

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 3 APRIL 2014

PRESENT:- The Worshipful The Mayor in the Chair; Councillors Junab Ali, Steve Allsopp, Abdul Amin, Paul Baker, John Ballman, Ray Ballman, Mike Bawden, Andrew Bennett, Alan Bishop, Roderick Bluh, Michael Bray, Wayne Crabbe, Mark Dempsey, Michael Dickinson, Oliver Donachie, Mark Edwards, Toby Elliott, Claire Ellis, Emma Faramarzi, Fionuala Foley, Brian Ford, Mary Friend, Jim Grant, John Haines, Peter Heaton-Jones, Neil Heavens, Dale Heenan, Russell Holland, Fay Howard, Richard Hurley, Colin Lovell, Cindy Matthews, Brian Mattock, Des Moffatt, Derique Montaut, Teresa Page, Stan Pajak, Maureen Penny, Garry Perkins, Julian Price, David Renard, Ann Richards, James Robbins, Nicky Sewell, Kevin Small, Vera Tomlinson, Joe Tray, Steve Wakefield, Nadine Watts, Peter Watts, Steve Weisinger, David Wood, Robert Wright and Julie Wright.

103. Vote of Thanks

(1) That the Council records its appreciation for the work undertaken by Councillors Mike Bawden, Michael Dickinson and Rochelle Russell following their decision not to stand as candidates in the forthcoming Local Government elections and offers its best wishes for their future endeavours.

(2) That the Council records its appreciation for the work undertaken by Ms Sally Rhind-Tutt in her capacity as Committee and Member Support Officer and offers its best wishes on her retirement.

104. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rochelle Russell and Keith Williams.

105. Communications

The Board Director, Commissioning reported that a letter had been received from Thamesdown Transport Ltd in response to a Council Motion approved at the meeting held on 2nd January 2014 (Minute 82 refers).

106. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 24th February 2014, be confirmed and signed.

107. 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. No declarations were made.

Mr Terry Reynolds submitted written questions regarding recent issues referred to the Council's Standards Committee. A written response was tabled at the meeting.

Mr. Brian Cockbill submitted written questions in respect of (a) complaints received by the Council's Monitoring Officer, (b) dining and kitchen facilities in Swindon Primary Schools, and (c) inspections of the former college building in Victoria Road. Written responses were tabled at the meeting.

Mr Brian Cockbill asked a supplementary question regarding the work of the Standards Committee. The Chair of the Standards Committee responded at the meeting.

Mr Brian Cockbill asked a supplementary question regarding meeting the project officer leading on the provision of dining facilities in Primary Schools. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services indicated that a written response would be provided.

Mr Brian Cockbill asked a supplementary question seeking assurances that the Council was undertaking its duty under the Heritage Act to protect buildings. The Chair of the Planning Committee indicated that a written response would be provided.

Mr Mike Bowden submitted written questions regarding the future public ownership of Lydiard Park and House. A written response was tabled at the meeting.

Mr Mike Bodwen asked supplementary questions regarding public consultation on any review of the status of Lydiard. The Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Culture responded at the meeting.

Mrs Carole Bent submitted written questions regarding the work of the Council's Standards Committee. A written response was tabled at the meeting.

Mrs Carole Bent asked a supplementary question regarding a complaint made against the Mayor to the Council's Standards Committee. The Chair of the Standards Committee responded at the meeting.

Mrs Carole Bent asked a supplementary question regarding when the decision of an assessment panel meeting would be made publically available. The Chair of the Standards Committee indicated that a written response would be provided.

Mrs Goodenough submitted a written in respect of the provision of green waste bins. A written response was tabled at the meeting.

Mrs Goodenough asked a supplementary question regarding her experience of trying to obtain a green waste bin. The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Housing and Streetsmart (Delivery) responded at the meeting.

Mr Ockadon asked a public question regarding the future provision of leisure in the Borough and the future of Council leisure centres. The Leader of the Council responded at the meeting.

Mr Ockadon asked a supplementary question regarding consultations on the future of leisure land at Croft Playing Fields. The Leader of the Council responded at the meeting.

Council agreed that Council Standing Orders be suspended in order to allow additional public questions to be put to the meeting.

Mr Paul Gregory asked a public question regarding the adoption and promotion of an economic policy highlighting Swindon's railway connections. The Leader of the Council responded at the meeting.

Mr Richard Symmonds asked a public question regarding the public provision of leisure facilities. The Leader of the Council responded at the meeting.

Mr Richard Symmonds asked a supplementary question regarding why the Council couldn't make a profit from its leisure facilities and the impact on the price of leisure provision if parts of the service were privatized. The Leader of the Council responded at the meeting.

Mrs Jane Milner-Barry asked a public question regarding the Oasis Leisure Centre lease and why she hadn't received a response to a previous question. The Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Culture responded at the meeting and indicated that a written response would be provided.

