

## **COUNCIL**

**THURSDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**PRESENT:-** The Worshipful The Mayor in the Chair; Councillors Junab Ali, Abdul Amin, John Ballman, Ray Ballman, Alan Bishop, Nick Burns-Howell, Emma Bushell, Matthew Courtliff, Claire Crilly, Malcolm Davies, Mark Dempsey, Paul Dixon, Oliver Donachie, Steph Exell, Emma Faramarzi, Brian Ford, Jim Grant, Dale Heenan, Steve Heyes, Russell Holland, Fay Howard, Janine Howarth, Oladapo Ibitoye, Robert Jandy, Jenny Jefferies, Vinay Manro, Mary Martin, Nick Martin, Cathy Martyn, Jane Milner-Barry, Des Moffatt, Stan Pajak, Barbara Parry, Maureen Penny, Garry Perkins, David Renard, James Robbins, Imtiyaz Shaikh, Carol Shelley, Kevin Small, Roger Smith, Basil Solomon, Andy Spry, Gary Sumner, Timothy Swinyard, Caryl Sydney-Smith, Rahul Tarar, Nadine Watts, Peter Watts, Steve Weisinger, Keith Williams and Robert Wright.

### **27. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Allsopp, Brian Mattock, Adorabelle Shaikh and Vera Tomlinson.

### **28. Communications**

The Chief Executive reported that a statement had been received from Network Rail in respect of Agenda Item 7(a) and was available on the Council's website.

### **29. Minutes**

Resolved – That, subject to the inclusion of Councillor Vinay Monroe in the list of attendees, the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> July, 2019, be confirmed and signed.

### **30. Declarations of Interest**

The Worshipful The Mayor reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting. Councillor Matthew Courtliff made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of Agenda Item No. 7(a) as he was employed by Network Rail.

### **31. Public Question Time**

Ms Sarah Church submitted a written question regarding the maintenance of Cavendish Square and reports that the Council was to repurchase Cavendish Square. The Leader of the Council indicated that a written response to the question had been tabled.

The Council received a public question in respect of the content of the Council's Local Plan which was currently out for consultation. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning responded at the meeting.

Ms Jenny Francis asked a public question regarding road safety in the Hay Lane area. The Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment responded at the meeting.

Ms Jenny Francis asked a supplemental question regarding research undertaken, prior to installation, to ensure the Hay Lane pedestrian crossing was suitably situated. The Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment responded at the meeting.

Mr Roy Worman submitted a written question in respect of historical meetings held to discuss the development of the town centre proposed by Dr. Marsh. The Leader of the Council indicated that a written answer would be provided.

## **32. Council Petition Scheme**

The Council considered a report of the Chief Legal Officer concerning the receipt of a petition containing 425 signatures (with 409 signatures in on-line version) requesting the Council to “make the section of Hay Lane in Grange Park safe to cross for residents.”

In accordance with the Council’s Petition Scheme, Mrs Clarisse Grother and Mr Rodney Birks (Petition Organisers) introduced the petition on behalf of the petitioners.

Councillor Maureen Penny moved and Councillor Matthew Courtliff seconded:

“First I would like to thank those who have organised this petition for bringing this matter to my attention.

Ward Councillors have also raised their concerns with me.

As the Cabinet Member responsible for Transport and the Environment, I am keen that we have roads that are safe for all users – motorists, cyclists and pedestrians.

Officers monitor road safety performance across the Borough as part of an annual review, analysing reported injury collision data provided by Wiltshire Police. This work informs the Council’s priorities for road safety improvements either as engineering schemes or education based initiatives. Traffic surveys carried out on Hay Lane in either direction indicate good compliance with the posted speed limit.

However the Council recognises the concerns that have been raised and so it is my proposal that:

- Officers write a Briefing Note outlining the road safety priorities for the Borough and for this report to consider the measures required for the Borough including Hay Lane.”

Councillor Steph Exell moved and Councillor Kevin Small seconded that the Motion be amended to read:

“This Council:

- i) Thanks the petitioners for raising this important issue.
- ii) Requests the Cabinet Member for Highways and the Environment to bring a report to Cabinet detailing how the Council can make the section of Hay Lane in Grange Park safe to cross for pedestrians, including reviewing the following measures:
  - Introduce a 20mph speed limit;
  - Insert a road-wide speed hump on or near to the pedestrian crossing;
  - Improved signage to ensure motorists are aware of the zebra crossing and to slow down motorists.”

The amendment was put to the vote and declared lost.

