

COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 14 APRIL 2016

PRESENT:- The Worshipful The Mayor in the Chair; Councillors Steve Allsopp, Abdul Amin, Ray Ballman, Andrew Bennett, Alan Bishop, Michael Bray, Emma Bushell, Wayne Crabbe, Paul Dixon, Oliver Donachie, Mark Edwards, Toby Elliott, Claire Ellis, Steph Exell, Emma Faramarzi, Fionuala Foley, Brian Ford, Jim Grant, John Haines, Dale Heenan, Russell Holland, Fay Howard, Colin Lovell, Mary Martin, Nick Martin, Cathy Martyn, Brian Mattock, Gemma McCracken, Des Moffatt, Teresa Page, Stan Pajak, Kevin Parry, Maureen Penny, Garry Perkins, David Renard, James Robbins, Eric Shaw, Carol Shelley, Kevin Small, Timothy Swinyard, Caryl Sydney-Smith, Joe Tray, Chris Watts, Nadine Watts, Peter Watts, Steve Weisinger, Keith Williams, David Wood, Julie Wright and Robert Wright.

81. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Junab Ali, John Ballman, Mary Friend, Richard Hurley, Derique Montaut and Vera Tomlinson.

82. Vote of Thanks

That the Council records its appreciation for the work undertaken by Councillors Andrew Bennett, Paul Baker, Michael Bray, Mark Edwards and Richard Hurley following their decision not to stand as candidates in the forthcoming Local Government elections and offers its best wishes for their future endeavours.

83. Communications

The Chief Executive reported that no communications had been received.

84. Minutes

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 25th February 2016, be confirmed and signed.

85. Declarations of Interest

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.

86. Public Question Time

Mr Keith Smith submitted written questions regarding a petition signed by residents of Highworth opposing the “Threat to Highworth Library”. The meeting was advised that the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills had tabled a written response to Mr Smith’s questions.

Ms Alison Durrant submitted written questions in respect of the future provision of the Council’s library service, including Highworth library. The meeting

was advised that the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills had tabled a written response to Ms Durrant's questions.

Ms Durrant asked a supplementary question in respect of the funding of the Council's library service. The Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills responded at the meeting.

Mr Blake Chandler submitted a written question regarding the future of the Park South library. The meeting was advised that the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills had tabled a written response to Mr Chandler's question.

Mr Chandler asked a supplementary question concerning the future hours of operation of the Park South library. The Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills responded at the meeting.

Ms Sarah Church submitted written questions regarding the use of volunteers to staff libraries and the Diversity Impact Assessment undertaken by the Council as part of its Library Strategy. The meeting was advised that the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills had tabled a written response to Ms Church's questions.

Ms Church asked a supplementary question on the Council's proposed future use of volunteers as part of its Library Strategy. The Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills responded at the meeting.

Ms Sarah Church submitted written questions regarding representations made by the Council in response to reductions in grant funding from Central Government and the Council's proposals for the future funding of its library service. The meeting was advised that Leader of the Council had tabled a written response to Ms Church's questions.

Ms Helen James submitted a written question regarding the future of the Council's library service. The meeting was advised that the Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills had tabled a written response to Ms James's questions.

Ms James asked a supplemental question regarding comments attributed to the Leader of the Council in respect of the future of Highworth Library. The Leader of the Council responded at the meeting.

Mr Dick Millard submitted a written question regarding work undertaken by the Swindon Bicycle Users Group in partnership with the Council and cycling organisations in respect of the Cycling Framework for Swindon. The meeting was advised that the Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport had tabled a written response to Mr Millard's questions.

Mr Millard asked a supplementary question regarding the promotion of the Cycling Framework for Swindon. The Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport responded at the meeting.

Mr Tony Hillier asked a question on the effect of funding reductions for the Council's library service during the current Financial Year. The Cabinet Member for the Economy, Regeneration and Skills responded at the meeting to Mr Hillier's question.

Mr Hillier asked a supplementary question clarifying the Cabinet Member's response regarding the budget reduction for the Council's library service. The Cabinet Member responded at the meeting.

87. Minute for Confirmation

Councillor Richard Hurley moved and Councillor David Renard seconded that Minute 78 of the Cabinet (Treasury Strategy Statement 2016/17) be confirmed and adopted.

Councillor Kevin Small moved and Councillor Robert Wright seconded:

"That Council notes in the Cabinet's Treasury Management Strategy, Cabinet project Council general fund debt to increase from £100m at the end of 15/16 to £185m by 2018/19.

With the Council's annual debt charges, which is paid for from residents' council-taxes, already at £8.4m and with debt charges set to rise in line with additional general fund debt, Council believes it is crucial that the public understand the impact past and future council borrowing has on their council-tax bills.