Mrs Jane Milner-Barry asked a supplementary question seeking clarification when the Leisure Review would be presented to Council. The Cabinet Member for Economy, Regeneration and Culture responded at the meeting.

Ms Linda Kasmaty asked a public question regarding the current designation of the Croft Playing Fields. The Leader of the Council indicated that a written response would be provided.

Mrs Kareen Boyd asked a public question about public investment in green energy projects following support from the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability responded at the meeting.

Mrs Kareen Boyd asked a supplementary question regarding the status of Fast Solutions. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability indicated that a written response would be provided.

Mrs Kareen Boyd asked a supplementary question seeking clarification as to when the Director of Law and Democratic Services was aware of Fast Solutions. The Director of Law and Democratic Services responded at the meeting.

Mrs Kareen Boyd asked a public question clarifying who the Council's Standards Committee were accountable to. The Chair of the Standards Committee responded at the meeting.

Mrs Kareen Boyd asked a supplementary question regarding the possibility of the Council asking the Standards Committee to increase the pace of its work. The Chair of the Standards Committee indicated that written response would be provided.

Mrs Kareen Boyd asked a supplementary question seeking clarification as to whether the written response referred to would be provided by 9th April 2014.

The Chair of the Standards Committee responded at the meeting.

109. Minutes for Confirmation

There were no Minutes for Confirmation.

110. Motion - Swindon Energy Co-operative

Councillor Dale Heenan moved and Councillor Oliver Donachie seconded:

"This Council,

(1) Recognises the excellent work that has occurred on the Collective Energy Switch programme, which has cut gas and electricity bills for hundreds of families across Swindon.

(2) Notes the continued cross party support for initiatives to deliver on the November 2013 Full Council decision to, "100% target by 2020."

(3) Recommends that the Cabinet Member for Finance establish a Cabinet Member Advisory Group to advise the Cabinet Member on the business cases for any Swindon Borough Council investment in renewable initiatives to ensure continued support in an open and transparent manner.

(3) Requests that the Cabinet Member for Finance present a report to Cabinet as soon as practical on setting up a Swindon Energy Social Enterprise to provide a mechanism to continue promotion of Collective Energy Switching within the Borough, allow residents to invest in renewable schemes and assist in delivering allowable solutions for zero carbon homes."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

(Councillor Brian Ford made a personal declaration of interest in respect of this item.)

111. Motion - Lydiard Park

Councillor Michael Dickinson moved and Councillor Mick Bray seconded:

"This Council,

- condemns the scaremongering and claims being made that Lydiard Park and House is being "sold off" and is part of a campaign of "asset stripping" within the Borough.

- reminds Members of their duties under the Councillors' Code of Conduct not to bring the authority into disrepute.

- agrees that there are no plans, and this Administration will not bring forward any plans, to sell Lydiard Park and House.

- requests that the Cabinet Members for the Economy, Regeneration and Culture and Highways, Strategic Transport and Leisure, present a report to Cabinet as soon as practicable on ways to ensure that Lydiard is preserved for future generations to use and enjoy such as through a trust."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

112. Motion - Cars Parking on Grass Verges

Mark Dempsey moved and Councillor Peter Watts seconded:

"This Council recognises the concerns of local residents in many of Swindon's communities who do not have adequate parking capacity in their residential area. Furthermore, Council recognises that this can sometimes lead to residential areas being left untidy as a result of residents having to park on grass verges.

This Council requests a report be brought to the Cabinet detailing options for how the Council can increase car parking capacity in residential areas that need it."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

113. Motion - Opposition to Companies that Operate Blacklists

Councillor Jim Grant moved and Councillor Derique Montaut seconded:

"That Swindon Council deplores the illegal practice of blacklisting and requests that the Lead Cabinet Member and Officers seek a way to ensure that any company tendering for construction and civil engineering contracts to be awarded by Swindon Council will be asked to provide information that they have not conducted any "grave misconduct" by way of blacklisting. This will include questions in relation to:

1. Membership of the Consulting Association; and
2. Employment of individuals who were named contacts for the Consulting Association."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

114. Motion - Traffic on Cricklade Road

Councillor Joe Tray moved and Councillor Mark Dempsey seconded:

"The Council requests the Lead Member for Highways to bring a report to Cabinet detailing how the Council could complete a road traffic survey on Cricklade Road at the Moonrakers Junction, and following the survey, undertake and complete a preliminary design of a new Moonrakers Junction that would ease the traffic on this

main route into and out of the town centre. Council believes this plan should be fully consulted upon and be ready to implement as soon as funding becomes available."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

115. Motion - Coate Water Country Park

Councillor Derique Montaut moved and Councillor Abdul Amin seconded:

"This Council recognises that since 2003 Coate Water Country Park has received far less investment than other country parks in the town and, in particular, Lydiard Park.