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

### **33. Motion - Town Centre Regeneration**

Councillor Bob Wright moved and Councillor Stan Pajak seconded:

“This Council:

- Believes that the current Conservative administration lacks a substantive cohesive plan to bring Swindon Town Centre into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Notes:

- The proposal by Dr Laurie Marsh to regenerate Swindon’s Town Centre- titled “Destination Swindon”. Dr Marsh is a successful businessman with a proven record of regenerating buildings through Charitable Finance Initiatives.
- The proposal includes redeveloping the Mechanics Institute, creating a university in the Town Centre, a new 2000 seat conference, exhibition and concert hall and an innovative rapid transit system.
- Dr Marsh has identified a number of banks and institutions for this redevelopment programme with whom he has previously worked successfully and has already had a number of organisations and local stakeholders who have expressed a desire to cooperate with this project.
- This scheme offers £1.5bn worth of investment and requires no capital investment from Swindon Borough Council. When complete this scheme would generate an income to the Council.

Requests:

- The Cabinet to review its decision not to work with Dr Laurie Marsh and pursue this project.
- The Cabinet Member for the Town Centre bring a report to Cabinet detailing how the Council could enable this project.”

The Motion was put to the vote and declared lost.

(Councillor Matthew Courtliff made a non prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of this item as he was employed by Network Rail.)

### **34. Motion - Eastern Villages Infrastructure**

Councillor Jim Robbins moved and Councillor Kevin Small seconded:

“This Council:

Notes:

- The Eastern Village Transport Schemes report agreed by Cabinet at its 10<sup>th</sup> July meeting. Cabinet approved in this report borrowing to fund transport schemes at the White Hart Junction, Gablecross Junction, Nythe Road Junction, Piccadilly Roundabout and a new Southern Connector Road.
- In order to fund these transport schemes and other community projects, Cabinet plan to borrow £59.4m by 2025/26. This will have massive implications on the Council's revenue budget with annual debt charges expected increase by £12m by 2028/29. This is the equivalent of more than 10% increase on residents' Council Taxes.
- The Cabinet expect developers to eventually pay the Council back the money it has borrowed through its contributions to the development. The developer contributions are subject to agreements being reached and kept to by developers and housing numbers being built out as expected by the Council.
- Cabinet agreed to these spending decisions despite it being highlighted in the report that they were a “significant risk”.

Believes:

- Cabinet's decision is forcing Council-Taxpayers to take all of the financial risk of the Eastern Villages housing development, with housebuilders taking all of the profit.
- Cabinet's decision would set a precedent about the Council's involvement in financing major infrastructure projects that are a part of private sector developments.

Requests:

- That a report be brought to Cabinet by the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning reconsidering how much Council-Taxpayers money Cabinet is prepared to risk as part of the Eastern Villages development.”

Councillor Gary Sumner moved and Councillor Russell Holland seconded that the Motion be amended to read:

“This Council:

Notes:

- The Eastern Village Transport Schemes report agreed by Cabinet at its 10th July meeting. Cabinet approved in this report borrowing to fund transport schemes at the White Hart Junction, Gablecross Junction, Nythe Road Junction, Piccadilly Roundabout and a new Southern Connector Road.

This Council:

- Welcomes the approved expenditure for improvements on White Hart Junction, Gable Cross Junction, Nythe Road, Piccadilly and the Southern Connector Road only.
- Welcomes the Local Growth Funding of £48.7million and the prospects of additional funding from the Housing Infrastructure Funding of £18million for these improvements.
- Welcomes that as a result of Government policy since 2010 that the numbers of houses has been reduced ensuring better quality development.
- Has confidence in the expansion of Swindon and endorses the approach as set out by Cabinet Report which dealt with matters of financial risk.
- Asks that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning agrees to report back to Cabinet any significant variations to that risk."

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

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

### **35. Appointment to Outside Body**

Councillor David Renard moved and Councillor Russell Holland seconded:

"That Councillor Robert Jandy be appointed as a deputy to serve on the Wiltshire Pension Fund for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2019/20."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

(Councillor Kevin Small made a prejudicial declaration of interest in respect of this item as he was Member of the Wiltshire Pension Fund and left the room during the discussion of the item).

(Councillor Des Moffatt made a personal declaration of interest in respect of this item as he was Member of the Wiltshire Pension Fund).

**36. Minutes of Cabinet and Decisions Delegated to Cabinet Members**

The Council considered (a) the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10th July 2019, (b) questions to the Cabinet Members regarding their portfolio responsibilities and answers received, and (c) Cabinet Member Decision Notices.

**37. 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.

**38. Councillors Question Time**

The Chief Legal Officer reported that a Standing Order 15 Questions had been received from Councillors Nick Burns-Howell, Emma Bushell, Jim Grant, Janine Howarth and Jane Milner-Barry.

Councillor Emma Bushell asked a supplemental question regarding the possible repurchase of Cavendish Square. The Cabinet Member for the Town Centre responded at the meeting.

Councillor Janine Howarth asked a supplemental question regarding the consultation process with Ward Councillors in respect of the possible repurchase of Cavendish Square. The Leader of the Council responded at the meeting.

Councillor Jane Milner-Barry asked a supplemental question regarding information provided in the Cabinet Member’s response. The Cabinet Member for the Transport and Environment responded at the meeting.