Council resolves to amend Cabinet's Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Policy and Prudential Indicators for 2016/17, to include that in all future council-tax leaflets sent to every household, it be made explicitly clear the amount residents' council-taxes spend on debt charges and that no other term be used to describe this annual spend."

The Amendment was put to the vote and declared lost.

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

88. Council Petition Scheme

The Council considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services concerning the receipt of a petition containing 2,841 signatures calling on Swindon Borough Council to guarantee the future of all libraries in Swindon by ensuring that they continue to be run by professionally trained Council staff and funded by the Council.

The Council received the comments of Ms Sarah Church, on behalf of the petitioners, introducing the petition and debated the way in which the Council could most appropriately respond to the concerns raised.

Councillor Garry Perkins moved and Councillor David Renard seconded:

"Council thanks the petitioners for their submission. The Council is still in an engagement phase towards producing a draft strategy and these views will be taken

into account as part of that. A draft strategy will be circulated in June and I invite all concerned residents to read and respond to it.”

Councillor Jim Robbins moved and Councillor Jim Grant Seconded that the Motion be amended to read:

“This Council welcomes the petition to protect Swindon’s libraries and believes the decision in the February Budget Meeting to cut funding from Swindon’s community libraries will lead to at least some library closures.

Council asks Cabinet to consider reinstating the funding over the next two years for libraries, cut in the 2016/17 Budget, based on the opposition amendment presented at the February Budget Meeting.”

The Amendment was put to the vote and declared lost.

A formal division was requested in accordance with Standing Order 14(2).

Members voting for the motion were Councillors Steve Allsopp, Abdul Amin, Ray Ballman, Emma Bushell, Paul Dixon, Stephanie Exell, Jim Grant, Fay Howard, Des Moffatt, Teresa Page, Stan Pajak, Jim Robbins, Carol Shelley, Kevin Small, Joe Tray, Chris Watts, Nadine Watts, Peter Watts, David Wood, Julie Wright and Robert Wright.

Members voting against the motion were Councillors Andrew Bennett, Alan Bishop, Michael Bray, Wayne Crabbe, Oliver Donachie, Mark Edwards, Toby Elliot, Claire Ellis, Emma Faramarzi, Fionuala Foley, Brian Ford, John Haines, Dale Heenan, Russell Holland, Colin Lovell, Mary Martin, Nick Martin, Cathy Martyn, Brian Mattock, Gemma McCracken, Kevin Parry, Maureen Penny, Garry Perkins, David Renard, Eric Shaw, Tim Swinyard, Caryl Ann Sydney-Smith, Steve Weisinger and Keith Williams.

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

89. Motion - Community Governance Review

Councillor Steve Allsopp moved and Councillor Robert Wright seconded:

“This Council notes:

- The Community Governance Review notes that the first stage of the Council's Community Governance Review has now been completed.
- That despite the efforts of the Council and Councillors to raise awareness of the Community Governance Review, many residents in the Borough are still unaware of the impact the parishing of non-parished areas of the Borough would have on their Council-Tax bills and provision of local services.
- The growing number of residents who have signed petitions and expressed to councillors that they want any council decision to parish the non-parished areas of the Borough to be based on the outcome of a local poll amongst voters in the

non-parished areas.

Council urges Cabinet, before the Council's Community Governance Review is concluded, to commission a poll of voters in the non-parished areas in the Borough asking if they wish their area to be turned in to a parish or not to help inform the outcome of the Community Governance Review."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared lost.

90. Motion - Public Liability Insurance

Councillor Jim Grant moved and Councillor Toby Elliott seconded:

"This Council notes the problems community groups and charities are having obtaining Public Liability Insurance in order to provide a voluntary service on behalf of Swindon's communities.

This Council requests the Cabinet Member for Communities and Strategic Planning to bring a report to Cabinet outlining the extent to which the Council can use its Public Liability Insurance to cover community groups and charities who are providing a voluntary service to the local community."

The Motion was put to the vote and declared carried.

91. Calendar of Meetings 2016/17

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, 2016/17.

Councillor David Renard moved and Brian Mattock seconded:

"(1) That the Timetable of Meetings for the Municipal Year 2016/17, 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.

92. Minutes of Cabinet and Decisions Delegated to Cabinet Members

The Council considered (a) the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 10th February and 16th March 2016, and (b) questions to the Cabinet Members regarding their portfolio responsibilities and answers received.

93.

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.

94.

Councillors Question Time

The Director of Law and Democratic Services reported that Standing Order 15 questions had been received from Councillors Steve Allsopp, Stephanie Exell and Derique Montaut.

Councillor Stephanie Exell asked a supplementary question seeking clarification on whether additional funding had been sought from Central Government to cover the cost of work relating to the widened definition of the “deprivation of liberty”. The Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care responded at the meeting.

Councillor Stephanie Exell asked a supplementary question regarding works to the Rodbourne Road railway bridge. The Cabinet Member for Sustainability and Transport responded at the meeting.