This Council notes that from the S106 agreement the Council has reached with the developer of the Commonhead development, up to £1m could be invested in improvements in the Coate Water Country Park.

This Council urges the Cabinet to agree that the full £1m of Section 106 money that can be invested in leisure and recreation is invested solely in Coate Water Country Park.

This Council requests the Leader of the Council bring forward a report to Cabinet detailing how the Council could provide adequate resources to East and South Swindon Localities to start a public consultation on how £1m of investment could improve Coate Water Country Park."

At the request of the mover and seconder and with the agreement of the Council the Motion was amended to read:

"This Council recognises that since 2003 Coate Water Country Park has received far less investment than other country parks in the town and, in particular, Lydiard Park.

This Council notes that from the S106 agreement the Council has reached with the developer of the Commonhead development, new investment could be provided to improve Coate Water Country Park.

This Council urges Cabinet to agree that as much of the Commonhead Section 106 money as possible is invested in Coate Water Country Park.

This Council requests the Leader of the Council bring forward a report to Cabinet detailing how the Council could provide additional resources to East and South Swindon Localities to start a public consultation on how this Section 106 money could improve Coate Water Country Park."

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

116. Motion - West Swindon Library

Councillor Jim Robbins moved and Councillor Nadine Watts seconded:

"This Council notes the concerns of Old Town library users about the restricted access to the Old Town Library as a result of the Arts Centre being managed by a private company. This Council also notes the concerns of residents and community

groups in West Swindon about future access to the West Swindon Library, if and when the Council transfers the Link Centre to a different provider.

This Council requests that the Cabinet Member for Highways, Strategic Transport and Leisure bring a report to Cabinet detailing how the current level of access can be retained to both libraries following these proposed changes."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

117. Motion - Town Centre Road Network

Councillor Bob Wright moved and Councillor Junab Ali seconded:

"This Council:

- Recognises that the Town Centre's infrastructure is of immense importance to the town's overall road network and traffic flows as well as to those who live in the Town Centre.
- Is concerned about the recently proposed changes of the Town Centre's road network and believes that it doesn't serve the interests of Town Centre users.
- Believes that supplementary guidance needs to be agreed on the Town Centre's future road network that will sit with the Town Centre Masterplan.

Therefore, this Council requests that the Leader of the Council to bring a report to Cabinet to detail how the Council can initiate a Town Centre Infrastructure Consultation before further costly works begin on changing the roads, routes, paths and cycleways.

The outcome of this consultation should provide the detailed specifications for the Town Centre's future road network which will provide the basis for grant applications. Council believes that if this consultation is to be agreed, it should be controlled and managed by its Highways Department."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared lost.

118. Calendar of Meetings 2014/15

The Director of Law and Democratic Services submitted a report setting out the proposed dates for meetings of the Council, the Cabinet, Committees and Other Swindon Borough Council Bodies for the Municipal Year, 2014/15.

The Leader of the Council reported the Corporate Governance Working Group has made recommendations on the structure of the Council including its Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Footpaths and Rights of Way Committee which he will recommend Council to accept at Annual Council. At this stage it is anticipated that the date of the Overview and Scrutiny meetings will remain as set out in the timetable.

Councillor David Renard moved and Brian Mattock seconded:

“(1) That, subject to any changes to the structure of the Council approved at Annual Council, the Timetable of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2014/15, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services be approved for formal adoption by Annual Council.

(2) That the Director of Law and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to vary the dates for meetings of the Council, the Cabinet, Committees and Other Swindon Borough Council bodies should this prove necessary for the efficient discharge of Council business.”

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

119. Minutes of Cabinet and Decisions Delegated to Cabinet Members

The Council considered (a) the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 5th February 2014, and (b) questions to the Cabinet Members regarding their portfolio responsibilities and answers received.

120. 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.

121. Councillors Question Time

The Director of Law and Democratic Services reported that Standing Order 15 questions had been received from Councillors Steve Allsopp, Mark Dempsey, Neil Heavens and Bob Wright.

Councillor Steve Allsopp asked a supplementary question regarding when the review referred to in the Cabinet Member’s response would be reported to the community groups affected. The Cabinet Member for Finance indicated that a written response would be provided.

Councillor Mark Dempsey asked a supplementary question seeking additional detail in respect of where and how the money referred to in the tabled answers 6(b) (d) and (e) was spent. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Sustainability indicated that a written response would be provided.

Councillor Mark Dempsey asked a supplementary question seeking a more detailed breakdown of the car park usage figures set out in the tabled answer 10. The Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Culture indicated that a written response would be provided.

Councillor Neil Heavens asked a supplementary question regarding outstanding issues at Eldene Community Centre. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Projects and Transformation responded at the meeting.

Councillor Bob Wright asked a supplementary question regarding the provision of bins in the town centre area. The Cabinet Member for Public Protection, Housing and Streetsmart (Delivery) responded at the meeting.