2018, be confirmed and signed.

97.

Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. Councillor Toby Elliott made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 6 (1) as he was employed by Network Rail.

98.

Public Question Time

Mr Roy Worman submitted written questions regarding the cost of and benefits arising from the Council's membership of England's Economic Heartland Strategy Transport Forum.. The Council was advised that the Leader of the Council had provided written responses to Mr Worman's questions and that these had been circulated at the meeting.

Ms Kareen Boyd asked a question regarding Council officers' and elected members' access to personal information supplied by individuals to the Council. The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Digitalisation and Lydiard Park and House responded at the meeting.

Ms Boyd asked a supplementary question regarding privileges afforded to Freeman of the Borough. The Leader of the Council requested that Ms Boyd submit this question in writing in order that a response might be provided.

Ms Carol Bent asked a question regarding public access to the main Council chambers for meetings of the Council. The Leader of the Council responded at the meeting.

Ms Bent asked a supplementary question asking that all Councillors to sign up to the Better Swindon principles. The Leader of the Council responded at the meeting.

Mr Nick Burns-Howell asked a further question regarding Council provided services assisting people with issues relating to substance abuse. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety responded at the meeting.

Mr Burns-Howell asked a supplementary about the discarding of used hypodermic syringes in public areas and how these instances should be reported to the Council. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Public Safety responded at the meeting.

Mr Burns-Howell asked a further question regarding the use of additional Government monies for pot-hole repairs. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Place responded at the meeting.

Mr Tim French asked a question regarding disabled drivers access to the rear of the town centre bus station to park their vehicles. The Cabinet Member for Communities and Place indicated that a written response would be provided.

99. Minutes for Confirmation

(1) Councillor David Renard moved and Councillor Russell Holland seconded that Minute 91 of the Cabinet (Membership of England's Economic Heartland Strategic Transport Forum) be confirmed and adopted.

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

(2) Councillor Vera Tomlinson moved and Councillor Eric Shaw seconded that Minute 35 of the Licensing Committee (Introduction of a Dog Walking Registration Scheme) be confirmed and adopted.

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

100. Council Petition Scheme

The Council considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services concerning the receipt of a petition containing 769 signatures requesting the Council to "take action to resolve the traffic issues in the Rodbourne (Even Swindon) area and in particular the problems caused by queuing vehicles trying to enter the car parks of the McArthur Glen Outlet Village".

In accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme, Ms Amy Wilkinson introduced the petition on behalf of the petitioners.

Councillor David Renard moved and Councillor Kevin Small seconded:

"(1) That the lead petitioner be thanked for bringing this matter to the Council's attention.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Communities and Place submit a report to Cabinet no later than July 2018 including how the Council could:

(i) Install additional white line markings to allow traffic to enter Barnham Court from Bruce Street Bridges;

(ii) Carry out a pilot scheme on 9th September 2018 to test the feasibility of making Rodbourne Road northbound on days when there are special events at the Outlet Village or STEAM;

(iii) Remove the Church Place bus gate to allow traffic to access Bristol Street by the Territorial Army Centre/St Mary's Church to use the Bristol Street car park; and

(iv) Work with McArthur Glenn to encourage the Outlet Centre to (a) look at solutions of access to the East Car Park by introducing a form of registration recognition barrier system and the possibility of a new exit; and (b) increase the number of car parking spaces at western car park through layering or another solution.

(3) That the Head of Highways and Transport be requested to liaise with the traders situated on Rodbourne Road regarding their experience of the traffic problems in Rodbourne, to identify how any proposed changes could affect their trade, and that once mitigating measures have been implemented, further liaison be undertaken to measure the impact of those changes.

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

101.

Motion - New Homes

Councillor Gary Sumner moved and Councillor Oliver Donachie seconded:

“This Council:

1) Welcomes:

a) the recent restated commitment by the Prime Minister and the Government to supporting house building, and

b) the work the Council is already undertaking to support providing new homes.

2) Notes:

a) That Swindon has an adopted Local Plan that supports ambitious targets for new homes,

b) That a number of parish councils have adopted neighbourhood plans to complement the Local Plan,

c) The economic benefits from building houses as well as supporting employers by providing good homes for their staff,

d) The delays that lie outside the Council's control in having construction start once planning permission is given. In particular, the fact that essential service companies such as the water companies and broadband infrastructure providers do not always coordinate their investments to support housing growth.

3) Invites the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government to:

a) Restore the New Homes Bonus to help Councils to pay for the investment and services new homes require,

b) Devise tax incentives to make it more profitable to build sooner once planning permission is granted, and

c) Introduce a duty to cooperate with planning authorities for utility companies, including modern utilities such as broadband, to ensure that new homes are not delayed because of the lack of infrastructure.”

Councillor Jim Robbins moved and Councillor Emma Bushell seconded:

“This Council:

1) Notes:

- a) The Prime Minister's recent statement on housebuilding and believes it was inadequate as it failed to acknowledge problems with developers land-banking and to address the fundamental causes of the current broken UK housing market including the decrease in home ownership, lack of affordable housing stock and a dramatic increase in rough-sleeping.
- b) That the last time the country built 250,000 homes a year, 40% of these homes were built by local authorities. The current percentage of all new build homes that are affordable is 9.2%.
- c) The LGA's statement in response to the Prime Minister's speech pointed out that there are 423,000 homes waiting to be built by developers and that "no-one can live in a planning permission".
- d) That millions of pounds of donations to the Conservative Party have come from house builders and the construction industry. Any Conservative proposal to offer tax breaks to these companies should be considered in this context.

2) Supports:

- a) The LGA's position to lift the borrowing cap of local authorities with a Housing Revenue Account in order to boost vital investment in Council House Building.
- b) The Labour Party's "use it or lose it" policy toward developers who are land banking on undeveloped land that has developable potential.
- c) All measures that will ensure local authorities can fully enforce their Local Plan affordable housing targets. Currently the local target is 30% and the current rate is only 9.2%.
- d) Restoring the New Homes Bonus to help Councils to pay for the investment and services new homes require."

The Amendment was put to the vote and declared lost.

The Substantive Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

102. Recruitment Process for Chief Executive

The Leader of the Council and Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a joint report seeking (a) approval for the appointment of an interim Head of Paid Service until a permanent appointment is made, and (b) the process for the appointment of a new Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service.

Councillor David Renard moved and Councillor Russell Holland seconded that:

(1) It be agreed to continue with the post of Chief Executive following the departure of Mr John Gilbert.

(2) The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development be authorised to begin the process of recruiting a new Chief Executive for the Council and to make the necessary arrangements required for the successful appointment to that post.

(3) The Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the other Group Leaders be authorised, to agree the salary of a new Chief Executive within current budgetary provision made for Chief Officers.

(4) That the role description and person specification for the post of Chief Executive as proposed in the revised Appendix A, tabled at the meeting, be agreed.

(5) The Leader of the Council, in consultation with the other Political Group Leaders on the Council be authorised, to appoint an interim Head of Paid Service, from the current members of Corporate Board, to act in that capacity in the period between the current Chief Executive leaving and the successor Chief Executive beginning in post.

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

103. Minutes of Cabinet and Decisions Delegated to Cabinet Members

The Council considered (a) the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th February and 14th March 2018, (b) questions to the Cabinet Members regarding their portfolio responsibilities and answers received, and (c) Cabinet Member Decision Notices.

104. Minutes of other Council Bodies

The Council (a) received the minutes set out in the “Minutes of Other Council Bodies” circulated with the Agenda, and (b) considered questions to Chairs relating to the work of their Committees and other bodies and answers received.

105. Councillors Question Time

The Director of Law and Democratic Services reported that Standing Order 15 Questions had been received from Councillors Fay Howard, Jane Milner-Barry, Carol Shelley and Bob Wright.

Councillor Fay Howard asked a supplementary question in relation to information relating to recycling by the Borough available on the Council’s website. Cabinet Member for Corporate Services, Digitalisation and Lydiard Park and House responded at the meeting.

Councillor Jane Milner-Barry asked a supplementary question regarding the registration of the North Star Development with the Building Research Establishment for BREEAM assessment and certification. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration responded at the meeting.

Councillor Carol Shelley asked a supplementary question regarding reorientations made by the Council in respect of the potential closures of Oxonwood and Braeside educational centres by Wiltshire Council. The Cabinet Member for Education and School Attainment responded at the meeting.

Councillor Bob Wright asked a supplementary question regarding the accuracy and completeness of the Cabinet Member's response. The Cabinet Member for Regeneration responded at the meeting.